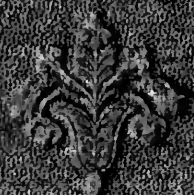


LESSONS

ON THE

LABOR OF OUR LORD



CONTAINED IN ONE VOLUME



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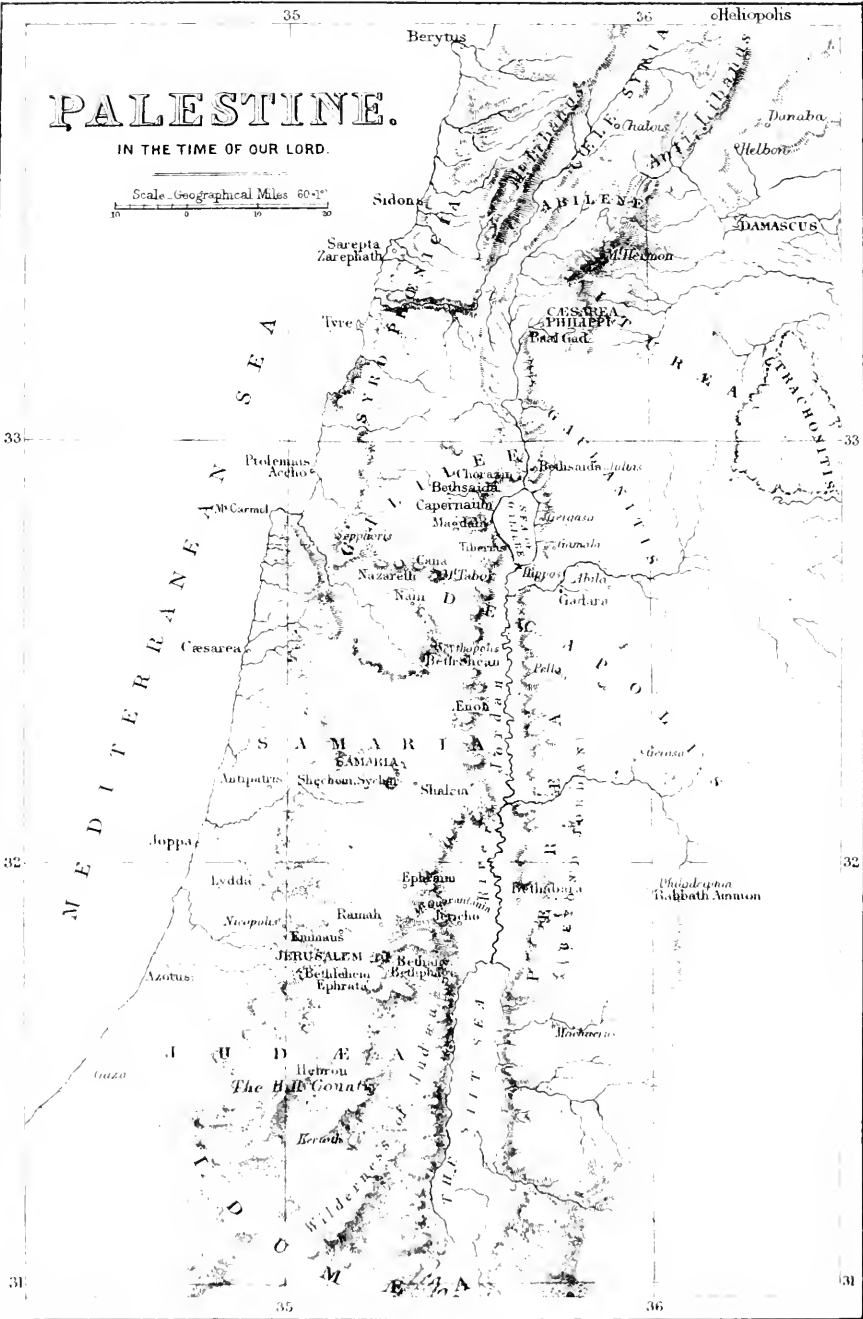
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LESSONS



ON THE

LIFE OF OUR LORD.

For the Use of Sunday School Teachers and other Religious
Instructors.

By EUGENE STOCK.

REPRINTED FROM THE "CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL MAGAZINE."

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST VOLUME.

THE following Lessons have already appeared in the *Church Sunday School Magazine*, and in the separate monthly publication containing the Notes extracted from that periodical. In the present volume they appear in a form substantially the same, but all temporary allusions (such as those to the Church Seasons with which some of the Lessons corresponded in the Calendar for 1870) have been eliminated, and the space thus gained has been filled up with fresh matter. Several corrections and emendations have also been made, and the "mottoes" and texts for repetition have been altered in many places.

The Introductory Remarks with which the work opens appeared in the first serial number, and it is unnecessary to add anything to what is there stated. But it may be well to reproduce the following note which appeared in the second number in consequence of certain suggestions, and which elicited several communications warmly approving of the views thus expressed :—

It has been suggested to the writer of the Lessons on the Life of Our Lord by one or two friends, whose opinion he highly esteems, that the Lessons are *too full*, and contain much more matter than the teacher can possibly use. As others may feel the same difficulty, he wishes briefly to explain his design, which, perhaps, is not clearly understood.

The fact itself is indisputable. The Lessons do contain more than any teacher can give to his class. But ought it to be otherwise?

In the first place, the Sketches of Lessons themselves are intended for use in all the classes of a school. It is, therefore, necessary, on the one hand to suggest questions, illustrations, explanatory sentences, methods of "putting a thing," which, though superfluous to the senior teacher, may be of use to his less experienced comrade; and, on the other hand, to include much that is beyond the capacity of a junior class, and yet too important to be neglected with elder scholars. An attempt—only partially successful, indeed—has been made to meet both cases, and yet the Sketches do not exceed the average length of those usually published.

In the second place, with regard to the explanatory "Notes" in small type, which are undoubtedly longer and fuller than ordinary, it is the belief of the writer that a man must always know, about any given subject, a great deal more than he is going to teach. An interesting lesson can only come out of the *full-ness* of a man's mind, just as an impressive lesson can only come out of the full-ness of his heart. Why was Faraday the prince of lecturers to children? Was it not because he was master of his subject? Yet he did not give his juvenile audiences the hundredth part of what he knew.

Now the great majority of Sunday-school teachers cannot readily obtain the knowledge they require. They have no libraries of their own, and no access to others. The design

of the "Notes" is to supply their need. They would, indeed, be unable to cram into their lessons, even if they tried, the information there condensed. But if they could, to do so would be most undesirable. All collateral and illustrative matter is but a means to an end, and must ever be subordinate to the *one great sacred object of Sunday-school teaching*. Nevertheless, the teacher who carefully stores his own mind with what has (not without some study and much care in the selection) been gathered together in the "Notes," will at all events find his own interest in what he is going to teach greatly increased. Once interested himself, it will be comparatively easy to interest his class; and having thus gained the eyes and ears of the scholars, he can press home, by the Divine blessing, successfully, the life-giving messages of the Gospel.

The Author has been gratified to learn, from the numerous testimonies which have been received, that these Lessons have, in their serial form, been found useful. He is thankful indeed if he has been permitted, in however small a degree, to assist his fellow Sunday-school teachers in their arduous labours.

That this Volume may be privileged to awaken, in the minds of those who use it, a deeper interest in the Life and Ministry of our blessed Lord and Saviour, and that its contents may be abundantly blessed to the spiritual profit of both teachers and scholars, is the Author's most earnest desire and prayer.

London, September, 1870.

NOTE TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

WITH much thankfulness the Author now presents this Second Volume, completing the work. He has been deeply gratified by the numerous expressions of approval which the First Volume has called forth; and trusts that the present one may prove equally helpful to his fellow-workers. To God be the glory of any small measure of good which the book may be permitted to accomplish!

September, 1871.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

ON THE

LIFE OF OUR LORD.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN commencing this new Course of Sunday-school Lessons, the writer desires to offer a few explanatory remarks by way of introduction.

1. The Course is designed to form a continuous history of our Lord's Life. It is not intended merely to take incident after incident, and show that each by itself gives an interesting picture and a useful application; but to point out (as far as possible) the connection, moral as well as historical, of the successive events. It is believed that, in this way, a new interest in the Gospel narratives, and a higher appreciation of our Lord's character and work, may be awakened, even in the minds of Sunday-school children. It is much better, if possible, to stimulate the regularity of their attendance by kindling in them *the wish not to miss a Lesson*, than to do it either by promise of reward or threat of punishment. Let the teacher endeavour himself to realise that he has before him a task at once solemn and attractive, and strive to awaken in the minds of his scholars the idea that they are beginning what will be *continuously interesting*. The three introductory Lessons on 'The Incarnation,' 'Prophecies of the Coming Saviour,' and 'The Fulness of Time,' will, it is hoped, be found specially useful in preparing both teachers and scholars for the study of the Life itself; and if they appear over-full of matter, and therefore difficult to teach, it must be remembered that this arises from the nature of the subjects, so that they must not be judged as specimens of the Lessons generally.

2. The chronological arrangement adopted in this Course is the result of careful independent research. It does not strictly follow any one of the 'Harmonies' which have been constructed by leading writers on the subject, and which have been reproduced, with further variations, in the popular manuals. These have been examined and compared; and it is believed that their best features are combined in the system adopted, although absolute certainty cannot be expected where so many differences exist. The several questions at issue will be discussed as they arise in the Lessons.

3. Each Lesson consists of three distinct parts—(a) an introductory note, giving hints to the teacher, and explanations as to the design of the Lesson; (b) a sketch of the Lesson to be actually delivered; (c) explanatory notes on the difficulties of the passage, and on points of chronology, geography, manners and customs, &c., &c. The Sketches of Lessons are written with a view to their use in ordinary Sunday-school classes; but, in the introductory note, suggestions will be given as to what may be added, omitted, or altered for senior or infant classes, as well as general hints regarding illustrations, application, &c. The explanatory notes are designed for the teacher's information, and for use in class at his discretion.

4. The short text or motto affixed to the title of each Lesson is designed to embody the central idea of the Lesson. It does not necessarily refer to the *application*: more frequently to the significance of the subject historically

5. The texts for repetition have been carefully selected. Two or more are usually given; and it will be understood that *either*, or *both*, can be appointed by the teacher to be learned.

6. The Hymns suggested for use in the school with each Lesson are taken from the *Church Sunday-school Hymn Book*.

7. Three general suggestions are offered to teachers who may wish to follow out the design of these Lessons in its integrity:—

(a) Not to let the class read the entire passage appointed before beginning the teaching, but to take it in sections, as indicated in the sketch. The writer considers the practice of reading the whole or part of a chapter round, verse by verse, before the children can have the slightest interest in it, to be a very inexpedient one. Before the Bibles are turned to, let there be (if possible) a *curiosity* to know what will be found there.

(b) To look out, in the course of preparation at home (*such preparation is assumed as essential*), all the texts referred to in the Lesson. It may not be well to use them all in class, but the teacher's own knowledge of them will have its effect on the success of his teaching.

(c) Not to *announce* to the class the *titles* of the divisions of the Lesson. They are given solely for the sake of clearness. Narratives in particular should be taught throughout, without artificial break. The heads may sometimes, however, be usefully employed in *recapitulating*.


Lesson I.—The Incarnation.

'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'

Read—Texts referred to in Lesson; *Learn*—Phil. ii. 6–8; John i. 14.

(*Hymns, 6, 30, 41, 310, 311.*)

TO THE TEACHER.

 It is not usual to give a doctrinal lesson on the Nature of Christ as an introduction to a series on His earthly Life; yet, not only is it most important that the truths implied in the term 'Incarnation' should be apprehended (however feebly) by children, but the interest and impressiveness of the subsequent lessons will be greatly enhanced by a continual reference to these truths.

Let the teacher, then, not shrink from this opening subject because there is in it no narrative to picture out, but do his very best to teach it so thoroughly that he may be able afterwards to refer back to it freely.

Neither the essential Godhead nor the real Manhood of our Lord is at all realised by children generally. On the one hand, they think of 'Jesus' and 'God' as two distinct Beings; on the other hand, they never conceive of Christ as actually living, feeling, suffering, as a man. Their idea of Him (unconscious, of course—they do not *reason* about it) is as of one like an angel, neither human nor divine.

The force of the several points in this lesson depends on the texts, which, though numerous, are (it must be remembered) but a small selection of what might be quoted, and have been chosen with great care. These must be thoroughly studied beforehand, even by the teachers of non-reading classes; for although in such classes they cannot be referred to, familiarity with them will give definiteness to the teaching. The two texts given to prove the doctrine of the Trinity are much the best ones for that purpose, just because their use for other purposes is so well known.

It has been thought well to give *several* answers to the question, 'Why God the Son became Man,' because the common reply, '*To save sinners*'—true as it is—gives no adequate idea of the greatness and extent of Christ's work. Such an idea may be successfully conveyed by means of the texts referred to, even though there would not be time to explain them all fully.

In elder classes, reference should be made to the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and the Second Article. Should the Course be commenced on Advent Sunday, the Collect for the day can also be quoted; in which Christ is spoken of as having come 'to visit us in great humility,' and yet as 'living and reigning with the Father and the Holy Ghost.'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

We are going to talk about the Life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps have gone through it before—if so, try and understand it better than ever. Not like lives of other men, which read once or twice and then want something else. Some have studied every word of Gospels many times, yet each time more interesting, always something new. And see why the Gospels written, John xx. 31. Yet how few care about it? Why? See 2 Cor. iv. 4—how terrible! Pray, with David, Ps. cxix. 18.

When we read a man's life, what the first event recorded? But we must go back before the birth of Jesus. For look at John xvii. 5. What was He then? Not a man, not an angel, but—. How long had He lived as God? John i. 1—3; Col. i. 17. And how long will He be God? Heb. i. 8. So in the *Te Deum*—'Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father.' And in our texts to-day—'only begotten of the Father,' 'in form of God,' 'equal with God' [see Notes].

When we pray 'Our Father,' we pray to God, but not to Jesus. Who then? And who else is God too? Here are three sacred Persons, yet how many Gods? Deut. vi. 4; 1 Cor. viii. 4. What do we call this Three in One? See where the Three Persons are put together as equal in Scripture, Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14. When and where do we hear these verses quoted? (*Baptism, Benediction in Church.*)

Can we understand this? No one can. You have seen a great engine puffing and snorting as it drags the train along. Perhaps have learned how all those strange wheels and bars of iron move so beautifully. But does the little insect that jumps on the wheel know all that? Could it be taught? And when we try to understand the great God, we are like the fly trying to understand the engine.

Look again at our texts—'made flesh,' 'made in the likeness of man' [see Notes]. God the Son came down upon earth, and became the Man Jesus. This called the INCARNATION, i.e., 'taking flesh.' Another mystery (as St. Paul calls it, 1 Tim. iii. 16). Consider now—

I. HOW GOD THE SON BECAME MAN.

1. *He laid aside His glory.* See a picture of what that glory was, Isa. vi. 1—6 (see John xii. 41). See how, when upon earth, He desired to return to it, John xvii. 5. Then how great the love that gave it up, 2 Cor. viii. 9. It is called 'emptying Himself,' Phil. ii. 7 [see Note 2].

2. *He took a human body.* He was really

born, and had a real mother, Gal. iv. 4. His body grew, Luke ii. 52. He was hungry, Matt. iv. 2; thirsty, John iv. 7, xix. 28; tired, John iv. 6. He really died, Mark xv. 44, 45.

3. *He took a human soul.* He thought and felt, had a human will, Luke xxii. 42; was glad, Luke x. 21; sorry, Mark iii. 5, Luke xix. 41, John xi. 35; surprised, Matt. viii. 10, Mark vi. 6;—like other men. He was loving, patient, pitiful, upright, pure, just as other men ought to be, only—*only what?*—see 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. iv. 15; 1 John iii. 5.

4. *Yet He was God all the while.* See what was predicted, Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6—the *child* should be 'the Mighty God'; and what does 'Emmanuel' mean? Matt. i. 23. And in His life we see both the Godhead and Manhood together; e.g., on the lake, it is the weary sleeper who wakes and stills the storm; at Bethany, the tearful mourner calls the dead to life, &c., &c.

It is 'this Jesus,' 'very God and very Man,' whose life, while upon earth, we are going to read.

II. WHY GOD THE SON BECAME MAN.

1. To take away sin, 1 John iii. 5, 8. Look at Ps. xiv. 2, 3—'the Lord looked down'; what did He see? (Comp. Gen. vi. 5.) Think of all the misery this sin has brought. God wished us to be happy—then must sweep away sin—how do it? see Heb. ix. 26; Isa. liii. 6. So what is Christ called? John i. 29.

2. To obey all God's law, Heb. x. 7. What for?—to get heaven for Himself?—but He was there already. See why, Rom. v. 19, x. 4.

3. To take away death's power, and give us life, Heb. ii. 14, John x. 10.

4. To be able to sympathise with us, Heb. ii. 17, 18.

5. To give us an Example, John xiii. 15.

6. To reveal God to us. What do men know about God? 1 Cor. i. 21. Yet what do they often think? Ps. i. 21. It is Jesus who shows God to us, John i. 18; Luke x. 22. How? John xiv. 9; Col. i. 15.

7. To make us love God. Dowe naturally? Rom. viii. 7. But how can we help it when we see such love? 1 John iv. 10, 19; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

8. To unite God and man. Did the Man Jesus cease to live when the Son of God ascended to heaven? What did Stephen see? Acts vii. 56. So the Son took our nature *for ever*; and what does He give to us? 2 Pet. i. 4. How wonderful!

What a work to undertake! No wonder *only God* could do it.

Think of any one *losing* all these blessings! Think of any one *refusing* them, or caring nothing about them! Are you like that? You have the privilege of

knowing about them—'receive not *this* grace of God in vain'! So wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians; and *what did he say next?* 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

NOTES.

1. The verses for repetition require some explanation.

John i. 14—'The Word was made flesh,' &c. The term 'Word' applied to the Son of God is peculiar to St. John; it denotes the special office of the Son as the Revealer of God. By his *words* a man *communicates*—*reveals*—his thoughts. In the first verse of this Gospel, St. John uses the term without explanation, as one that will be understood by his readers: probably owing to its use in the philosophical writings of the age, which (though a very interesting subject) need not be enlarged upon here. But some corresponding expressions in the Old Testament may be noted: Ps. xxxiii. 4, 6, cvii. 20, cxix. 89; Job xxviii. 12, &c.; Prov. viii., ix.

'*Was made flesh*.' 'Flesh' here stands for *human mortal nature* generally, as in Isa. xl. 6; 1 Pet. i. 24. The word was probably used with reference to the heresy of the Docete, who held that Christ's body was only an *appearance*, and against whom St. John writes in his 1st Ep. (iv. 3) and 2nd Ep. (ver. 7).

'*Dwelt among us*'—lit. 'tabernacled.' The word occurs also in Rev. vii. 15, xxi. 3, and has a special reference to *God dwelling with men*.

'*We beheld His glory*,' *i.e.*, both the eternal glory manifested on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the glory of His character and work (see John ii. 11, xi. 4). The words 'tabernacled' and 'glory,' occurring together, evidently refer to the ancient Shechinah—the 'glory of Jehovah'—in the tabernacle.

'*The only begotten of the Father*.' This expression only occurs here and in ver. 18, iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9. Here it is in contrast with the 'sons of God' of the two preceding verses: *they* sons only by faith—*He* by identity of nature.

'*Full of grace and truth*'—*grace* as opposed to the rigour of the Mosaic law, *truth* (*i.e.* reality) as opposed to its types and shadows; comp. ver. 18.

2. Phil. ii. 6—8. These verses would be better rendered thus:—'*Who, subsisting* (a strong word) *in the form of God, esteemed* (same word as in ver. 3) *not His being equal with God a thing to be clung to, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men,* &c.

The word rendered in our version 'robbery,' is usually explained to mean 'a thing to be

grasped at.' 'Clung to' is suggested by a recent writer in the *British Quarterly Review*, and seems far preferable, as implying *possession*.

The sense of this remarkable passage is—Christ had the '*form*' (outward glory) of God; and of *this*, although really and rightfully equal with God, He 'emptied Himself' (not of His Godhead, not of His equality with God—only of His Divine 'glory'), and took the '*form*' (same word) of a servant, the 'fashion' (outward guise) of a man.

Bishop Browne (*Exposition of the Articles*) says:—'The participles express the manner in which the actions of the verbs were effected. He, being in the form of God, emptied Himself of His Divine glory. *How?* By taking the form of a servant. And *how* did He take the form of a servant? By being made in the likeness of man. And then, being no longer in the glory of God, but in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself. *How?* By becoming obedient unto death.'

3. The following are some further proofs of the Divinity of Christ:—

Direct statements:—Rom. ix. 5; Col. ii. 9; Heb. i.

Divine attributes ascribed to Christ:—*Eternity*, Micah v. 2; John viii. 58; Heb. i. 8—12, xiii. 8; Rev. i. 17, xxii. 13 (comp. Isa. xlii. 6). *Omnipotence*, Matt. xxviii. 18; Phil. iii. 21; Rev. i. 8. *Omniscience*, Matt. ix. 4, xli. 25; John ii. 24, 25, xxi. 17 (comp. 2 Chron. vi. 30); Rev. ii. 23 (comp. Jer. xvii. 9, 10). *Omnipresence*, Matt. xviii. 20, xxviii. 20; implied also (with omniscience and omnipotence) in Heb. vii. 25, and many similar passages.

Divine actions attributed to Christ:—*Creation*, John i. 1, 3, 10; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 10. *Preservation of all things*, Col. i. 17, Heb. i. 3. *Forgiveness of sins*, Mark ii. 7, 10; Acts v. 31.

Divine worship paid to Christ (comp. His own declaration in Matt. iv. 10 with John v. 23):—Matt. xxviii. 9, 17; John xx. 28; Acts ix. 14, 21, and 1 Cor. i. 2 ('calling on His name'); Acts vii. 59; 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9; Phil. ii. 10, 11; Heb. i. 6; Rev. v. 8, 13. (The instances of 'worshipping' Him while on earth—except those after the resurrection—are not included, because they may not have implied belief in His Divinity.)

Lesson II.—Prophecies of the Coming Saviour.

'*As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets.*'

Read—Passages referred to in the Lesson; *Learn*—John v. 39; Matt. xiii. 16, 17. (*Hymns*, 23, 232, 238, 259.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This is another Lesson virtually upon texts. It will be observed, however, that many of the most prominent Messianic predictions are not referred to (see Note 1). The design has not been to give merely a classified list of passages for the class to look out and read;

this would be easy enough, but not of great interest even to good text-finding children, and quite useless to the teachers of non-reading (or *slow-reading*) classes. Rather to sketch—of course most imperfectly—the growth of what critics call the ‘Messianic idea,’ *i.e.*, the hope of a coming King and Saviour; and thus, not only to give point to the passages which will be looked out in class, but also to provide the junior teacher with material upon which he can work without calling for texts at all. Does such an one look doubtfully at the Lesson? Let him try and master the subject for himself, realising what the prophecies, &c., quoted meant at the time they were given, and how they apply to Christ; then he will need no references in actual teaching, but will *tell what he knows* somewhat in this way (observe that the most difficult point is taken as the example):—

God told Abraham he should have many grandchildren, &c. [Enlarge; refer to counting stars, Gen. xv. 5.] One of them, long after, should be a great blessing to the world. [Question as to *what* is a ‘blessing,’ and explain.] Abraham knew he himself could not be such a blessing—he a sinner—weak—soon to die [enlarge]; would think, ‘My children will be sinful, like me, &c.—how be a blessing?’—hard to understand—but believed because God told him. Who is a blessing to all who come to Him—so kind—died that He might bless us by taking away sin? &c., &c. Do we not sing ‘Blessed Jesus’? Was Jesus one of Abraham’s family? [Explain.] Yet was he sinful? Why not? So when God told Abraham about ‘his seed,’ who did He mean?

Of course it would be impossible to *write* the Lessons like this; the teacher must learn to fill out the skeletons given, and adapt them to the wants of his own class.

In case the Lesson be found too long, the third division may well be omitted (though with elder classes it should at least be just alluded to), and the first need not occupy any time. The second should be taken, if possible, just because it is often ignored. But upon the fourth the chief attention must be concentrated, special stress being laid upon the *two contrasting lines* of prophecy, on account of their importance in understanding the rejection of Jesus by the Jews.

Teachers who desire to get a true conception of the uses of Old Testament prophecy, without the trouble of reading standard works, are recommended to get an Exeter Hall Lecture on the subject, by Dr. Magee, the present Bishop of Peterborough (Nisbet & Co., price 3d.) Those who wish to enter more fully into the subject may consult *Davidson on Prophecy*, Canon Payne Smith’s recent Bampton Lectures on *Prophecy a Preparation for Christ*, and Professor Stanley Leathes’ Boyle Lectures on *The Witness of the Old Testament to Christ*.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Last Sunday we saw ‘Why God the Son became Man,’ to take away sin, &c. [*Recapitulate.*] How came this to be necessary? [*Question on the Fall.*]

But the Saviour did not come at once—waited long—4,000 years at least—why? Men must learn how dreadful sin is, or would not want a Saviour. Next Sunday see how He came just at the right time.

Did the people who lived before He came know nothing of Him? God told them, in many ways, a great deal. To-day look at some of His messages.

I. THE PROMISE IN EDEN. Just when Adam and Eve in misery, because of their sin, God told them of a Saviour—told them *before* He punished them (Gen. iii. 15—19); how pitiful! What did He tell them about the Saviour? See ver. 15. (a) He should be a man (*‘her seed’*). (b) He should fight against their cruel enemy (*‘enmity’*). (c) He should not be conquered as they had been, but should crush the enemy (*‘bruise thy head’*—the way to kill a serpent). (d) He must be stronger than the enemy—could He then be *only a man*? (e) Yet He should be hurt, should suffer, though not conquered (*‘bruise his heel’*).

Who is all this like? see 1 John iii. 8; Heb. ii. 14; Luke xi. 21, 22; Rev. xii. 9—11.

II. THE PROMISES TO THE PATRIARCHS. In spite of God’s promise to Adam and Eve, men forgot Him, grew worse and worse—even the Deluge only stopped it for a time—at last scarcely any one who cared for God—promise forgotten. Then God chose a man—his family to become a great nation—separate from all the world—that He might train them to know and obey Him—that He might give them His messages to men to write down and keep safe—that from them the Saviour might come; Acts vii. 2, xiii. 17; Deut. vii. 6—8; Rom. iii. 2.

What did God tell Abraham of His purpose? Gen. xii. 2, 3, xv. 1—6, xvii. 1—8, xxii. 15—18; comp. xxvi. 3, 4, xxviii. 13, 14. (a) Despite the sin all around, all nations should one day be blessed. (b) This blessing should come through Abraham’s family. (c) But Abraham knew his children would be sinful like himself—how then such a blessing?—God the only source of blessing (xv. 1)—should not God Himself be the Saviour? [see Note 2].

Who was both God and the seed of Abra-

ham? Rom. ix. 5; Gal. iii. 16; Heb. ii. 16. And what did Jesus say about Abraham knowing Him? John viii. 56. And is Jesus a blessing? Acts iii. 25, 26; Eph. i. 3, iii. 8; comp. Ps. lxxix. 17.

' Blessings about where'er He reigns.'

III. THE TYPES OF THE JEWISH LAW. Abraham's family in Egypt—slaves—very ignorant—few remembered the Promise. How did God teach them after He brought them out? By pictures—figures—types—like 'shadows' (Heb. viii. 5, x. 1), which give the outline of a man's form, but not his features, &c. But if see a shadow, what sure of? Must be some real thing coming—no shadow alone. Tabernacles, priests, sacrifices—what did they teach? see Heb. ix. 8—that sinful men could not come near holy God—must have some one between; also that God would accept *another's* death instead of the sinner's.

Who has come between? Who has really died for sinners? 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

IV. THE LATER PROPHECIES. By-and-by God told more about the Coming Saviour, to David, Isaiah, Daniel, all the prophets. It would take many lessons to look at all His messages. Two great things predicted:—

1. *The glory of the Coming Saviour.* In Moses' time, if the Israelites thought about the Coming One, would think of one like Moses—could imagine nothing better than that; so what sort of person did God promise them? Deut. xviii. 15. But when they had a king—and that king David—would think Coming One must be like him—would look for a great King. How then did God describe Him now? (a) He should be the Son of David, Ps. lxxxix., cxxxii. (b) He should reign as a King, ii. 6, xlv.; gloriously, xlv. 3, 4; righteously, lxxii. 2; graciously, lxxii. 4-7, 12-14; despite all opposition, ii. 1-6, cx. 1, 2. (c) His Kingdom should be everywhere, lxxii. 8; ii. 8; and for ever, lxxii. 5, 17.

Under good and bad kings the same message came, Isa. ix. 6, 7, xxxii. 1; Jer. xxxiii. 5; Micah v. 2-5; in and after the captivity, Dan. ii. 44, vii. 13, 14; Zech. ix. 9; under

the Romans, Luke i. 32, 33. To this they looked forward, Luke xix. 11; John vi. 15; Acts i. 6.

Who is this King? Rev. i. 5, xix. 16. What did Jesus say Himself? Matt. xxv. 31, 34; John xviii. 36; Rev. iii. 21. See the above prophecies applied to Him, Matt. xxi. 5; Acts iv. 25-27; Heb. i. 5, 8, 9.

2. *The Humiliation of the Coming Saviour.* Even in Eden this mentioned ('bruise his heel'); the types pointed to redemption by death; and amid all the prophecies of Messiah's kingly glory were many others of His sufferings. God put Ps. xxii. (and others) into David's mouth to describe what Christ should undergo; comp. ver. 1, 6-8, 16-18, with Matt. xxvii. 35, 36, 39-43, 46. See especially Isa. liii.; comp. ver. 7, 8 with Acts viii. 32-35; ver. 12 with Mark xv. 28; also Dan. ix. 26.

Did the Jews understand this? John xii. 34. Not even the disciples at first, Matt. xvi. 22, 23; Luke xxiv. 20, 21. But what use would all the rest be without it? Satan could not have been crushed—sin would have kept from us all the 'blessings' of Abraham's seed—the King could only condemn us. In heaven no Satan—no sin—every blessing—the King Himself 'in His beauty' (Isa. xxxiii. 17); yet what do they most rejoice in there? Rev. v. 9, 12.

'Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry!'

Would Abraham, David, Daniel, be thankful for God's goodness in telling them about the Coming Saviour?

To us He is not the Coming Saviour, but the SAVIOUR WHO HAS COME. How much ought we to thank God! A Sunday-school child can know more about Him than Moses or Isaiah.

'How blessed are our eyes,
That see the heavenly light;
Prophets and kings desired it long,
But died without the sight.'

Are we looking to Him—as the Conqueror of Satan, to succour us; as the Seed of Abraham, to make us blessed; as the King, to rule in our hearts; as the suffering Saviour, to take away our sin?

NOTES.

1. A large number of predictions, &c., are not referred to in this lesson. They may be thus classified:—

(a) Those in which the Messianic reference, though probable, is not certain; as Gen. xlix. 10; Job xix. 25.

(b) Those which are Messianic only in a secondary sense; as Numb. xxiv. 17, which refers primarily to David.

(c) Those which, although important, do not fall into the groups included in the lesson; as Ps. xl. 6-8, cxviii. 22; Isa. xi. 1-10, xxviii. 16, xlii. 1-4, xli. 1, lxiii. 1-6; Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12; Mal. iii. 1-3; and many others.

(d) Those referring to particular events in Christ's life; as Ps. xvi. 10, lxxviii. 18, lxxix. 9, 21; Isa. vii. 14, 16; Jer. xxxi. 13; Hos. xi. 1; Zech. xi. 13, &c.

(e) Incidental types; as the Passover Lamb, the Manna, the Brazen Serpent, &c.

(f) Personal types; as Joshua, Jonah, &c.

2. The significance of the promises made to Abraham has recently been very ably pointed out by Professor Stanley Leathes, in his *Boyle Lectures* on 'The Witness of the Old Testament to Christ.' He says (p. 62): 'Abraham had been made to know God. In learning to know God, he learns to know himself to be, as he once confesses, but "dust and ashes." But he learns to know also that in his seed there shall be a source of universal blessing. It was impossible for him not to know that what he was, *that* his seed should be—dust and ashes, like him. He is to be greater than all his seed, because the father of them. Yet in that seed there was to be *one* who

was to contain and to be the blessing itself. . . . As he knew that he was not himself a source of blessing, but stooped to receive blessing from Melchizedek; as he knew that what he had not the power to give he could not transmit to his offspring, and that what they had not individually they could not possess collectively; so he was led upwards to the hope of One who should unite in his own person the blessedness of the Ever-blessed with the manhood of the promised seed. Thus it was that he rejoiced to see the day of Christ; that 'he saw it, and was glad.'

3. It is commonly said that 'the Old Testament is full of Christ'; yet many, in proving it, either enumerate several isolated passages which do not amount to a hundredth part of the whole, or else resort to fantastic resemblances in little details for which there is no warrant in Scripture or in reason.

But when we study the prophecies in the light of the contemporary history, and determine the meaning they would apparently have

at the time of their delivery, we see how every event, every exultation, every victory, was made the means of throwing forward the minds of the people to something much greater yet to come. Thus, 1 Sam. ii. 35 is not usually reckoned Messianic: there were many 'faithful priests' succeeding Eli's sons; but the very sins of Hophni and Phinehas would make the people long for some one different, and they would be led to hope for the 'Coming One' as a 'faithful priest.' So the simple appointment of the good Eliakim to succeed the arrogant Shebna, as treasurer under Hezekiah, gives the inspired prophet an opportunity of saying of Eliakim what could only refer in its highest sense to Messiah, Isa. xxii. 15-23. And what a force attaches to Isa. xxxii. 1 when we think of it as spoken in the reign of Ahaz!

Thus regarded, the Old Testament is indeed seen to be full of Christ; and every great man, just in so far as He did the will of God, is seen to be a type of Christ, an imperfect specimen of what Christ should be perfectly.

Lesson III.—The Fulness of Time.

'The Desire of all nations shall come.'

Read—Passages referred to in the Lesson; Learn—Ps. cxix. 126; Matt. iv. 16; Gal. iv. 4 (Hymns 23, 24, 87, 230, 308, 309.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson consists mainly of information to be given by the teacher to prepare the way for the rest of the course. The task of condensing into the usual space allotted to the Sketch, and in a simple form, even the limited amount of information which can be given in a Sunday-school lesson, has proved simply an impossible one; but it is hoped that, with the help of the additional particulars furnished in the Notes, the painstaking teacher will be able to convey a tolerably correct idea of the state of both Jews and Gentiles at the period of the Advent.

As almost every point is, in the Sketch, illustrated from Scripture, the Lesson need not be at all a *secular* one, although it may appear so at first sight; and the teacher should aim at leaving this idea in the minds of the class, viz., that Christianity was *sadly wanted* by the time Christ came. The application will then follow impressively.

The Lesson need not be so catechetical in actual delivery as usual, but care must be taken that it do not become a *mere lecture*; and questioning will be necessary to make sure that what is *taught* is really *learned*—that the knowledge imparted, however meagre, is at all events *clear* (e.g., many children will connect 'Rome' with *the Papacy* if the teacher is not careful).

Intelligent ordinary classes ought to take all that is here given, and superior senior classes much more. A great deal might be said about the Jewish sects, synagogues, &c.; but it must be remembered that in the mass of such facts the *general idea of the religious condition of the people* is apt to be lost, just as an enumeration of existing sects and parties would in no sense describe the religious condition of England. Smith's *Student's New Testament History* is particularly valuable on these points; as also the two first chapters of Westcott's admirable *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, which are strongly recommended to teachers of this Lesson. Hepworth Dixon's *Holy Land* (chaps. 7, 8, 19, 35, 48, 51) gives considerable information in a popular form.

Junior classes must not be puzzled with many proper names and other external facts; but the *purpose* of the Lesson may be accomplished in teaching them. They should be made to know the sinfulness of the world, its misery 'without God,' the helplessness of its learned men to make people better; still more, the formality and arrogance of scribes and

Pharisees, and the vague longings of the Jews for a deliverer; and how God's patient eye was watching all things. The illustration of a benighted traveller waiting for the sunrise will be found effective.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

At last the time came for the Incarnation. At last the King and Saviour so long promised was to come. But what had been going on in the world all this time? Were men looking out, thankfully and hopefully, for the Coming One? Nations were rising and falling—men working, playing, fighting, idol-worshipping, living, dying—as if no God—had forgotten Him altogether.

Had God forgotten? Ps. x. 11—16; Prov. xv. 3. What was He doing? You have seen when old houses pulled down for new building—empty space—mounds of rubbish—men working here and there—great stones brought—poles set up—*looks all disorder*—but who is watching, ordering, planning, all the time? God is like the architect, Ps. cxv. 3; Isa. xl. 22; Dan. iv. 35—all that long time was preparing for the coming of His Son. At last all ready. To-day see condition of the world when He came.

I. THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

(1) The world then not at all what it is now—Britain a distant province of great empire (like New Zealand now of England)—emperor at Rome ruling countries in north, south, east, and west—no Pharaoh in Egypt, Hiram at Tyre, Benhadad at Damascus, or Sennacherib at Nineveh—the great kingdoms named in the Old Testament gone—Rome everywhere (see Luke ii. 1). So God had told Daniel (ii. 40, vii. 23). This just the time for the Gospel to be preached—why? If many kingdoms, different governments, wars, how could the Apostles have travelled about so easily? [*See Notes 1, 2.*]

(2) *Now*, if book published in London, cannot be read in France, Spain, &c., unless translated. One of the hardest parts of a missionary's work to learn the language of the people he goes to. But *then*, one language all over Roman Empire—no Roman (Latin), but Greek—such a beautiful language, that when Greece was conquered, even the proud Romans learned it. So when St. Paul preached everywhere in Greek, could be understood; when he wrote Greek letters (the Epistles in our Bible), how many could read them? [*See Note 3.*]

(3) But what sort of people lived in the great empire, spoke the beautiful language? Many very rich and selfish—others oppressed and miserable—great wickedness, Rom. i. 28—32. *Now*, even people who do not love God often ashamed to sin—very few ashamed *then*. Very few thought even of their false gods; if they did, it was only to get something out of it (like the silver-smiths at Ephesus, Acts xix.). The clever men knew the idols no good, but never thought of the great God always looking down on all, 1 Cor. i. 21; could see things

were very bad, but knew no remedy; had found out many wonderful things, but could not make men good—not always good themselves. See the sad words of Eph. ii. 12. [*See Note 4.*]

So when the Gospel came, the world was ready, for there was—

(a) One great empire; universal peace.

(b) One language everywhere.

(c) A people sunk in sin, caring not even for the idols, and whose best men could do them no good.

But what of the nation God had chosen out to be separate, to have His revelations (as we saw last Sunday)? Let us look at,

II. THE CHOSEN PEOPLE.

1. *Their Government.* No David or Hezekiah now: a foreigner reigns in Zion. And even he can only be king because the Romans let him—they supreme here too. Is he a good king? what does Matt. ii. tell us of his deceit (ver. 8) and cruelty (ver. 16)? [*See Note 5.*]

2. *Their Religion.* Were they better than the Gentiles? No idolatry—in old times always caring for idols—never after the Captivity. Had the Scriptures—valued them greatly—kept the law, sabbaths, sacrifices, washings, &c. Worshipped not only at Temple—synagogues everywhere—scribes to teach, like Ezra, Neh. viii. 1—8, 13. But this not all. Scribes did not teach rightly—thought more of great Rabbi's words than of God's words, Mark vii. 8—argued hard questions—only gave the people hard rules to keep, Matt. xxiii. 4; comp. John vii. 49; Luke iv. 18. The Pharisees—they prayed, fasted, gave alms, Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16; Luke xviii. 11, 12; but were they acceptable to God?—why not? ('to be seen of men'; comp. Matt. xv. 8, 9, xxiii. 5, 6, 14, 25—28). [*See Note 6.*]

3. *The Jews of the Dispersion.* Were the Jews, with their greater knowledge, any good to the Gentiles? No longer shut up in Canaan as of old—dispersed everywhere—even so in Esther's days, Esth. iii. 8, 12, 13; much more then, see Acts ii. 5, xv. 21; Jas. i. 1. If they had set a good example, been kind and upright, &c., how much good they might have done! But see Rom. ii. 24; comp. Acts xviii. 2, 14—17, xix. 34. [*See Note 7.*]

Must we not say, with David (Ps. cxix. 126), 'It is time for Thee, Lord, to work, for they,' Gentiles and Jews, 'have made void Thy law'?

Did no one feel this—no one long for Messiah to come?

III. EXPECTATIONS OF THE MESSIAH.

(a) Look at Acts xxvi. 7. The Jews were looking out—but for what? Not for the blessing on all nations promised to

Abraham—not for the sufferer and sinner Isaiiah spoke of—*only for the King [on these points refer to last Lesson]*—a King to deliver them from foreign rule and make them great. But some different, Luke i. 77—79, ii. 32, 38.

(b) Not only the Jews. Of whom was it predicted that they should 'desire' a Redeemer? Hag. ii. 7. So it was. Books written then speak of an expectation everywhere of some great One coming. [Note 8.] Who came from the far East to worship the King when He was born? Matt. ii. 2. Who was waiting for Messiah to 'tell her all things'? John iv. 25.

So in every way, when Christ came, it was 'the fulness of time,' Gal. iv. 4.

Again, as last Sunday, we see HOW GREAT IS OUR PRIVILEGE.

'How happy are our eyes,' &c.

'The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth,' 1 John ii. 8. The promised 'Sun of Righteousness' (Mal. iv. 2) has risen. And what does He say to us? see John xii. 36. Are our hearts dark in the midst of light? We see what the world was without Christ—*so is a heart without Christ*. And there are dark lands still—think of them.

'Can we, whose souls are lighted,' &c.

Let us work for them, and pray—

'Through the world, far and wide,
Let there be light!'

NOTES.

1. The Roman Empire was very far from being 'the world' at the period of the Advent. The immense populations of India and China had then as much of civilisation as they have now. The worshippers of Vishnu and Buddha were far more numerous than those of Jupiter; Confucius more widely revered than Plato and Aristotle. But as for some centuries the influence of Christianity was to be mainly confined to the Roman Empire, the condition of the countries comprised in it is all that, in this lesson, needs to be alluded to.

2. For a considerable time before the birth of Christ, the Empire had been convulsed by civil war. The preceding century was that of Marius and Sylla, Cæsar and Pompey, Antony and Octavius. The latter had at last triumphed, and ascended the imperial throne with the title of Augustus Cæsar; and, in token of the universal peace, the Temple of Janus at Rome (which always stood open during war) was shut,—a suitable moment for the Advent of the Prince of Peace. Notwithstanding the tyrannies and corruptions of the provincial Roman governors, of whom Felix (Acts xxvi.) may be taken as a fair type, there can be no doubt that the existence of uniform laws and administration over so vast an area was favourable to the spread of the Gospel. The respect paid to St. Paul's 'citizenship' (Acts xvi. 38, xxii. 29) is one of many illustrations of this.

3. Whatever was the exact meaning and purpose of the Gift of Tongues, this is certain—that Greek was the universal language of society, correspondence, and trade—and to a considerable extent also of literature—throughout the eastern half of the Empire; and that in Greek St. Paul wrote to the Christians alike in Rome itself and in half-barbarous Celtic Galatia, as well as at Corinth and Thessalonica. The immense influence of this fact upon the progress of Christianity is obvious. Recent investigations go far to prove that Greek was even the common tongue of Palestine itself, and that our Lord spoke in it (see the interesting papers by Dr. Roberts in the *Sunday at Home* for the latter months of 1869). This must, however, be considered an open question at present.

4. We are apt to be dazzled by the glitter of the Augustan age, with the refined luxury which we connect (e.g.) with the name of Pompeii, and

with the literature that boasted of Horace and Virgil at its head. But, beneath the external splendour, the careful reader of history observes a moral degradation scarcely equalled in any age of the world. The Roman satirists themselves draw as dark a picture as the terrible one of St. Paul. And there was not even an imperfect religious sense to condemn vice and rapacity. Gibbon's remark, that creeds were thought by the *untaught* all equally true, by the *taught* all equally untrue, and by the *magistrates* all equally useful, is illustrated by Pilate's contemptuous question, 'What is truth?' and by Gallo's entire (and therefore impartial) indifference. We admire the poetry of Horace, but its creed may be expressed in the words, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' The better men, such as Cicero and Seneca, bewailed (as Plato had done before them) that the highest philosophy was incapable of influencing man's conduct. Ovid's line has become proverbial—

'I know the best, and yet the worst pursue.'

5. Palestine had had its full share of the ravages and sufferings of the civil wars. Amid them, Herod, the son of Antipater, an Idumean (i.e. Edomite), rose, on the ruins of the dynasty founded by the Maccabean princes, to the throne; tributary, however, to Rome (like some of the Indian Rajahs to the British rule), of which we have an illustration in the 'taxing' of Luke ii., ordered by the emperor, and taking effect in Herod's kingdom. Herod strove hard to be popular with the Jews, by beautifying Jerusalem, and particularly by rebuilding the temple on a scale of great magnificence; but his foreign origin, his cruel disposition, and his taste for Greek and Roman customs, combined to excite the hatred of the people.

6. Information respecting the Jewish sects, the synagogues, &c., will be given in subsequent lessons, as it is required. It is sufficient to say here that the institution of the synagogue had a great influence in two ways: (1) It gave the people everywhere opportunities of public worship, and of hearing the Law read, and thus prevented those lapses into idolatry which had been so prevalent when Jerusalem was the only centre of religious instruction and services. (2) It helped to kindle the hopes of a coming Messiah, by bringing the prophetic writings before the people.

7. The 'Jews of the Dispersion' were a very important element in the Empire. They were scattered throughout all the great cities, having large colonies especially at Babylon, Alexandria (see Acts vi. 9), and Antioch. St. Paul met them wherever he went; to them he always first preached; among them he found his bitterest opponents. Though distrusted by the strict Jews of Judæa on account of their Greek tendencies, they frequently attended the great festivals at Jerusalem, and the half-shekel (Matt. xvii. 24) for the Temple service was collected from them (like the offerings for Mecca and 'Peter's-pence' now). To the Jews of Alexandria we owe the valuable 'Septuagint' Greek translation of the Old Testament, which

was, in fact, the 'Bible' of the apostolic æge, the quotations from the O. T. in the New being frequently taken from it. The evil reputation in which the Jews were held is evidenced by the satirical remarks upon them in Martial and Juvenal.

8. The general vague expectation of some great One which prevailed at the time is testified to by the Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius. The latter says, 'There prevailed an ancient and consistent opinion in all the East, that it was fated that at that time those should go forth from Judæa who should rule the empire.' The Jewish 'dispersion,' no doubt, tended to spread the idea, the prophecies of their sacred books becoming known.

Lesson IV.—The Saviour's Mother.

'Behold the handmaid of the Lord.'

Read—Luke i. 26—55; Learn—Luke i. 46—48; Matt. xii. 49, 50. (Hymns 13, 35, 95, 157.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This being the first narrative Lesson in the course, it may be well to repeat the two suggestions already made in the preface, viz., (1) That although *titles* will be sometimes given to the divisions of a Lesson, it is not intended that they should be *announced* to the class in actual teaching, but are simply designed to make the scheme of the Lesson clearer. (2) That the passage for reading should not be read through before the Lesson begins, but in sections, as may be required in the teaching.

The part of this Lesson about Mary's Song cannot be taken as it stands—perhaps not at all—with non-reading classes; but it ought, in ordinary classes, to be interesting, on account of the familiarity of the Song as sung in our Evening Service. The application may be the same in substance throughout the school, though of course different in form and language. The spiritual *brotherhood* is put forward in it, though not directly analogous to Mary's relationship, because more practical in its bearings on the children.

The passage is a very important one in the Romish controversy; and in neighbourhoods where Roman Catholics are numerous (as in Lancashire) it will be well to take the opportunity to point out the utter absence of anything in the narrative warranting the slightest approach to Mariolatry. Where this local reason for doing so does not exist, it is probably wiser and safer to refrain from instructing the children in errors they may never have heard of, and so to speak as that they may unconsciously come to think of the Lord's mother with the *simplicity* so characteristic of the Gospels. Certainly there should be no *depreciation* of her. That some make her a goddess is no reason why we should not honour and imitate her humility and faith, as we should in the case of an apostle.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Before we come to the Birth of the Saviour, let us read a little about His mother. What nation must she belong to?—tribe?—family? [*Question on Lesson II.*] See Gen. xxii. 18; Mic. v. 2; Ps. cxxxii. 11. [*See Note 1.*] Where should we expect to find David's descendants living? (See John vii. 42; comp. Luke ii. 4.) But we have to go to a little quiet country town far away—Nazareth. [*See Note 2.*] There no prince living in a palace—the heir of David's house is the village carpenter—betrothed to a humble maiden of the same royal family—*she to be the Saviour's mother!*

I. THE ANNUNCIATION. [*Read Luke i. 26—38.*]

Mary alone—a quiet, simple woman—perhaps engaged in her household work (God's messages often sent to men when at common duties—Moses, Gideon, Elisha).

Suddenly an angel—bright and glorious—speaking startling words to her—'highly favoured' [*see Note 3*]—'blessed among women'—what can it mean?

No wonder she is greatly agitated [*see Note 4*]—like Daniel and Zacharias when the *same angel* came to them, Dan. viii. 16, 17 27; Luke i. 12.

Then look at the next gentle words—her own name uttered to soothe her—and what then? Yes, the long looked-for King is coming, and He will be her child! Is she perplexed still?—is the message so wondrous?—what does the angel remind her of? (ver. 37); and God has just given a token of His power—the aged Elizabeth is to have a son too.

How does the angel speak of the Child that should be born? (a) What shall be His name? (see Matt. i. 21). (b) He shall have a Kingdom—whose? over whom? for how long? (ver. 32, 33). (c) But He shall be much greater than David—why? Who shall be His Father? (ver. 32, 35).

How does Mary receive the message? Does she doubt it? or is she vain of so high a privilege? or does she shrink from so high a position? Look at her words—trustful, humble, calm, ready for God's will; ver. 38. [See Note 6.]

II. THE SONG OF MARY. [Read ver. 39—55.]

Mary must tell some friend the great news. Joseph is told by the angel, Matt. i. 20. Whom does Mary seek? All the way to Judæa (perhaps to Hebron) to see her whom the angel had named. Look at Elizabeth's greeting—the very same words the angel had used! how should she know? (ver. 41). Then the same Spirit comes on Mary—she is like a prophet of old—inspired ('breathed into' by God)—heaven-taught words of praise burst from her lips—just like those from Hannah's, 1 Sam. ii. 1—10. What does she say?

1. *Whom does she praise?* (a) 'God my Saviour'—why this? She thought not of the Kingdom the Child should have, but of the Name He should bear (ver. 31)—'Saviour.' Through Him God would 'save' His people. (b) 'He that is mighty'—'nothing impossible to Him' (comp. ver. 37).

2. *What does she praise God for?* For His goodness—(a) *To herself.* Why did she rejoice to think of a Saviour? who need a Saviour? what was the Saviour to save from? Mary thought first of her *sinfulness.* Then she thinks of the future—people would look back and think 'Mary was the Saviour's mother—happy woman!' But is she vain of this? (see next verse). (b) *To all His people.* Is God's mercy for her?—so for them (ver. 50). Can He do great things for her?—so wherever His 'strong arm' is needed (ver. 51). Is she, with her

low estate, exalted?—others shall not be forgotten (ver. 52, 53). Does she believe His message to her?—all His ancient promises shall be fulfilled (ver. 51, 55). [See Note 7.]

Was Mary indeed 'highly favoured'? Was it not a great honour to be related to Christ—so closely too—His own mother? Yes; and so thought a woman who once spoke to Him, Luke xi. 27. Did He say No? But what did He add? *More blessed.*—how so?—look at Matt. xii. 47—50; because—

WE MAY HAVE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP.

Who is the head of a family? Jesus here (Matt. xii. 50) speaks of a 'Father'—who? The great God has a 'family,' 'in heaven and earth,' Eph. iii. 15; there is One Son, John i. 18; but many others are 'adopted' (Gal. iv. 5)—'become' (John i. 12) 'sons of God'—then what relation to Jesus? see John xx. 17; Heb. ii. 11.

This spiritual relationship closer than the earthly one. Why?

(a) *More happy and united.* When mothers and children, brothers and sisters, are loving and happy together, it is a blessed sight—but are they always? The Elder Brother—

'His is love beyond a brother's:
Oh, how He loves!'—

always loves, John xiii. 1; and His 'brethren' love Him, 1 Pet. i. 8.

(b) *More lasting.* Jesus might have had an earthly relative who would have rejected Him, died in sin, been lost; His spiritual relatives with Him for ever: Mary now in heaven, not as His mother, but as redeemed by Him.

Then because the relationship closer, the love should be greater, Matt. x. 37.

HOW MAY WE HAVE THIS RELATIONSHIP?

What does Jesus say? 'Whosoever shall do the will of My Father.' What is God's will about His 'adopted sons'? John i. 12—'Believe on Christ's name' (comp. Gal. iii. 26); 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18—'Come out, &c.; Eph. v. 1—'Imitate God'; Rom. viii. 14—Be 'led by the Spirit.' In other words,

We must have Mary's character—trusting 'God our Saviour,' and yielding ourselves to His will. Let each say, 'Behold me—Thy handmaid [or (with boys) Thy servant]; be it unto me, in body and soul, in life and death, according to Thy word.'

NOTES.

1. There is no distinct statement that Mary was of David's house, but the fact is implied in our Lord's own descent from him, which must have been a natural one as well as a legal one through Joseph. It is remarkable that the genealogies both of Matthew and Luke appear to be Christ's, and, therefore, not the true pedigree of Joseph. Some read Luke iii. 23 in a peculiar manner, and make the genealogy that follows to be Mary's, but most authorities consider this

view inadmissible, and hold that both belong to Joseph, Matthew giving the legal succession of heirship, and Luke the natural descent.

2. Nazareth was so obscure a place that Joseph, who speaks of many towns and villages in the neighbourhood, never mentions it. On the locality, &c., see Lessons IX. and XXII.

3. 'Thou that art highly favoured.' This is the correct rendering, and not the 'full of grace' of

the Romanists, which conveys the idea of grace being given to Mary which she could dispense to others. The same Greek word occurs in Eph. i. 6—'accepted in the beloved.'

4. '*She was troubled.*' The Greek word is very strong, and is nowhere else used in the N.T.

5. '*Thy cousin Elizabeth*'—rather, 'kinswoman.' The relationship is not stated.

6. The contrast between the unbelief of Zacharias and the ready faith of Mary has been often marked. The latter's question in ver. 34 is quite different from the former's in ver. 18. Zacharias doubts the message; Mary merely wonders how it is to be fulfilled. Concerning Mary's meek acquiescence (ver. 38), Bishop Hall says, 'All disputation with God after His will is known arises from infidelity. There is not a more noble proof of faith than to captivate all the powers of our understanding and will to our Creator, and, without all questionings, to go blindfold whither He will lead us.'

7. We must regard the 'Magnificat' as a result of the direct inspiring impulse of the Holy Ghost, such as '*mored* holy men of old,' and such as is distinctly stated to have been given to Elizabeth (ver. 41) and Zacharias (ver. 67). At the same time the close resemblance of the Song to that of

Hannah shows that it was the natural outcome of Mary's feelings, which would most readily express themselves in words familiar to her in her reading of the Scriptures.

The words '*God my Saviour*' do not refer directly to the Child; Mary's knowledge of His nature and work was imperfect as yet. Nor do they merely mean God as the Preserver of His people. The idea of spiritual salvation is in them—*salvation to be wrought out by God, in some way, through the Child.*

'*Shall call me blessed*' is, in the Greek, one word—'*felicitate me.*' It is not '*Shall name me the Blessed.*' It is no prophecy of the title 'Blessed Virgin.'

'*Low estate*' is, in the Prayer Book version, '*lowliness,*' which is not accurate. It describes Mary's *circumstances*, not her *character.* It is rendered 'humiliation' in Acts viii. 33.

8. There is a remarkable difference of *style and diction* between the first two chapters of St. Luke's Gospel and the other twenty-two. St. Luke's writing generally is the purest Greek in the N.T., whereas these two chapters, containing the account of our Lord's infancy, &c., are full of Hebraistic expressions. It is evident that Luke used a previously existing narrative, and it is thought that this may have come direct from Mary herself.

Lesson V.—The Birth of Jesus Christ.

'Unto us a Child is born.'

Read—Luke ii. 1—20; Learn—Isa. ix. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 9. (*Hymns* 26, 27, 28, 32, 89.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It is not the junior teacher, but the teacher of a senior class, who will be perplexed with the subject of this Lesson. The question with him is—how to throw into the treatment of so familiar a narrative sufficient novelty to awaken any keen interest. With this difficulty in view, the Sketch has been drawn out in a somewhat unusual form; and the teacher will observe that its key-note is the question, 'Did any one know who the Child was?' It remains, however, one of exceptional simplicity; but so it ought to be.

The second head of application exemplifies the way in which language should be simplified in teaching. We speak of Christ's "motive" and "aim": with children we should say, 'What made Him do it' and 'What He did it for.'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

If you were at Jerusalem, you might take a beautiful walk over the hills towards the south, and six miles off you would come to a pretty little town, standing on one of the hills, and having a wide view eastward over the wilderness of Judæa [*show map; see Note 3*]. Who used to live there? Ruth i.; 1 Sam. xvi.

Bethlehem full of people—come from all parts—many happy meetings. What come for? [*Read ver. 1—7.*] The Emperor of Rome [*see Lesson III., Note 2*] is taking a census of his subjects, and people have to go and be numbered at the place where their forefathers lived [*see Note 2*]. Those who have no friends to take them in seek shelter in the great building intended for travellers [*see Note 4*], and it is soon full.

Then come a man and woman who have journeyed all the way from Galilee to be registered here. Why? ver. 4 [*see Note 2*]. There is no room for them, except where the horses and asses are put up—dark, crowded, noisy, uncomfortable [*see Note 4*]. And there, in the night, is born a little baby. There is no cradle for it—where has it to lie?

WHO WAS THAT BABY? [*Refer to Lesson I.*] Did any one know it was God the Son come down into the world?

1. *Joseph and Mary knew.* How did they know? Who told them? What were they told? [*Refer to last Lesson.*] No one else on earth knew. But—

2. *The angels in heaven knew.* How they

must have wondered! Their King, so great and so high, whom they could scarcely look at (Isa. vi. 1-3; comp. John xii. 41), made 'a little lower' than themselves (Heb. ii. 9)! They did not fully understand it (1 Pet. i. 12); yet they could rejoice and sing. Why? Look at their song, ver. 14.

(a) They knew it would bring 'glory to God'—by showing His power, wisdom, love (Ps. lxxxv. 10; 1 Cor. i. 24; 1 John iv. 9). They loved God—wished Him to be glorified—so rejoiced.

(b) They knew it would bring 'peace on earth'—peace between men and God (Rom. v. 1)—peace in men's hearts (Phil. iv. 7)—peace among men (Eph. iv. 32). They knew the enmity to God (Rom. viii. 7), the misery of soul (Isa. lvii. 20, 21), the 'envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness' (Rom. i. 29-31), in the world. They longed to see peace everywhere—so rejoiced.

(c) They knew it would bring 'good will to men.' Had God ever had a bad will to men? see Ezek. xxxiii. 11. But now God's love would be seen and felt (1 John iv. 9; Rom. v. 8)—so they rejoiced. [See Note 6.]

3. *There were men whom God sent to tell.* How the angels would have liked to have proclaimed the birth of Jesus throughout the world! There were great men living then: the Emperor at Rome, able generals, wise statesmen, clever writers—some whose books we read now; but would they have believed? Jesus must live, die, rise again first—then to be proclaimed; now only to a few, to those who would listen to and believe God's messages. Who were the first to be told?

[Read ver. 8-20.]

It is night in the fields near Bethlehem. Here are men not gone home—why are they out? To guard their flocks—from what? (1 Sam. xvii. 34, John x. 10, 12). It is dark—they can dimly see the outline of the hills—perhaps a distant light in the town—it is very quiet—they only hear their own voices and the flocks bleating. [*With town children explain further—no rattling of wheels—no lamps.*] Suddenly—a dazzling light—what? ('the glory of the Lord')—brighter even than the sun (Acts xxvi. 13). No wonder they are 'sore afraid'! How gently God's angel speaks! What has he to tell?—nothing dreadful—'good tidings'—for them ('to you'). What is there for them? 'A Saviour.' No doubt they were

men who longed to be saved from their sins, and this is just what the angel meant (Matt. i. 21). And who is He? He is 'Christ'—the Messiah, promised of old, come at last; He is 'the Lord'—not a mere man—not even an angel—not a subject at all—but 'the Lord of all,' 'the Lord from heaven' (Acts x. 36, 1 Cor. xv. 47). And then they hear that song. They really hear—

'the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King!'

They will go and worship Him at once (comp. Ps. xxvii. 8, cxix. 60). Where shall they find Him? Surely in the greatest house in Bethlehem. No—'lying in a manger.' Can it be? They do not doubt a moment—'Let us go and see this thing which is come to pass.' And so they find the Child—the worst lodged of any child in the town! Then see what they did—(1) praised God—(2) told others. What an example!

SEE THE CONDESCENSION OF THE SON OF GOD.

1. *How does this history show His condescension?* He condescended—

(a) To be born to poverty. Can children choose whether they will be born of rich or poor parents? *But He could.* Do not be discontented if you are *what He chose to be.*

(b) To be born just when and where there were no comforts for the mother or child.

(c) To be welcomed to the earth, not by the great and rich, but only by poor shepherds.

2. *What was His motive and aim in such condescension?*

His motive—what made Him do it?—Love for us sinners.

His aim—what did He do it for?—'That we through His poverty might be rich' (2 Cor. viii. 9).

3. *For whom did He so condescend?* For all men, 1 Tim. ii. 6, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. But all do not get good from that condescension. *Who do?* See to whom it was given to know the Son of God even in His infancy. It was to those who, when God sent messages to them, listened, believed, obeyed—see Matt. i. 24, Luke i. 38, ii. 15. *Do we care for God's messages to us?* Are they 'glad tidings of great joy' to us? If so, see how the Lord Jesus will condescend to us, Rev. iii. 20, John i. 11, 12, xiv. 23. Are we too poor and humble? What were Joseph and Mary and the shepherds? See Isa. lxvi. 2, Jas. ii. 5, 1 Cor. i. 26-29.

NOTES.

1. The date of the Nativity has been a subject of much controversy. The commonly received view, that it was in the year of Rome ('A. U. C.') 749 or 750, seems, on a careful comparison of evidence, to be probably correct. Herod's death has been fixed with considerable certainty as having happened between March 13 and April 5 in the year 750; and the question then is—how long before his death was Jesus born? If the close of 749 or the beginning of 750 be assumed as

the date, then, allowing forty days to the Presentation in the Temple, about two months remain for the visit of the Magi and the sojourn in Egypt (where he was 'until the death of Herod'); and several independent calculations, based on other data, are in harmony with this view. The traditional day of the Nativity, Dec. 25, will then be as likely as any other; and the positive arguments against it are not weighty. The chief one is that the flocks would not be out

in the field at night in December. But this is very uncertain. One German writer says that the weather in Palestine about Christmas is 'often most beautiful.' Dr. Barclay speaks of the earth being 'clothed with rich verdure' in December, and gives the average temperature at Jerusalem in that month as 54 deg. Fahr.

2. 'Taxed,' rather 'enrolled' or 'registered.' The same Greek word occurs in Ith. xli. 23 ('written in heaven'). It was, in fact, a general census. The governorship of Cyrenius was eight years after Herod's death, and many solutions of this difficulty have been suggested. Zumpt has adduced strong evidence that Cyrenius was *hæc* governor; but if not, the verse would probably mean that the actual taxing was carried out some years later than the census on which it was based, which took place at our Lord's birth. The *mixed rule* then subsisting in Palestine had a remarkable influence on the fulfilment of prophecy. Had the census been purely Jewish, Mary need not have gone to be registered, the names of men only being taken. Had the census been purely Roman, both might have been registered at Nazareth. The Roman law required her enrolment, the Jewish that it should take place at the hereditary city.

3. Dr. Kitto thus describes Bethlehem:—'The first appearance of Bethlehem is very striking, in whatever direction it is approached. It is built upon a ridge of considerable elevation, and has a rapid descent to the north and east. The white stone of which the hill is composed, and of which the town is built, makes it very hot, and gives it a dusty appearance. It is surrounded by small valleys or depressions, devoted to the culture of the olive and the vine, and has, in the distance, a massive and imposing appearance. . . . At the easternmost extremity of Bethlehem, on the edge of a steep rock overhanging a plain of several miles in extent, stands the Convent of the Nativity, containing within its precincts what is said to be the place where the Saviour was born. . . . The windows, which are all in the upper story, and still more the terrace, command an extensive view over the east country, even to the mountains of Moab beyond the Dead Sea.'

4. The 'inn' or *caravanserai* of Eastern countries is simply a large walled enclosure, looking from the outside like a prison or fortress. In many of them there is a large building within, comprising numerous cells and a sort of public room, but all unfurnished,—in fact, just the bare walls. The vacant open space which runs round between the inner building and the outer wall serves as the 'stable'; and there, in all probability, Joseph and Mary had to take refuge among the camels and asses belonging to the travellers who had pre-occupied the cells. For a detailed description of these *caravanserais*, see Kitto's *Daily Bible Illustrations*.

A graphic account of a night in a somewhat different building of the kind occurs in Miss Rogers' *Domestic Life in Palestine* (p. 208). She says:—'I found the house consisted of only one very lofty room, about eighteen feet square. . . . Just within the door, a donkey and a yoke of oxen stood; and I soon perceived that rather more than one third of the room was set apart for cattle, where the floor, which was on a level with the street, was of earth, and partially

strewn with fodder. We were led up two stone steps on to a dais, twenty-two inches high where fragments of old mats and carpets were spread. . . . Meantime, our two horses were unsaddled and lodged in the lower part of the room. . . . Three deep troughs or mangers, about three feet by one, were hollowed out of the broad stone coping at the edge of the dais. Mohammed, our groom, filled these troughs with barley, and our tired animals enjoyed their evening meal. . . . I imagined Joseph anxiously seeking rest and shelter for her (Mary) after her long journey. . . . The raised floor was crowded with strangers, who had, like them, come to be taxed. But Joseph and Mary may have taken refuge from the cold in the lower part of the room. . . . I raised my head, and looked at one of the mangers, and I felt how natural it was to use it as a cradle for a newly-born infant. Its size, its shape, its soft bed of fodder, its nearness to the warm fire always burning on the dais in mid-winter, would immediately suggest the idea to an Eastern mother.

5. Mr. Hepworth Dixon (*Holy Land*, p. 98) argues very ingeniously that the 'inn,' in the stable of which Christ was born, may have been the very house in which Boaz and Ruth, Jesse and David, lived; and that its site was that now occupied by the Convent of the Nativity. The argument, in brief, is this:—(1) In small towns there would be but one *khan* (caravanserai, inn), and it would generally be the sheikh's house, or a building formerly inhabited by the sheikh. (2) Boaz was obviously the sheikh at Bethlehem. (3) His house in due course became David's. (4) In Jer. xli. 17, the 'habitation' (rather, *khan*) of Chimham 'by Bethlehem' is named. (5) Chimham, the son of Barzillai, had been taken by David and treated as one of his sons (2 Sam. xix. 38; 1 Kings ii. 7); and the inference is that David in fact gave him his house at Bethlehem. (6) Khans in the east are *neutral* spots, almost invested with sacredness; they, therefore, are not destroyed in war, and if they fall into decay are carefully repaired. The 'inn' to which Mary and Joseph came was, then, probably, the very *khan* of Chimham, and home of David and of Ruth. (7) Considering the permanence of all oriental recollections, it cannot be supposed that between the time of Christ and that of Constantine, the site of the *khan* was forgotten at Bethlehem, and Constantine built a church over the presumed birthplace of our Lord, *which church still stands*. (8) The situation of the church exactly corresponds with the Biblical notices of the spot, particularly those in the Book of Ruth (this is worked out in a very striking manner).

Mr. Dixon further urges that the cave under the church, now called the 'grotto of the Nativity,' is the actual birthplace of our Lord. Justin Martyr, who lived in Syria in the second century, says that Christ was born in a cave; and if the cave was close to the *khan*, it would naturally be used as the stable.

The whole of the sketch of Bethlehem, its position, features, history, associations, in this book, is interesting in the extreme.

6. 'Good will towards men.' The words are different in some of the best MSS., and mean in them 'among men of good will,' i.e. the elect people of God (*Alford*). But this reading not being certain, the received text has been followed

Lesson VI.—The Circumcision and Presentation.

‘Obedient to the law for man.’

Read—Luke ii. 21—38; Learn—2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. v. 19. (*Hymns* 34, 62, 126, 329.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This is emphatically a lesson that must not be taught by verse-by-verse exposition. Were it so taught, it would be virtually a Lesson on *Simeon*, whose story occupies eleven verses out of the eighteen. But the present course is not one on St. Luke's Gospel, but on the Life of Christ; and, in the life of Christ, the one verse which relates His circumcision is as important as all the other seventeen; to that verse, therefore, is devoted nearly half the lesson.

For the same reason, the time allotted to the application should be devoted to the contemplation rather of Christ's work than of Simeon's character, to doctrinal rather than practical teaching. The *vicarious obedience* of Christ is a most important truth, but does not often come into our Lessons; this opportunity, therefore, of explaining it should not be lost.

The *example* given us, however, by our Lord, of obedience to a law *seemingly inapplicable* to Him, may be usefully enforced as suggested; and it can with some effect be applied to the very ordinance which has succeeded Circumcision, viz., Baptism, and, in certain cases, to Confirmation also. The incidental testimony, too, to the propriety of *Infant Baptism*, afforded by the analogy of Circumcision, will not fail to be noticed.

Reference should be made to the Church Services for the ‘Circumcision’ and ‘Purification.’ The application suggested by the Collect for the former day has not been taken, because the object of the Lesson is to fix attention upon Christ Himself.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

I.—THE CIRCUMCISION.

When little boys were born in Judæa, something done to them which God had commanded—what? Look at Gen. xvii. 9—14. See how Abraham obeyed this command when Isaac was born, Gen. xxi. 4. And so ever afterwards with little boy babies. The Jews were very proud of this custom (Phil. iii. 4, 5), and used contemptuously to call other nations ‘the uncircumcised,’ e.g., David (1 Sam. xvii. 26), and the early Christians at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 2, 3). Why? It was a sign of the covenant between them and God—a token that they were God's peculiar people. Are not all men God's people? By creation, yes—but what separates them from Him?—*sin*. So Circumcision to signify putting away sin.

Is it so now? see Gal. v. 6, vi. 15. But we have instead, for all children, girls and boys—what? Baptism, like Circumcision, is the ‘outward and visible sign’ of an ‘inward and spiritual grace,’ viz., our adoption into God's family, to be His peculiar people: signifying the putting away of sin, and also *how* it can be put away (*by washing*). Who instituted Christian Baptism, just when Circumcision was going to be done away? see Matt. xxviii. 19.

So when the Child Jesus was eight days old, what was done to Him? [*Read ver. 21.*] But why? Had He any sin to put away? 1 John iii. 5. Did He, God's own Son, need to be *admitted* into God's family? Why then circumcised? Look at Heb. ii. 17 (*‘in all things like His brethren’*), Gal. iv. 4,

(*‘made under the law’*). He would be *as a sinner*, like other sinners, bearing their sins; would do all that the law told them to do. [*See Note 1.*]

Now your names are—(John, Mary, &c.) ‘Who gave you those names?’ (*‘God-parents at my Baptism.’*) So with Jewish boys at Circumcision, see Luke i. 59. What was the name given to the holy Child at Bethlehem? By whose order? What did it mean?

II.—THE PRESENTATION.

But if Jesus was to be ‘under the law,’ there was something else to be done. He was a *first-born son*. Look and see what God had said about *eldest boys*, Exod. xiii. 2. When the destroying angel came to Egypt that dreadful night, who were slain? So it was the Hebrew *first-born* who were *especially* ‘passed over’ and left alive. (Comp. Exod. iv. 22, 23.) And God said first-born boys must always belong to Him, for His particular service. But afterwards God chose one whole tribe instead (Numb. iii. 12, 13), and the first-born of the other tribes had only to be ‘presented to the Lord.’ So when Jesus was about six weeks old (Lev. xii. 1—4), Joseph and Mary had to carry Him to Jerusalem (six miles from Bethlehem). [*Read ver. 22—38.*]

(1) It is not a great day at the Temple—no grand ceremonies, no crowds. Just one or two priests are there, to receive any offering that may be brought, to attend to the daily sacrifice, &c. Here comes a man in humble dress, with his wife, and a little

baby to be 'presented to the Lord'—why? And they have got an offering for God—what? If they had been rich, what would they have offered? (Lev. xii. 6—8)—but they were poor. One of the priests takes the birds, and dedicates the baby to God. He sees nothing strange in this—he is doing it every day—he little thinks who that Child is! Yet what a prophecy is being fulfilled! (see Mal. iii. 1).

(2) Just then an aged man comes in—his name?—his character? For years he has been looking out for something, and God has told him that before he 'sees' death, he shall 'see'—what? That 'Christ, Messiah, King, Redeemer, who had been promised 'by the mouth of all God's holy prophets.' Were any other Jews looking out for the coming King? how many? (see Acts xxvi. 7). What sort of king were most of them expecting? [refer to Lesson III.]. Yet Simeon comes into the Temple—sees the poor man and woman with the little baby—feels God's message in his heart, 'That is the promised King'—doubts not a moment—takes the Child—and bursts into a song of thankfulness. He is ready to die now—he has 'seen' what he waited for. Think of Joseph and Mary's wonder—an utter stranger knowing at once who the Child is! And another surprise now—who else comes in and recognises Him too? Here is an aged widow knowing what priests and rulers knew nothing of. And there are others also, humble people waiting for God's promise—to them Anna tells the good news.

(3) But now mark what Simeon said—particularly two things which the Apostles themselves were slow to learn:—

(a) That the Child should not be merely

a Jewish king, 'the glory of Israel. Others—the despised 'uncircumcision'—should share in the blessings of salvation; dark and ignorant as they were, Jesus should be 'a light to lighten the Gentiles.'

(b) That the glory should not be yet—something first—humiliation and suffering. Jesus should be 'spoken against'—*was He not afterwards?* Something should happen which should pierce Mary's heart like a sword—what was that? see John xix. 25. [See Notes 7, 8.]

Last Sunday we talked of the CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST. How is it shown again here? [Recapitulate.]

What did we say last Sunday was His aim in this condescension? So here—'obedient to the law for man.' [Recapitulate.] But why 'for man'?

1. *As our Substitute.* God requires all to obey His law perfectly—if not, what then? But do we? can we? How then will God accept us? Jesus came to be 'our Righteousness,' Jer. xxiii. 6; to give to God, for us, what we could not give ourselves, that we might stand before God as—what? Rom. v. 19; Eph. i. 6.

2. *As our Example.* People say, 'I do what God commands in some things—why must I do *this*? why be so strict? Suppose I don't, what harm?' But Jesus did what He need not have done. Imitate Him—'Is this commanded? then I will do it.'

Are we trusting in Him as our Substitute—following Him as our Example? Are we like Simeon and Anna, seeking to see and know Him, not ashamed of Him, praising God for Him, telling others of Him?

NOTES.

1. On the Circumcision of Christ, the following passage from Brown and Fausset's *Commentary* is worth quoting: "The Circumcision of Christ had a profound bearing on His own work. For since 'he that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law' (Gal. v. 3), Jesus thus bore about with Him in His very flesh the seal of a voluntary obligation to do the whole law—by Him only possible in the flesh since the Fall. And as He was 'made under the law' for no ends of His own, but only 'to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons' (Gal. iv. 4, 5), the obedience to which His circumcision pledged Him was a *redemptory obedience*—that of a 'Saviour.'"

2. The 'presentation' of a child by humble parents must of course have been an every-day incident of Temple life. In Holman Hunt's great picture, 'The Finding of Christ in the Temple,' such an incident is represented in the background. The offering of the pigeons was upon Mary's ceremonial purification. See Lev. xii.

3. The prophecy in Mal. iii. 1, may be regarded as partially fulfilled at the 'Presentation,' and partially at the visit recorded in John ii.

4. Simeon's age is not mentioned, but we naturally think of him as an old man. Anna

must have been 103, even if she was married at twelve. The fact that she was of the tribe of Asher incidentally shows that when the 'two tribes' returned from the Babylonish captivity, some belonging to the 'ten tribes' came also.

5. 'The Consolation of Israel' was a term for the Messiah, in common use among the Jews, and was even uttered in oaths (*Lightfoot*). It was probably suggested by Isa. xl. 1, xlix. 13. It is noteworthy that the Greek word is related to that rendered 'Comforter' in John xiv. &c., and 'Advocate' in 1 John ii. 1.

6. Simeon's song was uttered in the very words of prophecy; see Isa. xlii. 6, xlix. 6, liii. 10, lx. 1—3, lxi. 11. Compare Isa. ix. 2; Acts xiii. 47; Rom. xv. 9—12.

7. 'A sign that shall be spoken against'—literally, a butt or mark against which darts are hurled.

8. 'For the fall and rising again of many in Israel.'—This expression may refer to Isa. viii. 14, 15, xxviii. 16; the idea being that of a stone, over which some fall, and on which some rise; see Matt. xxi. 44; 2 Cor. ii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Or there may be a special reference to those who 'fell' in unbelief during our Lord's ministry, but 'rose again' at the Apostles' preaching.

LESSON VII.—The Wise Men from the East.

'A light to lighten the Gentiles.'

Read—Matt. ii. 1—12; *Learn*—Isa. xlix. 6; Ps. cxix. 105; Heb. iii. 14.
(*Hymns*, 36 to 40, 118, 170, 283, 374, 230.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Few subjects are more susceptible of vivid picturing than this; and few need it more, in order to give interest to a familiar narrative. To do this effectively, it will be well to take the two first divisions of the Sketch below before reading any part of the passage. It will be observed that the matter of these two divisions is not taken directly from St. Matthew's account; and a good example is here afforded of the necessity of the temperate and reverent use of the imagination in filling up Scripture narratives. For of everything that is suggested in the Sketch, it may be said, not that it *may* have occurred, but that it *must* have occurred. The two divisions simply comprise what the words, 'We have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him' necessarily imply; and, therefore, no countenance is given to the practice of inventing fictitious embellishments to Scripture.

The interviews of the chief priests and the Magi with Herod have a proportionately smaller space in the Sketch than in the narrative. The teacher will be able to say more of Herod in the following Lesson; and, therefore, this one may be almost exclusively on *the Gentile worshippers of Christ*. The formal 'application' in the Sketch, though inserted with a view to completeness, is less important than the preceding paragraph on 'the Gentiles,' which latter will suitably close the Lesson, should time run short.

Infant-class teachers will give more time in proportion to the second and fifth divisions of the narrative, and less to the third and fourth. The opening Lesson, on this subject, in Mr. Warington's *Fifty-four Infant Class Lessons* (Church of England Sunday-school Institute) is particularly excellent as a specimen of effective elementary teaching.

On this narrative, Dr. Hanna's *Earlier Years of our Lord* will be found very suggestive. In fact, teachers should read all the six volumes of his admirable *Life of Our Lord*.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What did old Simeon say that the Child Jesus should be? [*Refer to last Lesson.*] Among other things, '*a light to lighten the Gentiles.*' Soon after the return to Bethlehem [*see Note 1*] this began to be fulfilled.

(1) Let us go to a country distant from Judæa, to the far East, the country (probably) where Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus reigned, where Daniel prophesied, where Esther was queen. Very wise and clever men there—fond of watching the motions of the stars, and knowing a great deal about them (although no telescopes then). One night they see a *new star*, very bright—what can it mean? People used then to think the appearances of the stars had to do with the birth of great kings. This generally a mistake, but was it true this time? Who sent this star? and who told the Wise Men that Judæa was the place to look for the new-born King? [*See Note 3.*]

(2) Shall they go all that long weary journey? Yes, they start at once. Think of them on the road—a long string of camels bearing themselves and their treasures (ver. 11)—crossing wide deserts, fording swift rivers, ascending steep mountain paths—never stopped by fatigue, heat, robbers—never doubting God, never inquiring 'what good is it?'

(3) Now come to Jerusalem. [*Read ver. 1—8.*] A great cavalcade is entering the city—foreigners from the far East. What do they inquire of the people? (ver. 2.) What would the Jews think?—'A King born!—Herod is our king, a dying old man—his sons are grown men—what can these strangers mean?' [*See Note 5.*] But think what the Wise Men must have felt! all this way they have come, and now the Jews themselves know nothing of a King born in the land—surely the journey was in vain—surely they were deceived. Stay—a summons from King Herod—he tells them what the chief priests and scribes have said to him about it—when Messiah comes, he ought to be born—where? why? What a good king Herod seems!—if the Magi find the royal Child at Bethlehem, he too will submit to God's anointed One. What he really meant we shall see next Sunday.

(4) Will the Wise Men go on? Why should they? the Jews themselves know nothing about a King being born, and when told of it, do not believe it, or care nothing about it—why should it be left to them, who are not Jews, but strangers, to go and find Him? But they feel sure it was God who had spoken to them—they will obey

Him—and, wondering that crowds do not come too, they start again—alone. [*Read ver. 9—12.*] And God rewards them—what do they see? (ver. 9)—*the star once more!* [*See Note 3.*] Think of their 'exceeding great joy.' And now—still greater wonder—the star 'goes before them,' and leads them to the very house [*see Note 6*] where Jesus is.

(5) What must they have thought of the house—of Joseph and Mary? *This* the new-born King!—not in a palace—in the humble dwelling of a carpenter—what an end to their journey! Yet do they doubt? See how they treat that Child in its mother's arms. Think of Mary's silent wonder—at the arrival of such a company—at the worship offered to the Child—at the costly presents [*see Note 7*].

IN THESE MEN WE SEE THE FIRST GENTILES BROUGHT TO CHRIST. This was His first 'Epiphany'—*manifestation* (i.e., appearance, in the sense of being shown or revealed) to the Gentiles. How many have 'seen' and worshipped Him since! See what God had said long before about it. Ps. lxxii. 10, 11; Isa. lx. 6. It often happened afterwards that Gentiles received the Gospel when Jews rejected it, see Acts xiii. 42—48, xviii. 4—8, xxviii. 25—29; comp. Matt. viii. 10. And now, in our Gentile world, are those who ought to know most about Christ the most obedient to Him? Think of the many English boys and girls who know His great love, but care nothing for it. Think of the heathen

children—*some in the 'far East'*—who give up everything for His sake.

CAN WE BE LIKE THESE GENTILES?

1. *God gives us what He gave them*—**DIRECTION.**—He called them to go—guided them on the way—rewarded them with success. So with us. God gives us direction by His Word, the 'light to our path,' Ps. cxix. 105. The Bible calls us to go to Christ. It shows us the way. *If followed*, it brings us to Christ; shows us now His power, love, salvation; gives us a 'blessed hope' of His presence hereafter. (See John v. 39; Isa. lv. 6, 7; Acts xx. 21; Matt. vii. 21; Rom. viii. 31—39; John xvii. 24.)

2. *Do we give God what they gave Him*—**DEVOTION?** (a) They started. Have we started on the Christian journey? (b) They persevered despite difficulties within and without. So let us, Heb. xii. 1; Luke ix. 62. Let us seek Christ *alone* if need be, as they did (comp. John vi. 68; 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17). (c) They followed no human device, not their own devices, but the star only. Let us remember Ps. cxix. 9; Prov. iv. 25. (d) They gave *their best* to Christ. May it be our choice to do so (Rom. xii. 1; 2 Sam. xxiv. 24).

3. *Shall we find what they did?* They found *less than they looked for*, only a *poor child*. We, if we find Christ, shall say with the queen of Sheba (1 Kings x. 7), 'Behold, the half was not told me!' See Phil. iv. 7; 1 Cor. ii. 9.

NOTES.

1. The visit of the Magi must be placed *after* the Presentation in the Temple; for we cannot imagine Jesus being taken to Jerusalem just when Herod was seeking to kill Him, and Mary's offering would surely not have been that ordained for poor people had the gifts of the Magi been then presented. It would seem that Joseph had intended to reside at Bethlehem, see Matt. ii. 22; and the visit to Jerusalem would be merely a day's excursion. In fact, the whole of Matt. ii. must be inserted in the middle of ver. 39 of Luke ii., nor is there anything arbitrary or unnatural in doing so.

2. The word in the original rendered 'Wise Men,' is 'Magi,' a term first applied to the priests of Media, and then to all the sages of the East. The Magi being famous astronomers, their name became identified with the study of the stars; and hence, through the false science of astrology, is derived our word 'magician.'

3. It has been calculated that a 'conjunction' (i.e., an apparent near approach) of Saturn and Jupiter occurred in B.C. 6, and some have thought to account in this way for the 'star' seen by the Magi. But no planet could have 'gone before them,' to the very spot; and if the narrative is to be taken literally, the meteor must have been sent miraculously. Alford makes out a strong case in favour of the natural 'conjunction' being referred to, but Pritchard (in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*) seems clearly to disprove it.

The Magi may have connected the appearance

of the star at that particular time with the birth of the Messiah, through knowing Daniel's prophecy, uttered in *Chaldea*, Dan. ix. 24—26, or from a tradition of Balaam's words (himself from the East), Num. xxiv. 17; or (through the Jews resident in Persia and Babylonia) from the Messianic predictions generally. Some curious prophecies in the sacred books of Persia, the 'Zend-Avesta,' are also mentioned by Bp. Elliott (*Huls. Lect.*, pp. 72, 77, notes). And see Lesson III. But a special revelation was probably given them, as afterwards (ver. 12).

We are not to suppose that the star shone all the time. When they saw it, they went to Jerusalem as the natural place to find the 'King of the Jews.' Then, on their starting for Bethlehem, the star re-appeared.

4. The quotation of the chief priests is from the Septuagint version of Micah v. 2. Compare John vii. 42. '*Princes of Judah*,' ver. 6. The Hebrew word used in Micah may mean both 'princes' and 'thousands,' the princes being originally the rulers of thousands.

5. The reception of the Magi both by the people and the priests is at first sight surprising. Why should 'all Jerusalem be troubled'? and why were the Magi allowed to search *alone* for the King of the Jews? Obviously they were scornfully disbelieved. The Jews would ask the proud question of 1 Kings xxii. 24. And yet there would be 'trouble' at the thought of a new excuse for Herod's cruelties. The priests were an *example*

of a familiar illustration—they were like sign-posts, *pointing but not going*.

6. Painters usually represent the Magi visiting the Infant Saviour in the stable, and Bp. Heber's Epiphany Hymn puts the same idea into poetry, '*Love lies His head with the beasts of the stall*.' This (independently of the considerations in Note 1) is plainly shown to be an error by ver. 11.

7. Concerning the Oriental custom of presenting gifts, see Gen. xxxii. 13, xliii. 11; 1 Sam. x. 27;

1 Kings x. 1, 2. The three gifts may be regarded as symbolic:—the gold of the *royalty* of Jesus (see Ps. lxxii. 15, xxi. 1–3); the frankincense of His *divinity*, incense being universally offered to Deity alone (see Ex. xxx. 34–38); the myrrh of His true mortal human nature, it being used in embalming dead bodies (see John xix. 39). Of course we are not to suppose that the Magi designed this symbolism; they simply offered the choicest productions of their country.

Lesson VIII.—The Escape from Herod.

'*The Lord saveth His anointed.*'

Read—Matt. ii. 13–23; Learn—Ps. ii. 2–4, 6; Prov. xix. 21. (*Hymns*, 135, 221, 194, 382.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It will be observed that the facts of this Lesson are not arranged in quite the same order as in the Gospel narrative, which gives the flight into Egypt before the cause for it. Such inversions cannot be made if a passage be taught verse by verse commentary-fashion, but in Sunday-school teaching they are often very effective.

The explanations of the two prophecies can be omitted in junior classes, if thought too difficult; but they should be carefully and clearly given wherever it is possible to do so.

The application in the Sketch is necessarily general in character, but it may and should be made minutely practical in actual teaching, and the teacher who knows his boys best will best do this. The idea of a mighty conflict ever going on in the world, in which each is engaged, consciously or unconsciously, *on one side or the other*, is very impressive. That the little every-day words and deeds of the children are acts in this great conflict; that the petty persecution of a pious and gentle lad is a persecution of Christ (see texts cited), and the little plots against him some of those 'many devices' of which Solomon speaks; that God is really on the side of the Christian, and that His side must be the victorious one: all this flows naturally out of the subject, and as the narrative part of the Lesson is short, the teacher should seize the opportunity, *not of lecturing* on these points, but of getting up a brisk and free conversation upon them.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Let us to-day go back to Jerusalem. What were the feelings of the people when the Magi came inquiring about the 'new-born King'? Why 'troubled'? Perhaps because they knew King Herod would be alarmed, and feared lest he should be led into more cruelties. And we shall see it was not without reason.

I. THE CHILD IN DANGER.

(1) Herod was troubled too. How strange! He had been thirty-eight years on the throne, had conquered all his foes, had even put his own wife and sons to death for fear of their conspiring against him. He had tried to please the people by rebuilding the Temple, and filling Jerusalem with beautiful palaces. Yet now he is afraid of—a baby! But he knew that he, a foreigner, a hated Edomite, had no right to the Jewish crown—might not this child *born* King of the Jews have a better right? He knew of the promised Messiah—suppose this should be He! How did he find out where to look for the child? whom did he send? how did

he deceive them? comp. Ps. lv. 21. [*Refer to last Lesson.*]

(2) Herod is getting alarmed—the Magi have not come back; then (he thinks) they must have found the new rival and joined his party—what is to be done now? The child shall die, whoever he is,—how? [*Read ver. 16–18.*] How foolish! if the child *were not* the Messiah, why fear? if it *were*, who could harm Him? It does not take long to do the cruel deed—the soldiers are soon back—Herod satisfied—'*that King is put out of the way.*' [*See Note 1.*] But only a few weeks after that, *the King of kings called Herod before His judgment throne.*

(3) But come to Bethlehem. See the desolate homes, heart-broken fathers and weeping mothers—all the little children dead, cruelly murdered—no babies in all Bethlehem that night. If Rachel could rise from her grave close by (Gen. xxxv. 19, 1 Sam. x. 2), how she would weep! A slaughter and a lamentation, as when the Babylonians ravaged Ramah. Of that one

Jeremiah spoke (xxx. 15), but God meant his words to be a prophecy of the mourning for children who should, 600 years after, die for His Son; ver. 17, 18 [see Note 6].

(4) Do you pity those children? Pity the bereaved parents—but is a dead baby to be pitied? It has escaped all the sin and sorrow it would have had in life; the lamb can never stray—no risk of being lost—safe in the fold for ever. And these Bethlehem children were *honoured*—what St. Paul was ready to do (Acts xxi. 13), they did—are among ‘the noble army of martyrs,’ with Stephen, Polycarp, Ridley—their death commemorated by the Church on ‘Innocents’ Day.’

“Them the King of kings hath given
Glory lasting as His own:
Lord, it was Thy mercy free
Suffered them to come to Thee.”—[*Hymn 135.*]

II. THE CHILD IN SAFETY.

(1) But was the Child slain with the rest? [Read ver. 13—15.] Look again at Jeremiah’s prophecy—not *all* slain at Ramah—some to be restored one day; so at Bethlehem—*One* saved—should one day return in glory.

(2) Think of Joseph’s dream—his haste—Mary’s hurried preparation—must go away quickly, secretly, by night—long journey—how anxiously Joseph must have looked back as he went, fearing his pursuers—how thankful when once in Egypt, beyond Herod’s power.

(3) No Pharaoh in Egypt then—part of what empire? Many Jews lived there [see Note 4]. Joseph might perhaps meet friends. But he was soon to return. [Read ver. 19—23.] Why was it safe for the Child to go back? Where was Joseph at first going to take Him? [See Lesson VII., Note 1.] Why did he alter his plan? where did he go then? About the life of Jesus at Nazareth we shall talk next Sunday.

(4) This sojourn in Egypt predicted too,

ver. 15, Hos. xi. 1. Hosea meant that God brought ‘His son’ Israel (see Exod. iv. 22) out of Egypt. What had this to do with Jesus? Who was the true ‘seed of Abraham,’ the ‘glory of God’s people Israel’? Gen. xxii. 18; Gal. iii. 16. [Refer to Lesson II.] So Messiah, like his kindred according to the flesh, should ‘sojourn in the strange land’ of Egypt, and be called up from thence by God; and Hosea’s words should be true in both the past and the future.

Is not our text true? ‘Many devices..... BUT—the Counsel of the Lord, THAT shall stand.’

The ‘devices’ do not always fail; but if they succeed, it is that God’s purposes may be worked out. The day came when the plots against *that Child* did succeed—but what then? See how the Apostles understood our other text, Acts iv. 25—28 (‘*whatsoever Thy counsel determined before*’). Where is that ‘new-born King’ now? how long will He reign? 1 Cor. xv. 25. One day all—willing or unwilling—in joy or terror—will do what Herod pretended (ver. 8) he would do, Phil. ii. 10.

Are you Persecutors of Jesus? You are shocked; but see Acts ix. 5 (who had Saul been persecuting?), Matt. xxv. 40, 45. How do you feel towards schoolfellows who are ‘religious’? Are there not ‘many devices’ against such? What will come of it? *You gain nothing, and make God your enemy.*

Are you persecuted as Jesus was? All His servants will be, John xv. 18—20; 2 Tim. iii. 12. But if infants who knew nothing ‘glorified God by their death’ (Collect for Innocents’ Day), how much more those who suffer for Christ (even in little things) *willingly and patiently*? And what will come of it? We are on God’s side, and can say Ps. cxviii. 6; Rom. viii. 31. His ‘counsel shall stand’—and what is it? Luke xii. 32.

NOTES.

1. The indications of Herod’s character in this chapter correspond exactly with the account of him in Josephus. The man whose suspicious jealousy had made him the murderer of his own wife and three sons was the very man first to be alarmed by the report of one *born* King of the Jews (being an Idumean himself, and having obtained the throne by unscrupulous intrigues), and then to order the slaughter of the male infants at Bethlehem. He was probably on his death-bed, tortured by the painful disease that was killing him, when the Magi arrived; see Lesson V. Note 1.

The massacre is not mentioned by Josephus; but this is not to be wondered at, when we remember Herod’s continual cruelties, and that in a little country town like Bethlehem there would probably not be found more than twenty or thirty boys under two years old.

2. Ver. 16. ‘*Coasts thereof*,’ i.e., the suburbs; the hamlets and outlying houses round the town.

3. ‘*Two years old and under*.’ From these words it is supposed that the star appeared at

the conception of Christ, and again at His birth; that the Magi reported the time of its appearance as ‘thirteen months ago’ (allowing four for their journey); and (everything over twelve months being in Jewish parlance ‘two years’) that Herod ordered accordingly. But, in any case, it may be assumed that Herod would give a limit of age sufficiently high to preclude any possible risk of the child escaping.

4. In taking refuge in Egypt, Joseph and Mary were not going wholly among foreigners. The Jews settled in that country, and at Alexandria especially, were a numerous and influential body, and had been much patronised by the Ptolemies, or Greek kings of Egypt, by order of one of whom it was that the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, was begun. The Alexandrian Jews had a synagogue of their own at Jerusalem, for their use when visiting the holy city, as we learn from Acts vi. 9.

5. On Herod’s death, his kingdom was divided into four parts; the district of Abilene (in the Lebanon) falling to Lysanias (probably the son

of a former Syrian prince of that name, who had been deposed); and the three other divisions going to three of Herod's sons, viz., Iturea and Trachonitis (corresponding to the ancient Bashan) to Philip; Galilee and Perœa to Herod Antipas; and Judœa, Samaria, and Idumea to Archelaus. Philip and Antipas were called 'tetrarchs' (rulers of fourth parts); Archelaus was called 'ethnarch' (ruler of a nation). Archelaus reigned nine years, at the end of which the emperor Augustus deposed him for his cruelty, and made Judœa a province under a regular Roman governor.

6. St. Matthew wrote his Gospel especially for Jewish readers; and accordingly we find him appealing at every step to Old Testament prophecy; six times in these two first chapters. Some of the quotations are remarkable, and at first sight puzzling; but if the principle laid down in Lesson II., Note 3, is kept in mind, there need be no difficulty in interpreting them. And

it will be observed, that the very fact that Matthew cites them is an evidence that the Jews would recognise them as applicable.

(a) Jer. xxxi. 15. The prophet evidently refers to some massacre or kidnapping 'raid' of the Chaldean invaders at Ramah (comp. Jer. xl. 1). Ramah was in the territory of Benjamin; so Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, is represented in poetic figure as weeping for her slaughtered or enslaved children; and God comforts her by promising the future restoration of those taken away. So the mothers of Bethlehem wept, unconscious of the future return and glory of *One Infant* who had been saved, and who was thus the anti-type of the Jews who returned from Babylon. The fact that Rachel died and was buried near Bethlehem seems to add to the appropriateness of St. Matthew's reference.

(b) Hos. xi. 1. On the principle already referred to, this citation presents no special difficulty, and is sufficiently explained in the Sketch.

On ver. 23, see next Lesson, Note 3.

Lesson IX.—The Home at Nazareth.

'He shall be called a Nazarene.'

Read—Passages referred to in the Lesson; *Learn*—Luke ii, 51, 52; John xiii. 15.

(*Hymns*, 33, 42, 161, 355.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In teaching on this subject, it is usual to dwell almost exclusively on the narrative of the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, and the lessons suggested by it. Yet this visit was but an episode (albeit an important one) in a period of thirty years. We know, indeed, very little of those thirty years, but we know quite enough for a very full Sunday-school lesson. The teacher will very probably be asked such questions, concerning matters not revealed, as the curiosity of a sharp boy would suggest. He will therefore have an excellent opportunity of showing the folly of expecting (as some children do expect) that the Bible will tell us everything. It is important that our ignorance of the events of those years should be deeply felt. But be it observed, that this feeling is to be produced, *not by ignoring what we really can gather* from our knowledge of the ordinary life of a Jewish child (as has been too often imagined), but by reverently using that knowledge as the basis of our thoughts: just as the student of astronomy has a loftier conception of the greatness of the universe than the man who knows nothing about it.

The first division of this Lesson must only be taken fully with elder classes. The facts alluded to in it are, however, very useful, as giving *historical reality* to the period.

There is one great difficulty in enforcing upon children the example of Christ. It lies in their common conception of Him as one to whom goodness was so easy that it had no merit, who could not feel as children do feel, who was altogether far above the petty trials and difficulties of child-life, and whose example cannot be fairly adduced. Though not expressed, and often unconscious, this feeling certainly influences the childish mind. Let us, therefore, make it our special business, in this Lesson, to exhibit Jesus as a *real boy*. Let us not fear to diminish the reverence with which His Divinity is regarded; that feeling already exists, and we shall rather increase it by dwelling on the real humiliation of the Eternal Son of God.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

For thirty years we scarcely hear anything of Jesus. Only one event recorded—take that next Sunday. To-day think of Him as a child and as a young man.

I. WHAT WAS GOING ON AROUND HIM DURING THE THIRTY YEARS. It matters

little to you, while children, what happens at court, in parliament, &c.; but what goes on now may make a difference to you when you grow up. So with Jesus: we shall understand His ministry better if know what happening all that while.

We often meet in the Gospels with

Roman soldiers, laws, moneys, &c. It was *during this time* that they came into the country. No king now, like Herod, at Jerusalem—Roman governor at Cæsarea (Pilate one of them) ruling over Judæa. In Galilee and countries beyond, two of Herod's sons, Herod Antipas and Philip, Luke iii. 1; yet under Rome—when built fine new cities named them after Roman emperors (Mark viii. 22, 27; John vi. 23)—Roman soldiers here and there—the officers sometimes friendly to the Jews (Luke vii. 5)—many Jews became collectors ('publicans') of Roman taxes—the emperor's likeness on the coins, &c., &c. [See Note 1.]

But the Jews hated the Romans—'why should we, God's chosen nation, be subject to foreigners?'—despised their brethren who became publicans, Luke v. 30, xviii. 11, xix. 7. When Jesus ten years old, taxing began—great insurrection, Acts v. 37. Always longing for deliverance, Acts 1. 6.

All this while, where was He who should be the great King over all?

II. HIS CHOSEN DWELLING-PLACE.

Nazareth—little obscure town [see Lesson IV., Note 2]—despised even by its near neighbours (John i. 46). Might go there now—see the same sunny valley, green hills round, trees, brooks, &c.; the well where Jesus must often have been, the rock from which they tried to throw Him afterwards, Luke iv. 29. [See Note 2.]

Why was such a place chosen for the home of Jesus? Look at Matt. ii. 23. Where predicted that He should be called a Nazarene? see Isa. xi. 1—Messiah should be a 'branch'—the Hebrew word *Nazer*, not a beautiful bough, but a poor insignificant twig (comp. Isa. liii. 2). So He lived at poor insignificant town named like twig—*Nazar-eth*; by its name He and His followers called, and therefore despised, Matt. xxvi. 71; John xix. 19; Acts xxiv. 5. [See Note 3.] Even in the name of His dwelling-place, see Christ's humiliation!

III. HIS DAILY LIFE. That of a poor man's son. Schools then in all the towns [see Note 5]—no doubt He was a scholar—brought up to read the Scriptures diligently—same stories of Joseph, Samuel, David, which children love so much still—taught the texts which all little Jews repeated like a catechism, Exod. xiii. 2—16; Deut. vi. 1—9, 13—22. No doubt He began early to learn to use the tools in Joseph's workshop. So day by day, week by week, year by year, the Son of God lived, a little Jewish village boy.

Then a young man, when Joseph dead [see Note 4]—Himself the village carpenter (Mark vi. 3)—now the head of the household and guardian of His mother (see John ii. 12, xix. 27)—having on Him all the duties of son, brother, neighbour, friend, citizen—perhaps mis-understood and looked down upon by brethren and sisters (like David, 1 Sam. xvii. 28)—attending the

synagogue every Sabbath (Luke iv. 16—'as His manner was'). And all this while nothing wonderful to look at—no miracles—Jesus like others, except in—

IV. HIS CHARACTER. Imagine a little boy never acting, speaking, thinking, wrongly or foolishly. Think of one in the schoolroom, at play, at home, in the street, never jealous, deceitful, selfish, disobedient, vain, passionate—always just the opposite—at evening prayer having nothing to confess—parents and teachers having nothing to punish—[*illustrate further as time permits*]—Jesus like that. Sufficiently like others not to make everybody curious, yet how unlike!

What does the Bible say of other children? see Prov. xvii. 25, xix. 13; Ps. lvi. 3; Job xix. 18—do we not all *know* how true these words are? Even the goodness of good children so imperfect, a meek boy generally weak, a resolute boy rough. But Jesus 'strong in spirit,' and yet a pattern of gentleness (see Isa. xlii. 2). Nobody could see anything in Him which might have been altered for the better.

See what St. Luke says, ii. 40, 52:—

'*Strong in spirit*'—how often boys strong enough in body, yet weak when tempted, no control over temper, can't bear pain or disappointment. How much He had to bear—how painful to Him the sin around Him! (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 18).

'*Filled with wisdom*' (see Isa. xi. 2—5)—then no room for folly—how many have no room for wisdom!

'*Increased in wisdom and stature*' [see Note 6]—how many good and studious boys decrease in wisdom as they grow!

'*In favour with God and man*'—some boys do please men, but how often is it just by displeasing God—which of us pleases both? where is the boy with whom God always more and more 'well-pleased'?

Why all this? THAT HE MIGHT BE AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL.

You might say, How can I copy Him who went about preaching, working miracles, &c.? But here is an Example for the little child, the school-boy, the youth at work, the grown man toiling for his daily bread. You can do no great thing? *neither did Jesus*, yet he lived a perfect life; just going on, day after day, doing the little duties that came before Him. Does God require more of us? See Rom. xii. 9—13, 1 Cor. x. 31; Eph. vi. 1—3; 1 Thess. iv. 11.

The trivial round, the common task,
Should furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.

True, we cannot attain to this perfect Example. But are we to try? See Matt. xi. 29; Phil. ii. 5; John xiii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 21; 1 John ii. 6, iii. 3. Who can 'change us into His image'? see 2 Cor. iii. 18—only the Holy Spirit. And it is God's design that we should have that image, Rom. viii. 29.

NOTES.

1. The political changes which took place in Palestine during our Lord's childhood and youth had an important influence upon His subsequent ministry. In addition to the examples given above of Biblical allusions to them, it may be observed that the Roman 'legion' (body of 6,000 soldiers) occurs as the type of overpowering force. Matt. xxvi. 53, Mark v. 9; and that one of the Twelve seems to have been a follower of Judas of Galilee, the leader of the revolt in A. D. 6, viz., Simon *Zelotes*, one of the sect of the 'Zealots.' Josephus (Ant. xviii. 1) gives an account of this revolt.

The cities referred to above are Tiberias, built by Herod Antipas, and Casarea Philippi and Bethsaida Julias, built by his brother Philip; the two former named after Tiberius Caesar, the latter after Julia, the daughter of Augustus.

2. Nazareth lies in a sheltered valley among the Galilean hills, just above where they sink down into the Plain of Esdracoon. Dr. Macleod says:—'A low undulating ridge of hills encloses the green plain that lies like a lake with Nazareth built on one of its shores.'

The 'crag' from which the Nazarenes attempted to hurl Christ has been identified; and the well to which the women still come for water is, no doubt, that to which Mary must have often resorted.

With regard to the bad character of Nazareth, it must be borne in mind that Nathanael was no Jerusalem Pharisee, despising all the Galileans, but dwelt at Cana, only a few miles off.

3. '*He shall be called a Nazarene.*' The most clear and complete explanation of these words we have met with was given by Mr. Warrington in the *Church Sunday School Magazine* for Feb., 1868. His remarks may be thus briefly summarised:—(1) The word *Nazer*, applied to Messiah in Isa. xi. 1, and there rendered 'branch,' has the sense of a feeble and insignificant 'twig.' (In the other prophecies of the 'Branch' the Hebrew word is different.) (2) This word *Nazer* appears in the name of *Nazareth*, and well indicates the poor reputation of that town. (3) By the name of this despised city Jesus was known. Though not really 'of Nazareth,' He was always 'called' so. In accordance with prophecy, He was really a *Bethlehemite*, and yet without the honour attaching to such an origin. Both the name and the repute of Nazareth cling to Him. Even to this day, in the East, Christians are contemptuously called 'Nazarenes.' This is also the view of Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, though it is not given so completely there.

The idea of some that Christ was a *Nazarite* is quite unfounded. The word in the original is a totally different one.

4. As Joseph is not mentioned after the events of Luke ii., the inference is that He died before our Lord's public ministry. That Jesus was then at the head of the household seems implied in the texts quoted above. Who His 'brethren and sisters' were, is a question on which commentators always have been divided, and probably always will be. That they were the *first cousins* of Jesus, children of Alpheus (or Clopas) and of Mary the sister of the Virgin, seems the most probable view, and indeed almost demonstrated by the arguments of Smith's *Dictionary of the*

Bible (reproduced also in the *Student's New Testament History*), where Alford's strong counter-arguments appear clearly refuted.

5. The following passage, respecting Jewish schools, is from Mr. Deutsch's famous article on the Talmud in the *Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1867:—'Eighty years before Christ, schools flourished throughout the length and the breadth of the land;—education had been made compulsory. While there is not a single term for 'school' to be found before the Captivity, there were by that time about a dozen in common usage. Here are a few of the innumerable popular sayings of the period, betokening the paramount importance which public instruction had assumed in the life of the nation:—'Jerusalem was destroyed because the instruction of the young was neglected.' 'The world is only saved by the breath of the school-children.' 'Even for the rebuilding of the Temple the schools must not be interrupted.' 'Study is more meritorious than sacrifice.' 'A scholar is greater than a prophet.'

6. The popular conception of the Saviour is too much that of a *human body dwelt in by God*, which wholly omits the 'reasonable soul' (*Athan. Creed*) so strongly implied in Heb. ii. 17, 18, iv. 15, v. 7–9, Matt. xxvi. 38, Luke x. 21, Mark vi. 6, and in the words 'increased in wisdom.' It is to be observed that this growth in wisdom does not imply *defect*, for from His earliest childhood Jesus was 'filled with wisdom'; His human mind expanded, and so, though always 'full,' it constantly 'increased' in wisdom. Observe also that this mental growth was not confined to the years of His childhood; it is expressly stated of the period *subsequent* to His first Passover. The expression 'increased in favour with God' is very remarkable, and is to be understood like the other one, not that God was at any time *less* 'well-pleased,' but that, as Jesus grew, there was more and more in Him on which the Divine favour could rest.

7. Note that our Lord's perfect life through those many years was a part of His vicarious work. The growing up through infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, from grace to grace, holiness to holiness, in subjection, self-denial, and love, *without one polluting touch of sin*,—this it was which, consummated by the three years of active ministry, by the Passion, and by the Cross, constituted the '*obedience of one man by which many were made righteous*' (Alford).

8. *Illustrations.*—Draw a straight line on a slate; then lay the ruler by it, and you will see how imperfect it is. So are our lives when tested by God's law. But the life of Jesus was as a line drawn absolutely straight.

How can we in practice copy Jesus? How do you write a copy in your copy-book? By looking constantly at the top line, imitating it in capital letters, small letters, up-strokes, down-strokes, even stops. So be always 'looking unto Jesus.'

Blow a little air into an air-cushion or a bladder; you see it is quite full. Blow on and on; it is always full, yet always getting larger. Just so the human soul of Jesus, 'filled with wisdom.' This illustration must be used with great caution, but it is effective if so used.

LESSON X.—The First Passover.

'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?'

Read—Luke ii. 41—51; Learn—Luke ii. 49, 51; Col. i. 9, 10. (Hymns 160, 261, 326, 328.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The first division of the following Sketch introduces a line of thought with reference to this passage which the writer has not seen elsewhere. It is usual to dwell on the incidents of this visit to Jerusalem, and to overlook the important considerations underlying the bare fact of the visit at such a time and on such an occasion. In the narrative we have, in remarkable combination, the essential Divinity of Jesus and the obligation of His real humanity to observe all legal ordinances. The particular custom to which the Sketch alludes is strikingly analogous to the Christian rite of Confirmation as the preliminary to admission to the Lord's Table, and so conveys, in an unexpected way, an important lesson for our elder scholars. In junior classes, of course, this part of the Sketch will be but slightly touched upon.

The application, again, is, and should be, somewhat different from the common one. The details of Christian conduct would be drawn out of the preceding Lesson, and in this one it is of less importance to urge further particular duties (as attendance at God's house, attention to teaching, submission to parents) than to dwell upon the spirit that is at the root of all, and prompts to all, viz., that controlling desire to put God first, to live for Him alone, which is the key to all Christ's human life, and which is the burden of the second of the texts for repetition.

Let the teacher be particular to make it quite clear to all the children that Jesus did not sit among the doctors as a superior, and did not 'dispute' with them, all pictures implying the contrary notwithstanding.

Some sharp scholar will probably ask where Jesus lodged, &c., during the three days. Here, again, will come the always useful answer,—not 'I don't know,' which intimates the special ignorance of the individual teacher, but 'We don't know,' i.e., nobody knows. But see Note 4.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

In those Thirty years one special event recorded—study it to-day.

I. GOING TO THE PASSOVER. [Read ver. 41, 42.]

Once a year Joseph and Mary go away from home for a week or two, leaving the Child Jesus behind. Where do they go? why? Deut. xvi. 1—8; comp. 1 Sam. i. 3. Little children did not go, but at last Jesus old enough [see Note 1]. Now can become a 'son of the law'—be admitted to all the privileges of God's chosen nation.

Two things appointed for Jews as signs of God's covenant with them; one of being brought into covenant—Circumcision; one of keeping in it—Passover; both indispensable, Gen. xvii. 14; Exod. xii. 15; Numb. ix. 13. What did Circumcision mean? [refer to Lesson VI.]. What did keeping the Passover mean?—commemorating Israel's deliverance from slavery and death, through their believing and obeying God about eating the lamb and sprinkling its blood.

So we have two great ordinances: Baptism, sign of entrance into Christ's Church [see Lesson VI.]; the Lord's Supper, of keeping in it (commemorating deliverance through the Lamb of God, feeding by faith

—so life sustained, &c.). When baptized child old enough, comes to Confirmation—covenant publicly ratified—then to the Lord's Supper: like a Jewish boy of twelve going as a 'son of the law' to the Passover.

We have seen Jesus submitting to the first rite; now we find Him observing the second.

Think of Him on the road—companies of people journeying from all parts to Jerusalem (comp. Ps. xlii. 4, lv. 14, cxxii. 1—4)—many boys going for the first time, all eager to see the holy city they have read and heard of. Think of Jesus there, seeing David's royal city, Temple and worshippers (had been there when an infant, not since)—then the great night of the feast—solemn meeting—the lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened cakes—the hymns, &c., &c. [see Note 2]. How wonderful to look back and think when this first done!—and to think of one of the young 'sons of the law' being Himself the true 'Passover' to whom all Passovers pointed, the very Lamb of God whose blood to be sprinkled on our hearts!

II. TARRYING IN THE TEMPLE. [Read ver. 43—50.]

The week of solemn services over—companies [see Note 6] journeying homeward—

travelling all day—at evening the Child missed—how Mary and Joseph distressed, would think Jesus could not be absent of his own accord, so fond and dutiful always—perhaps kidnapped by His old enemies; how anxiously they seek Him (ver. 48), yet all in vain—then sadly back to the city, asking everywhere.

Where found at last? Room in Temple—great doctors sitting to teach and catechise—young students seated at their feet (Acts xxii. 3)—*One* learner there ‘full of wisdom,’ giving bright, clear answers, modestly asking questions in his turn, but such questions! The doctors amazed—never such a scholar seen before (Ps. cxix. 99, 100). [See Note 3.] See Mary—no thought of who else there—enough that He is found—what does she say?—too sad not to complain, too overjoyed to rebuke.

Look at that wonderful reply—‘*Why should they wonder where He was? Mary spoke of His father—did they forget WHO WAS HIS TRUE FATHER? Where could He be but in that Father’s house, engaged in that Father’s work? did they think it was a boyish prank to stay behind—that He was dazzled by the city’s splendour? was He not acting a good Son’s part? MUST He not do this?*’

So the Child knew who and what He was. Had Mary told Him what the angel had said? Why, she almost forgot it herself, ver. 50. How then did He know? [See Note 5.]

III. SUBMITTING TO EARTHLY TIES. (Read ver. 51).

Might Jesus have refused to go back? might He have then separated Himself for God’s work? What was it that He did? Eighteen years yet before Messiah to be manifested. Was He, then, to go on getting all Jewish learning, sitting at the doctors’ feet for years (like St. Paul)? see John vii. 15. Then what to do? [*refer to last Lesson*—to be ‘subject’—was that being ‘about the Father’s business’?—see how pleased the Father was (ver. 52), more and

more until that Voice came to say so, Matt. iii. 17.

What two kinds of duties have we? [*Refer to Catechism*]. Last Sunday we saw how Jesus set us an example of fulfilling our ‘duty towards our neighbour.’ To-day He shows us how to do our ‘duty towards God.’

‘*ABOUT MY FATHER’S BUSINESS.*’ So we ought all to be. How can we?

We can—(a) observe God’s ordinances: Jesus kept the Passover, though needing not the redemption it spoke of. (b) Observe the ordinances of God’s Church [*e.g., Confirmation, as referred to above*]: the rules about becoming a ‘son of the law’ not from Moses, but from the Rabbins, yet, being good ones, Jesus obeyed them. (c) Resort to God’s house: if English boy missed, would he be found in church? Yet see Ps. xxvi. 8, lxx. 4, lxxxiv. (d) Seek to learn more about God’s Word: if Jesus studied it, under the appointed teachers, how much more should we! (e) Yet not neglect duties to earthly friends; submit to parents, &c.

But much more than all this in the words. The locomotive engine very powerful—what heavy trains it draws!—but does not go of itself—something wanted to set it and keep it going—steam.

What then do we want? What was the secret of all Jesus did? He had the WILL—earnest desire and determination—to do God’s will, Ps. xl. 7, 8. Having this will, He ‘MUST’ be ‘about His Father’s business’—could not help it—and did it not as hard duty—His delight, meat and drink to Him, John iv. 34.

Have we this will? Not naturally—all like to have ‘our own way,’ Isa. liii. 6—dislike God’s, Rom. viii. 7, 8. How to be altered? see next verse (Rom. viii. 9)—[*comp. 10th Article*]. Every day, every hour, at every turn, ask, ‘Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?’ (Acts ix. 6). Then what is the promise? Matt. vi. 33.

NOTES.

1. The Jewish custom of admitting boys to be ‘sons of the law’ at the age of twelve—or thirteen: it is doubtful whether Jesus did not go up a year before the strict time—is well known. The following passages from the Rabbinical writings refer to it:—

“Let a man deal gently with his son till he come to betwelve years old, but from that time let him descend with him into his way of living:’ that is, let him diligently, and with severity (if need be), keep him close to that way, rule, or art, by which he may get his living.” (Quoted in Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.*, on Luke ii.) “Up to the age of thirteen a father has to care for his son’s fulfilment of the duties of religion. But on his thirteenth birth-day he may say, Blessed be He who has made me free from the burden of my son’s sins.” (Quoted in Plumtre, *Christ and Christendom*, p. 98.)

It is noteworthy that the Greek word rendered

‘child,’ in ver. 43, is not the word used before in this chapter (which is a diminutive), but means, strictly, *boy*.

2. The feast of the Passover in the later days of Jewish history was a much more elaborate thing than it had been in Egypt, and it would be very impressive to any one attending for the first time. Among the numerous observances which had gradually grown up, and become almost as sacred as those enjoined in Exod. xii., were the *four cups of wine* passed round at stated intervals, two of which seem distinctly alluded to in Luke xxii. 17, 20; and the service of praise called the ‘Hallel’ (a contraction of *hallelujah*), which consisted of the singing of Ps. cxiii.—cxviii. in prescribed portions, one of which was no doubt the ‘hymn’ sung by Christ and the eleven (Matt. xxvi. 30).

We have illustrations of the piety of Mary and

Joseph, in their staying at Jerusalem for 'the days,' i.e., the seven days of unleavened bread, which was not done by all; and in Mary's going at all, for the attendance of women, though enjoined by the Rabbis, was not required by the law, see Deut. xvi. 6.

3. 'Found Him in the temple'—i.e., probably in one of the three rooms in which the members of the Sanhedrim used to receive their pupils. It is not impossible that one or both of the two famous Rabbis, Shammai and Hillel, may have been present, or (as young men) some of those named in Scripture, Gamaliel or Nicodemus, or (as a scholar) Saul of Tarsus.

The old idea that Jesus 'disputed' with the doctors has no foundation in the narrative. We must regard Him simply as a learner. 'Hearing them,' 'asking them questions,' 'His answers,' are all named. The instruction given by the scribes was sharply catechetical in form, and clever answers were much thought of. One of the Rabbis says (quoted by Plumtre):—'I have learned much from the Rabbis my teachers; I have learned more from the Rabbis my colleagues; I have learned most of all from my disciples.' Josephus describes the sensation created by his answers as a lad of fourteen, to hear which great numbers used to resort to the school. Of course the 'understanding' of Jesus must be very differently regarded. His was no mere precocity in dialectic skill. His questions and answers must have breathed a far purer and higher atmosphere of truth than that of the strife of words of which Rabbinical controversy consisted; and this, doubtless, was the cause of the astonishment they evoked.

4. In thinking over this narrative (and indeed all Scripture narratives) we must divest ourselves altogether of modern English ideas. For instance, it must not be supposed that Mary and Joseph would have the slightest difficulty in obtaining entrance to the chambers of the Temple. Again, the question might be asked, Where did Jesus lodge, &c., during those three days? While no answer professing to be correct can be given, yet there will be no difficulty in the minds of those who consider both the obligations of Oriental hospitality, especially in Jerusalem at Passover time, and that in after years Jesus spent whole nights on the Mount of Olives.

5. 'About My Father's business' seems to imply active work; but the original (literally—'in the things of My Father') includes more passive

occupations, as listening to instruction. Some would render it 'in My Father's house,' but the expression, though including this, comprehends much more. The word rendered 'must' is the same so often used about our Lord's work, Matt. xxvi. 54; Mark viii. 31; Luke xxii. 37, xxiv. 7, 44; John ix. 4, xx. 9.

This answer derives a peculiar significance from Mary's words, 'Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.' It was natural that she and Joseph should have been amazed; for though they knew the mystery of the birth of Jesus, they knew not that He knew it. Yet their surprise is certainly in itself surprising. The explanation is suggested by the beautiful words of Mr. Plumtre (*Christ and Christendom*, p. 95), who describes Mary and Joseph at Nazareth as 'the husband and wife, each with a reticent consciousness of the greatness of the Life committed to their charge; each, at times, half losing count of the true measure of that greatness in the familiarity of daily intercourse.'

The value of every word of the Gospel narrative is strikingly shown by the fact that, had Mary said 'we' instead of 'Thy father and I,' the point of Christ's answer would be lost.

In what way the consciousness of His Divinity dawned on the young Child we have no means of conceiving, but we need not hesitate to adopt the words of Matthew Henry—'The Divinity that dwelt in Him from His conception manifested itself to His humanity by degrees, in proportion to His capacity.' And if, as is usually considered, this visit to Jerusalem marks the awaking of the consciousness, the condescension shown in His returning to be 'subject' to Mary and Joseph is much enhanced. Stier (*Words of the Lord Jesus*, vol. i., p. 18, Clark's Ed.) calls the incident the 'solitary floweret out of the wonderful enclosed garden of the thirty years, plucked precisely there where the swollen bud, at a *distinctive crisis*, bursts into flower'; and speaks of the reply of Jesus as the 'first word of the Eternal Spirit in the human spirit of the person of the God-man.'

This passage, by shewing that the *child Jesus* was as really God as the *man Jesus*, disproves the heresy that the Divine Son descended on the *human Jesus* at His baptism.

6. 'Company,' ver. 44. The Greek word strictly means a 'company of travellers,' and is only used in this place. Perhaps 'caravan' is the best equivalent.

Lesson XI.—The Forerunner.

'Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.'

Read—Luke iii. 1—18 (comp. Matt. iii. 1—12); Learn—Isa. xl. 3—5; Luke i. 76, 77.
(*Hymns*, 108, 141, 142, 307.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In a biographical course of Lessons on the Life of Christ, great pains should be taken to give due prominence to the ministry of the Baptist, as God's appointed way of preparing the Jewish nation for the appearance of the Messiah. In the following sketch, therefore, John's preaching is regarded from that point of view, and the application is in accordance with the general design. If the teacher were giving a course of consecutive

expository Lessons on St. Matthew's or St. Luke's Gospel, the subject would work out differently, the attention of the class being confined to the verses before them, and the application being directed to the enforcing of the necessity, character, and results of true repentance. This distinction will explain the exclusion of some points from the Lesson below, as well as the attention given to others. The language of John's testimony to Christ is explained in Lesson XIV.

The *third division* should only be taken with such intelligent scholars as would take an interest in referring to the passages given.

The teacher will not fail to notice the good example set him by the Baptist in the latter's method of awakening his hearers to a sense of their sins. John does not speak alike to everybody of 'sin' in the abstract, but to the publicans, the soldiers, &c. of their special faults and temptations. So let us do, speaking of the peculiar besetting sins of big boys out in life, of upper day-school boys, of little boys, and of girls of various ages, according to our respective classes. The differences of place and circumstances, also, must not be forgotten: the London office, the Manchester factory, the Hull water-side, the Norfolk farm, bring severally very different temptations. At the same time, the great root of all sins—the uniform natural condition and tendency of the human heart—must always be recognised.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

It is thirty years since 'all Jerusalem was troubled' by the inquiries of the Wise Men from the East; eighteen years since a Galilean boy startled the Rabbis in the Temple by his youthful wisdom. All now forgotten. Old men have died, young men become old, children grown up. No king now [refer to Lesson IX. See Note 1.] Six Roman officers have governed Judæa since then, all hated by the people as foreigners; the present one, Pontius Pilate, hated more than all. How long, they ask, are they to be subject to strangers?—Shall not the Messiah now come? They hope and expect—God will surely send them a great warrior, who shall drive out their Gentile rulers, and sit on David's throne.

Suddenly, a rumour in Jerusalem—people ask one another about it—a strange man has appeared in the wilderness of Judæa [see Note 2] with the dress and appearance of the prophets of olden time (2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4) and the rough fare of a Nazarite (Matt. iii. 4; Luke i. 15; Numb. vi.) [see Note 3] proclaiming that 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand' [see Note 6]. The people flock to see and hear him from all parts.

Let us ask, what he came to do? how he did it? what was the result?

I. WHAT WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MISSION?

Look at what the angel said to his father when announcing his birth, Luke i. 13—17. Look at what he said of himself, John i. 23. Look at the prophecies to which the angel and he referred, Isa. xl. 3, 4; Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5, 6. When great king went on journey in those days, could not go by railway or turnpike-road; so *pioneers* sent before him, to make a road through the woods and morasses and rocks, to make the rough, narrow, winding paths smooth—wide—straight. This just like what John had to do. *He was a pioneer, a forerunner.* Who was he to prepare the way for? What was

it that wanted to be prepared?—the hearts of the Jews. Why?—were hard (proud and selfish)—crooked (deceitful).

II. HOW DID HE FULFIL HIS MISSION?

(1) Let us go with the crowd from Jerusalem—over Olivet—by the steep, wild, rocky way 'down from Jerusalem to Jericho' (Luke x. 30)—into the hot Jordan valley [see Note 2]—to the river bank near where Israel crossed in Joshua's time. Look at the multitudes (see Matt. iii. 5, 7; ver. 12, 14); people of all classes, fishermen from Galilee, shepherds from 'beyond Jordan,' vinedressers from Judæa, publicans from Jericho and Capernaum, soldiers going to the war against the King of Arabia, proud Pharisees and scornful Sadducees from Jerusalem [see Note 4]. In the midst is John—what does he say? Matt. iii. 2.

(2) Some think, why should they repent? if the King is coming, they are quite ready to join him, and fight against the Romans—what has that to do with repentance? But John tells them of their sins—of God's anger; and some begin to think that if they were trees, and the woodman came with his axe to cut down the fruitless trees, they would have to fall (see ver. 9). So they come, confessing their sins, asking John how they shall mend their lives; and what does he say? Luke iii. 10—14.

(3) Then he takes them down into the river, and pours water over them—as a token of what? (a) That they are ready to give up their sins, and receive the coming King with 'humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient hearts'; (b) that God is ready to receive, pardon, cleanse them; see ver. 3 and Matt. iii. 6.

(4) Some turn away offended, Luke vii. 30—why? see ver. 8. They think they are quite fit for Messiah's Kingdom, being Abraham's children: it may be right for *Gentiles* to be baptized when admitted into covenant [see Note 5], and perhaps even for *Jewish* 'publicans and sinners'; but for

them—no! But what do all need to fit them? John iii. 3; and to get *that*, of what use is Abraham's blood in the veins? John i. 13 ('*born, not of blood . . . but of God*').

(5) But the people begin to think whether John is not the Messiah himself. And then he tells of the coming King, His greatness, His heavenly baptism that should purify the heart as well as cleanse the body, His awful power to separate the bad from the good; ver. 15—17.

III. WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF HIS MISSION?

John was very popular, see Luke xx. 6. But did he do his appointed work? did he 'prepare the way of the Lord'? (a) Where did Jesus get His first disciples? John i. 35—42. (b) When John was murdered, where did his followers go? Matt. xiv. 12. (c) To whom did Jesus appeal when defending Himself? John v. 32—35. (d) What impression was made by John upon the people who lived near the Jordan? see John x. 40—42. (e) When John's disciples who had gone into distant lands afterwards heard Christ's Gospel, how did they receive it? see Acts xviii. 24—28, xix. 1—6.

So the 'voice crying in the wilderness' was heard long after, and far away.

IS THERE ANY WORK LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST'S WANTED NOW?

Yes: the King is coming again—His way to be prepared—how?—by whom? [*See Collect for Third Sunday in Advent.*]

But Christ comes now—every day—to men's hearts. He 'knocks at the door,' Rev. iii. 20. Is the door often opened? Men do not care about Him. You, if told a way to get on in the world, to become rich, would listen eagerly—would go and do as advised. You are told of Friend and Saviour—don't care. What is wanted?

His Way must be prepared. How? How did John prepare the Jews' hearts?—*told them of their sins.* Then some did, some did not, welcome Christ—who did?—those who felt their sins and wanted a Saviour, see Luke vii. 37, xv. 1, xix. 6, 7, xxiii. 41, 42. How would a shipwrecked crew, a captive in a dungeon, a condemned criminal, receive a deliverer? Why joyfully? *Because feel misery and peril.* So with us—when feel sin, hearts hard as rough road will be soft, hearts deceitful as crooked path will be straight (sincere).

Who can soften hearts—so prepare them to welcome Christ? Ezek. xxxvi. 26. The Holy Spirit reveals sin, John xvi. 8.

NOTES.

1. Judæa had been a Roman province more than twenty years when John the Baptist appeared. Herod's son and successor, Archelaus, was deposed by the Emperor for his cruelties, and banished to Gaul, and a 'procurator' was appointed to govern the kingdom under the 'prefect' of Syria. Pontius Pilate was the sixth of these procurators. On the rulers, &c., named in Luke iii. 1, see Lesson VIII., Note 5.

2. The 'wilderness of Judæa' is a term applied to the strip of uninhabited country between the 'hill-country' of Hebron and Bethlehem and the Dead Sea, consisting, in fact, of the wild ravines which descend abruptly into the deep hollow in which the lake lies, and of the precipitous rocks which divide them. The district extends from opposite Jericho in the north to Engedi in the south. John probably moved northward as he preached; as his first baptisms seem to have taken place near the 'wilderness,' and must have been at the 'lower fords' of the Jordan opposite Jericho; while we find him (John i. 28) a little later at Bethabara (or Bethany), probably the 'upper fords' where the Jabbok runs into the Jordan (comp. Judg. vii. 24); and afterwards at Enon near Salim (John iii. 23), which has been identified still higher up the stream towards Bethshan or Scythopolis.

3. Locusts are not an uncommon article of food among the poor in the East, sometimes mixed with flour and made into cakes, sometimes boiled and eaten like shrimps, butter being added, and sometimes fried or roasted. The Mosaic law allowed them to be eaten, Lev. xi. 22. '*Wild honey*': comp. Deut. xxxii. 13, Judg. xiv. 8, 1 Sam. xiv. 25, 1's. lxxxvi. 16.

4. The deep impression made by the appearance of a man with the habits and in the garb of prophets like Elijah, preaching with Elijah's

'spirit and power,'—and that, too, after a prophetic silence of 400 years, since Malachi predicted the appearance of 'Elijah' before the Lord's coming,—is evident from the crowds that descended into the Jordan valley from all parts of the country; and it must be remembered that John did no miracle (John x. 41). It has been calculated that it was a 'sabbatic year' (Lev. xxv.), and as these years were now observed with some strictness by the Jews, the people would not be detained by their ordinary avocations. According to Stanley and others, an expedition was then passing down the 'Ghor' (Jordan valley) from Damascus against Petra in Idumæa, the capital of Aretas, King of Arabia Petræa (2 Cor. xi. 32), and some of these troops were doubtless the 'soldiers' of Luke iii. 14.

5. It has been much disputed whether John's baptism was a novelty. There seems, however, little doubt that the rite had been used by the Jews before this for the admission of Gentile proselytes. The question of the priests and Levites (John i. 25) clearly implies that they would not think it strange for the Messiah or Elias to baptize.

6. '*The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*' This expression is peculiar to Matthew. Elsewhere the term is 'kingdom of God.' It must be understood to mean the new dispensation ushered in by the Advent of Messiah, which the Jews took to be an earthly reign, but which was really a spiritual one.

7. '*Prepare the way of the Lord,*' &c. Dr. Thomson (*Land and the Book*, p. 77) describes a similar proclamation being issued prior to a journey of the Sultan, when, literally, 'stones were gathered out,' 'crooked places made straight,' and 'rough places level and smooth.'

Lesson XII.—The Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation.

'In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.'

Read—Matt. iii. 13—17, iv. 1—11; *Learn*—Luke iii. 21, 22; Heb. ii. 17, 18.
(*Hymns*, 160, 198, 311, 325, 357.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson is not such a long one as the title would seem to imply; but there are two reasons for including so much:—(1) That the general truth taught by Christ's Baptism is almost the same as that taught by the *fact* (at least) of His Fasting and Temptation, viz., the truth expressed in the motto above; (2) That by taking this time the outward circumstances of our Lord's sojourn in the wilderness, the way is left clear for a second full lesson on the Temptation itself.

The application is intended to be brief, the design of the Lesson being chiefly to exhibit Christ's love and condescension; and the teacher who succeeds in doing *this*, but may have no time to put the concluding questions, need not go away under a sense of failure. These questions are partly suggested by the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent. With junior classes, the *first two* should be considered the most important.

The subject of Christian Baptism is not introduced, as it would be difficult to do so appropriately, and it has already been referred to in Lessons VI. and X.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

In our last lesson we talked about John the Baptist. What was the work he had to do? How did he do it? What was the result? [*Recapitulate.*] To-day see how John received the King whose way he had prepared.

I. AT THE JORDAN.

(1) Let us stand by the Jordan again. John is there. He has been baptizing many people—as a sign of what? [*refer to last lesson.*] Then comes One to be baptized, a Galilean carpenter, looking like other men—but who was He? John recognises Him as a relative (Luke i. 36), though he has seen Him but little, their lives having been so different. Does he know Him to be the Messiah, the Son of God? see John i. 31. But he knows His pure, upright, gentle character; he feels that even he himself, the prophet of God, is unworthy to baptize such a man; and what does he say? [*See Note 1.*]

(2) Was John right to be surprised? What was his baptism the sign of? Did Jesus need repentance and forgiveness? See 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. vii. 26; 1 John iii. 5. But He had come to take our sins upon Him, to be 'numbered with the transgressors'; whatever is 'right' for them to do, He also must do it all, and so 'fulfil all righteousness.' And now in this, too, He will be even as the rough soldiers and the degraded publicans.

[*Illust.—King and rebels—rebels come and lay down arms before king—would innocent man come with them?—would not like to be 'numbered with rebels.'—This Jesus did.*]

(3) He steps down the bank into the river. He ascends it again [*see Note 2*], praying (Luke iii. 21). And now look! The heaven is cleft asunder [*see Note 3*], light streams down, there is a wondrous

form descending upon Him; and then a Voice from on high. Who were *these Three*—the One speaking from heaven—the One standing on the earth—the One coming down from heaven to earth? Different Persons—all divine—but not three Gods—what do we call them?

(4) See what that Voice said. (a) What did it tell John? That this cousin of His, this plain mechanic of Nazareth, whose beautiful and holy life he has marked almost with awe, is the very King Himself, whose approach he has been proclaiming. How does he know this? and what else is revealed to him? John i. 33, 34. (b) What did it tell Jesus? That it was just when He, the Sinless One, humbled Himself to be baptized as a sinner, that the Father was so 'well-pleased' (comp. Isa. liii. 10; Phil. ii. 8—10). What love and condescension!

II. IN THE WILDERNESS.

(1) Jesus is now 'anointed with the Holy Ghost' (Acts x. 38)—ready to come forth before the people as their King and Prophet. See 1 Sam. x. 1, xvi. 1, 12, 13; 1 Kings xix. 16; Ps. lxxxix. 20. We too must have the Spirit—but why? (Rom. viii. 7—9)—He not like that, and yet He was, as a man, under the guidance of the Spirit, just as we have to be. But how different from us: we resist and provoke the Spirit; He was 'full of the Holy Ghost' (Luke iv. 1, see John iii. 34). But where does the Divine Guide now take Him?—to Jerusalem? [*Read chap. iv. 1—11; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1, 2.*] Let us follow the Lord into the wilderness and watch Him.

(2) A wild, rocky, desolate country [*see Note 5*]. Wild beasts prowl about, Mark i. 13 [*see Note 6*], and men seldom pass, Jesus alone there. For forty days He eat

nothing, yet He feels it not, so wrapt is He in prayer and thought (see Note 7). Who else fasted like that? Deut. ix. 9; 1 Kings xix. 8. And who else had a period of retirement before beginning a public work? Exod. iii. 1; Luke i. 80; Gal. i. 16—18. So, again, Christ is willing to be just like His servants.

(3) There is one watching Jesus, full of dread and full of hatred. Satan has seen the Nazarene workman who never sinned—has heard that wondrous Voice from heaven at the Jordan—knows this lonely wanderer in the desert is the Redeemer promised so many ages before in Eden (Gen. iii. 15)—knows what He is come for, 1 John iii. 8. He will try if even that Holy One can be tempted, if even that Mighty One can be conquered.

(4) The forty days are over. The pangs of a six weeks' abstinence suddenly seize upon Jesus. Now, at the moment of seeming weakness, is the devil's opportunity. How Satan tempted Jesus, and how Jesus conquered Satan, we will see next Sunday. But when the conflict was over, who brought to Jesus the food for which His human body fainted? Here, again, the Master like the servants; comp. 1 Kings xix. 5; Ps. lxxviii. 25.

THUS WE SEE THE SON OF GOD 'MADE IN ALL THINGS LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN.'

We have seen—

(a) Him who knew no sin, submitting to the baptism of repentance, like the sinful men around Him.

(b) Him who perfectly knew and loved God's will, obeying the inward guiding of the Holy Spirit, just as we, who cannot otherwise do right, ought to do.

(c) Him to whom all the earth belongs, patiently suffering for want of the commonest food.

(d) Him who is the Lord of angels, condescending to be tempted by the prince of the fallen angels, and to be tended by His own unfallen angels.

Let us adore His wondrous love. All this was for us.

Let us strive to be like Him who was content to be like us. How?

Do we confess sin, and seek cleansing?

Do we pray to 'be filled with the Spirit,' and obey His 'godly motions'?

Do we 'use such abstinence' (from all earthly indulgence) that 'our flesh may be subdued to the Spirit'?

Do we bear patiently any suffering God may send upon us?

Do we steadfastly 'resist the devil'?

NOTES.

1. It has been much disputed whether John had ever seen Jesus when He came to be baptised; in other words, whether the 'I knew him not' of John i. 31 refers to Christ's person or to His Messiah-ship. Undoubtedly the village carpenter and the wanderer in the desert would not be intimate, and the mediæval conception of 'the Holy Family,' as we see it embodied in pictures, is as groundless as many other ideas of the period. But it seems impossible that two Jews, relatives, should live so long without even meeting at the yearly feasts, from which we have no reason to suppose John absented himself. And if John knew nothing of Jesus, why did he shrink from baptizing Him? He certainly did not know He was the Messiah: upon this point John i. 32, 33 is decisive. His reluctance must have sprung from his own knowledge of the holy life of Jesus at Nazareth.

2. 'Went up straightway out of the water.' The word 'straightway,' or 'immediately,' seems to indicate that Jesus did not wait in the water to receive the instructions which it is probable John had adopted from the Jewish customs in the baptism of proselytes (see Luke iii. 10-14).

3. 'The heavens opened.' The word rendered 'opened' in St. Mark's account is a very striking one, different from that used by Matthew and Luke, and means literally 'cleft asunder' (Alford).

4. The Holy Spirit descended, not only in the manner of a dove, but in the bodily shape of a dove (Luke). Alford says, 'The modern explanations of the "like a dove," as importing the manner of coming down, belong to the vain rationalistic attempt to reduce down that which is miraculous.' The Descent of the Holy Ghost was probably seen, and the Divine Voice heard, only by Jesus and John.

5. The 'wilderness' named as the scene of the Temptation is thought by some to have been the desert of Sinai, where Moses and Elijah fasted, but was more probably the same that John the Baptist appeared in. (Lesson XI., Note 2.) An old tradition points to a precipitous mountain just above Jericho as the 'exceeding high mountain,' and it is called *Quarantania*, from the forty days.

6. 'With the wild beasts.' The second Adam is here represented with the dominion given to the first Adam, but partly lost at the Fall. See the apostolic exposition of Psalm viii. in Heb. ii.

7. On our Lord's forty days' fast, Trenchard observes:—'To bring in here His divine power, or to suppose that He fasted otherwise than as a man, is to rob the transaction of its whole meaning. Uprone and upholden above the common needs of the animal life by the great tides of spiritual gladness, in the strength of that recent Baptism, in the solemn joy of that salutation and recognition from His Father, He found and felt no need for all these forty days.'

And as no man can naturally subsist for so long without food, the support of His bodily life during that period was strictly miraculous.

The expression 'He afterward hungered' proves that the spirit so triumphed over the flesh that Jesus did not feel hunger till after the forty days. In John iv. 6-8, 31-34, we have a similar, though slighter, incident of our Lord's life. In a lesser degree, men have passed through a like experience, under intense feelings of joyous or sorrowful excitement: it was so with Saul of Tarsus, Acts ix. 9.

8. Mark and Luke say that Satan also tempted Christ during the forty days. Possibly only by inward suggestion. Certainly 'the Temptation' began afterwards.

Lesson XIII.—The Three Temptations.

'In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'

Read—Matt. iv. 1—11; Learn—Heb. iv. 15; James iv. 7; Ps. xvii. 5.
(*Hymns, 154, 166, 169, 194, 375.*)

TO THE TEACHER.

The writer's design in the following Sketch has been to show as clearly as possible the peculiar force of each temptation, and to lay stress upon the way in which each was met by our Lord. Great condensation has been found necessary, and the teacher must give a good deal of thought to the subject, if he would describe the conflict to his scholars as one who understands its meaning himself.

The explanation in the Sketch of the difficult words, 'Man shall not live,' &c., is but a superficial one; but their full significance (*see Note 6*) could hardly be taught.

No attempt has been made to include in the Sketch any comparison of the three temptations with those which meet children in their daily life; simply because any illustrations that might be given would *narrow* the application, and appear to exclude all that did not chance to be mentioned. The following hints, however, will give some idea how the comparison may be made:—

(1) A child, when deprived of something it desired, murmurs and complains, and then perhaps seeks it by unlawful means. Numberless childish sins are of this kind. And what was the object of the *first* temptation, but to raise discontent in the mind of Jesus, and lead Him to get for Himself what His Father had not given Him?

(2) A child will go its own road, and have its own way, and often run into bodily danger, saying, 'Oh! it's all right!' or 'I don't care!' This spirit, variously manifested, appears in all children. And what is it but the same presumption into which the *second* temptation was designed to drive our Lord?

(3) A child will do a single (and apparently little) act of sin—it may be a lie, or an ebullition of temper, or an act of disobedience, or an omission of duty—to get some coveted object, lawful or unlawful. Was it not this that Christ recoiled from in the *third* temptation?

These are but meagre suggestions, but the whole subject is so full that pages might be occupied with the thoughts which crowd upon the mind. Some further topics of study will be found in Notes 1 and 2. Teachers of elder classes would do well to take some opportunity of applying the subject to the familiar details of every-day life in a week-day walk with any scholar to whom such a conversation would be especially useful. The Lesson deserves more time than the ordinary teaching hour.

There is a very interesting chapter on the Temptation in Archbishop Trench's *Studies in the Gospels*. Dr. Hanna, also, is excellent on this passage.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

To-day we are to look a little more at the Temptation of Christ. Where did we leave Him? how long had He been there? At the end of the forty days what was Jesus suffering from? [*Recapitulate.*] Now Satan appears [*see Lesson XII., Note 8*]—thinks a chance now—how does he begin?

THE FIRST TEMPTATION.

Satan reminds Jesus of the voice at His baptism—'Are you the Son of God? Has God left His Son to perish with hunger? Can He be your Father? But if you are the Son of God, you need not perish—you have power—exert it; *if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*' Does Jesus falter? Does He doubt the Father's love? Will He work a miracle for Himself? He simply rejects the temptation altogether.

But how? Does He argue with Satan about His being the Son of God? He leaves that alone. He just takes His place as a man. Weak sinful men were sustained by God without *earthly food*, not for forty days, but for forty years, see Deut. viii. 2—6. He quotes God's very words to them, and is content, like them and all other men, to depend simply on the Father's bounty.

THE SECOND TEMPTATION.

The devil can do nothing with such simple child-like trust—but, perhaps, by flattering it, he may make it presumptuous. They stand on the edge of a lofty tower on the Temple wall. Down far below is the Valley of Jehoshaphat—so far below that one cannot look down for giddiness [*see Note 4*]. Satan points down there—'Shew how much you trust your Father by throwing

yourself over — fear not lest you fall — you trust in the Father—remember how the Scriptures you quoted speak of His angels having charge of His children—‘*if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.*’

And why should He not? Because this is not God’s appointed way of honouring His Son. And Jesus will shew men that to expect God’s blessing when they are not walking in *His appointed ways* (see Ps. xci. 11), is to ‘tempt God’—and whatever may seem harmless, to do *that* is to sin, Deut. vi. 16.

THE THIRD TEMPTATION.

Satan will make one last effort. Ever since the Fall he has been the ‘god and prince of this world,’ 2 Cor. iv. 4; John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11. He knows this Galilean is really the Son of God, come to claim His usurped throne. Can he get Him to receive it *from himself*, and so acknowledge his supremacy? Before those eyes which had for thirty years looked on the familiar hills of Galilee he now displays the treasures and glory of his vast empire—‘That shall be yours—only do me homage.’

How could this be a temptation to the holy Saviour? It offered—(1) that His kingdom, which should put an end to all the sin and misery that so pained Him, should begin *at once*—(2) that He should gain that kingdom without conflict and suffering. But Jesus will not do evil that good may come. (Comp. David, 1 Sam. xxiv.) ‘The cup that His Father has given Him, shall He not drink it?’ John xviii. 11. See Heb. ii. 9, 10; Phil. ii. 8—11; Isa. liii. 12. In holy wrath He spurns the tempter from His presence.

But *how*, again? Not as the Son of God who ought Himself to be worshipped—not as having power over all and so power over Satan; no, but as a man, as one of us. He,

a man, must obey God’s laws; He, a loyal subject, must worship none but God.

Satan leaves Him ‘for a season.’ When did he return? Look how, with unwearied subtlety, he afterwards employed priests, and even an apostle, to assail Jesus, Matt. xxvii. 40, xvi. 22, 23. Think, too, of His own final attack in the Garden and on the Cross, see John xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 53.

Why should the Son of God submit to all this? [*Refer to motto of preceding lesson.*]

Was not Satan a fearful adversary to contend against? *The same adversary assails us now.* See Job i. 7; Luke xxii. 31; Eph. vi. 12; 1 Pet. v. 8. And with the same temptations, sometimes to doubt God’s love, sometimes to ‘tempt God,’ sometimes to do evil that good may come. [See *Introductory Note.*] What shall we do?

1. *Look to Christ for sympathy.* See Heb. ii. 18, iv. 15; Luke xxii. 31, 32. Are we in the midst of ‘those evils which the craft and subtlety of the devil worketh against us’? Let us ‘cast our care upon Him, for He careth for us.’

‘He knows what sore temptations mean—
For He has felt the same.’

2. *Look to Christ for example.* How can we copy Him? (a) Resist the devil, Jas. iv. 7; 1 Pet. v. 9. Watch against the first suggestions even to seemingly little sins. Ps. xxxix. 1; Matt. xxvi. 41; 1 Thess. v. 22. Struggle against continuous and repeated temptations, Eph. vi. 10—13; Heb. xii. 4; Luke xxi. 36; 1 Cor. xvi. 13. (b) Use God’s Word as your weapon, and have it always ready, Eph. vi. 17; Heb. iv. 12; Ps. xvii. 4, xxxvii. 31, cxix. 11.

3. *Look to Christ for strength.* Satan is stronger than we, but Christ is stronger still. Do all in dependence on Him, 2 Cor. xii. 9; Eph. vi. 16; with constant prayers such as Ps. xvii. 5, xix. 13; Matt. vi. 13.

NOTES.

1. The *order* of the three temptations is differently given by Matthew and Luke. That of the former is obviously correct as to *time*; Luke’s is the order in which temptation is usually classified in the Bible; see next Note.

2. The three temptations have a remarkable correspondence with the threefold aiurement which beguiled Eve, with the threefold division of temptation in 1 John ii. 16, and with our common threefold expression—‘the world, the flesh, and the devil.’ Thus:—

‘Good for food’—‘The lust of the flesh’—The flesh—1st temptation.

‘Pleasant to the eyes’—‘The lust of the eyes’—The world—2nd temptation (*in Luke’s order*).

‘To make one wise’—‘The pride of life’—The devil—3rd temptation (*in Luke’s order*).

There is scarcely any sin that we commit which has not some point of likeness to one or other of those to which the devil tempted Christ.

On the other hand, when the three temptations are examined closely, they seem—although different in form, and different in the *inducements* presented in each case—to be really and

essentially temptations to one and the same sin, viz., *self-will*; the meaning of which is that the guilt of all sin, as against God, is that it is a turning ‘each one to his own way,’ a refusal simply to walk in God’s way—in a word, disobedience.

To illustrate this identity of the three temptations—which of the three was it that led Ananias and Sapphira into sin? Certainly the *first*—for they could not deny themselves the ordinary means of subsistence, from want of faith in God’s over-ruling care. Certainly the *second*—for they ‘tempted God,’ as Peter told them; and that by seeking the favour of men, and thinking to honour God and obtain His blessing in a path contrary to His will. Certainly the *third*—for they thought to secure treasure to themselves at the expense of just one little unspoken falsehood. In short, they went *their own way*, and found that ‘there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of the death.’ We have seen that the temptation which beguiled Eve partook of the nature of all three. Archbp. Thomson

(*Dict. of Bible*, Art. 'Jesus Christ') says:—'The three temptations are addressed to the three forms in which the disease of sin makes its appearance on the soul—to the sense of sense, the love of praise, and the desire of gain. But there is one element common to them all—they are attempts to call up a wilful and wayward spirit, in contrast to a patient self-denying one.'

Taking the temptations in their simpler and more obvious aspect, we may illustrate the first by Job, the second by Ananias and Sapphira, the third by Judas Iscariot. In Num. xiv. we find the Israelites overtaken by the first and second in succession, ver. 1-4, 40-45. Other examples of 'tempting God' occur in Exod. xvii. 2; Ps. lxxviii. 18, 56; Acts xv. 10. We may contrast the tremendous bribe rejected by Jesus on the mountain with the paltry bribes taken by men, Josh. vii. 21; 2 Kings v. 23; Matt. xxvi. 15; Heb. xii. 16.

3. The whole narrative of the temptation unmistakably describes actual occurrences. But it is probable that 'all the kingdoms of the world' were seen by Jesus in a wondrous vision conjured up by the tempter. The narrative affords decisive proof of the real personality of Satan. He 'comes,' he 'says,' he 'takes,' he 'shows,' he 'departs.'

4. The 'pinnacle of the Temple' probably means the Royal Porch or Cloister of Herod, a tower built at the south-eastern angle of the Temple wall, overhanging the valley of Jehosaphat. Josephus says that the height was so great as to cause dizziness, and this, though long considered an exaggeration, has been fully borne out by the researches of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The tower seems to have been 240 feet high from the bottom of the wall, and the wall crowned the top of the cliff of Moriah, itself 200 feet high from the brook Kedron, so that the whole height would exceed that of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Some have thought that the temptation here presented to our Lord was to display supernatural power before the assembled worshippers in the Temple courts; but if so, then He could not have stood on what was strictly the 'pinnacle of the Temple,' and the height would be comparatively trifling.

5. It is remarkable that the texts quoted by our Lord were all from the section of the book of Deuteronomy which was especially taught to all Jewish children, and which, therefore, He had Himself learned as a boy. Stier beautifully says:—'The Living Eternal Word vested Himself in the written Word.' Satan obviously quoted Scripture because Jesus evidently held it in such reverence. From this we learn that the devil can use texts when they suit his purpose; and from his omission of the words 'in all thy ways,' that he can cunningly *mis-quote* them too. Plumpton observes, that the words might well appear likely to lead astray one who had already moved unhurt among the 'lion and adder,' the 'young lion and the dragon' (see Ps. xci.).

6. '*Man shall not live,*' &c. The great lesson learned by Israel in the wilderness was *simple obedience to God without fear of consequences*. This is spiritual life, a far higher life than the bodily—and God takes care that those who seek the former shall have the latter's wants provided. Christ, tempted by Satan to think first of the bodily life, quotes the words in which this great principle is embodied. And, in Matt. vi. 33, He calls on His people to live upon the same principle.

7. *Illustrations*.—'You carry gunpowder about with you. Oh, beware of sparks!' (*Flavel*). 'There was, no doubt, a moment when a pitcher of water in the hands of a little child might have quenched what became the Great Fire of London.' (*Trench*).—The strength of a chain is virtually only that of its weakest link.—The *Pilgrim's Progress* is full of illustrations of resistance to temptation.

Lesson XIV.—The Baptist's Testimony.

'Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.'

Read—John i. 19-37, iii. 26-36; Learn—John iii. 28-30; 2 Cor. iv. 5.
(*Hymns*, 61, 93, 102, 104, 120, 231 (v. 3, 4), 232.)

TO THE TEACHER.

To bring the Baptist's testimony concerning Christ all together into one lesson, there has been included in this Sketch what he said six weeks before the incidents of John i. 19-37, and also what he said at a later period, after our Lord's public ministry had begun. The Lesson, therefore, is partly supplementary to that on 'The Forerunner,' partly carries on the direct history, partly refers by anticipation to subsequent events.

As the subject itself is one which, although important, may at first sight look uninteresting, an attempt is made in the Sketch to throw some attractiveness into the method of teaching it. This is done in two ways:—

(1) By opening the Lesson with an illustration, which serves afterwards as a 'hinge' on which to 'swing' both the recapitulation and the application, and which is therefore (to change the figure) the key of the whole. The other illustrations suggested in the closing paragraph, especially that of the lamp (a Scriptural one), will also be found useful.

(2) By introducing the same three points in John's testimony three times in different parts of the Sketch. This will be seen by comparing the three groups of sentences marked (a) (b) (c), which correspond to one another in each case. If the teacher will but give the experiment a fair trial, he will find that *unity* is an attractive feature in any lesson. A chain of connected links is more easily carried than the same quantity of metal in loose fragments.

Teachers of junior classes may have to omit portions of the second division ('How the Testimony was received'), but, if they use simple language, they can easily teach the first ('The Testimony').

It is not intended that the important passage, John iii. 26—36, should be read through. In doing so, it would be necessary to explain it in detail, which would be impossible in this Lesson. Only such verses should be referred to as are wanted.

Teachers of senior classes should seize the opportunity, afforded by the application suggested, to urge the necessity of a fearless 'witness' for Christ in workshops, &c.; and this not only respecting the claims of religion generally, but especially respecting those great truths which formed the burden of John's testimony, and which our young people will find to be 'everywhere spoken against.'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

We must now go back to John the Baptist. We saw, three Sundays ago, how plainly he told the Jews he was not the coming King, but only sent to prepare the way for Him. Let us see what He said—his 'testimony'—about that King.

Testimony—what is that? [*Illustrate by witnesses in law courts, &c.*] We are all *witnesses*—give *testimony every day*—*i. e.*, tell what have seen and heard. Is our testimony always *true*? Often tempted not to tell right, when we have to say what will be disliked, disbelieved, laughed at, &c.; or, what will make others think less of us (*e. g.*, boy having to tell of schoolfellow better or cleverer than himself). [*Illustrate further.*]

Now see how John gave his 'testimony,' and what came of it.

I. THE TESTIMONY.

(1) What was it He said at the first? Look at Matt. iii. 11, 12; Mark i. 7, 8; Luke iii. 16, 17. The coming One was to be greater than John, so much greater that John would feel unfit even to be His slave [*see Note 2*—was to baptize, and that not merely with water, as a token of repentance, but inwardly, by giving the Holy Spirit to come into men's hearts and cleanse them through and through as metals are purified by fire;—was to be like a farmer winnowing corn: and what should happen to the chaff, to the worthless in His sight?—what to the pure and wholesome grain?

(2) But, now John speaks still more clearly—that coming One has appeared—he knows Him now—he has seen Him—when?—what had he seen at the same time?—how had he known what that wondrous sight meant? Matt. iii. 16, 17; John i. 32, 33. [*Refer to Lesson XII.*] Six weeks have passed since then; and now there comes to John a solemn deputation from Jerusalem to inquire who he is. [*Read Rev. 19—28.*] How does John answer? how does he now speak of the King?

(a) *As One already come*—(ver. 26)—

'there standeth one among you'—unknown—unnoticed among the people (see John i. 10)—'*this is He.*' (Where had Jesus been since John last saw Him?)

(b) *As the Lamb of God*—(ver. 29)—the true Lamb, typified by the passover lamb, prophesied of as 'led to the slaughter,' see Exod. xii. 1—13; Isa. liii. 7; Acts viii. 32; 1 Cor. v. 7; Rev. xiii. 8. [*See Note 4.*]

(c) *As the Son of God*—(ver. 34)—no mere man, fallen and weak, but One almighty and all-sufficient. See Heb. vii. 25—27.

II. HOW THE TESTIMONY WAS RECEIVED.

(1) Did the priests and Levites believe all this? They do not even inquire for this 'One standing among them'; and see what Jesus said to them afterwards (John v. 33, 38, 40, 43). Just so it was thirty years before, when the Magi at Jerusalem. But can we see *why* they did not believe John? They *would* think (a) how could Messiah be 'standing among them' and they not know it? how could this rough preacher know better than they? (b) How could Messiah be like a lamb? He might indeed get rid of the world's sin by slaying those wicked Gentiles, but that would not be lamb-like. (c) How could an unnoticed person in the crowd be the 'Son of God'?

(2) But there were some who did believe. Here are two fishermen from Galilee: they had come to hear John—had been convinced of their sins—had confessed them—had been baptized; and then had not gone home again, but stayed with John. And now he has told them just what they want—(b) of One who can take away the guilt of those sins they have confessed—who will 'bear their iniquities'—as they have often read in Isaiah's prophecy should be done by One who would be 'led as a lamb to the slaughter' (Isa. liii.)—(a) of One too who, being one of themselves, could understand them;—(c) and yet the Son of God, able to 'save them to the uttermost.' They did not understand all

this clearly, as we do; but when John *again* pointed out to them the 'Lamb of God' (ver. 36), what did they do?

(3) Is John jealous of his followers leaving him to go after some one else? He has yet more to bear in this way. Jesus, after a little while, comes forward publicly, teaching and baptizing, like John, and doing what John had not done—what? (chap. ii. 23, x. 41.) What is the consequence? (chap. iii. 26, iv. 1.) How does John like the people being drawn away from him? Look at chap. iii. 28—31; he knows he is not the bridegroom—content to be the bridegroom's friend, to bring the bridegroom (*Christ*) and the bride (*His people*) together—his heart full, not of jealousy, but of joy. And see what he says about Jesus, more solemn than anything he has said before, ver. 36.

See what a good 'witness' John was. [Refer to opening illustration.] Did he tell what was true? (iii. 32); where did he learn what he told? (i. 33). Did he take care to say nothing but what the Jews would like? Did his testimony exalt or lower himself? When Jesus became greater than he was, how did he like it? [Recapitulate.]

ARE THERE ANY WITNESSES LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST NOW?

1. Witnesses (ministers, teachers, Bibles, good books) come and tell *you* the very same things: (a) Jesus one of us—a man; (b) Jesus the Lamb slain for sinners; (c) Jesus the Son of God. How do we receive this 'testimony'?—like the Jews, 'making God a liar' (see 1 John v. 10)—or like the two fishermen, 'setting our seal to it [as to an agreement] that God is true'? (see John iii. 33).

2. You ought to be witnesses too. What do we light lamps for?—just to burn the gas or oil?—what for? Look at Matt. v. 15, 16—what does Christ want His people to be like? and see what He called John the Baptist, John v. 35. Comp. Phil. ii. 15. [Other illustrations:—*Passing on good news; Handing buckets of water on from one to another at a fire.*] Let us say, with Peter (Acts iv. 20), 'We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' And if we 'testify' about Christ, what should it lead others to do?—what did John's words lead his disciples to do? Let the text for repetition (2 Cor. iv. 5) be true of us all.

NOTES.

1. 'Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not,' &c. Lightfoot shows from the Rabbinical writings that the Jews expected Elias to introduce a general baptism or purification of the nation (from Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, Zech. xiii. 1), when he should appear (according to Mal. iv. 5) to prepare for Messiah's coming.

2. 'Shoe's latchet,' the lace or thong by which the sandal was fastened. Tying, untying, and carrying the sandals was a slave's duty.

3. Did the Baptist speak the words of John i. 29—34 to his own disciples only, or to the people present, or to the deputation from Jerusalem? The latter appears the natural sense of the passage; and our Lord seems to refer to the testimony then given in His defence before the Jewish rulers, John v. 32, 33.

4. 'The Lamb of God, which taketh away,' &c. Kitto observes, that the prophetic figure may have been suggested to the Baptist's mind by the sight of flocks of lambs being driven from the pasturages of Perœa, across the fords of the Jordan, to Jerusalem, for use at the approaching Passover (John ii. 13); and that he would say, as it were, 'These are but types—

behold the true Lamb,' &c. Alford refers the words to the great Messianic prophecy of Isa. liii. Plumptre suggests that John may have observed upon our Lord's face the traces of His severe privations and conflicts in the wilderness, from which He had just returned; and that thus Isaiah's prophecy would occur to his mind—the 'visage marred more than any man'—'a man of sorrows'—'wounded for our transgressions'—'brought as a lamb to the slaughter.' The Greek word 'taketh away' is used in the Septuagint version to express the idea of *bearing guilt* in Exod. xxviii. 38; Lev. v. 1; Ezek. xviii. 20.

These words must have sunk deep into the heart of his disciple John (the Evangelist), as our Lord is frequently spoken of as a Lamb in his writings (thirty times in the Book of Revelation), and nowhere else in the New Testament.

5. The idea of 'testifying,' 'bearing witness,' &c., is very prominent in the New Testament. 'The word μαρτυρία (*testimony*) and its cognates occur 152 times. Of these 31 are found in our Lord's recorded teaching (26 in St. John, and 5 in the other Gospels), and 58 in the language of St. John himself.'—(Plumptre.)

Lesson XV.—The First Disciples.

'Not many wise men, not many mighty, not many noble.'

Read—John i. 37—51; Learn—John xvii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. (Hymns, 19, 120, 123, 329, 331.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The passage from which this Lesson is taken is peculiarly rich in excellent points of practical application. Some of these are suggested in the questions in the last paragraph but one of the Sketch; but they can be introduced incidentally in the course of the

exposition, if preferred (such a *running* application is permissible in this Lesson, though not in most others); or they can be altogether omitted. In any case they must, however attractive, be considered subordinate to the main subject, which is—in a Course like the present—not the characters of Andrew, Philip, &c., but, more generally, *the founding of the Christian Church*. The chief application, therefore, is—(1) Are we true members of the Church, 'Israelites indeed'? (2) Christ, who knew Peter and Nathanael so well, knows whether we are so or no.

In using the illustration of the river, a particular river known to the children should be referred to if possible. Other illustrations might be used instead of this one, *e.g.*, the oak-tree springing from the acorn, or the building rising stone by stone (a very appropriate symbol of the Church). The illustration of the eye must be used cautiously: children should learn that the thought of Christ's omniscience is not necessarily a terrible one—to the Christian it is a cause of thankfulness and hope, like the watching eye of the mother, which gives confidence to the child when attempting to do something difficult for the first time.

If the teacher is not careful, this passage will be a source of confusion to the scholars: they will not distinguish between John the Baptist and John the Evangelist.

Our Lord's interview with Nathanael is full of interesting points, and would by itself make an attractive lesson for an elder class; but on this occasion, and especially with junior classes, it cannot receive much attention. For the teacher's information, however, Notes 5 to 10, on this subject, have been added.

There is a good chapter on this passage in Trench's *Studies in the Gospels*.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Jesus is again at the bank of the Jordan—consecrated by His baptism, strengthened (Heb. v. 8) by His endurance of the days of Fasting and His victory in the Temptation, endued with the Holy Spirit 'without measure,'—His public ministry on earth must now begin. How will He set about it? Will He present Himself before the rulers at Jerusalem—work mighty miracles to shew who He is? No—will begin quietly—His first followers not to be great folk. What does to-day's text say? now see how true it is.

Have you seen a great river?—broad and deep—bridges across—steamers, &c. on it—could you count the drops of water? Church of Christ like that—multitudes worshipping every Sunday all over the world—could you count them? *But go where river begins*—little bubbling spring—how wonderful to think that becomes the great river. *Can we go to beginning of Church?* See it to-day—see the *first five members*.

1. *John and Andrew.* [Read ver. 35–40.] Last Sunday we saw how Jesus was pointed out to two Galilean fishermen. Who were they? [See Note 1.] What did the Baptist tell them of Him? Let us follow them as with eager steps they go after Jesus. How kindly He speaks to them! Why do they want to go home with Him? Would a few minutes be enough for them? They are sinners seeking a Saviour—long to know more of Him. And that very evening [see Note 2] they are persuaded that this humble workman from Nazareth is, indeed, the promised King. (See ver. 41.) Persuaded by what? by miracles? His blessed words are enough; see John vi. 68, vii. 46.

2. *Simon Peter.* [Read ver. 41, 42.] They cannot keep the glad tidings to themselves.

[Refer to illustrations in preceding Lesson.] If you had good news, to whom would you tell it first? John and Andrew have brothers—Andrew's is close by. Quickly he is brought to Jesus. What is his name? But Jesus greets him with a new name—not, indeed, to be his yet—'thou shalt be called' [comp. 'thou art,' in Matt. xvi. 18]—why not? Simon is full of love and ardour, but unsteady, easily moved this way and that—so not like a 'stone.' But should grow to be firm and steadfast—being with Jesus, should become like Jesus (see Heb. xiii. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 4–6; 1 Cor. iii. 11), and be fit to be a 'foundation-stone' (see Eph. ii. 20; Gal. ii. 9; Matt. xvi. 18) of the Church that day founded.

3. *Philip.* [Read ver. 43, 44.] The next day a fourth disciple joins the band, not of his own accord (like John and Andrew), not invited by a brother (like Simon)—how then? Does he hesitate to 'follow' the quiet Nazarene? When he comes to Jesus, whom does he meet besides? are they strangers to him? ver. 44.

4. *Nathanael.* [Read ver. 45–51.] Philip has a friend—must bring him to Jesus. No doubt the two have often talked together about the promises 'which Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write,' (ver. 43)—perhaps Nathanael is thinking about them when Philip comes in. Startling news—'We have found Him!' Whom? where? from Nazareth? impossible! How wisely Philip answers! not angrily, not arguing, but quietly waiting—by-and-by Nathanael will agree with him.

Jesus sees the doubter coming—is not angry—knows how many Jews are unworthy of their name (see Rom. ix. 6: Rev. iii. 9)—knows this man is one of the 'Israel

of God' (Gal. vi. 16; Rom. ii. 28, 29). He who had predicted Simon's steadfastness, now proclaims Nathanael's sincerity.

Think of Nathanael's amazement—what at? (1) at hearing a stranger describe his character, ver. 47; (2) at finding that the stranger's eye has watched his movements, ver. 48 (comp. John iv. 17, 18, v. 14). He feels as David did, Ps. cxxxix. 1—3; his whole heart bows in adoration; he, the 'Israelite indeed,' acknowledges this Nazarene as the Divine King of Israel'; called to see the 'son of Joseph,' he beholds the 'Son of God.'

See how Jesus rewards the faith of the 'Israelite indeed,' ver. 51—wondrous promise! His ancestor (the man whom God named 'Israel') saw a vision—what was it? But he shall see the true 'ladder,' the true 'way' by which to mount to heaven, and that 'way' the very *Man* [note the expression 'Son of Man'] whom he has just confessed as the *Son of God*. [See Notes 7, 9, 10.]

THESE WERE THE FIRST DISCIPLES, the first members of the Christian Church. What a small beginning! [Refer to illustration of river, above.] Think what the Church has grown to now. And it is still extending—missionaries on the Ganges and the Niger just continuing what Jesus Himself began on the Jordan.

To this Church we belong, born in a

Christian country—dedicated to Christ in Baptism. But, as there were *Israelites in name only*, and '*Israelites indeed*,' so now not all who belong to the Church are true disciples.

ARE WE TRUE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST?

See if we are like those we have now read of. Do we, like John and Andrew, come to the 'Laub of God'? Do we seek to be like Simon, *stones* in the great building of the Church? (Who can make us so? Eph. ii. 22.) Do we, like Philip, obey Christ's call? Do we, like Andrew and Philip, seek to bring others to Christ? (Especially those at home; Peter's after-life shews what a *brother's word can do*.) Do we, like Nathanael, confess Christ as our King?

Remember that CHRIST KNOWS us—knows the true answer to these questions. He who knew the characters of Peter and Nathanael knows ours. See Matt. ix. 4, xii. 25; Luke vi. 8; John ii. 24, 25; Rev. ii. 23. [Illustration:—*French general confined in dungeon—in the wall a small hole—through it a sentinel watched him perpetually. The thought of that eye ever on him most oppressive of all sufferings.*] What does He see in us?—'No guile'? [See Note 6.] This is what He looks for, Ps. li. 6, comp. Ps. xxxii. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 1. Can we adopt Peter's words, John xxi. 17? Pray—'Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open,' &c.

NOTES.

1. There can be little doubt that Andrew's companion in following our Lord was John the Evangelist himself, as throughout his Gospel he never mentions himself by name, but uses such expressions as 'that other disciple,' &c. Between chapters i. 19, and ii. 11, we have the incidents of (apparently) seven successive days narrated almost as in a diary. To St. John these must have been memorable days; and, with a recollection quickened by the Divine Spirit, he was able to record exact hours and exact words more than forty years afterwards.

2. '*The tenth hour*.'—By the Jewish mode of reckoning, which is probably intended, this would answer to our four P.M. Some suppose that the modern method of reckoning, which would make it ten A.M., was common among the Romans, and that St. John, writing after the fall of Jerusalem, adopts it; and refer also to chap. iv. 6, 52, xix. 14. Others think these passages confirm the common view.

3. *Cephas* is the Aramaic (the vernacular Hebrew at the time), *Peter* the Greek, for 'stone.'

4. Philip seems to have been a type of those who simply believe the Gospel without being troubled with objections which occur to others; and even when these are suggested to them, their faith is not affected by their own inability to answer them. They reply to the objector, as Philip did to Nathanael, 'Come and see.'

5. Nathanael is generally supposed to be the same as Bartholomew the Apostle, on the following grounds:—(1) In three out of four lists of the twelve, Bartholomew is coupled with Philip, who brought Nathanael to Jesus.

(2) Bartholomew is never named by John; Nathanael never by the other Evangelists. (3) Nathanael appears as a companion of the Apostles after Christ's Resurrection.

Bartholomew means 'the son of Tolmai,' and would probably, therefore, not be a personal name. Nathanael means 'gift of God,' and is, therefore, the same name as our 'Theodore.'

6. '*In whom is no guile*' does not, of course, mean *without guilt*; but that Nathanael's character was sincere, transparent, *guileless*. There could not be a better illustration of it than the simplicity with which he said, 'How knowest Thou me?'—in entire unconsciousness that he was virtually praising himself.

7. Nathanael's confession was a very remarkable one, and should be compared with Peter's, Matt. xvi. 16; Martha's, John xi. 27; and Thomas's, John xx. 28, all which were made much later. That the coming 'King of Israel' should be the 'Son of God' he would learn from Ps. ii., yet how little this was understood by the Jews we see from John v. 18, x. 30—39.

8. '*Verily, verily*.'—The original is 'Amen, Amen.' This repetition of the word only occurs in those of our Lord's discourses given by John. It always introduces a statement of solemn importance, and comes fitly from Him who is the 'Amen,' Rev. iii. 14.

9. '*Hereafter ye shall see*,' &c.—Most expositors see in these words a reference to Jacob's ladder, and interpret them spiritually, as meaning that Christ is the true ladder between heaven and earth, His divinity attaching Him to heaven, His humanity to earth; through or 'upon'

whom alone can the angels descend and ascend in their 'ministering' errands (Heb. i. 14) between a holy God and sinful men.

The following striking explanation is suggested by Mr. G. Warrington:—Jacob's vision was given him at a time when his position as the chosen 'seed' seemed most doubtful, the fulfilment of God's promise most unlikely. He was an exile, hated and threatened by his brother. The vision assured him of God's care of him, and the certainty of the promise. The hosts of heaven were on *his* side; what need he fear from men's opposition? Jesus had just been acknowledged as the Messiah, the promised King, the Head of the true Israel. But His brethren after the flesh would, as a whole, reject and desire to kill Him. How would the disciples' faith stand this? The same comfort and support which Jacob had had, they should have also. They should have visible proof that *heaven* was on His side, even when things were at their worst. Every miracle, every heavenly voice, every vision of angelic attendants, would come

under this promise; heaven was 'open' to them, and they could see on which side God was: 'angels were ascending and descending upon the Son of Man'; He was their care, because their Master.

10. It is remarkable that Jesus should use the name by which He usually spoke of Himself—'Son of Man'—for the first time just when He was hailed as the 'Son of God'; as He did also at His trial, Matt. xxvi. 64. The expression occurs eighty-eight times in the Gospels, and always used by Christ Himself. We only find it in three other places, Acts vii. 56, Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14, all of which are significant of the *Manhood in heaven*. Our Lord no doubt employed it with special reference to the great prophecy of Dan. vii. It was as *Son of Man* that Christ claimed power to forgive sins, to be lord of the Sabbath, and to execute judgment, Mark ii. 10, 28; John v. 27; Matt. xxv. 31.

11. On 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' see Notes to Lessons IV. & IX.

LESSON XVI.—The First Miracle.

'The Son of Man is come eating and drinking.'

Read—John ii. 1—11; Learn—John ii. 11; Phil. iv. 19; Eph. iii. 20.

(Hymns, 41, 96, 150, 279, 289, 322.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Our Lord's first miracle was one of great importance, as indicating the nature of His religion. 'The Son of Man,' unlike the Baptist, 'came eating and drinking,' to shew that Christianity was not for the cloister, but for everyday life. Coming close upon the stern preaching of John, the fact that our Lord mingled in the common scenes of social intercourse must have greatly impressed His disciples, and we know that it was subsequently a cause of accusation against Him.

It is in this light, therefore, that we should view this narrative; and in actual teaching we shall find the lesson much enhanced in interest by the thought of the surprise which the disciples must have felt, first at Jesus attending the feast, and still more at His using His miraculous power for such a purpose; while the practical lessons flowing from these points are very important and useful.

With a subject in which picturing will occupy so prominent a place, illustrations are superfluous, except with regard to the 'manifesting' of Christ's 'glory,' and the one given below for this will suggest others if they are wanted. In the application, however, the teacher cannot refer too familiarly, or in too great detail, to the daily lives of the scholars, to shew how Christ can be with them everywhere, and how His being with them will make them happier. The way of doing this will vary with the ages and circumstances of the scholars: thus, in the first paragraph of the application below, while 'home' and 'streets' apply to all, the other places named do not. The following illustrates what is meant by Christ turning our 'water' into 'wine':—An ordinary school-boy sets about a long-division sum in a spirit of discontent at having such a task, and throws it aside when done with a gasp of relief. At the best, it is 'something that has got to be done,' and the sooner it is done the better. But the Christian boy goes to it with a light heart, sees in it something his Father has given him to do, feels it is for the time 'his Father's business,' and takes a pleasure in it. Few boys feel this, it is true, but *how happy* those who do!

The junior class teacher will confine himself to picturing the narrative, to the section (a) of the third division, and to such parts of the application as flow naturally from this section.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Let us go back to Nazareth to-day, to the quiet home where Jesus lived so long. He is not there—been absent two months—went away, like so many others, to go down to the Jordan, to be baptized by the great preacher there. Two months have passed—Jesus not come back—what must Mary think?

At last He comes—but not alone—who with Him?—how many? [*refer to last Lesson*]—why with Him?—what do they think of Him? chap. i. 37, 41, 45, 49. Think of Mary's joy and expectation; what words would come back to her mind? Luke i. 32, 33; how eagerly she must look for what He will do now!

I. WHERE JESUS WENT—to a marriage feast. [*Read ver. 1—5.*]

A wedding in the family [*see Note 2*]—at Cana, a few miles off [*see Note 1*]—Mary there. Now Jesus come home, is asked too—and His new friends—one of them (perhaps) no stranger (see chap. xxi. 2).

But will they go to a feast? John the Baptist never did—very strict—lived alone—what did he teach his followers? (Luke v. 33, vii. 33)—will not the new prophet be like him? What does Jesus do? Andrew and the rest follow, but how they must wonder!

The bridal party assembled—not rich people—cannot afford much wine—it is nearly all gone—what shall they do? Mary sees it—a thought strikes her—might not Jesus help them? Elisha had multiplied oil and bread (2 Kings iv. 1—7, 42—44)—would the promised King have less power? See the answer of Jesus—how gentle [*see Note 3*]—yet a rebuke—the time for being 'subject' is past—He is now to act by Himself—yet not by Himself either—must be 'about His Father's business' [*refer to Lesson X.*]—do everything just when the Father appoints—that is 'His hour' [*see Note 4*]. But He says only 'not yet,' so Mary waits, and prepares the servants.

II. WHAT JESUS DID—turned common water into costly wine [*Read ver. 6—10*].

The feast goes on; the wine is exhausted. No, the servants are taking some to the 'ruler' [*see Note 2*]. He tastes it—what sort does he expect to find it?—but what is it? ver. 10—how is that? The bridegroom knows not—thought all gone—where can it be from?—out of those great jars [*see Note 5*]—but they are water-jars—were full of water just now. Yes, but now all full of wine—the very best—enough to supply the family for months! How was it?

Think of the feelings of the party, the bridegroom's gratitude, the guests' amazement, Mary's joy—she never looked for this!

But what did John and Andrew think? Strange enough that Jesus should have

gone at all—but what has He done now? The Baptist never even tasted wine (Luke i. 15), and taught them to *fast often*. He told them of their sins—baptized them to a new life—then pointed to the 'Lamb of God.' That 'Lamb of God' they followed, and the very same week He has taken them to a feast, has chosen *there* to shew what power He has, has created quantities of wine!—what can it mean? But do they turn from Him? ver. 11—they love and trust Him all the more.

III. WHY JESUS ACTED THUS—to 'manifest His glory' [*Read ver. 11*].

To 'manifest,' i.e., to *shew*. What did Jesus shew?—His power? Yes; but though 'power' and 'glory' often the same with men (e.g., Napoleon's only 'glory' was his 'power' to conquer), not the same with Jesus (comp. Lord's Prayer). He had 'all power' (Matt. xxviii. 18); but the question is—*How did He use it?*

(a) He used it to make people happier—did not frown on their pleasure—joined in it (comp. Rom. xii. 15)—worked a miracle to increase it.

(b) He used it to make the commonest of things a blessing.

(c) He used it to shew what St. Paul says, 1 Tim. iv. 4.

(d) He used it quietly—no display—not like magicians (wands, mutterings, &c.)—but like God (whose works so silent—stars moving—plants growing, &c.).

This, then, the 'glory' of Jesus—to make people happy—to bless common things—to sanctify all God's gifts—to do good unostentatiously.

DO WE WISH TO BE MADE HAPPIER?
We can be—how? *By having Christ with us.*

Where will He be with us? Not only in Church—in the home, school, playground, streets, workshop, kitchen; at work-time, school-time, play-time, meal-time. Not only when we are praying—even when laughing; in company as well as when alone.

Will His being with us make us happier? Are you afraid of its making us gloomy? Did it at Cana? Did Jesus stop the pleasure there? But one thing He must stop if He comes—*sin* (see John xvii. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 31; Jas. i. 27). No wonder those who are *happy in sin* do not want Him—are you? But does sin really make pleasant things more pleasant? Just the other way (e.g., how many 'days of pleasure' are spoiled, because one is selfish and another irritable!)

How will His being with us make us happier? Exactly in the same way as at Cana—

(a) He will turn our 'water' into 'wine'—our common things into rich blessings—our 'trivial round and common task' into 'a road to bring us daily nearer God.'

Even troubles, &c.; see Neh. xiii. 2; Ps. xxx. 11; Isa. lxi. 3; Rom. v. 3.

(b) He will give what He gives without stint—'exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think,' Eph. iii. 20; Phil. iv. 19.

(c) He will give His best things—His 'good wine'—at the last. [See Note 6.] See Luke xviii. 30; 1 John iii. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Ps. xxxii. 19. First the cross, then the crown, 'Not as the world giveth, give I unto you' (John xiv. 27).

NOTES.

1. The site of Cana has been much disputed. Two modern villages claim to be identified with it, Kefr Kenna, 43 miles north-east of Nazareth, and Kana-el-Jehil, 9 miles north. The former is the traditional site; the latter was discovered by Dr. Robinson, and has been accepted as the true one by most recent writers; but in the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, October, 1869, the Rev. J. Zeller, of Nazareth, strongly argues for Kefr Kenna.

2. Allusions to marriage feasts will be found in Gen. xxix. 22; Judges xiv. 12; Matt. xxii. 1-10; Luke xiv. 8. The festivities frequently lasted seven or fourteen days. There is no other allusion in Scripture to the 'ruler of the feast,' but some directions to such a functionary appear in the book of Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxxii. Among the Greeks and Romans he was usually a friend of the host, especially chosen by lot for the purpose of keeping order and of selecting the wines.

It is probable that the marriage occurred in Mary's family, as she evidently speaks to the servants as one who had some right to direct them. The invitation to our Lord and His disciples must have been given at the last moment, as He had been absent some months, and they were of course unexpected. Nathanael, as a dweller at Cana, would probably be well known to the party; and his having joined the new Teacher would naturally be an incident of much interest to them.

3. 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' That the term 'Woman' was not one of severity or disrespect is clear from the fact that our Lord also used it in His last words to Mary on the cross, John xix. 26. See also Matt. xv. 28, John xx. 15. But the words 'What have I to do with thee?' convey a distinct rebuke, being an assertion of independence. They are, literally, 'What to me and thee?'—i.e., *What is there that concerns both me and thee?*—or, *What is there in common between us?*

They are the very words used to our Lord by the devils; and see also Josh. xxii. 24; Judges xi. 12; 2 Sam. xvi. 10, xix. 22; 1 Kings xvii. 18; 2 Kings iii. 13. They are a reminder that Christ could now no longer be governed by mere human relationships; and Mary needed the reproof, because, as Chrysostom says, 'She counted that, after the manner of other mothers, she might in all things command Him whom it was more fitting for her to reverence and worship as her Lord.' We cannot doubt that Jesus designed the words as a lasting testimony against those who, in later days, should regard her as having an influence on the dispensing of His gifts—precisely the very thing which He here says she can have nothing to do with.

4. 'Mine hour is not yet come.' (Comp. John vii. 30, viii. 20, xii. 23, 27, xvii. 1.) Nothing is more remarkable in our Lord's life than the undeviating purpose manifested in it, combined with a

Divine patience and self-restraint in doing nothing before the time. Dr. Hanna (*Earlier Years of our Lord*, p. 254) quotes a remarkable passage from the writings of Napoleon Buonaparte, showing how much this feature of Christ's life impressed one who had known the disappointments of ambition.

5. The 'waterpots' probably contained twenty gallons each, so that the quantity of wine was very great. 'The purifying of the Jews,' i.e., their customary ablutions, see Mark vii. 2, 3, Luke xi. 39. When Jesus ordered the jars to be filled, it might be thought that His design was to enjoin some special ceremonial ablutions; and the fact that He intended their contents for festive use instead, is a striking illustration of the change from the Law to the Gospel.

6. 'This beginning of miracles.' The Greek word usually employed by St. John for a miracle is different from that found in the other Gospels, and means a *sign* rather than a mere *wonder*. In this case, the word is very appropriate, for the miracle was most significant of the general character of our Lord's mission, as (1) sanctifying every act of our common life, (2) turning the water of ceremonial austerity into the wine of Gospel joy, (3) giving the best gifts last.

The following striking passage is from Jeremy Taylor's *Life of Christ*:—'Every sin smiles in the first address, and carries light in the face and honey in the lip; but when we have "well drunk," then comes "that which is worse," a whip with six strings, fears and terrors of conscience, and shame and displeasure, and a crafty disposition, and diffidence in the day of death. But when, after the manner of purifying of the Christians, we fill our waterpots with water, watering our couch with our tears then Christ turns our water into wine, first the waters of sorrow, and then the wine of the chalice Jesus keeps the best wine to the last, not only because of the direct reservation of the highest joys till the nearer approaches of glory, but also because our relishes are higher after a long fruition than at the first essays, such being the nature of grace, that it increases in relish as it does in fruition.'

It has often been noticed that the first miracles of Moses and Christ respectively typified the character of their revelations—Moses turned water into blood, Christ turned water into wine.

7. Wordsworth compares the *sudden* change of water into wine at Cana with the *gradual* change of the rain that descends from the clouds into the juice of the vine: both Divine works, the one designed to arouse and attract those who see not God's hand in the other. The contrast is, however, much greater than this. The rain has its part in the production of the grape, but only in combination with other materials, and under the influence of varied forces. With these Christ dispensed; and *in this lay the miracle*.

Lesson XVII.—The First Public Appearance at Jerusalem.

The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Temple.'

Read—John ii. 13—25; Learn—John i. 11; Ps. cxix. 139; Luke xii. 40.
(Hymns, 81, 82, 109, 276.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Slight as this passage seems on a cursory reading, there are few more important in the Gospels. And difficult as it certainly would be if taught verse by verse, commentary fashion, it is really one of the most interesting. It will be observed that in the Sketch two whole divisions (besides the introduction) precede the reading of the passage: it is just in this way that the scholars may be *prepared* to be interested in it.

It must also be remembered that much of the external picturing will be unintelligible to the less instructed among our scholars without a constant reference to what is familiar to them. Thus, the crowds, &c., at Passover-time may be illustrated by any annual local festival, as a harvest-home, or Christmas; the Temple spoken of as grander than 'our cathedral,' or 'our town-hall'; the scene in the Temple-courts shewn by imagining the *local weekly market held in the church*; &c., &c.

The prophecy in Mal. iii. must on no account be omitted, even in non-reading classes, the teachers of which can *tell* the children what God had foretold 400 years before, viz., that 'the Lord' (*i.e.* Messiah) should 'come suddenly,' come 'to His temple,' to 'purify' the worship, &c. Otherwise Christ's act will not be understood as proclaiming who He was.

In the application, the practical point about behaviour in church can be urged with effect after such a lesson; but it must be a subordinate one, and introduced as a *test* of preparedness for the Second Coming of Christ.

The teacher will not forget that the *heads* are not to be *announced* at the beginning of each section. They are intended only to make the Sketch *look* clearer, and it will be seen that each section follows on naturally at the end of the preceding one, and that a break in the teaching would spoil the Lesson. They might, however, be named in recapitulating.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

The public ministry of Christ is now begun. He has been pointed out as the Messiah by the messenger sent by God to prepare the people for His coming; He has gathered His first followers; He has worked one great miracle to assure them who He really is. And now it is time that He should come forth publicly before the nation.

Where ought He to do so? Certainly at 'the city of the great king.'

What would be the *best time*? Surely, when the people from all parts of the country, and many who were settled in foreign lands, assembled at Jerusalem—when would that be?

In what *way* should He proclaim Himself? This we shall see.

I. MESSIAH EXPECTED.

Imagine we are at Jerusalem, at Passover time. How crowded the city is—almost all Jewish faces—but various costumes and strange languages (Acts ii. 5—11)—trains of camels and asses from distant parts—every body busy and alive—meetings of friends—hiring of lodgings (see Mark xiv. 12—16)—thousands of lambs driven in for the Passover feast.

But there are some faces not Jewish—who are these soldiers?—no warriors of

Israel as in olden times—but Romans who have conquered the country; and there are more than usual now—come from Caesarea to keep order among the Passover crowds. [See Note 3.] How the people hate to see them! how they long for the promised king—God's Messiah—'the Lord's Anointed'—to come and 'restore the kingdom to Israel' (Acts i. 6)! Will He not soon come?—has not John told them so?

II. MESSIAH NEEDED.

But are the Jews worthy to be God's favoured people as before? Come to the Temple and see. It is magnificent—grander than any building we have ever seen—and look at the crowd of priests and Levites—the multitude of worshippers—the smoke of many sacrifices ever ascending—surely God must be well pleased!

But look at Isa. i. 11; Mark xii. 33; John iv. 24. God wants the heart—do they give Him that? 'What meaneth, then, this bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen?' Look at the great outer court—a noisy cattle-market on God's sacred ground!—rough men selling animals for sacrifice (doves for the poorer worshippers, Lev. xii. 8; Luke ii. 24)—others exchanging money [see Note 2]; how unlike the solemnity of God's house! (Eccl. v. 1; comp. Gen.

xxviii. 17; Exod. iii. 5). Do not the people need to be changed themselves before God can give them the kingdom again? (Comp. Josh. vii. 12; 1 Sam. vii. 3.) So John told them (Matt. iii. 8). What, then, is the Messiah most wanted for? Is it not to 'save His people from their sins'? (Matt. i. 21.)

III. MESSIAH COME. [Read ver. 13—16.] The promised Messiah *is there*—unknown—just one among many other plain Galilean peasants. This is 'His Father's house' (ver. 16)—what must He think of the scene?—how hateful! What does He do? See the sudden confusion—cattle driven out—tables upset—drovers and money-changers unable to resist—all the turbulent crowd dispersed—*by what?* By His *divinely-awful look—by His divinely-indignant words* (comp. John xviii. 6).

Was that the way to show Himself as the Messiah? Look at Mal. iii. 1—3. Where had God said Messiah should appear? What was He to do? ('purify,' &c.) What state would the people be in? ('who may abide,' &c.) How exactly fulfilled! Jesus would not stand up and say, 'I am the Messiah'—who would believe that? But He *does what Messiah should do*—and He speaks of 'His Father': this (with John's testimony) ought to be enough. (See John v. 32, 33, 36.)

IV. MESSIAH REJECTED. [Read ver. 17—25.]

Was it enough? What did the disciples think? (ver. 17); comp. Ps. lxxix. 9—(all the Jews considered this Psalm Messianic). What did the rulers think? They durst not complain of what Jesus had done—felt their own guilt in allowing such a scene—doubtless remembered Malachi's prophecy, and what John had told them—would say 'This Galilean *claims* to be the Messiah—let us see if he can prove it by giving some

wonderful sign.' How does Jesus answer them? [See Note 6.] He sees their hearts (see ver. 25)—knows no sign of any use—so will not give one now, but foretells their murder of Himself (God's true Temple, Col. ii. 9), and His resurrection, which shall be the great and only sign given them (comp. Matt. xii. 38—40; Rom. i. 4). Did they understand? No; yet did not forget (see Matt. xxvi. 61, xxvii. 40).

But Jesus does do some 'signs' (ver. 23) [see Note 8], though not what they want—most likely kind works of healing the sick, &c. And some do trust in Him as the Messiah; but He does not trust in them [see Note 9]—He knows them too well. What does this knowledge shew us about Jesus? (see 1 Kings viii. 39).

Thus we see how the true King of Israel was received by His own favoured nation—how the Eternal Son was received in His own Temple. Is not John i. 11 true? But Malachi's great prophecy has to be fulfilled once more, for—

THE LORD WILL AGAIN COME SUDDENLY—Not in humiliation, but in glory (Matt. xxiv. 30, xxv. 31). Not to submit to scorn and rejection, but to—what? look at Matt. xiii. 41—'to gather out of His kingdom' (i.e., His Church)—what? *Now*, good and bad mingled in the Church—then to be separated—all the bad to be 'driven out'—so that God's people may be 'an holy temple unto the Lord' (Eph. ii. 21). Truly, 'who may abide the day of His coming?'

How will He find us?—ready to receive Him *now*. For He does come now: into our churches—to see how we worship there; into our hearts—to see if we are 'temples of the living God' (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, 2 Cor. vi. 16). holy, devoted to His service. Pray that He drive *sin from us now*—not us *from Him then*.

NOTES.

1 This cleansing of the Temple must not be confounded with the similar act recorded in Matt. xxi. Mark xi. The latter took place in the last week of our Lord's life, and his language on that occasion was much more severe.

2. The concourse of people at the yearly Passover is described by Josephus as enormous, and the consequent traffic, particularly in animals for sacrifice, very great. The Roman coinage was now in universal use, and as the fees and dues payable at the Temple were only taken in the old 'shekels of the sanctuary' (Exod. xxx. 11—16)—(comp. Matt. xvii. 24, where the Greek word rendered 'tribute money' means the Jewish coin required for the Temple 'tribute')—the 'tables of the money-changers' were necessarily much resorted to.

3. The Roman procurators, who usually resided at Cæsarea, the civil capital (comp. Acts xxiii. 23, 24, xxv. 1, 6, 13), were in the habit of coming to Jerusalem at the feasts, with extra troops to preserve order; which, however, only tended to inflame the national hatred of the foreign conquerors, and frequent disturbances were the

consequence; one of which seems alluded to in Luke xiii. 1. It is strange to reflect that the same thing still occurs in Jerusalem at the same time; the Turkish garrison being reinforced to keep order at the Easter celebrations of Greeks, Latins, and Armenians.

4. The 'scourge' was probably improvised by twisting together some of the rushes laid down for the cattle to lie upon. Alford says that the Greek implies that it was used *only* on the sheep and oxen.

5. The term '*The Jews*,' as used by St. John, generally refers to the rulers and the priestly party at Jerusalem, and not to the people generally. If this be borne in mind, the force of many passages in his Gospel will be more clearly seen.

6. '*Destroy this Temple*,' &c. This was one of those enigmatical sayings which (like so many of the prophecies) were not designed to be understood at the time, but which should be for the confirmation of faith after their fulfilment. Some have supposed that Jesus, as He spoke, pointed to Himself; but if so, how could He be misunderstood? whereas even the disciples only saw

His meaning after His resurrection (ver. 22). The rulers, however, as Stier points out, approached afterwards very near to a right understanding of the saying; for they probably referred to it in telling Pilate that Jesus had said He would rise again, Matt. xxvii. 63.

Similar instances of a sign being given in the form of a prophecy occur in 1 Kings xxii. 28; Jer. xx. 1-6, xxviii. 15-17.

The imperative mood—'Destroy'—does not, of course, imply a command, but rather a prediction; like the words 'Fill ye up the measure of your fathers' (Matt. xxiii. 3).

There are two Greek words rendered 'temple' in our version: *ἱερόν* (*hieron*), which means the whole range of buildings, and *ναός* (*naos*), which means the Holy Place. The former is used in ver. 14, the latter in ver. 19. The distinction is very significant.

7. 'Forty-six years,' &c. Herod the Great began

his restoration or rebuilding of the Temple in the year of Rome 734. Forty-six added to this gives the year 780. If our Lord was born at Christmas 749 (see Lesson V. Note 1), and was baptized thirty years after (Luke iii. 23), then this Passover would be in April 780. The two independent calculations thus agree together. The word 'was' in this verse should be 'has been': the Temple was not completed till later.

8. The Greek word rendered 'miracle' in ver. 23 is the same (*σημεῖον*, *semeion*) as that rendered 'sign' in ver. 18 (comp. preceding Lesson, note 6), so that Christ did give 'signs' of His authority, though they were not of that portentous character that the rulers demanded.

9. The Greek word rendered 'commit' in ver. 24 is the same as that rendered 'believe' in ver. 23. The sense is antithetical—'They trusted in Jesus, but He did not trust in them.'

Lesson XVIII.—The Conversation with Nicodemus.

"Ye must be born again."

Read—John iii. 1-21; Learn—John iii. 5-7; Gal. vi. 15. (Hymns, 94, 109, 142, 250.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It will be observed that this important passage is treated *historically* in the following Sketch: *i. e.*—instead of opening with a brief reference to Nicodemus, and then proceeding to explain the great truths of the chapter, one after the other, as if they stood alone like the articles of a creed,—the Lesson is *on Nicodemus* throughout, and our Lord's doctrinal statements are regarded as spoken to *him*. The advantage of this is threefold; (1) A passage famous for its difficulties becomes comparatively easy; (2) A subject which many teachers might consider 'dry' is invested with the interest of a narrative; (3) The controversies which rage around ver. 5 (see Note 3) are happily avoided.

At the same time it is believed that the momentous teachings of the chapter on Regeneration and Atonement will not lose, but gain, in solemnity and force from this method of treatment. The children will be interested in the application of them to Nicodemus, and will be more readily, and (so to speak) *unexpectedly*, impressed with the consequent application to themselves, than if the teacher were to speak throughout as delivering a direct message from Christ to their own souls.

It being impossible to take the whole passage in detail, the Lesson dwells chiefly on the first eight verses; ver. 14-16, on account of their transcendent importance, form the subject of the third section; and the rest is either simply omitted, or barely alluded to. The teacher is recommended to follow this plan, unless, with a quick and intelligent elder class, he can manage to bring in the whole. In this case, Notes 5, 6 can be referred to.

It is not easy to impress on younger children the importance of a change of nature, because—whatever they may be taught to *repeat*—they do not *realise* that their nature is sinful. Perhaps the best method is to use such an illustration as this:—As the tiger-cub, though harmless, has in it a ferocious *nature*, which will be *developed by-and-by*, so is it with you and sin—pray then for the new heart *now*—the change will be harder as you grow older. The same lesson is taught by the well-known anecdote of the great painter who painted from life a picture of a bright little child, calling it Innocence, and, many years after, painted another picture from life of a convicted felon, calling it Guilt. It turned out that the felon was no other than the once bright little child grown up.

Other illustrations of the necessity of an inward and spiritual change:—The *heart* the *mainspring* of action, like that of a watch.—No use to cut down weeds; they must be *rooted up*.—A wax figure can be made like a man, and mechanism can give it motion; but it has *no life*; so an outwardly religious man, without the Spirit.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How pleasant, when many against us, to find one who *believes in us!* (*Illustration:* new boy at school, timid, laughed at; one kind to him: to that one he can tell what he cannot to the rest.)

How was Jesus received at Jerusalem? [*Recapitulate.*] To whom did He not 'commit Himself'? Why? To-day read of one to whom He could and did 'commit Himself.'

I. THE NIGHT VISITOR.

The Jewish rulers, doubtless, talk about the new prophet—how scornfully—'he the Messiah! a Galilean villager! (comp. John vii. 52)—where is his *sign*, too?' But some [see *Note 1*] not so—are struck. 'He has done signs, though not just what we wanted.' [*See preceding Lesson, Note 8.*] One especially—a great teacher [*see Note 1*—cannot shake off feeling—must get at Jesus: but what will men say at his going to such a man?—must go secretly—can we wonder at it?

[*Read ver. 1—4.*] See Nicodemus in dark streets—enters house (not a grand one)—gives the humble carpenter the title (*Rabbi*) so often addressed to himself—acknowledges Him as 'come from God.'

Now what would Nicodemus expect Jesus to tell him? If really the Messiah, might say what intended to do—how going to drive out Romans, set up the expected 'kingdom,' make Jews great, especially the holy Pharisees. Or if only a 'teacher,' might give new explanation of law, recommend more fasting and alms, even proclaim a message from God about the expected 'kingdom.' See him waiting to hear what Jesus has to say.

II. WHAT HE REALLY NEEDED TO BE IN THE KINGDOM—a new life.

Now see Christ's answer—a solemn one ('*Verily, verily*')—meant for Nicodemus himself—('I say unto thee'). Yes, He speaks of the Kingdom—but how? 'Except a man'—any one—Jew as well as Gentile—Pharisee as well as publican—'you, Nicodemus'—'be born again, cannot see it.'

'Born again'—what is that? All life so far as nothing—whole life must be different. What does life begin with?—so must be as if born anew—begin all over again. [*See Note 2.*]

See what Nicodemus says, ver. 4—how foolish—can he mean it?—he is startled, 'taken aback,' knows not what he says, 'This Galilean going to set up Messiah's kingdom, and a strict and learned Pharisee unworthy to be in it without some extraordinary change!' [*See Note 2.*]

Then Jesus tells him three things [*read ver. 5—8*]:—

(1) *What this new birth is.* [*See Note 3.*] What had John the Baptist been doing for two or three months past? What did his baptism mean? People to dip in the

water in token of putting away sin and leading new life. And what had he said? Luke iii. 16. Coming One also to baptize—but how?—not outside, but inside—the Holy Ghost to cleanse the heart. So Nicodemus needs two things (comp. Rom. x. 10): (a) To come forward boldly, confess himself a sinner, be like the publicans, submit to the token which shows that all his past life (however strict) needs to be washed away, that he must begin afresh. (b) To come to Messiah for what He only can give, the Spirit—all else useless without that—beginning new life no good without, for would be as bad as the old one—must have Holy Spirit in heart.

(2) *Where it comes from*, ver. 6. Nicodemus had puzzled about a *bodily* birth, ver. 4. But suppose this could be, what use? Sin comes from father to son ('*born of the flesh is flesh*'). If become a baby again, still a sinful baby. So if heart, feelings, wishes, will, life, to be new, must be from God—'*born of the Spirit*.' Comp. John i. 13; Rom. viii. 5—9; 1 Pet. i. 23.

(3) *How it can be seen*, ver. 8. Imagine fine day in woods, air still, no hard wind, very quiet; you hear a rustling up above—what is it?—leaves moving—why?—gentle breeze [*see Note 4*—so soft that can't tell if north, south, &c. But you know the wind there. So, see a man [*or chick!*], who cares nothing about God, beginning to look, speak, act, as if did care—as sleeper just waking moves a little—then know that is the Spirit's work; cannot see Him, but see and hear what He does. See Gal. v. 22, 23; 1 John ii. 29, iii. 9, 14, v. 1, 4, 18.

[*Read ver. 9, 10.*] Ought Nicodemus to have known? (a) Should have understood about 'new birth,' for when Jews baptized Gentiles who believed in true God [*see Note 2*], used to call them 'infants just born.' (b) Should have known no outward change enough, must be spiritual, from the Scriptures he knew so well; see Ps. li. 6, 10, 17; Isa. i. 10—17; Jer. iv. 14; Ezek. xi. 19, xviii. 31, xxxvi. 25—27.

But if this new life must be got—if no salvation without—how shall Nicodemus get it? (ver. 9—'how?') So Jesus tells him,—

III. HOW HE MIGHT GET IT—by faith in the Son of Man.

We cannot, in one lesson, talk of all Jesus said—[*Read ver. 11—16.*] [*See Note 5.*]

If all need change, all sinners; then all deserve to 'perish'; yes, even Nicodemus! BUT—what? ver. 16—'GOD LOVED THE WORLD'—yes, all alike—Jews sinful like Gentiles, and God loved Gentiles as well as Jews. Then, how saved the perishing? 'Gave'—whom? who is that? see ver. 14, 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man' the same—then this humble Nazarene sitting in this quiet room claims to be God's Only-

Begotten!—must believe in *Him* if to be saved!

But *how* should the Son of Man save men? What Moses did to Brazen Serpent to be done to Him—'lifted up' [see Note 5]. Nicodemus knew what the bitten Israelites had to do; so he, not questioning, to look in faith on a 'lifted up' Messiah—one crucified as a criminal. How strange! could not take it in then—but when Jesus was 'lifted up,' what did Nicodemus do?—John xix. 39—came out boldly, after three years' hesitation, and, at the very time that the Apostles had deserted Christ, avowed himself a disciple.

If he had not, what would have come upon him? see ver. 18. But what has he got now? ver. 15.

HAVE YOU THE NEW LIFE? Are you 'born again'? You have had the token, the 'outward and visible sign'—when? But have you the 'inward and spiritual grace,' the Holy Spirit in the heart? Without this, no 'seeing the kingdom,' no 'eternal life.'

How know if have the new life? what did we say on ver. 8?

How is it that we, poor sinners, can have such a gift? Because the Father loved, the Son came down, the Spirit works.

NOTES.

1. That Nicodemus came to Jesus by night *from fear*, seems implied in John vii. 50, xix. 39. But rather than blame him for this, we may well praise him, considering he was the only one who came at all.

The expression 'a master,' in ver. 10, is, in the original, 'the master,' and obviously refers to the eminence of Nicodemus as a teacher.

It is not likely that the expression 'we know,' was a mere rhetorical artifice to avoid saying 'I.' Probably there were others among the rulers who felt as Nicodemus did, e.g., Joseph of Arimathea; and see John xii. 42.

2. Ver. 3—'Except a man,' &c. The abruptness of Christ's reply must have startled and disconcerted Nicodemus, as his question in ver. 4 shows. He could not be wholly blind to our Lord's meaning, seeing that the idea of new birth was familiar to a Jew in connection with the baptism of proselytes. The expression quoted in the Sketch is mentioned by Lightfoot (*Hor. Hebr.* on Matt. iii.), who gives some curious particulars of the Rabbinical baptismal customs. But Nicodemus had never thought of an *Israelite* needing to be 'born again'; and probably his perplexity about this, together with some little irritation at the obviously personal application of Christ's words to himself, betrayed him into a rejoinder which seems simply unmeaning.

Some render 'born again' as 'born from above'; but the more exact meaning is 'born afresh,' or 'altogether anew'; and so Nicodemus evidently understood it. Alford says that Christ's answer is equivalent to, 'It is not *learning*, but *life*, that is wanted for Messiah's kingdom, and *life* must begin by *birth*;' and quotes the following from Luther: 'My teaching is not of doing and leaving undone, but of a change in the man; not *new works done*, but a *new man to do them*—not another *life* only, but another *birth*.'

'See the kingdom of God,' i.e., *have a shave in*; comp. Ps. xvi. 10—'see corruption.' 'Enter,' in ver. 5, does not differ materially in meaning, but is a stronger word. On the meaning of the 'kingdom,' see Lesson XI., Note 6.

3. 'Born of Water and of the Spirit.' Two chief views have been held of the meaning of these words:—

(1) That they refer directly to Christian Baptism, and imply that the 'new birth,' which admits into the 'kingdom of God,' comprises the visible rite and the invisible grace.

(2) That they do not refer at all to Baptism.

That the expression merely describes the influences of the Spirit under the image of water, just as that other one, 'with the Holy Ghost and with fire,' describes them under the image of fire.

To the former view it is objected, (1) that Christian Baptism not being yet instituted, our Lord would not be likely to speak of it so enigmatically to Nicodemus; (2) that it is theologically unsound to make even so solemn a rite as one of the two sacraments essential to salvation.

To the latter view it is objected (1) that the different order of the words in the two expressions precludes (in the Greek) their being regarded as parallel; (2) that as regeneration is (to say the least) intimately connected with Baptism, it is derogatory to the Sacrament to exclude a reference to it in Christ's words.

Now the probability is that the whole truth does not lie on either side. The best way of ascertaining the real meaning of the words is to ask—What would they imply, as spoken to a Jewish Rabbi by Jesus of Nazareth at that particular period?

The answer to this question cannot be doubtful. Not to speak of the Rabbinical baptismal customs (see above, Note 2), it must be remembered that, for three or four months previously, the whole country had been in a ferment of excitement on account of the preaching and baptism of John. From that baptism, Nicodemus, in company with the other Jewish rulers, had, probably, held aloof (see Luke vii. 30). Our Lord's words, therefore, would remind him that, just what 'publicans and sinners' had done, he must do, viz., come out boldly and make open confession of his need of renewal, and submit to a rite which would signify the utter abnegation of his whole past life. And further, that as John had spoken of a higher spiritual baptism to be introduced by the coming Messiah, so the outward ceremony would be useless without an inner change of heart; while, on the other hand, he who really desired the inner change must not shrink from the external symbol. That to be 'born of the Spirit' was the essential requisite is shown by the repetition of these words, without the others, in ver. 6 and 8.

It must also be remembered that Christ was about to establish a visible embodiment of the 'Kingdom of God,' viz., His visible Church, and that He subsequently gave an express command that those who were admitted to it ('made disciples of,' see Greek of Matt. xxviii. 19) were to be

baptized. In accordance, therefore, with the whole analogy of Scripture, we have a (double) outward expression of a (double) inward fact. The baptism of water, admitting to the Church visible, is the sign and symbol of the baptism of the Spirit—the new nature—admitting to the Church invisible. So, under the old dispensation: circumcision admitted to the privileges of an Israelite; but as ‘all are not Israel who are of Israel,’ the true ‘circumcision of the heart’ was necessary to adoption into God’s spiritual family.

4. The beauty of the illustration in ver. 8 is enhanced by the fact that, in the Greek, the words for ‘wind’ and ‘Spirit’ are the same (*πνευμα, pneuma*). The word rendered ‘bloweth,’ also, is the cognate verb, so that the passage reads just as it would in English if rendered ‘the breath breatheth.’ A soft breeze is intended (see Sketch), a different word being used in Scripture for a violent wind.

5. Ver. 9–16. ‘*How can these things be?*’ is equivalent to ‘Well, be it so, suppose you are right; but *how* is this new birth to be secured?’

Our Lord’s answer cannot, in the short compass of these notes, be explained fully; but after expostulating with Nicodemus on his ignorance (ver. 10)—complaining of his unbelief (ver. 11)—asking how, if he did not understand what men might know of themselves (viz., their need of a change of nature), he could be taught what could only be known by revelation (salvation through a crucified Saviour) (ver. 12)—and stating why He Himself, and He only, was able to expound such matters (ver. 13),—He proceeds to give His reply, viz.:—The one

means by which the new nature must be obtained is *faith in Himself*, the Son of Man, and yet the ‘only-begotten Son of God,’ given to the world (not to the Jews only) expressly that through His eternal life might be procured (ver. 15, 16). And this faith is to be similar in character to that by which the bitten Israelites in the wilderness were saved, for He, the Son of Man, is to be ‘lifted up,’ like the Brazen Serpent, for all to gaze upon.

The expression ‘lifted up’ had probably become a current phrase for the Roman method of execution by crucifixion (comp. John xii. 32–34); just as the word ‘hung’ has come to mean a particular method with us. Nicodemus would, therefore, perceive the degradation Messiah was to submit to, though he would not see the further figurative meaning of ‘lifted up,’ viz., *exaltation* and *proclamation*. The reference to the Brazen Serpent would not be strange to him, its typical character being affirmed in a remarkable passage in the Book of Wisdom (xvi. 5–13).

Alford’s exposition of ver. 13–16 is very clear and able as against rationalistic interpretations.

6. Ver. 13.—Brown and Fausset thus give the sense of this difficult verse:—

‘The perfect knowledge of God is not obtained by any man’s going up from earth to heaven to receive it—no man hath so ascended,—but He whose *proper habitation*, in His essential and eternal nature, is in heaven, hath, by taking human flesh, descended as the “Son of Man” to disclose the Father.’

7. In ver. 17–19, ‘condemn,’ ‘condemned,’ ‘condemnation,’ should be ‘judge,’ ‘judged,’ ‘judgment.’

Lesson XIX.—In Samaria—I.

‘*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.*’

Read—John iv. 1–26; Learn—John iv. 13, 14. (*Hymns*, 112, 142, 145, 183, 322.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Before commencing the preparation of this Lesson, the teacher is requested to read the introductory note to the following one.

There is an idea among teachers that, although a parable or a miracle can easily be made interesting to children, a dialogue must necessarily be dry. This is a mistake. The recorded conversations of our Lord afford admirable opportunities for picturing—and that of the most attractive kind, viz., the exhibiting what people think, feel, and say,—their surprise, curiosity, fear, hope, love, &c., &c. With junior classes, indeed, a description of the externals of the scene at the well may be necessary, in order to gain attention at first. But for elder scholars these externals often have much less interest than to follow the course of question, reply, &c., in a dialogue: the former they know (or *think* they know) already; the latter is almost certainly new to them. In all cases the aim of the teacher must be so to arrange the lesson that, from sentence to sentence, from question to question, from verse to verse, the children may *want to know what came next*. No doubt, mentioning this object is not explaining how it can be attained; but if the teacher’s efforts are *rightly directed*, pains and practice should do the rest.

Care must be taken that the *unity* of the lesson is not lost in a multitude of minor comments. The central idea is ‘water,’ and the figure must be worked upon throughout. Ver. 16–26 are not to be regarded as introducing a new subject, but as the answer to the woman’s prayer, as containing the gift itself—the ‘water’—bestowed on her by Christ.

It will probably, however, be found impossible to take the third head at all, except with elder scholars, if the earlier portion is to be taught thoroughly.

As the main point of the lesson lies in Christ's own illustration, other illustrations are not needed. But the figure of 'water' may be variously applied, *e.g.*—A traveller in the desert searches for water; but suppose he *carried a fountain with him*:—this is just what a Christian *does* do.

Trench's chapter on this subject, in his *Studies in the Gospels*, is extremely interesting. Macduff's *Noontide at Sychar* also contains much that is excellent and suggestive.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Jesus, rejected by the rulers at the capital, now turns to the country people, chap. iii. 22; goes down to the Jordan, preaches like John; but who baptized the crowds of people (iii. 26, iv. 1) that came? iv. 2. By and by news of this comes to Jerusalem (iv. 1)—rulers think it serious—ought to be stopped. What does Jesus do? His 'hour not yet come' (comp. ii. 4) for conflict with them—work to be done first in Galilee—starts thither. [See Note 1.] [Read *ver.* 1—4.]

Which way shall He go? Along bank of Jordan, or up over hills of Samaria? [See Note 2.] To-day see why He 'must needs' go latter way.

I. EARTHLY WATER REFUSED.

Think of two beautiful high hills (same as where Law solemnly proclaimed in Joshua's days (Josh. viii. 30—35)—valley between—old city in valley—what called?—what formerly? [See *Additional Note II.*] At entrance of valley a well—very old—who dug it? *That well is there now.*

It is mid-day [see *Note 4*—sun very hot. A party of weary travellers comes up—one of them too tired to go further—sits on well while others go on to get food at town. Who is it? [Read *ver.* 5—9.] Cool sparkling water down in that well; but can He get it? A woman coming—great jar on head—going to draw water—He will ask her for some. Anything strange in that? (comp. Gen. xxiv. 17; 1 Kings xvii. 10). Did He not look worn out? Would she not pity Him?

She stops short in surprise—why? Samaritans great enemies of Jews: Jews despised them as foreigners—hated them because pretended to be Abraham's children—would not eat with them or use same vessels, &c., see John viii. 48; they jealous of Jews—thought themselves as good—ill-treated Jews journeying through country (Luke ix. 52, 53). [See *Note 5*, and *Additional Note I.*] And so Jesus gets no water! What does God say of such 'hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife'? Gal. v. 20, 21. 'From envy, hatred, &c., Good Lord, deliver us!'

II. HEAVENLY WATER OFFERED. [Read *ver.* 10—15.]

Does Jesus rebuke the woman? 'If thou knewest . . . asked . . . He would have given thee'—would have treated her very differently—does not this rebuke her

churlishness?—yet how gently! And what would He have given? See her surprise—'where should He get it?—not from the well'—(why not?)—'and did this Jew mean better water than that?—he not satisfied with Jacob's water!' But Jesus points out two defects in that water, good as it is: (a) it cannot satisfy for ever ('shall thirst again,' *ver.* 13); (b) it cannot always be got at (see *ver.* 14—'in him'). But the water He gives—(a) if once drunk, drives away thirst altogether; (b) even then is always within reach ('in him') to refresh and be enjoyed. [See *Note 7.*]

What did Jesus mean? See John vii. 37—39,—*the Holy Spirit*; and all that He brings—faith in Christ, grace to make holy, peace, comfort, happiness—all spiritual blessings—*salvation*. [See *Note 6.*]

Now see again what He said of this 'water,' this 'gift of God,' these blessings of salvation.

(a) 'Shall never thirst.' Is anybody quite contented? Is not every one always wanting something he has not got? A little more money, a little more pleasure—then quite enough, quite happy—but is it so?—'should like that'—and then *that*—never satisfied. Things may be very good, like Jacob's water, but 'you thirst again.' See Isa. lv. 2; and what did Solomon 'in all his glory' say? Eccl. ii. But what have those said who took God's 'living water'? *e.g.* David, Ps. iv. 6, 7; St. Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 10.

(b) 'In him, a well [lit. fountain] of water.' Can we always get what we want of earthly things? Ask the Prodigal Son, Luke xv. 13—17. But God's 'living water' can always be had for the asking, Isa. xli. 17, 18, lv. 1.

Does she understand? *ver.* 15—not fully; yet is struck—feels this Jew has some great blessing to give—asks for it [see *Note 7*]. But she little thinks that, in His next words. He is giving her this very 'water,' as He said (*ver.* 10) He would. See how.

III. HEAVENLY WATER GIVEN. [Read *ver.* 16—26.] [See *Notes 8, 9.*]

What is this heavenly water? [Recapitulate.] And to give all this to the woman Jesus teaches her three things:—

(a) *About herself*, *ver.* 16—19. That she is a sinner, and that He knows all about it. But, then, how to become better?—She is used to thinking God must be worshipped *up there* on Gerizim—[see *Additional Note I.*]

Jews say no, His presence only at Jerusalem—how she to know? So Jesus tells her,—

(b) *About God.* A Spirit, everywhere—can always approach Him—

‘Where’er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every spot is hallowed ground.’

A Father—kind, tender, forgiving, willing to hear—‘seeking’ out (comp. Luke xix. 10) poor sinners who will come to Him. But how must they come? not merely kneeling, singing, saying prayers outwardly—but with all their heart—‘in spirit’ (comp. Phil. iii. 3); not just to get pardon, and then go and sin again—but ‘stedfastly purposing to lead a new life’—‘in truth’ (comp. Ps. cxlv. 18).

(c) *About Himself.* She is still puzzled—would like to do right—but ignorant—never mind—Messiah is coming one day—then know. Think of her standing there,

feeling her sin, wanting salvation—before her a poor traveller, parched, weary, foot-sore—can you not see her face as that poor Jew says, ‘I am He!’

Next Sunday see what came of it.

WOULD WE, TOO, HAVE THIS ‘WATER’? Then do as the woman did—ask Christ. He will give us the Holy Spirit—and what will the Spirit do? (a) Show us ourselves, our sins, our sinful hearts—make us ‘thirst after righteousness’ (Matt. v. 6). (b) Show us God—great and holy—yet a tender Father, willing to forgive and help. (c) Show us Christ, the one Saviour, who died, rose again, lives, and pleads ‘for us men and for our salvation.’

Then, like fresh water in the soul—will be revived, refreshed, strengthened—and that not for once—never thirst again. And what hereafter? See Rev. vii. 17.

NOTES.

1. It is remarkable that we should have no longer account of Christ’s ministry in Judæa than is contained in chap. iii. 22. Most chronologers consider that it occupied a period of some months, and the word ‘tarried,’ in the Greek, implies continuance. It was probably similar in character to that of the Baptist, comprising the preaching of repentance and baptizing. Whether miracles were wrought, we have no means of knowing; but, as far as we can tell, this was the only period when Jesus spent any time in Judæa, and it seems natural to suppose that His works of mercy would be done there as well as afterwards in Galilee; and if so, the multitudes gathered together, greater even than those that had flocked to John’s preaching (iii. 26, iv. 1), are at once accounted for. Some, however, think that during this period Jesus was waiting in Judæa to give the Jews an opportunity of accepting the Baptist’s testimony concerning Him, and of acknowledging Him as the Messiah; and that His more public ministry and mighty works were delayed until John’s preparatory mission was put an end to by his imprisonment, and were then—the Jews having now rejected the claims of Jesus—commenced in Galilee.

The ‘land of Judæa’—i.e., the country districts, not the cities.

Why did not Christ Himself baptize? Possibly for St. Paul’s reason, 1 Cor. i. 14–16. Trench says, ‘He reserved the baptism with the Holy Ghost for Himself.’

2. The direct route from Judæa to Galilee lay through Samaria, and was the one usually taken by travellers to and fro, although the stricter Pharisees sometimes went by way of the Jordan valley to avoid intercourse with the Samaritans. The usual explanation, referring the expression ‘must needs’ to Christ’s gracious designs is probably correct.

On the question whether this journey is identical with that named in Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 14, see *Additional Note III.*, page 55.

3. On Sychar and Jacob’s Well, see *Additional Note II.*

4. ‘Thus,’ i.e., as a tired man would. An incidental proof of the real manhood of our Lord. Probably trees then overshadowed the spot, under which He sat. ‘The sixth hour,’ i.e., noon; see

Lesson XV., Note 2. Those who think it was 6 P.M. argue that the evening was the time for drawing water; but the fact that no one else came marks it as an unusual time.

5. ‘A woman of Samaria,’ rather, ‘Samaritan woman.’ The city of Samaria was some distance from Sychar. Dr. Macduff (*Noontide at Sychar*, p. 17) met a Samaritan woman at the very spot, carrying a stone pitcher on her head. On the enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans, see *Additional Note I.*

‘Have no dealings with,’ lit. ‘use not anything with,’ as cups, &c. Note that this is spoken of here as a sign of Jewish hatred—‘the Jews have,’ &c. There was, however, sufficient intercourse to enable the disciples to buy food: comp. Luke ix. 52. Tristram (*Land of Israel*, p. 137) asked drink of a woman who was filling a pitcher from a spring near Nablus, but was angrily refused—‘The Christian dogs might get it for themselves.’ Contrast Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 17–20.

6. Ver. 10–15. ‘The gift of God.’ Miss Whately, in ‘*Ragged Life in Egypt*,’ says that the cry of the water-carriers in Eastern streets is ‘The gift of God! the gift of God!’—water being especially so regarded. If, as seems likely, there is a reference to this in Christ’s words, they would be equivalent to—‘There is a greater gift of God than this gift of God—this water which I have asked for; if thou knewest that,’ &c.

It has been much disputed what Divine blessing our Lord thus designated: some say, Himself; some, the Spirit; others, the cleansing of His blood; others, again, the ‘washing of regeneration.’ Bearing in mind that the conversation was about drinking, and not about cleansing, it seems obvious that the *internal work of the Spirit* is primarily intended; but all spiritual blessings may be indirectly referred to, as they are frequently promised in the Old Testament under the figure of water, see Psalm xxxvi. 8, 9; Isa. xli. 3, xlv. 3; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, xlvii. 1, &c.; Zech. xiv. 8.

The expression ‘Living water’ implies fresh, running, not stagnant waters; see Gen. xxvi. 19; Lev. xiv. 5; Numb. xix. 17; Cant. iv. 15; and the woman’s answer shows she so understood it, as she refers to the spring water in the well as also ‘living water.’ Such water alone could be a type of Gospel blessings; see Jer. li. 13.

7. 'Nothing to draw with'—*lit.* not 'a-thing-to-draw-with' (one word)—an appliance for getting the water; probably the vessel of skin which is still used in the East, and let down by a rope of goat's hair. Our old English version renders the word 'bucket.'

'Art thou greater than our father Jacob?' These words refer to Christ's 'who it is that saith to thee,' and are equivalent to—'Whoever thou art, the man that can give better water than this must be a greater man than Jacob—but how can this be?' Our Lord's reply is truly wonderful in its wisdom—pointing out just the one defect of this water; not, indeed, a real defect, but for that very reason the more enhancing the pre-eminence of the water *He* would give—'your water has all the qualities of good water, but mine has those too, and a special quality of its own besides': implying, too, its spiritual character, of which the woman appears now (ver. 15) to catch a glimpse.

'Give me this water,' &c. Some think these words ironical, and implying incredulity. Rather they express the half-conscious yearnings of the woman for something that will satisfy. Both mind and heart are beginning to open. She sees this 'living water' is something not requiring a waterpot to draw it, and that quenches thirst for ever; but her fancy that the possession of it will save her journeys to the well shows how imperfectly she as yet understood Christ.

8. Ver. 16–20. Much unnecessary perplexity has been expressed respecting the connection of our Lord's command to the woman to call her husband, with the preceding conversation. His words must (as intimated in the Sketch) be regarded as the first step to granting her request. Alford well says, 'The give me this water was not so simple a matter as she supposed. The heart must be first laid bare before the wisdom of God: the secret sins set in the light of His countenance; and thus our Lord here does.' Ryle (*Expos. Thoughts on St. John*) says, 'The first draught of living water was conviction of sin.'

The Greek of ver. 17 is very significant. The woman says, with literal truth, but yet in such a way as to conceal the real state of the case,

'I have no husband.' Jesus, in repeating her words, alters the order of them—'Thou hast well said, *An husband* I have not'; thus revealing His omniscience even in His first utterance.

The woman's reply in ver. 19 is a virtual confession of her sin. But why does she immediately turn to discuss the question in dispute between Jews and Samaritans? Some say, To avoid a disagreeable subject. But, as Alford says, 'the idea of her endeavouring to escape from the Lord's rebuke is quite inconsistent with her recognition of Him as a prophet.' Rather she is startled by the exposure of her sin; she feels God's claims upon her; 'what shall she do to be saved?' Then the old controversy suddenly occurs to her—what is she to believe? 'I would serve God, but—our fathers,' &c. So Trench. On the Samaritan worship, see *Additional Note I.*

9. Ver. 21–24. Christ's answer is one of the most solemn of all His utterances. He begins with words—'believe me'—which he is nowhere else recorded to have used. He vindicates the Divine authority of the Jewish worship, identifying Himself with the Jews—'*we* know what *we* worship' (this expression, too, occurs here only). At the same time He 'proclaims the passing away of every form of religion which is tied to a local centre, so to make room for that faith which should have its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere' (*Trench*). And He reveals God as (*a*) a Father, with all the tender care we attach to the idea of a parent, *seeking* (a remarkable expression) true worshippers (how encouraging to the woman!—God would accept her if she 'truly turned to Him, no matter where she might worship); as (*b*) a Spirit, so not to be thought of as dwelling in one place more than another, comp. Acts vii. 48, xvii. 24, 25; 1 Kings viii. 27; Isa. lxvi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 24; and to be worshipped 'in spirit and in truth' (see Sketch).

Trench observes that, profound as is the saying, 'God is a Spirit,' it is yet one which the woman would apprehend, because the word for 'Spirit' is the same as that for 'wind' (*it is so both in Greek and Aramaic*), and the idea would be conveyed to her mind of God, like the wind, penetrating everywhere, being tied to no place.

ADDITIONAL NOTE I.—THE SAMARITANS.

These strange people were not, as is sometimes erroneously supposed, a mixed race, partly Israelite and partly Gentile; but the descendants of the colonists brought by Shalmaneser from Babylon and other cities to dwell in the homes of the ten tribes whom he carried into captivity. See 2 Kings. xvii. That they had no claim to be called children of Abraham is implied by Christ's own words in Matt. x. 5, 6; Luke xvii. 18 (in the latter passage the word rendered 'stranger' is literally 'foreigner.')

At first they were idolaters, worshipping Jehovah (as a local deity) and other gods at the same time. The idolatry, however, seems gradually to have died out, and about B.C. 469 a magnificent temple for the worship of God was erected on Mount Gerizim, by a fugitive Jewish priest named Manasseh (see Josephus, *Ant.* xi. 7, 8), who

is supposed to have been that grandson of the high priest who was banished by Nehemiah on account of his marriage with the daughter of Sanballat (*Neh.* xiii. 28). This temple was, in B.C. 109, destroyed by John Hyrcanus, one of the Maccabee Jewish rulers; but the Samaritans have continued to worship there even to the present day, although their number has diminished to 200. Curious accounts of their religious customs will be found in most recent works on Palestine. The very ancient version of the Pentateuch which they possess differs here and there from the Hebrew text, having apparently been altered to make it support the claims of Gerizim to be God's chosen dwelling-place. In a German encyclopædia, referred to by Trench, the Samaritans are stated to believe that Gerizim is identical with Eden, with Ararat, with Moriah, and with

Bethel! No wonder the poor woman revered the 'holy mountain.'

The Jews' hatred of the Samaritans, which was no doubt first caused by the mere settlement in the Promised Land of an alien people, was aggravated by their opposition to the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra iv.—vi.), by their rival worship at Gerizim, and by their claim to be reckoned as Israelites. They were publicly cursed in the synagogues, and debarred from every religious and legal privilege. To call our Lord 'a Samaritan' was the bitterest insult the Jews could offer Him. It is supposed that the name *Shechem* was altered to *Sychar*, which means 'foolish' or 'drunken,' by the Jews in mockery. The writer of the book of Ecclesiastics (chap. i. 25, 26) speaks of 'his heart abhorring' those that 'sit in the mountain of Samaria,' and the 'foolish people that dwell in Sicheim.'

On the other hand the Samaritans fully

reciprocated these feelings, and several instances of their bitterness are recorded. They often refused the commonest hospitality to the Jewish travellers passing through their territory to the feasts at Jerusalem (comp. Luke ix. 52). They even waylaid and robbed the pilgrims. They are said on one occasion to have defiled the Temple by getting in and scattering dead men's bones about. They caused confusion in the fiery signals on the mountain tops, used by the Jews to communicate to their dispersed brethren the exact hour of the rising of the Paschal moon, by kindling flames at wrong times. They despised Jerusalem as a comparatively modern and upstart sanctuary, affirming their own to be the ancient and true one. Rejecting all the Old Testament except the Pentateuch, they professed to be the only true observers of the Law.

ADDITIONAL NOTE II.—SYCHAR AND JACOB'S WELL.

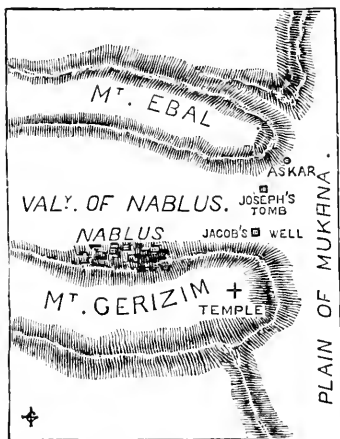
Sychar is commonly supposed to be the Shechem of the Old Testament, so intimately connected with the names of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Joshua, Abimelech, Rehoboam; see Gen. xii., xxxiii., xxxiv., xxxvii.; Josh. viii., xxiv.; Judg. ix.; 1 Kings xii. Comp. Josh. xxi. 21; Ps. lx. 6, cviii. 7. The modern town, Nablus (from the Roman name Neapolis), lies in a narrow

panying plan. The valley is described as the loveliest spot in Palestine. Dr. Robinson, who generally writes coldly enough, calls it 'a scene of enchantment.'

The well, of the identity of which there is no question, is at the mouth of the valley, a mile and a half east of the town. The fact of this distance has led some to doubt whether Sychar and Shechem (Nablus) were the same, as there are many other streams and fountains nearer to the town; why then should the woman go so far for water? Dr. Thomson (*Land and the Book*, p. 472) accordingly identifies Sychar with *Askar*, a village near the well. The best authorities, however, concur in the old view; and Tristram (*Land of Israel*, p. 143) says that the ancient town evidently lay more to the east. The woman may very probably have been led by superstitious feelings to come, even so far, to the venerated well of Jacob. The fact, also, of there being no appliances on the spot for drawing water, incidentally shows that it was not commonly resorted to.

All travellers in Palestine have described the well. It is dug in the solid rock; is 75 ft. deep, and 9 ft. in diameter. The quantity of water in it varies, sometimes rising to 15 ft., at other times the well being dry. Dr. Wilson (*Lands of the Bible*), in 1842, let down a servant to the bottom, who found there a Bible dropped in by Dr. Bonar some years before. Dr. Macduff tasted the water, and found it 'cool and pleasant to the taste.'

Why did Jacob dig a well in a place so well supplied with water? Partly to avoid disputes with the Shechemites (comp. Gen. xxvi. 18—22); partly as a visible evidence that the plot of land was his, a charter of his property. See Gen. xxxiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32.



valley between Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, through which has always run the main road from Jerusalem to the north. The valley itself runs east and west; and the traveller northward turns up it to the left from the Wady el Mukhna (the 'Plain of Moreh' of Gen. xii. 6; Deut. xi. 50), and after passing through it, turns again to the right in a northerly direction. See accom-

Lesson XX.—In Samaria—II.

'I have meat to eat that ye know not of.'

Read—John iv. 27—42; Learn—John iv. 34; Ps. cxxvi. 8. (*Hymns*, 160, 237, 263, 311, 354.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The reason for taking this interesting narrative in two lessons, instead of (as usual) in one, will be sufficiently obvious to the reader of the following Sketch. The preceding Lesson is devoted to our Lord's *teaching*; this one to *Himself*. To take both at one time would be impossible. No chapter in the Gospels more clearly exhibits Christ as a teacher: the spirit in which he worked—His principles and methods of work—particularly the *humaneness* (if the word may be allowed) of His work, viz., His patience and (so to speak) painstaking laboriousness, His use of means (illustrations, &c.), His pleasure in success. In a Sunday-school lesson, indeed, much of this would not be suitable, and in the Sketch very little of it appears; but the general idea will be conveyed by means of the illustration of the Sower and the Reapers, which (it will be observed) is taken from our Lord's own words in this passage. Children must not be allowed to forget the essential Godhead of Jesus; but, at the same time, it is important to teach them that, when He bore suffering or worked hard—*e.g.*, when, as in this case, He triumphed over fatigue and thirst—He did so truly and literally *as a man*, and in *the same way* that we can and ought to do; though, of course, all He did was perfect, all we do imperfect. Bearing this in mind, the teacher will not hesitate to use—always with due reverence—such illustrations as that of the British troops in Abyssinia, suggested below.

The first head of application gives an opportunity for the teacher to speak to the class *about himself*—his own office, work, hopes, &c.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

You have seen a sower scattering his seed. Can you guess what he thinks about? Is it not about the ground—will it bear well?—the weather—will rain and sun be favourable?—the crop—will it be a good one? He is looking forward—*hoping*. But is he in a hurry? Perhaps anxious, but can wait patiently—harvest not yet.

And you have seen the reapers, sickle in hand, cutting the yellow corn—the golden sheaves, loaded waggons, bright faces, happy voices, harvest home—all joyful. How different! Yet could you have the harvest without the sowing?

In this chapter we have both scenes.

I. THE SOWER'S PATIENCE AND HOPE.

While Jesus was sitting at Jacob's Well, where were the disciples? ver. 8. No doubt they hurried back to their weary Master. Now see—do they speak affectionately to Him, and at once give Him the food they have bought? ver. 27.

A dead silence. Six or seven persons together, none uttering a word. *The disciples*—amazed (*a*) at seeing Jesus, not now sunk down with exhaustion, not longing for water, but His face full of hope, love, pleasure, animation; (*b*) at seeing who else there—a woman! and she a Samaritan! *The woman*—speechless—He, a poor way-faring Jew, whom she had treated unkindly, the long-expected Messiah! [*refer to last Lesson.*] *Jesus Himself*, too, silent—why? *has been sowing*—sees the seed even now springing up—the harvest at hand (more of

this presently)—thinking of *that*. (Comp. a similar silence, John xxi. 12.)

Who first moves? ver. 28—see her hastening away to the town, her heavy pitcher left behind that she may go faster.

Then the disciples produce their food: but He cares not for it now—why? [*Read ver. 31—34.*] What can this mean?

1. *Had He not been really tired, hungry, thirsty?* Look at ver. 6—think what o'clock it was—the mid-day sun beating down—He left alone at the well while the rest went on—His request to the woman—and see Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15. Yes, He suffered *just as we should*. Yet what had He been doing? Think of all last Sunday's lesson—all He taught the woman—so wise and good; and she a wicked woman—unfeeling too—she could get at the water, but did she give Him any? How patient! how unselfish! (comp. Rom. xv. 3).

2. *How, then, could He do all this?* Not just because He was God [*comp. Lessons XII., XIII.*]. In His strength He was like us, as well as in His suffering. When a man doing something very exciting, very delightful, will often forget pain, fatigue, hunger. [*Illustrate:—e.g.* British troops marching over steep mountains towards Magdala—one day long march—exhausted—could scarcely drag on—suddenly turned corner—there was Theodore's army! Immediately forgot pain—rushed forward—battle—victory—no rest or food for hours after. The chance of fighting for Queen and

country just like food to them. Or sailors in storm (e. g. Acts xxvii. 33.)

3. But what was Christ's 'meat'? We have seen His likeness to us—now see difference. Anything exciting, exhilarating, in teaching a dull, unkind, sinful woman about God? What made it so pleasant to Him?

(a) It was His Father's will and work. When had He spoken of this before? Luke ii. 49 [see Lesson X.]. See what had been prophesied of Him, Ps. xl. 8. When did He 'finish' God's work? John xvii. 4, xix. 30.

(b) It was sowing. All that patience with the woman just like the sower's patience. And He looked forward to the harvest (as He did on the cross, Heb. xii. 2). Now see when the first sheaves were reaped.

II. THE REAPERS' JOY AND REWARD.

[Read ver. 35—38.] When seed sown, how long wait before harvest? So Jesus reminds disciples [see Note 1]—but His harvest to come directly. 'Look!' He says—'fields ripe now.' But—nothing of the kind—corn not grown yet—what mean? Look again towards Sychar—a company coming—Samaritans—the woman bringing them—there is the harvest! Disciples had not sown for that harvest (ver. 38). One had sown—had laboured all that hot afternoon sowing the 'seed'; others—they themselves—should reap (ver. 37); they should gather the crop, and have the wages (i.e., the joy) too (ver. 36); He and they would 'rejoice together.' [See Notes.]

But how came the seed to spring up like that? [Read ver. 28—30, 39—42.] Follow the woman from the well back to the town

—how eager! Her neighbours gather round her—'Come!' she says—and what then? Does she tell of the wonderful water the stranger has? or of the true worship instead of that on Gerizim, of which He spoke? Does she not keep to herself His knowledge of her life, of her sins? It is just *this* that she tells them (contrast Adam, Gen. iii. 10)—*this* that makes her think Him the Messiah! See them all flocking out—bringing Jesus back with them to Sychar—keeping Him and the disciples two days—hospitable to a party of Jews!

The seed in the woman's heart has sprung up in one day. How the Sower and reapers rejoice! For months Jesus has been teaching crowds, the disciples baptizing; but those only half-hearted (see John ii. 24, iii. 32). What a contrast here, with these poor despised Samaritans!

But these only a few sheaves (the 'handful of corn,' Ps. lxxii. 16)—much more to come—see what a harvest Peter and John reaped there a few years after, Acts viii. 5—17 (comp. ix. 31, xv. 3).

Who are the Sowers now? Ministers, missionaries, *we teachers*. What do we sow? Luke viii. 11. What harvest do we look for? 1 Thess. ii. 19. And we shall have it; see to-day's text (Gal. vi. 9), and Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.

You can be Sowers too, and you too shall reap. Did not the Samaritan woman sow? and did she not share in the reapers' joy, when the people she brought to Jesus believed in Him? But she received the seed into her own heart first—so must you, Pray, 'Blessed Lord, who hast caused,' &c.

NOTES.

1. 'Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest.' It is much disputed whether these words merely refer to a proverbial saying, or express an actual fact, viz., that our Lord was in Samaria in December, i.e., four months before the beginning of barley harvest. It is unnecessary to give the respective arguments here. The majority of commentators take the latter view, and it seems the most probable one, but certainly no chronological system should be based on so doubtful a point. Greswell's view, that the words, 'Look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest,' imply that it was literally harvest time, or a little before, is at all events to be rejected; for the point of the expression lies in the fact that if the disciples obeyed, lifted up their eyes, and looked on the fields, they would *not* see ripe corn: which would lead them to look for some figurative meaning in the words, and the explanation would be supplied by the appearance of the Samaritans in the distance. The contrast between the slow processes of nature, and the (in many cases) rapid processes of grace, which Christ designed to illustrate, would thus be most vividly (one may almost say pictorially) displayed to the disciples.

2. The general meaning of ver. 35—38, which are at first sight difficult, will appear from the second division of the Sketch. It must be borne

in mind that they contain the Lord's description of what He had been doing, His answer to the disciples' question as to how His strength had been sustained, and an encouragement to them in the work to which they were called. The expression 'other men laboured' refers not (at all events not directly) to the Old Testament prophets, but to Himself. He had even then been 'labouring,' and they 'should enter into His labours,' by having the gratification of receiving (perhaps of baptizing) the Samaritan believers; just as upon His 'labour' in the whole work of redemption, the 'travail of His soul' (Isa. liii. 11), depends all the ministerial success of every one of His servants, whose utmost toil is indeed only a joyful reaping compared with His sowing.

3. It is noteworthy that the Samaritan idea of the Messiah, as the 'Saviour of the World,' was a far higher one than that of the Jews. As they did not receive any of the books of the Old Testament except the Pentateuch, they could not misinterpret the later and fuller prophecies as the Jews did; and their conceptions might be derived from the promises to Abraham that 'in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed.' In like manner, the woman's expectation that Messiah 'would tell us all things,' might be based upon Deut. xviii. 15—18.

Lesson XXI.—The Nobleman of Capernaum.

'The obedience of faith.'

Rea?—John iv. 43—54; Learn—John iv. 50; Jas. ii. 22. (*Hymns*, 145, 149, 185, 345, 371.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Perhaps few of our Lord's miracles have, at first sight, less of special interest attaching to them than the one recorded in this passage, and the cursory reader might imagine that scarcely any opportunity for picturing was afforded by it. But the subject is peculiarly attractive when we look below the surface, especially at such points as the Greek word rendered 'nobleman,' which may almost be said to reveal the man's history (see Note 3, and first division of Sketch), or the incidents implied in the mention of the *hour* at which the miracle was wrought, compared with the relative positions of Cana and Capernaum (see Note 4, and second division of Sketch). These features of the Lesson will interest all classes of scholars, and the teachers of the younger children will be able to exercise their picturing faculties without going too deeply into the inner subject of the Lesson, viz., the growth of faith.

This inner subject, however, is one of great importance. Sunday-school teachers are too much in the habit of using theological terms which have no definite meaning in the minds of their scholars, and of this habit the constant iteration of the words '*faith*' and '*believe*' is the most common example. Yet every thoughtful teacher knows that if one of his scholars asked him to explain what he really means when he calls on them to '*believe in Christ*,' he would find it very difficult to give a clear answer. The suggestions made in the following Sketch may perhaps help him to do so.

For infants an easier application, and one quite as useful, is suggested by the fact (noticed at the end of the first division—and see Note 6) that this miracle and that of the water made wine are *representatives* of the two classes of mighty works done by our Lord, by which fact we are reminded of His all-embracing love and power.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How often we have talked of *faith*! Who understands what it is?—many do not—try to-day.

In the last six lessons we have seen many *believing* in Christ; but many different sorts of believing. Look at chap. ii. 23, 24—one sort; at chap. iii. 2 (comp. ver. 12)—another sort; two sorts in chap. i. 41, 49, comp. with ii. 11; two sorts in chap. iv. 39—42. To-day see a *picture of faith growing*—like an acorn becoming an oak; a man believing at first scarcely at all, at last with all his heart.

The Roman governor Pilate ruled only in Judaea. Over Galilee and Peræa (the country 'beyond Jordan') one of King Herod's sons reigned, called Herod Antipas; see Luke iii. 1. At his palace many courtiers, lords, officers—gay people (comp. Mark vi. 21)—given up to court affairs and pleasures—no thought of God's promises—would they care about any new prophet? Yet knew John the Baptist—had heard him preach before Herod (Mark vi. 20)—but would not like one who so sternly rebuked sin. Now had heard of Jesus—would they care for him?—would say, 'this man a prophet! he is only a Nazarene!' But some went to Passover—came back to Galilee, telling what wonderful things Jesus did (ver. 45; chap. ii. 23)—still many would think little of it.

What is it that sometimes brings thoughtless people to Christ? Isa. xxvi. 9, 16; Ps. cxix. 67. Upon one of these Herodian courtiers [see Note 3] God sends trouble—his son very ill—doctors cannot cure—worse and worse—just dying (ver. 47). How little the poor father cares now for finery and gaiety—all his money no use—what shall he do?

Now look at our picture of faith [Read passage]. See this nobleman—

I. BELIEVING IN CHRIST'S POWER.

In his distress he thinks of the Nazarene carpenter—'he healed some at Jerusalem—could he not heal my son?' Jesus is only twenty miles away (ver. 46). Early in the morning [see Note 4] the father sets off—tiring journey—up steep roads into hilly country. Perhaps he thinks (like Naaman, 2 Kings v. 9—12) that the 'prophet' will be highly flattered at so great a man coming to Him, and will eagerly go back with him (perhaps in hope of reward) to the sick bed at Capernaum.

What sort of *faith* is this? Thought Jesus could heal—knew not how—perhaps with some curious magic at bedside—certainly never thought (a) of *instant* cure, (b) of cure *at a distance*, or (c) of cure *after death* (comp. Martha and Mary, chap. xi. 21, 32). Anyhow, cared not for Jesus Himself—nothing to him who Jesus might be.

See what Jesus said, ver. 48—what meant? Something like this:—‘Ye Jews have the Scriptures testifying of Me—the Baptist has announced Me—I have fulfilled prophecy before your eyes [see Lesson XVII.]—yet ye will not believe—do not even care to inquire about Me—only want to see great wonders—even then many will not accept Me.’ [See Note 5.]

Was it not true of them? chap. ii. 18; Matt. xii. 38, xvi. 1; 1 Cor. i. 22. Was it not true of this man?—never thinking of Jesus till wanted His healing power—even then only asked for that—no idea of being a disciple.

Do Jesus’ words impress him?—does he feel the rebuke? Thinks only of the one thing—no desire for anything greater from Jesus—knows nothing of the ‘living water’—of the ‘Saviour of the world’ (see ver. 14, 42). Yet not offended, like Naaman—too sad and anxious.

Jesus might be angry with him, but only ‘very pitiful and of tender mercy’—will do ‘exceeding abundantly above all he has asked or thought.’ When had Jesus done so before? chap. ii. 1—11. Then He shewed His power over the *good* things of the world, blessing and increasing them. Now He will show His power over the *evil* things of the world, checking and curing them. [See Note 6.]

But faith must be tried—the father must go back alone. Now see this man—

II. BELIEVING IN CHRIST’S WORD.

‘Thy son liveth!’—How can He know that here at Cana? and how can it be true?—can he heal without touching the sick one? So the nobleman might have felt. Can he go back alone? Suppose this a mistake.

Does he hesitate to go? But mark—he is in no hurry. It is noon—he could get back to-night if made haste—does he? It is *next day*, when, on the way, he meets

his servants. Why this? ‘*He that believeth shall not make haste*’ (Isa. xxviii. 16). [See Note 4.]

What sort of faith is this? (a) Sure that what Christ says is true. This more than some, see chap. iii. 4, 12, 32. If can receive Christ’s words, then *heart ready*—only requires to *know* more in order to *believe* more. (b) Willing to obey Christ. This the test. Comp. Abraham, Heb. xi. 8; contrast Naaman. See faith growing.

Now see the glad news. Child not dead—cure complete (*fever left him*)—and when? Then it is all true—this Jesus has done it—and what then? See the man, and all his household—

III. BELIEVING IN CHRIST HIMSELF.

What does ver. 53 mean? Not merely believing Jesus can cure—this they *know* now. Much more: believing in Him *as Messiah*, avowing their faith (comp. Rom. x. 10), becoming his open disciples—the great officer of Herod’s court boldly joining the poor despised Nazarene.

What sort of faith is this? (a) Confident and happy faith—not timid and gloomy, but like that of Paul (2 Tim. i. 12), and of Peter’s converts (1 Pet. i. 8). (b) ‘Faith which worketh by love’ (Gal. v. 6)—not sitting still, but ready to work and suffer for Christ.

NOW WHAT IS OUR FAITH LIKE? Of course we believe (1) in Christ’s *power*. But do we believe (2) in His *word*—all He says to us in the Bible? Above all, do we believe (3) in *Himself*, taking Him as our Saviour, Lord, Friend, caring for Him above all others?

How is this to be proved? See text for repetition (Jas. ii. 22). How know difference between *dead tree* and *living tree*? So, does our faith in Christ make us ‘plentifully bring forth the fruit of good works’?

NOTES.

1. Up to this point the events of our Lord’s ministry are recorded only by St. John. In the three other Gospels, the commencement of His great public work in Galilee follows immediately on the Temptation. All expositors, however, agree that a considerable period intervened, occupied by the incidents of John i. 19—iv. 42.

The question whether the journey into Galilee, recorded in John iv. 3, 43, is the same as that named in Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 14; is discussed in *Additional Note III.*, p. 55.

2. ‘*His own country*,’ ver. 44. Most commentators, imagining that Christ was *avoiding* the place where He would get no honour, consider that the ‘own country’ is *Nazareth*, as distinguished from the rest of Galilee; and that He passed by Nazareth, where He would not be ‘received,’ and came to Cana, where He *was* ‘received.’ (Some even think *Bethlehem* is intended, which, in returning to Galilee, He was leaving behind in Judæa. This is undoubtedly wrong.) Certainly, Nazareth was ‘His own country,’ and as such is distinguished elsewhere

from Capernaum: see Luke iv. 23 (comp. Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 1.) But is *Nazareth* only intended? Is it not the *hill-country* in which *Nazareth* was situated, and *Cana* too? This upland district is as different as possible from the deep hollow in which lies the Lake of Gennesareth, fringed at that time with populous towns, of which Capernaum was one. In this hill-country the early life of Jesus had been passed; it was emphatically his ‘own country’ (more literally ‘*fatherland*’); hither He now came—just because here He would not be counted a prophet, and could be for a time in retirement. But, contrary to what might naturally be expected, the Galileans did ‘receive’ Him, having seen His acts at Jerusalem. See *Additional Note III.*, p. 55.

3. The word rendered ‘nobleman’ (*βασίλικός*, *basilikos*) means a *royal person*; but it is specially used by Josephus of the courtiers and officers of the petty Palestine kings as distinct from those of the Roman emperors. The man who came to Christ can therefore be identified as one of the household of Herod Antipas, the ‘tetrarch’ (i.e.,

ruler of a fourth part of Herod the Great's kingdom of Galilee. It is even possible that he may have been the steward Chuza, whose wife was one of the wealthy women who 'ministered' to Christ (Luke viii. 3). He may also have been one of the scribes who had given up their strict Pharisee lives, and joined the gay and vicious court of Antipas; to whom Christ seems to refer when He speaks (Luke vii. 25) of some teachers 'in soft raiment,' 'gorgeously apparelled,' 'living delicately in kings' courts.' [See an interesting 'biblical study' on Manaen, by Professor Plumptre, in the *Sunday Magazine*, April, 1867; and his article, 'Scribes,' in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.] If this last conjecture be correct, our Lord's words to him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders'—so like what He elsewhere said to scribes (Matt. xii. 38, 39)—are very significant.

4. The 'nobleman' came to Christ 'at the seventh hour,' i.e., one P.M. (see ver. 52, 53). As Cana was little more than twenty miles from Capernaum, he had probably started early the same morning. He certainly might have got back that night, especially if impelled by parental anxiety; and the fact that he only met his servants, on his way back, *the following day*, shows his confidence in Christ's word.

Note the expressions, 'Sir, come down'—'as he was now going down'; referring to the steep descent from the hill-country into the hollow of the Lake of Gennesareth.

5. This narrative illustrates the remarkable fact—too little recognised, though evident again and again in the Gospels—that our Lord did not regard His miracles as the chief ground of faith in Himself. He would not work mere prodigies

('signs from heaven') when challenged to do so, but confined Himself to the less startling works of mercy, which were the real 'signs' of His mission—tokens of His love—emblems of His spiritual blessings. Even these were generally conditional on the *prior faith* of the persons on whom they were wrought. 'If thou canst believe'—'Believest thou that I am able to do this?'—'He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief'—'Or else believe Me for the very works' sake' (as a lower kind of faith), &c., &c. Most of His attached followers joined Him under the influence of His word and presence; and when some, merely struck by His miracles, put faith in Him, He put no faith in them. (see Lesson XVII., Note 9). Miracles, however, constantly confirmed faith, as in the case before us, in John ii. 11, xi. 21—44, and many other places.

Christ's first reply to the nobleman, therefore, had no real harshness in it: it is a sadly-spoken and gentle rebuke of the defectiveness of his faith (see the Sketch). Alford beautifully observes that His treatment of this man was an example of 'not quenching the smoking flax, as His treatment of the Samaritan woman was of 'not breaking the bruised reed.'

6. St. John's reason for emphatically naming this miracle as the 'second' worked in Galilee (the first being that of the water made wine) seems to be twofold:—(1) They are typical examples of the two kinds of Christ's works—(a) on the good of this world, (b) on the evil of the world—as suggested in the Sketch; (2) Each had a special purpose and result in the confirmation of weak faith (see preceding note).

ADDITIONAL NOTE III.—THE JOURNEYS OF CHRIST INTO GALILEE.

Expositors have usually assumed that the journey into Galilee recorded in John iv. is identical with that named by the other Evangelists. Recent writers question this, and it would seem with good reason. For Matthew and Mark give the Baptist's imprisonment as the cause of the journey; whereas John (ver. 1) gives a totally distinct reason, and, moreover, his language implies that the Baptist was still at liberty (the Greek is, 'That Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John is'—implying that John's baptism was still going on).

Some who hold this latter view, further think that the visit to Jerusalem, narrated in John v., must be placed immediately after chap. iv., and that the departure into Galilee of the three earlier Gospels was the return from the capital. But the internal features of chap. v. (which will be pointed out hereafter) apparently require its being put later in the history.

The following arrangement seems to combine all the requirements of the sacred narrative:—

For some time Jesus and John were preaching and baptizing in Judæa simultaneously [see Lesson XIX., Note 1]. The crowds drawn to Christ excite the attention of the rulers (John iv. 1). To avoid a collision at so early a period—perhaps also

to prevent the suspicion of a rivalry between the two teachers (iii. 25, 26)—Jesus quietly withdraws into Galilee, passing through Samaria on his way. His object—retirement—not being gained, as the Galileans (contrary to expectation) 'receive Him (iv. 45), He returns into the 'wilderness' where He had been tempted, and thence (as seems intimated by Matthew, Mark, and Luke) He starts for Galilee, on hearing of John's imprisonment, to begin His chief public ministry; the time for which has now arrived, the Baptist's preparatory work being at an end.

The only apparent awkwardness in this scheme is the assumption of a retirement into the wilderness at the end of John iv. But since the journey to Galilee of Matthew, Mark, and Luke was not that of John iv. 3, 43, nor (probably) subsequent to John v., it must be placed between, and must have been from some place. And the idea of its being from the wilderness makes the narrative of the three Evangelists more natural.

In one respect, this arrangement is strongly confirmed by John iv. 41, the words of which are a standing Bible difficulty, but are by this view made transparently clear. Christ went into Galilee for the very reason that He would get "no honour" there, and so might find retire-

ment. (The journey of the three earlier Gospels has a directly opposite purpose, viz., to enter on a great public work.) Retirement, however, He did not find, as the proverb in this instance was but partially

verified. The Galileans, having been to the Passover at Jerusalem, and witnessed His miracles there, were now ready to 'receive' Him. [See Lesson XXI., Note 2.]

Lesson XXII.—The Rejection at Nazareth.

'Is not this the carpenter?'

Read—Luke iv. 16—30; *Learn*—Luke iv. 22; Isa. liii. 1—3
(Hymns 95, 145, 167, 261, 264, 270.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The chief requisite for teaching this Lesson well is this:—That the teacher should himself realise the scene in the synagogue with sufficient vividness to picture it as if he had been there. It is hoped that the Sketch, with Notes 2 and 3, will enable all to do this. The writer has borrowed considerably from Dr. Hanna's *Earlier Years of Our Lord*, the chapter in which on this subject should be read if possible. The description of synagogue worship, &c., in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (reproduced in the *Student's New Testament History*), will also be found very suggestive.

If the picturing is at all effective, the narrative will prove one of the most interesting in the Gospels. The very fact that it is not the story of a miracle brings it more within the range of a child's understanding; it will come home to the class.

The third head of application is the most important, and flows most directly from the narrative; it should, therefore, be taken alone if time runs short. But the Lesson is not complete without the other two heads. The first one will interest good text-finders; and it may be observed that in the paragraph is exemplified a good method of making Scripture references more pointed, viz., by individualising the inspired writer in each case—'Solomon will tell us how'—'Paul will help us to answer,' &c. The warning respecting familiarity with the Gospel can be further impressed on elder scholars by reminding them how much more interested they (speaking generally) were in the life and work of Christ when they were younger; familiarity, and consequent carelessness, growing with advancing years.

Illustrations are scarcely wanted in a lesson depending so much on its picturing. It is often well, however, to open with one, and to use them in application; and suggestions for this purpose occur in the Sketch.

It may be convenient to mention that the motto of the Lesson is from Mark vi. 3, where Jesus is called, not (as elsewhere) the 'carpenter's son,' but the 'carpenter.'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

If a man well-known in our town or neighbourhood went away for a time—became famous—great soldier or traveller—then came back to the old place—how would he be received?

Jesus thirty years at Nazareth—small town—everybody knew Him well. How was He occupied when there? Had no doubt done carpenter's work for them—been paid, &c., &c.—no one thought WHO He was. Now He goes there after being away some time—since last there has done wondrous things—see how He is received.

I. THE 'CARPENTER'S SON' IN HIS OWN TOWN. [*Read ver. 16—20.*]

It is the Sabbath—people gathering to the synagogue (as now to church) for Sabbath worship and teaching—eager to go to-day—expect to see one who for years was regularly there, but absent lately—the son of Joseph the carpenter's widow—whom none could ever find fault with—so

good—too good to be liked by all. (So now, church often the place where first expect to meet absent friend.) Why eager to see Him? Have heard strange reports of what He has done at Jerusalem, Cana, &c.—of His preaching publicly and having disciples, &c.

The synagogue full—He is there—not looking very different—not dressed like old prophets or the stern man who baptized in the Jordan. The service goes on—presently the 'Lesson' to be read—He rises as if a regular scribe—takes the roll given Him—the roll of Isaiah's prophecies—reads out a beautiful message from God (Isa. lxi.—words they know well)—then sits down to preach in the very building in which He had sat so often as a listener—all eyes on Him.

II. THE 'CARPENTER'S SON'S' CLAIM.

See the text (ver. 18, 19) and first sentence (ver. 21) of His sermon—we have no

more ('He began to say'), but how full this is! and how suitable! Think what sort of people sitting there—the common people of a little town. Most of them 'poor,' toiling wearily day by day—some 'broken-hearted' with trouble or sorrow—some 'captives' to besetting faults—some 'blind' (either literally or with ignorance). No postman brings good news to them—but *the text does* ('Gospel' = good news). God promises a 'Jubilee year' [see Note 3]—a time of release from the worst slavery (John viii. 34), of recovery of an 'inheritance' that is 'incorruptible,' &c. (1 Pet. i. 4).

But who to bring all this? One 'anointed' by God's Spirit—the 'Messiah'—of whom Isaiah wrote so much. And when? What does Jesus tell them (ver. 21)? *Now!* 'this day'!—then He means that *He* is Messiah!

III. THE 'CARPENTER'S SON' REJECTED.

[Read ver. 22–30.]

Now see what the Nazarenes think of it all. They like His words—so different from what used to come from scribes—no hard rules which no one can remember or keep—'words of grace' [the *literal meaning*] indeed—and He (they well know) not a learned man either. They are fascinated at first. But see—altered looks—whispering—murmurs—'What! *he!* he whom we have known all his life, Joseph's son, the carpenter—he set *himself* up to be God's Messiah!'

Jesus stops—He knows all their thoughts—see what He says, ver. 23–27. "It is only what He expected ('surely')—what is always the case ('no prophet,' &c.)—but let them be careful—they may lose great blessings. Are they jealous because His works (healing sick, &c.) not done *there* first (ver. 23)? What had God done of old? did the barrels of meal last in *Hebrew* homes in Elijah's days? did Elisha heal *Israelitish* lepers? If they will not have the 'good news,' God can send it down to the publicans and fishermen of Capernaum—can even send it away to the Gentiles" (comp. Acts xiii. 46, xviii. 6, xxviii. 28).

This maddens them. 'Does this carpenter compare Himself to Elijah? does He dare to say that the promise to Israel shall go to the Gentiles—the dogs—the uncircumcised?' Comp. the tumult at St. Paul's similar words, Acts xxii. 21, 22.

Look!—on the Sabbath—in the house of

prayer—the whole congregation springing up, seizing the gentle Jesus, dragging Him out, rushing to the edge of the cliff to hurl Him over. Suddenly—He is gone! where? none can tell! So they *have* seen a miracle after all, but—it has separated them from their Saviour.

WHICH OF US ARE LIKE THESE NAZARENES?

1. *All of us are like them in one way.* The same Saviour comes to us, proclaiming the same Gospel. But do we want it? Are we *poor*? Perhaps we have *nothing*; Solomon will tell us how, Prov. xiii. 7 (comp. Rev. iii. 17). Are we *broken-hearted*? We ought to be, for sin; see what David says, Ps. li. 17. Are we *blind*? Peter (2 Pet. i. 9) or John (1 John ii. 11) will tell us how that might be. Are we *captives* or *bruised* (i.e., crushed) by cruel foes? Paul can help us to answer, see Rom. vii. 23, 24; 2 Tim. ii. 26. Is any one of these texts like a mirror, in which we see ourselves? If so, to us Jesus comes, to make rich, Prov. viii. 17, 18; to give comfort, John xiv. 18, 27; to open the eyes, Acts xxvi. 18; to deliver from bondage, Rom. vi. 14, vii. 25; to do everything for us, Phil. iv. 19.

2. *Some of us are like them in another way.* They rejected Jesus; how many do now! But, you say, we would not have done as they did. Are you quite sure? They little thought that morning what they would do before night. But you may reject Jesus without going so far as that. To neglect Him is to reject Him. [Illustr.—*I offer you money—you simply do not put out hand to take it—is not that rejecting it?*]

3. *In one other way we are like them.* What made them reject Jesus? Was it not that they knew Him so well, His face and voice so familiar, thought little of it? And you know all about Him—heard it often—Gospel nothing new to you—is that why you care not for it? [Illustr.—*Sunshine, action of heart in breathing, &c., such common mercies that not appreciated.*] Negroes and savages not clothed and educated like you—whom you would look down on—they often eager for God's message—and they will be in heaven when some clever English boys and girls 'cast out.' But may come *now*—'acceptable year of Lord' (comp. 2 Cor. vi. 2)—*now* 'in unwise cast out' (John vi. 37).

NOTES.

1. Alford and others think that this visit to Nazareth should be placed later in the chronology—St. Luke not observing the order of time: (1) because they identify it with the visit mentioned by Matthew (xiii. 54–58) and Mark (vi. 1–6); (2) because of the allusion in ver. 23 to 'what had been done at Capernaum.' But the majority of expositors (including Tischendorf, Meyer, Wieseler, and most English writers) agree that there were two visits, notwithstanding the remarkable similarity in the accounts; and this seems clearly proved by the single fact

that St. Mark (vi. 5) speaks of miracles being wrought, which could not have been the case on the occasion recorded by St. Luke, as the very expression in verse 23 precludes their having been done before it was uttered, and it is impossible to conceive of them after the rejection. 'What had been done at Capernaum,' was probably the cure of the nobleman's son (who lay sick *there*, though Jesus was at Cana). Further, ver. 31–41 (and Mark i. 21–29) evidently record the commencement of the ministry at Capernaum, and ver. 31 implies that Jesus went

there from Nazareth; with which Matt. iv. 13 agrees ('Leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum').

2. **SYNAGOGUES.**—The word is a Greek one, meaning *assembly*, and is almost identical with the Latin 'congregation.' Like our word 'church,' it originally designated the assembly of worshippers (comp. John ix. 22; Acts ix. 2), but in course of time was applied to the building in which they met. Synagogues probably originated during the captivity, when the Temple worship was suspended, or even before (Ps. lxxiv. 8). Subsequently they rose in all directions, and had a great influence in fostering the religious life of the nation.

They generally stood on the highest ground in or near the town, and were so built that one end was towards Jerusalem (like chancels towards the east), at which end was the ark or chest containing the Books of the Law, &c., and the 'chief seats' so eagerly sought (Matt. xxiii. 6; Jas. ii. 2, 3). The pulpit, which stood in the centre of a raised platform, occupied a position similar to that in our churches.

The 'ruler of the synagogue' was the chief local Rabbi. Jairus filled this office at Capernaum (Luke viii. 41), and Crispus at Corinth (Acts xviii. 8). His qualifications were very similar to those of a bishop, as laid down by St. Paul. The word '*minister*,' in the passage before us, means (as elsewhere, Matt. xx. 26; Acts xiii. 5) a *servant*, and refers to the *chazzan*, a kind of clerk or verger; this functionary was often also the local schoolmaster.

The service consisted of prayers, read by the 'ruler,' the people standing (Mark xi 25; Luke xviii. 11) and responding 'Amen'; singing of the Psalms; the reading, first of the Law, then of the Prophets (as first and second lessons); and the '*derash*,' or 'word of exhortation' (Acts xiii. 15). Any one could read the Books of the Prophets; hence there was no obstacle to Christ doing so. The reader always stood; the preacher sat (comp. Matt. v. i.; Mark iv. 1).

The synagogue was also used as a court of justice (Luke xii. 11, xxi. 12), and even as a place of punishment (Matt. x. 17; Mark xiii. 9).

3. 'Opening' and 'closing' the 'book,' of course means *unrolling and rolling the roll* of the sacred writings. Each of the Old Testament books (or groups of books) would occupy a roll; so Jesus

was handed the roll of Isaiah's prophecies. Probably the regular appointed 'lessons' were just at that time from Isaiah; but Bengel's argument, attempting to fix the very day of the year by seeing when chap. lxi. fell in the Rabbinical calendar, cannot be relied on. It is more likely that Jesus Himself selected the particular passage.

The passage as given by St. Luke agrees substantially with the Septuagint version of Isa. lxi. 1, 2; but one clause is omitted, and some words from Isa. lviii. 6 inserted instead. The omission by our Lord of the closing words of the sentence ('the day of vengeance') may have been in order not to favour the popular idea of a temporal restoration. 'To preach the acceptable year,' would be better rendered, 'To proclaim,' the proclamation of the Jubilee being referred to. See Lev. xxv.

4. The two proverbs quoted by our Lord may be compared with two parallel English sayings, 'Physician, heal thyself,' with 'Charity begins at home'; 'No prophet,' &c., with 'Familiarity breeds contempt.' 'Physician, heal thyself' does not here mean, 'Preach to yourself before you preach to us,' but, 'You, a Nazarene, ought to heal the Nazarene sick before those elsewhere.'

5. 'Elias,' 'Eliseus,' and 'Sarepta,' must be explained as identical with the Elijah, Elisha, and Zarephath of the Old Testament. They are the Greek forms. Sarepta is now called Surafend.

6. A steep hill, two miles from the modern Nazareth, is the traditional scene of the attempt on the life of Jesus, and is called the Mount of Precipitation. It is evidently, however, not the real spot. Just over the town is a smaller cliff, forty feet high, on which are many traces of former buildings. Here a portion of the old village may have stood, and certainly (see above, Note 2) the synagogue. If so, Jesus had only to be dragged a few yards to the edge of the precipice. The cliff may have been virtually much higher, as the ground below has *risen* considerably through the crumbling of the rock and the accumulation of *débris*.

7. The exact method of our Lord's escape from the crowd is uncertain. He may have rendered Himself invisible, or made them powerless by a *look* such as that in Gethsemane, John xviii. 6.

ADDITIONAL NOTE IV.—CHRIST'S GALILEAN MINISTRY.

If we had only the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, we should imagine that our Lord's public work was almost confined to Galilee. It is clear that the regular course of Apostolic oral teaching given to the early Church—from which course of oral teaching was probably derived the substance of the three Gospels—was mainly confined to a selection of Christ's works and discourses in Galilee, and a detailed narrative of His death and its attendant circumstances. The obvious reason of this is, that most of the Apostles joined Him at the beginning of His Galilean ministry, and so naturally recorded the things they had seen and heard; though, as they were guided by Divine inspiration,

there are doubtless also other and higher reasons, which cannot now be discussed.

When, however, we turn to St. John's Gospel, we find that there was an important period of work in Judæa and the Jordan valley anterior to that in Galilee; [see *Addit. Note III., and Lesson XIX., Note 1*]. The question at once occurs to us, What was the relation of one ministry to the other? Why did Christ move from the capital and its neighbourhood, and, beginning (as it were) entirely afresh, retire into a provincial district? Why did he there spend most of His time, there employ most freely His miraculous power, thence draw His most intimate followers?

The answer seems to be, in brief, this:—

It was fitting that Messiah should be presented to the Jewish people in their corporate capacity as God's chosen nation. To this end John the Baptist pointed Him out to the official deputation from the Sanhedrim (John i. 19—34; see *Lesson XIV., Note 3*); to this end Jesus appeared at the capital, fulfilled a Messianic prophecy, and spoke of God as His Father (John ii. 13—22; see *Lesson XVII.*); to this end He remained in Judæa so long as the Baptist's testimony continued, thus still giving the rulers an opportunity of recognising Him if they would (John iii. 22—36; see *Lesson XIX., Note 1*). Their indifference and prejudice were, however, too great: Messiah was rejected. Then, and not till then, began the main work of the Lord's public ministry. It was this: *To gather out a new 'chosen people,' a new 'Church,' which should supersede the old.* 'The Kingdom of God should be taken from the Jews'—(not as individuals, for some would have it, but as a covenant people)—'and given to a nation'—(not the Gentiles as such, but the Church universal)—'bringing forth the fruits thereof.' *This work was chiefly done in Galilee.* A few men, indeed, joined Jesus earlier, on the banks of the Jordan—Andrew, Philip, &c.; but they were Galileans, and they did not finally 'leave all and follow Christ' till He came into Galilee. This 'leaving all and following Christ' was to the new dispensation what Abraham's leaving Mesopotamia, and going out 'not knowing whither He went,' was to the old dispensation. Both the Jewish Church and the Christian Church began with a Divine Call obeyed, a Divine Promise believed.

But why was Galilee, particularly the district bordering on the Lake, chosen as the scene of this special work? Because it was, next to Jerusalem—in some respects more than Jerusalem—the centre of life and activity in Palestine at that period, and at the same time there was far less of pride and prejudice in its people. It is called 'Galilee of the Gentiles,' not that the bulk of the inhabitants were not Jews, but because there was a large admixture of foreign population; the result being that even the Jews there were more open to new impressions, and were looked down upon by their Judæan fellow-countrymen, who

could recognise them anywhere by their provincial accent (Mark xiv. 70; Acts ii. 7).

It is remarkable that this district is scarcely mentioned in the Old Testament. It was under the Greek kings of Syria, and subsequently under the Romans, that it became so important. The great Roman road from Ptolemais (Acre) ran right across the province westward, through the then chief city Sepphoris (four miles north of Nazareth), down the steep descent to the shore of the Lake, then northward through Capernaum, across the Jordan by a bridge just above the Lake, and so on to Damascus. Hence, doubtless, the importance of Capernaum, which, with its neighbouring towns and villages, was to Palestine what Lancashire is to England—a great centre of modern life and progress, superseding the ancient glories of Hebron and Shechem—as those of Exeter, Winchester, &c., have been superseded. Many of the largest cities were almost wholly Greek—Sepphoris, Tiberias, Gadara, Hippos, &c., some of which—gay and fashionable—might be also compared to our Cheltenham and Scarboroughs. It is a striking fact that Christ is not recorded to have visited any of these: although He was the 'Prophet of Galilee,' He was 'not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

But Jerusalem was not yet given up. Again and again did Jesus 'go up' thither, and, by mighty act and word, invite the infatuated people to Himself. But they would have none of Him. Not a new and expansive 'kingdom' of believing souls, but the restoration of their own exclusive privileges, did they look for and desire. Often, 'how often,' would He have 'gathered' them, but they 'would not.' And so destruction came at last on their city and their Temple, as He foretold. And it is St. John, writing after the catastrophe, who is careful in his Gospel to record the Saviour's repeated but rejected invitations.

On the mutual relation of the Judæan and Galilean ministries, see Andrews' *Bible Students' Life of our Lord* (Strahan), pp. 107, &c., 167, &c. On the condition of Galilee in the time of Christ, see Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 731, &c.; Drew's *Scripture Lands*, p. 281, &c.; Hepworth Dixon's *Holy Land*, pp. 117, 264, &c.

ADDITIONAL NOTE V.—ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

The object of this Note is to explain the order of the events in our Lord's Galilean ministry adopted in these Lessons.

Owing to the marked differences of arrangement apparent in the first three Gospels (St. John's narrative scarcely touches this period), it is impossible to construct the harmony without inverting in many instances the order of one or other of the Evangelists; and, on the question how best

to do this a great variety of opinion exists. The writer of these Lessons has taken an interest in the subject for some years, and has, at different times, inclined to this and that view. But, while fully appreciating the ingenuity with which harmonists have endeavoured to fit every incident into its proper place, and even to fix the *day of the month* on which each one occurred, he has come to the conclusion that we do not pos-

sess the materials for accurately mapping out our Lord's ministry in a chronological table at all. And, besides the seemingly insuperable difficulties in the way of doing so, there are two reasons why we ought not to expect success in the attempt:—

(1) The miracles, discourses, circuits, &c., recorded, must be very few in comparison with the actual number of them. This is evident from the fact that while the 'Galilean ministry,' strictly so called (*i.e.*, from the call of Peter, &c.), to the Discourse at Capernaum of John vi.), is considered, by almost all the expositors, to have lasted twelve or fifteen months at least, half the space allotted to it by each Evangelist is (speaking roughly) occupied with the events of three days only.

(2) None of the Evangelists designed or professed to write a 'biography' of Christ. The Gospels are rather like modern '*lectures*' on the life of some great man, which, while observing a general and rough historical order, omit large portions of his career, and dwell upon such particular episodes as may illustrate his character and give a broad idea of the work of his life; and which, often with the same object in view, group incidents together without strict reference to the order of time. Such a lecture is far more effective for its purpose than the most exact chronological table.

At the same time, since *some* arrangement must be adopted in a continuous Course of Lessons, it is well to take that one, if it can be ascertained, which most nearly combines the three inspired narratives. In working this out, the following considerations should be borne in mind:—

(1) St. Luke's statement, in his preface, that he wrote '*in order*,' does not imply (as is often assumed) that he observed the strict order of time. The expression refers

rather to 'a moral or logical sequence' (Westcott, *Introduct. to Study of Gospels*, p. 176). The fact is that his narrative is more loosely strung together than those of Matthew and Mark; there being generally no connecting particles between his incidents (see v. 1, 12, 17, vi. 12, vii. 36, viii. 4). In some places, even where his order is certainly accurate, we only learn that it is so from the other Gospels (comp. vi. 6 with Matt. xii. 9; viii. 22 with Mark iv. 35).

(2) St. Matthew gives these indications of sequence much more frequently (see v. 1, viii. 1, 2, ix. 9, 18, 27, 32, xii. 9, 22, xiii. 1). And as he was an eye-witness of most of the events he records, it is natural to expect that, although not arranged chronologically of set purpose, they would fall into their actual order more naturally in his narrative than in one compiled by a writer who (as Luke did) obtained his information from others. That Matthew's facts are here and there grouped without reference to time is true (*e.g.*, verses 23—34 of chap. viii. certainly narrate what took place much later); but this does not appear to be the case to so large an extent as is often supposed.

(3) As Matthew and Luke differ widely in their arrangement, it is natural to ask with which of them Mark agrees. Many writers assume that his order confirms that of Luke; yet, in the table below, although Matthew is followed in several places where he differs from Luke, the order of Mark is, with a single exception, maintained throughout. The real question at issue is—Where, in the intervals of Mark's narrative, should be placed those incidents recorded only by Matthew and Luke, or either of them.

The arrangement of the events in eight groups will be found a great help to the right understanding of the problem.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.
I. { 1. First Call of the Fishermen	iv. 12—22.	i. 14—20.	
{ 2. Miracles in Capernaum	viii. 14—17.	i. 21—25.	iv. 31—41.
{ 3. Preaching in Galilee	iv. 23—25.	i. 36—39.	iv. 42—44.
{ 4. Second Call of the Fishermen			v. 1—11.
II. { 5. Sermon on the Mount	v.—vi.		vi. 17—40 (?)
{ 6. The Leper	viii. 1—4.	i. 40—45.	v. 12—16.
{ 7. The Centurion	viii. 5—13.		vii. 1—10.
{ 8. The Widow of Nain			vii. 11—17.
III. { 9. The Paralytic	ix. 2—8.	ii. 1—12.	v. 17—26.
{ 10. Call of Matthew	ix. 9.	ii. 13, 14.	v. 27, 28.
{ 11. Feast in Matthew's House, &c. .. .	ix. 10—17.	ii. 15—22.	v. 29—39.
{ 12. Jairus and the Sick Woman	ix. 18—26.	v. 21—43.	viii. 41—56.
{ 13. Blind, Dumb, &c.	ix. 27—38.		
{ 14. At Jerusalem			
IV. { 15. Message of the Baptist, &c.	xi. 2—30.		vii. 18—35.
{ 16. The Penitent Woman			vii. 36—50.
{ 17. Circuit			viii. 1—3.
V. { 18. In the Fields on the Sabbath	xii. 1—8.	ii. 23—28.	vi. 1—5.
{ 19. In a Synagogue on the Sabbath .. .	xii. 9—14.	iii. 1—6.	vi. 6—11.
{ 20. Withdrawal to the Sea	xii. 15—21.	iii. 7—12.	
{ 21. Choice of the Twelve	x. 1—4.	iii. 13—19.	vi. 12—16.
VI. { 22. Demonic healed—Accusations .. .	xii. 22—45.	iii. 22—30.	xi. 14—32.
{ 23. 'His Mother and His Brethren' .. .	xii. 46—50.	iii. 31—35.	viii. 19—21.
{ 24. Teaching by Parables	xiii. 1—52.	iv. 1—34.	viii. 4—18.
{ 25. Voyage across the Lake	viii. 23—27.	iv. 35—41.	viii. 22—25.
{ 26. The Gergesene Demoniac	viii. 28—ix. 1.	v. 1—20.	viii. 26—40.
VII. { 27. Visit to Nazareth	xiii. 53—58.	vi. 1—6.	
{ 28. The Twelve sent out	x. 5—42.	vi. 7—13.	ix. 1—6.

(John v.)

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.
(29. Death of John the Baptist, &c.	xiv. 1-12.	vi. 14-29.	ix. 7-9.
(30. Retirement across the Lake (John vi. 1-3)	xiv. 13, 14.	vi. 30-34.	ix. 10, 11.
(31. The 5,000 fed	(" vi. 4-15)	xiv. 15-21.	ix. 35-44.
(32. Walking on the Sea	(" vi. 16-21)	xiv. 22-33.	ix. 45-52.
(33. In the land of Gennesareth	(" vi. 22-71)	xiv. 34-36.	vi. 53-56.
(34. Discourse at Capernaum		xv. 1-20.	vii. 1-23.
(35. Accusations of the Pharisees			

It is obvious that *between* the several groups, and also between some of the sections, there is ample room for all the journeys, &c., of our Lord which are unrecorded; and, probably between groups II and III, III and IV, IV and V, and VII and VIII, considerable periods elapsed, which are an entire blank in the evangelic narratives.

Each group (except the two small ones IV and VII) contains incidents closely connected by distinct statements in one or more of the Gospels. The difficulty lies in arranging the groups themselves. Many harmonists put II (except section 6) and IV between V and VI, which does not affect Mark's order, but makes Luke's almost entirely correct, and disregards Matthew's altogether. But as regards Group II, this plan, in order to maintain Luke's order, separates the Healing of the Leper from the Sermon on the Mount, with which Matthew so distinctly connects it; and the Sermon itself is so obviously the first of Christ's great discourses to the assembled multitudes, that it seems altogether out of place so far on as after Group V. Moreover, both in Matthew and Mark, V and VI seem closely connected.

An important and extremely difficult question is, where the visit to Jerusalem of John v. comes in—(a question quite independent of that other one, as to *what feast* is there alluded to). Some consider that it occurred before the Galilean ministry; others fit it in at various points among the incidents of that ministry. Its position in the above table is determined, not on merely chronological, but on much deeper grounds, the explanation of which will give the key to the entire arrangement.

A careful perusal of the passages in Groups I to III will shew that, during the period they describe, Christ's ministry was one of great and almost unvarying external success. The only opposition to Him mentioned in these passages is found in sections 9 and 11, and that opposition is of a comparatively mild character.

Turning now to the passages comprised in Groups V to VIII, we observe a continuous record of antagonism and persecution. It begins with the controversy on Sabbath observance, which is immediately followed by a conspiracy to put Jesus to death (Matt. xii. 14; Mark iii. 6).

Now, between these two great divisions of the 'Galilean ministry' seems to stand the visit to Jerusalem of John v., on which occasion the Jews there 'sought to slay' Jesus, partly on the ground of His Sabbath-breaking. What more likely than that emissaries were then dispatched into Galilee,

to stir up prejudices against Him, and hence the changed aspect of affairs just noticed?

If this view be correct, great light is thrown upon the whole history. And, incidentally, it shows the unreasonableness of inserting Group II after Group V.

The position of Group IV has yet to be explained. Its actual place in the chronology is altogether uncertain, but there appear to be some links between the occurrences of John v. and the Baptist's message, as will be seen in the Lessons on these subjects. Hence the place chosen for section 15, which is followed naturally by 16 and 17.

On two other points in the table a word is necessary. (1) The only inversion of Mark's narrative is that of chap. v. 21-43 (section 12). Although both Mark and Luke place the raising of Jairus' daughter after the return from Gergesa, they give no distinct link of connection between the two incidents, and Matthew's account (ix. 18) of what took place *in his own house* must be regarded as decisive. (2) The chief inversion of Matthew's narrative is that of chap. viii. 23-ix. 1 (sections 25, 26). In this case a plain note of time is given in Mark (iv. 35), who distinctly states that the voyage to Gergesa closed the great day of parabolic teaching (comp. Luke viii.).

No attempt has been made in the above table to determine the absolute as distinct from the relative chronology, *i.e.*, to fix the seasons of the year at which any of the events happened. One point only is certain, *viz.*, that the 'Galilean ministry' closed at the period of a Passover, *i.e.*, March or April, which our Lord did not attend (John vi. 4). Most harmonists reckon back from that Passover to a month of December, supposed to be indicated in John iv. 35 (which indication, however, cannot be relied upon); and whether the intervening period was one of four months only, or a year and four months, would depend on the question whether the 'feast' of John v. 1 was a Passover or not. The only other note of time is the peculiar expression in Luke vi. 1, the meaning of which is doubtful, even if the reading be genuine—which is itself doubtful. The more carefully the whole subject is studied, the deeper will be the conviction that neither the Evangelists, nor the Divine Spirit who inspired them, designed to leave on record an exact chronological register of Christ's words and works at all, and that any attempt to construct one must more or less inevitably fail. At the same time, the general outline of the successive phases of His public life is sufficiently clear for all purposes of edification.

Lesson XXIII.—The Call of the Fishermen.

'Lo! we have left all and followed Thee.'

Read—Matt. iv. 12—22; Luke v. 1—11; Learn—Matt. x. 37, 38; Phil. iii. 7, 8.
(Hymns, 132, 171, 197, 326, 340.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It was originally intended, but was found impossible, to include in the Course a Lesson on the general subject of Christ's Galilean ministry, in which the external features of the country and the character of its population might have been described, with an application derived from the prophecy of Isaiah (ix. 1, 2) quoted by St. Matthew (iv. 14—16). The teacher should, however, endeavour himself to understand a district and a people so intimately associated with the Saviour's greatest words and works (on which subjects see *Additional Notes IV.*, p. 58, and *VI.*, p. 64). If a morning Lesson can be devoted to giving the information there condensed, the teacher will be repaid by the interest which will thereby be thrown upon succeeding lessons. In case this cannot be done, some suggestions for including in the present Lesson a hasty description of the Lake of Gennesareth and its surroundings are given in the first division of the Sketch; and a map should be shown to the children, if possible.

The narrative of the 'First Call' can be omitted if time runs short (or if the teacher should be of opinion, despite Note 3, that there was only one Call). The allusion to Christ's work as 'fishing' should not, however, be left out, and would come just as well under the fourth head.

The effectiveness of the application will very much depend upon the teacher's knowledge of the particular circumstances and characters of his scholars—how far he is able to name the *real* obstacles in the way of their 'following Christ.' Care should be taken to mention such things as *must* be abandoned; it does not do to say '*money*' to a boy whose entire home life is a struggle to 'make both ends meet'; and vague expressions like 'the world' should be always avoided.

Bunyan's 'man with the muck-rake' is a good illustration to quote; or that of the racer in Heb. xii. 1. Or this—'What would you think of the boy who would not drop a stone to take a sovereign?' The Collects for the Fourth Sunday after Easter and St. Andrew's Day may be referred to, and the hymn (340) 'Jesus calls us o'er the tumult!'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

I. THE LAKE.

Why does a river flow into the sea? The sea-level always flows *down*, never *up*—so river winds away, lower and lower, till it '*falls*' into sea. There is *one* place on earth where there is water—lakes and a river—far below sea-level, but shut in by land. If could cut a canal from sea to those waters, they would not flow down into sea—sea would rush down upon them and fill up the deep gorge in which they lie. It is the deepest land in the world.

This wonderful spot *the Jordan valley*—the waters are *Gennesareth, River Jordan, Dead Sea*. [See *Addit. Note VI.*, p. 64.] If three churches as high as St. Paul's, one on top of another, built by the Dead Sea, top would not reach to level of sea outside (Mediterranean).

Let us to-day go down, down, to the lake of Gennesareth. *Now* desolate, forsaken. In Gospel days bright and busy—towns and villages all round, full of people; mostly

Jews, but many foreigners—Roman soldiers, Greek merchants, crowds of pleasure-seekers; Herod's palace at his grand new city Tiberias [see *Lesson IX.*]. Much misery there, blind, lame, lepers, demoniacs; much sin too, money-getting, rioting, &c.; hypocritical Pharisees who cared not for poor, only for selves. [See *Addit. Note IV.*, p. 58.]

Here Jesus chose to live and work.

The proud rulers at Jerusalem will not have Him [see *Lesson XVII.*]; His own townfolk at Nazareth will not have Him [see *Lesson XXII.*]. Now He comes down here. Look what God's prophet had predicted 700 years before, Isa. ix. 1, 2; Matt. iv. 13—17. [See *Note 2.*]

II. THE FISHERMEN.

In the Lake quantities of fish—many got their living by catching the fish—had boats, nets, &c. Hard work—out all night—often caught nothing—dangerous storms. [See *Notes 4, 5, and Addit. Note VI.*, p. 64.]

Two fishermen, Jonas and Zebedee. Each two sons—Simon and Andrew, James and

John. Where do they live? John i. 44. When great excitement in country about John Baptist, the young men went to hear him; what happened to them? whom besides did they get to know? John i. 35—42 [*refer to Lessons XVII., XV.*]. Believed they had found the Messiah, of whom had read in Scriptures, heard in synagogue—had been with Him at Jerusalem, Samaria, Cana—seen His miracles, heard His words—had been allowed to baptize for Him just like John.

But they had come home again, living as of old, fishing. And now sad news—their old teacher John put in prison by Herod (Matt. iv. 12); and of Jesus they see nothing—is it all a dream?—the 'kingdom' not come after all?

III. THE FIRST CALL. [*Read Matt. iv. 18—22.*]

One day they are all on the shore; two (which?) throwing out small net into water to catch the fish swimming about close under the rocks; three (which?) sitting in boat mending larger nets. [*See Note 4.*]

Who comes by? where has He come from? what to do? [*recapitulate*]. He too 'going a fishing'—whom to catch? The people living in those busy Galilean towns like the fish in the Lake—'immersed' in darkness (ver. 16) and sin; He would 'catch' them—not killing them as in real fishing, but giving them new life [*see Note 7*]. He is seeking helpers in this work—shall He call learned Rabbis, scribes used to teaching? No: He will call these fishermen—humble, indeed, but diligent, keen, patient, at their own work, and He will make them so at His (see 2 Cor. xii. 16).

Will they obey the call? It comes from no stranger; they already honour and love Him [*recapitulate*]. At once—gladly—they go.

IV. THE SECOND CALL. [*Read Luke v. 1—11. See Note 3.*]

Jesus has begun work on the busy shores of Gennesareth—teaches in synagogues—heals sick—read of this next Sunday—great crowds following Him. Where are the four men who left their nets? Gone back to their fishing—don't understand they are to leave it altogether—Jesus must call them again—see how He will do it.

A long night of toil, but no fish—in the

morning boats hauled up on soft beach—what Simon and the others doing? A great multitude coming down out of Capernaum, pressing round the new Prophet—where does He take refuge? He preaches—from what pulpit?

See the boat now sailing out into deeper waters—nets preparing—strange—if failed in night (when fish mostly caught) how expect to catch in day-time? '*At Thy word*'—but why listen to a 'landsman'? Where have they learned the power of 'His word'?

Down goes the net—suddenly a heavy strain—how must they have felt! How came the fish there? see Ps. viii. 5—8 (comp. with Heb. ii. 6—9); so Jonah i. 17, ii. 10; Matt. xvii. 27; John xxi. 6. Then two narrow escapes of 'haul' being lost—first net breaking—then boat sinking; but the power that gave can also keep.

What are Andrew and the rest doing? but Peter on his knees—Christ's power and love has broken his heart—he would do anything for Him now—but his unworthiness overwhelms him—how can he ever be fit to be with such a Master, ever be a 'fisher of men'?—rather let Jesus go away and leave him. (Comp. Gen. xxviii. 17; Exod. xx. 19; Judg. xiii. 22; Job xlii. 5, 6; Isa. vi. 5.)

See the Lord's reply—a rebuke?—not even a command this time—a promise. It is Peter's very self-abasement that makes him fit for the work (Ps. li. 17; Isa. lviii. 15, lxvi. 2). And now a great decision: here lies the heap of fish, promising large profits—there stands the beckoning Saviour; on the one hand *home*—on the other a life of self-denial. Which shall it be?

Do they NOW regret their choice?

THEY WERE CALLED—SO ARE WE.

(a) What to leave? *Whatever* keeps from Christ. Sin of course. Any good thing that we care for more than for Christ (see Matt. x. 37, xix. 22; Luke xiv. 18—20; 2 Tim. iii. 4).

(b) What to do? 'Follow Christ'—*i.e.*, to love, trust, obey, imitate Him.

THEY OBEYED—ARE WE HESITATING? Think who calls—what He has done for us, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Think of the *end*. Moses did, Heb. xi. 26—Paul did, Phil. iii. 7, 14—Jesus Himself did, Heb. xii. 2. See what it is, John xii. 26.

NOTES.

1. On the general scope of Christ's ministry in Galilee, and on the Lake of Gennesareth, see *Additional Note VI.*, p. 64.

2. The prophecy in Isa. ix., quoted by St. Matthew, is rendered by the best scholars thus:—'As the former time degraded the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphthali, the after-time honours the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.' The greater part of Galilee was in the territories of Zebulon and Naphthali; the 'way of the sea' means the immediate coasts of the lake; 'beyond Jordan'

probably refers to the country east of the lake, belonging to Manasseh; and 'Galilee of the Gentiles' to the extreme north of Palestine. These districts suffered first and most severely from the Assyrian invasions, which were the occasion of the prophecy; and they were specially privileged in being the scene of Christ's most active labours.

3. It is much disputed whether the narrative of the Call in Matt. iv. and Mark i. refers to the same event as the narrative of Luke v. Trench, Hanna, and most popular writers think that it

does. Alford advocates the opposite view. The two accounts can certainly be harmonised; but there does not seem any reason why they should not be thought distinct, and the differences are sufficiently marked to warrant our distinguishing them:

(1) The passages in Matthew and Mark read more naturally if the miracle is not assumed to have occurred on the occasion they refer to.

(2) The employment of Peter and Andrew when Jesus approached them is not the same in the two cases; and the different Greek words rendered 'nets' show this more clearly (see next Note).

(3) The Call, in Mark, is the very first event in the Galilean ministry, and, in particular, before certain miracles at Capernaum, which in Luke precede the Call; and though Luke's unchronological arrangement might account for this, his mention of the great crowd around Jesus when He came to the boats at least implies that He was already famous, and confirms the order of the narrative.

(4) If these miracles had taken place, Peter had received the special mercy of the cure of his wife's mother, which would enhance the significance of his sense of sin in ver. 8.

(5) In Luke's account, Christ does *not* call the fishermen, but uses words which are much more significant if He had done so already.

On these grounds it is assumed in the Sketch that the accounts refer to different events. Nor, regarding the history as a whole, does this seem an unreasonable view; for it is indisputable that the preparation of Peter and his friends for their great work was marked by many distinct steps:—

(a) Their adhesion to Jesus as disciples in the Jordan valley, John i. (b) Their call to be His companions, Matt. iv., Mark i. (c) Their (on this view) second and final abandonment of home and property, Luke v. (d) Their appointment to the Apostleship, Mark iii., Luke vi. (e) Their first mission, two and two, Matt. x., Mark vi., Luke ix. (f) Their renewed commission after the Resurrection. (g) Their baptism with the Holy Ghost, Acts ii.

4. Four kinds of fishing are alluded to in the Gospels:—

(a) With a *hook and line*; with which Peter is directed to catch the fish in whose mouth he will find the 'tribute-money,' Matt. xvii. 27.

(b) With a *hand-net* (*ἀμφίβληστρον, amphibleestron*), thrown from a rock or a boat, at any particular fish which a keen eye may detect. This net Andrew and Peter were casting when first called, Matt. iv.; Mark i.

(c) With a *bag-net* (*δικτυον, dikturon*), shaped especially for fishing in deep water. Such were the nets that were being 'mended' in Matthew and Mark's account, and 'washed' in Luke's.

(d) With a *drag-net* (*σαγήνη, sageeneh*), of great size, requiring many men to work it. This is the net of the parable in Matt. xiii.

These different appliances are fully described in Thomson's *Land and the Book*, p. 402.

5. Two Greek words are used in the Gospels to designate the vessels used on the lake, viz., *πλοιον (ploion)* for *ship*, i.e., the larger fishing vessel; and *πλοιαριον (ploiarion)* for *boat*. The former is the word used in this narrative; the latter is the 'small ship' of Mark iii. 9, and the 'little ship' of Mark iv. 26. The use of the two words in John vi. is very curious, as will be explained hereafter. See Macgregor's *Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 254.

6. Several expressions in Luke v. 1–11, have a meaning in the Greek which is missed in our translation. 'Their net *brake*,' should be, 'their nets were bursting.' 'He was astonished,' is literally, 'astonishment encompassed him.' 'Catch men,' is, 'be a catcher of men.' 'Launch out' is singular, addressed to Peter alone, as the chief; 'let down' is plural, addressed to all; and accordingly Peter replies, 'I will let down'; and the Evangelist adds, 'when they had this done.'—*Alford*.

7. 'From henceforth thou shalt catch men.' Julian the Apostate sneeringly said that 'the Galilean did indeed most aptly term His apostles *fishers*, for as the fisherman draws out his victims from the waters where they were free and happy, into an element in which they cannot breathe, so did they do who made men Christians.' Trench observes that the word selected by our Lord with a singular felicity excludes and anticipates such an idea. It signifies to 'take alive,' and is used in the Septuagint translation of the O. T., where the 'take alive' occurs with reference to prisoners of war.

ADDITIONAL NOTE VI.—THE LAKE OF GENNESARETH.

This little inland sea is mentioned in the Bible under four names. In the O. T. it is called the Sea of Chinnereth (Numb. xxxiv. 11; Josh. xii. 3), from—as some think—its *harp-like* shape. The Evangelists generally call it the Sea of Galilee. St. Luke (v. 1) once names it as the Lake of Gennesareth, from a flat district on its west coast. St. John, writing much later, when Tiberias had become the most important city on its banks, speaks of it (vi. 1) as the Sea of Tiberias. It is now called by this last name, in Arabic *Bahr Tubariyeh*.

It lies in the deep gorge or cleft—the deepest on the earth's surface—which runs from the foot of Mount Hermon to the foot of Mount Hor. Down this gorge flows the Jordan, through the 'Waters of Merom,' through the Lake of Gennesareth, down to

the Dead Sea, the *bed* of which is nearly 3,000 feet, the *surface* 1,400 feet, below the ocean level. Gennesareth is not nearly so low as this, but is 650 feet below the ocean level, and lies very deep relatively to the hilly country on either side. Owing to its depression, the climate is tropical; but the water is sweet and cool. Like most lakes, it is subject to sudden and violent storms, caused by the wind rushing *down* (see Luke viii. 23) the ravines that intersect the surrounding mountains, and making the water boil as in a cauldron.

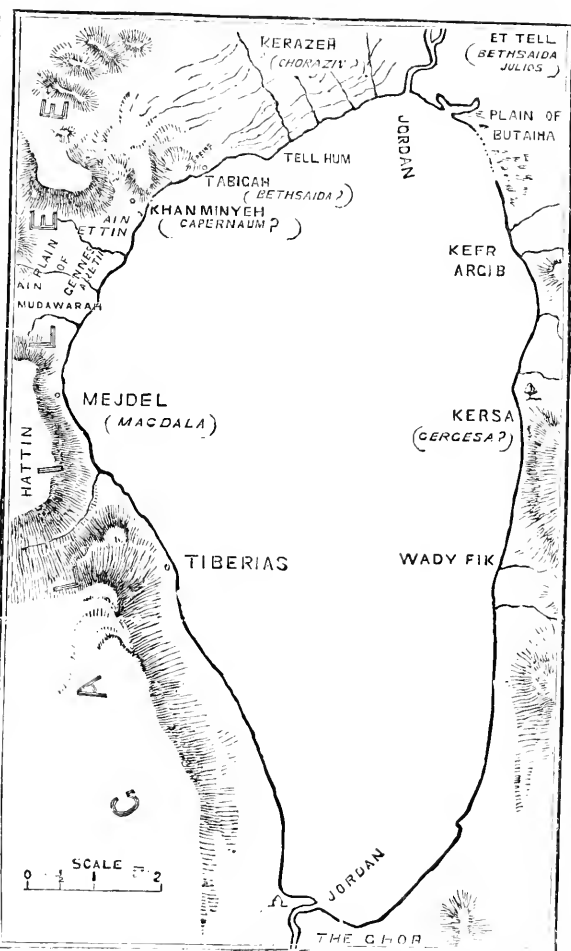
It is 12½ miles long, and 6½ broad in its widest part. Windermere is about as long, but much narrower. The depth is nowhere above 200 feet, and is generally from 80 to 110. There is a soft beach nearly all round, but at Khan Minyeh, Mejdal, and one or

two other places, the cliff rises up from the water, though not to any great height. The hills, however, close it round nearly on all sides, except at the two ends where the Jordan enters and leaves the Lake, and at the Plain of Gennesareth—a crescent-shaped plain on the western shore, round which the hills retire in a semi-circle from Khan Minyeh to Mejdal.

The long-debated and difficult question respecting the sites of Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin, cannot here be discussed. For sometime opinions as to Capernaum were about equally divided between Tell Hâm, at the north-east, and Khan Minyeh. Thomson (*Land and the Book*, p. 352) advocates the former; Robinson (*Bibl. Researches*, vol. iii., p. 318) the latter. Recently, the investigations of the Palestine Exploration Fund have pointed to Tell Hâm; but Mr. Macgregor (*Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 374), whose long and minute exploration of the Lake—its waters as well as its shores—makes him a very great authority, argues almost conclusively for Khan Minyeh; and Dr. Tristram, who

advocated (*Land of Israel*, p. 442) a different and third view, has yielded to his reasonings. They are chiefly founded on the notices in the Gospels respecting the voyages of Christ and the disciples. He also supports the view, which Thomson seemed to have disproved, that there were two Bethsaiidas, putting the Galilean Bethsaida at Tabigah, only half a mile from Capernaum.

It is supposed by some that Gennesareth lies in the crater of an extinct volcano, and the black basaltic rocks at Tell Hâm and elsewhere favour this view. A deep and



The outline of the Lake in this plan has been accurately reduced, by permission, from the Ordnance Survey Map made by Captain Wilson, and first published in Mr. Macgregor's recent work, *The Rob Roy on the Jordan*. That map is the only accurate one in existence; and it will be observed, that the contour of the Lake is not oval, as usually represented, but harp-like, or like that of South America turned over. The elaborate details of the Ordnance Map are not given in the above plan.

beautiful bay at Tabigah is described as warm with the hot springs flowing into it from the rocks, and teeming with life—myriads of fish below, flocks of ducks and gulls above. The Lake abounds with fish, and doubtless fishing was anciently carried on upon a large scale; but there are now (*Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 357) only three fishing-boats, the tax on boats being heavy.

Other particulars respecting the Lake and its localities will be given in future Lessons as they are required.

Lesson XXIV.—A Sabbath at Capernaum.

‘Mighty in word and deed.’

Read—Mark i. 21—35; (comp. Matt. viii. 11—17; Luke iv. 31—44); Learn—Matt. iv. 23, 24; Heb. xiii. 8. (Hymns, 24, 41, 71, 76, 159.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson must not be regarded as bringing before our scholars merely an interesting isolated narrative, but as giving a *specimen* of our Lord's regular work during His Galilean ministry. Let the teacher strive to convey an idea of the *continuance* of His words and works of love during a long period; of His journeys all about Galilee, showering blessings wherever He went.

With this view, both the lines of application suggested are general in character. The condition and wants of sinful man, as typically portrayed in the various cases that came under Christ's healing power, will appear in several subsequent lessons. On this occasion, attention should be concentrated on the Saviour Himself, both as the great Exemplar and as the ever-living Healer. The language of the second application, indeed, is framed with reference to the symbolic significance of the fever, &c., for the teacher's guidance in case of need; but there will probably not be time to explain this figurative language, and it must certainly not be used without explanation. For the same reasons, it will be convenient to defer any detailed account of demoniacal possession until Lesson XLIII., although the Note on this subject is given now.

In speaking of the imitation of Christ, vague generalities must be avoided; and the teacher cannot better employ his preparation time than by considering *what are the little kindnesses* which his own particular scholars have the opportunity of doing. The diligent visitor will have an immense advantage here. With elder scholars, the mutual relation of *inward and outward religion*--of *prayer and work*--should be pointed out.

The various well-known illustrations drawn from the analogy of bodily sickness can be effectively used in this Lesson: *e.g.*, *Does a sick man wait till he gets better, before he applies to the doctor?* and, *The ablest doctor no use unless you apply to him—the best medicine no use unless taken.*

In this, as in all cases where events are recorded by more than one Evangelist, the parallel passages (as given above) must be carefully compared. Such comparison often throws great light upon a narrative.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Jesus now at Capernaum, down in the hollow of the Lake [*see last Lesson*]. Here He lives a long while—not in a house of His own, perhaps in Peter's—not now working as a carpenter, always ‘going about doing good’—making journeys round about Lake, to Chorazin, Bethsaida, Magdala, &c., and up into the hill-country, all over Galilee—preaching in open air, teaching in synagogues, healing sick—never resting, yet never wearying. (See 1st text for rep.)

To-day see what He did on *one day*. See Him *teaching, working, praying*.

I. THE WORDS OF JESUS. [*Read ver. 21—28.*]

(a) *His words as the Teacher of men*. It is the Sabbath—the people of Capernaum gathered for worship in the synagogue—Jairus (see Mark v. 22) and the other rulers and elders in chief seats—perhaps others there whom we know, Jairus's little daughter, the nobleman and his restored son, the generous Roman officer by whom the synagogue was built (Luke vii. 5).

The people there used to hearing the Scriptures read and explained by the Scribes. But to-day the preaching very different (see ver. 22): no long dry argument about what this and that Rabbi thought—*this Teacher* speaks on His own authority; such ‘gracious words’—probably like those at Nazareth [*see Lesson XXIII.*]—not ‘laying burdens on men's shoulders’ (Matt. xxiii. 4)—no hard intricate rules—but ‘glad tidings’ to the poor and needy (Luke iv. 18); and yet words of warning too, like the Baptist's (see ver. 15)—people must ‘repent,’ turn from sin, be ready for the new ‘kingdom’—[*about this next Sunday*]. How had this teaching been received at Nazareth?—first, wonder—then, envious dislike and contempt. *Here* the people equally astonished, but have not known Jesus as the village carpenter, so no thinking themselves as good as Him—willing to be taught—and He gives them what He could not (comp. Mark vi. 5, 6) give the Nazarenes, *a sign*.

(b) *His words as the Conqueror of devils.* Suddenly, a loud cry of terror and hatred—a man's voice, but not the man's own cry—it is the evil spirit in him (dwelling in him always, how dreadful! worse than being mad) that cries out. Why?—'I know Thee' (comp. Jas. ii. 19). The 'unclean' spirit hates God's 'Holy One' (comp. Ps. xvi. 10; Dan. ix. 24; Acts iii. 14); and fears Him—why? 1 John iii. 8.

Hear Christ's words—not to the poor man—*him* He pities—but to the evil spirit. No words of love—the devils fierce and unchangeable enemies of God and man—between them and Jesus can be only 'enmity' (Gen. iii. 15)—He will not have them even as *allies* to testify who He is—'Hold thy peace' (comp. ver. 31, chap. iii. 12; Acts xvi. 17, 18). See two things in His words: *authority*—the 'Lord of all' has a right to command; *power*—He can compel them to obey; see Luke iv. 36.

Now see the poor man—falls down in midst of congregation, convulsed; but—rises up, in health and peace, master of himself! Here is 'liberty to the captive' indeed! Think of the news spreading everywhere as the people go home.

II. THE WORKS OF JESUS. [Read ver. 29–31.]

One mighty work we have just seen. Now go with Jesus—to whose house? Why Peter in trouble? what doctor does he go to? (Luke iv. 38). See Jesus at the bed-side—what does He speak to? what does He touch? The fever gone, like the evil spirit! but is the woman left weak, like others after fever?—not at all—strong as ever, she is serving the Sabbath meal.

Evening—the sun just gone down. Look into the street—it is filling with sick and infirm people: here a cripple on crutches, there a blind man feeling his way—here men carrying a dying friend on a litter—another and another—all the sick in the city! Why come? have heard what happened in the synagogue in the morning—have been longing for sunset, to come (without breaking Sabbath) to the wonderful man at Simon's house. Every one cured—not one goes back to his home sick or infirm.

Do you think it was such a simple and easy thing for Jesus to do all this? no trouble? all done with a single word? Look at Matt. viii. 17—what solemn words!—then it *did* cost Jesus something to do it—how? (a) Pleasant to relieve suffering, yet painful to see it at all (selfish people won't—send money for others to give); who feels

this pain most? is it not the *kindest* person? then what must Jesus have felt? (comp. Mark vii. 34). (b) But much more to Him—He felt *sin* at bottom of all—and *sin* (though He hated it) He came to bear—so 'bare our sicknesses.' And (c) very likely it took *all the evening* to do—would not Jesus speak to *each one*?—then how tiring!

III. THE PRAYERS OF JESUS. [Read ver. 35.]

Would He not want long rest and sleep now? Yet when does He get up? See Him coming out in the dark night—leaving the silent, sleeping city—up into some lonely place in the hills—there for hours on His knees. Why did He pray? just as a duty that had got to be done? It was His great pleasure, His refreshment. We know not what He said, but, recollecting other times when we *are* told, can we not fancy Him thanking the Father for those mighty miracles (comp. John xi. 41)—for He did them not alone (John xiv. 16)—and praying for the souls of those whose bodies He had healed (comp. Luke xxii. 32)?

Here we have a specimen, a sample, of the life of Jesus for months—day after day just like this.

What are our lives like? Are we 'following in His steps'? How many there are to whom we might do little kindnesses—such as even a little child can do! Which of us can say—

'I want to be like Jesus,
Engaged in doing good?'

Or are we selfish, caring for none but ourselves—our own comfort, pleasure, getting on in life? How unlike Christ! (Rom. xv. 3.)

But we want to be done good to ourselves. Is the fever of sinful desire burning in our hearts? Is Satan holding us fast, trying to defile us? Then remember—

JESUS IS THE SAME NOW (see 2nd text for rep.). He is still pitying, still praying, still healing (Heb. vii. 25)—can cool the feverish with the 'water of life' (Rev. xxii. 17)—make the prostrate strong (Isa. xl. 29–31)—make the unclean pure (Ezek. xxxvi. 25)—drive away the devil (Rom. xvi. 20). No case too hard (Luke xviii. 27); none turned away (John vi. 37)—

'He is faint and weary never,
And He turneth none away.'

Why should not the whole class, the whole school, the whole parish, be (see ver. 33) 'gathered together at His door'? 'Knock, and it shall be opened to you.'

NOTES.

1. The subject of demoniacal possession is a very mysterious one. Though the fact is most clearly stated in the Gospels, it is referred to as something perfectly familiar, and no explanation is given. The following are the principal points in the various Scripture statements:—

(a) Our Lord Himself refers 'possession' to Satanic agency (Luke x. 17–19; xi. 14–22).

(b) But there is no single word in the Greek like our 'devil,' by which both Satan and the inferior evil spirits are called. Satan is always *διάβολος* (*diabolos*): an evil spirit always *δαίμων* (*daimon*), or *δαμόνιον* (*daimonion*)—from which comes our word *demon*, or *demon*.

(c) Demoniacal possession of the body is distinguished from Satanic influence on the soul.

The 'possessed' were not necessarily the worst of men, like Judas when 'Satan entered into him,' or Ananias when 'Satan filled his heart.'

(d) 'Possession' is distinguished from disease, Mark i. 32, and other places; and from lunacy, (or epilepsy), Matt. iv. 24.

(e) But 'possession' was often accompanied both by bodily infirmity (*e.g.*, dumbness, Matt. ix. 32, blindness, Matt. xii. 22), and by the symptoms of epilepsy (Mark ix. 17-27) and violent insanity (Mark v. 1-5).

(f) In the 'possessed' there were evidently *two personalities, two wills*; though that of the man was overborne and kept in subjection by that of the demon, who literally 'possessed' his victim; and our Lord's words were plainly addressed to the demon, and not to the man. In Mark i. 23, the word 'with' ('man with an unclean spirit') is in the Greek, 'in'—as though in the spirit the man 'lived, and moved, and had his being.'

No difficulty need be felt because 'possession' seems to have been confined to one age of the world. As Alford says, 'The period of our Lord's being on earth was, more than any other in the world, under the dominion of evil. The foundations of man's moral being were broken up, and the hour and power of darkness prevailing.'

Some physicians, however, affirm that there are still extreme cases which cannot be otherwise explained; and Dr. Thomson's description (*Land and the Book*, p. 147) of some maniacs in Palestine is strikingly similar to the Scripture accounts.

The whole subject is ably treated by Alford (on Matt. viii.), by Trench (*On the Miracles*, p. 151), and by Dr. Barry (in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*).

2. Some of the expressions in this passage are very striking. Two characteristics of St. Mark appear in it: his favourite word εὐθέως (*eutheos*)—'straightway' or 'immediately,'—which is used

by him forty-five times, in the rest of the New Testament forty-seven times; and his continual notice of the astonishment caused by Christ's miracles. The accurate medical language of the physician Luke is seen in his term 'a great fever,' fevers being technically divided by the ancients into *great* and *small*. 'Hold thy peace,' is literally 'Be muzzled'; the same word is used in 1 Tim. v. 18. 'The fame of Him' (in Luke, not in Mark) is rather 'report,' or 'sound'; in Acts ii. 2, it is 'the sound of a rushing mighty wind.' 'Let us alone' is one little word (ἐα, *ea*), and answers to our exclamation 'Ha!' 'Torn,' in Mark i. 26, should be 'convulsed'; it is clear from Luke iv. 35, that the man was not injured. 'What have we to do with Thee?' is the same expression as that used by our Lord to Mary. John ii. 4; see Lesson XVI., Note 3.

3. Respecting Capernaum, see *Additional Note VI*, p. 62.

4. The remarkable quotation in Matt. viii. 17, is from Isaiah liii. 4—'He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.' Isaiah's whole prophecy in that chapter refers to our Lord's vicarious suffering for sin; but these particular words seem to point to His also bearing the indirect consequences of sin, and sympathising with men under the infliction of them, and in this sense, apparently, are quoted by St. Matthew; see Sketch.

5. It is one of Blunt's 'Scripture coincidences,' that while Matthew names the *evening* as the time when the crowd of sick people came to Christ, we only learn the cause of this from Mark and Luke, who mention that it was the Sabbath; they evidently waited in order to avoid 'breaking the Sabbath,' which legally came to an end at sunset.

Lesson XXV.—The Sermon on the Mount.—I.

'My kingdom is not of this world.'

Read—Parts of Matt. v., vi., vii.; Learn—Matt. v. 3, 20. (*Hymns*, 87, 94, 116, 131, 172, 175, 261, 361, 362, 367.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Interesting as the Sermon on the Mount is for detailed expository teaching, it is impossible in the present Course to treat it in that way. It is best to regard it, as the Conversation with Nicodemus has been regarded in Lesson XVIII., *historically, i.e.*, to consider its effect as a whole upon those who actually heard it; and thus to throw upon it the interest of a narrative, and give opportunities for picturing. Accordingly, instead of dividing the Sermon into two or three portions for reading and explanation on successive Sundays, certain great leading ideas have been gathered from it, and, in this and the following Lesson, are presented as they would appear to the popular mind, correcting current notions and revealing great truths.

In this Lesson is taken the teaching of the Sermon upon the 'kingdom' which the people were expecting, and which Christ had been proclaiming: viz., who were to be its subjects, what laws were to govern their relations one to another, and, indirectly, concerning His own supreme authority. (*See farther, Note 2*). In the next Lesson is taken its teaching on the character of God and His relation to His people. In regard to both these great subjects, the Sermon is very important, and very clear; and was doubtless very novel and startling to the hearers.

Of course no portion of the Sermon can be read through in these two Lessons. The various passages cited will have to be turned to as they are wanted. This will interest the scholars who read, and in non-reading classes the teacher must himself repeat (and, if in a separate room, make the children repeat after him) the more important verses.

An interesting picture can be drawn of the reports spreading, the crowds gathering, the ascent of the mountain, the listening audience, &c. What follows can then be illustrated by the eager attention of a school when any announcement of a 'treat' is to be made, the startled surprise that would be manifested if *not all* were to go, the anxiety to know *who* would be the privileged ones, the amazement if it were declared that the clever and leading children were *not* qualified, and the prevailing feeling that the announcement was not the mere opinion of an individual teacher, but the authoritative utterance of the superintendent. The analogy of these various points will be seen from the Sketch.

It is not intended that the question in the second section of the Sketch—'What sort of a King should He be?'—and its threefold answer, should be taken in any but intelligent elder classes.

It would be impossible to find space here for detailed notes on particular passages in the Sermon. The teacher is necessarily referred to the commentaries. Trench's *Exposition*, gathered from the writings of St. Augustine, is particularly interesting. Alford and Lange are good throughout; Stier (*Words of the Lord Jesus*) impressive, as usual.

SKETCH OF LESSON

In all directions the report is spreading of the wonderful miracles at Capernaum. Crowds come together from neighbouring towns and villages to hear and see the new Prophet. Many, too, from distant north and south, from the shores of Phœnicia and the mountains of Edom (Matt. iv. 25; comp. Mark iii. 8).

Think of the eager discussion—'Is this the coming King? a leader at last to drive out Romans and restore Israel's greatness?' John Baptist had said, 'the kingdom at hand'; had pointed out this Nazarene as the coming One; and now He too is proclaiming the 'kingdom' (Matt. iv. 17).

Jesus will give them an answer—tell them all about it. Up in the mountains a spot found where thousands can hear at once. He sits (like all Jewish teachers)—John and Andrew and the others next to him—the vast multitudes all round eagerly waiting His words (chap. v. 1, 2).

What He said is in these three chapters. It would take us months to go through all. Look at one or two chief things.

I. ABOUT THE KINGDOM.

(1) Look at His very first words, ver. 3. Yes—He mentions the 'kingdom.' But who are to have it? What! not the Jews? Did not God found the kingdom ages ago, when He called Abraham out from the heathen, and promised Him the land? does not the kingdom belong to Abraham's children, to all of us Jews?—so they would think. But quite mistaken—not a word about restoring David's victorious throne—not a word about Israel as God's favoured people. True, He speaks (ver. 13, 14), of 'salt of the earth,' 'light of the world'—but *who* are so?—not the Jewish nation—(see ver. 11, 12). And see what the Baptist said, Matt. iii. 9. Then the kingdom to be a *new* one—not the old—something quite different.

(2) Look again—who to have the kingdom—to be in it? (a) What had Jesus told Nicodemus? [*refer to Lesson XVIII.*]—must be 'born again'—new life—begin all afresh. So, what said that night in lowly house at Jerusalem, Jesus now says on the mountain to all—'*poor in spirit*'—not to be proud because Abraham's children or because so favoured by God—not to think much of selves any way; to feel worth nothing—got nothing—want everything—'*poor*' (comp. Rev. iii. 17). (b) Ver. 10—'persecuted for righteousness' sake' to have the kingdom—the kingdom would not (as they thought) bring power, pomp, prosperity, but persecution—then unhappy and to be pitied?—no, 'blessed.' (c) Perhaps they think, 'If only *some* Jews to have the kingdom—if it depends on goodness—surely the strict scribes and scrupulous Pharisees will have it.' But see ver. 20—must be *more righteous* than they!

(3) What righteousness can be greater than that of the Pharisees?—so careful to know all the law, and keep every bit of it—prayers, alms, fastings, &c. &c., see Luke xviii. 11, 12. Jesus will tell them—chap. v. 21—48, and vi. 1—18, all about it. Take two points. (a) *The Sixth Commandment.* Pharisees thought, if not murderers, kept it. What does Jesus say? ver. 21—24. Unkind feelings and hard words break the Commandment (comp. 1 John iii. 15). For who can tell what a *thought* may come to? Cain loved Abel *once*. Suppose some one very unkind to you, does you ham—how treat him? see ver. 44. (b) *Prayer*, chap. vi. 5, 6. Not 'saying prayers' because used to it, or because got to do it, or that others may see: but asking kind Father for what you want (more of this next Sunday).

Would not the people say, 'Who can be righteous like this?' That's just what

Jesus meant them to feel—*then* 'poor in spirit'—come as sinners to God—ready to be saved in His own way. We know this way—what is it? how get sin taken away? what righteousness will admit us to the 'kingdom'? (Rom. iii. 19—26). [See Note 3.] Then 'seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness' (vi. 33).

II. ABOUT THE KING.

Who should be the King? Jesus Himself. They felt this; for He spoke 'with authority' (vii. 29)—not only unlike the scribes, but unlike the old prophets—they said 'Thus saith Jehovah'—what did He say? See chap. v. 17, 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; vi. 2, 5, 16, 25, 29; vii. 24, 26.

But what sort of King should He be? The people mistaken about this too; as looked for Jewish kingdom, so looked for King like David—overcoming foreign oppressors, reigning at Jerusalem, receiving tribute from Gentiles. But He should do much greater things than that: should be [see Note 2]—

(a) *Founder of the new spiritual kingdom.* David only ruled nation set apart long before by God; Jesus would Himself call out men for new 'holy nation, peculiar people' (1 Pet. ii. 9)—does He not say who they shall be in chap. v. 3—11?

(b) *Lawgiver of this kingdom.* David only executed Moses' laws; Jesus would—not sweep them away (chap. v. 17) but

—give a new law greater and higher than all—see it in chap. vii. 12. Suppose school-boy always keeping *this* law [illustrate], then no others wanted.

(c) *Judge of all men's hearts, to see whether truly in 'kingdom' or not.* David might be deceived by false followers; but—see chap. vii. 21—23,—none could deceive Him—good words and great works no use—*heart* must be right.

He, Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, saying all this! no wonder they were astonished, ver. 28; can we not see them looking at one another—hear them eagerly talking—fancy their hearts 'burning within them'?

WE, TOO, ARE HEARERS OF CHRIST'S WORDS. How do we listen? Not so astonished, perhaps, for *used to it*; do we love them better for knowing them better?

'Hark, my soul, it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour: hear His word.'

Pray for grace to 'hear meekly His word, and to receive it with pure affection'—and 'to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit,' too; for the great question is—

ARE WE DOERS ALSO?—'thirsting after righteousness' (v. 6)—'asking, seeking, knocking' (vii. 7—11) for His righteousness—trying to be like Him (v. 48)? If so, on the rock (vii. 24—27)—nothing can harm us—safe for ever.

NOTES.

1. The question whether the discourse in Luke vi. is identical with, or distinct from, the Sermon on the Mount, is a very difficult one. Tischendorf, Tholuck, Stier, Robinson, Ellicott, Westcott, consider (with some variety of opinion as to details) the two identical, St. Luke giving a briefer abstract of our Lord's actual words. Greswell holds that they are entirely distinct; and to this view Alford seems to lean. Lange, following St. Augustine, takes a middle view, viz., that Christ spoke the discourse in Matthew to the disciples, and, immediately afterwards, that in Luke to the multitude. The arguments cannot be given here, but it may be observed that,—

(a) There is no geographical objection to their identity. 'A mountain,' in Matt. v. 1, is literally 'the mountain,' and probably means the hilly country above Genesareth; and 'the plain' in Luke vi. 17 simply means 'a level place,' which might be high up in 'the mountain.' The traditional 'Mount of Beatitudes' is a lofty hill called Hattin (see the Map on page 65), which has two peaks called the 'Horns of Hattin,' and a level place between them. Stanley (*Sinai & P.*, p. 360) and Robinson (*Bibl. Res.* ii. 370) therefore think that Christ was on one of the peaks, and descended (Luke) to this 'plain' to address the people.

(b) The notes of time favour the view that the discourses are distinct. This, however, cannot be relied on in the uncertainty of the chronology. See *Additional Note V.*, p. 57.

(c) The internal features of the two accounts give the most important evidence, but it is hard

to say on which side this evidence tells. On the one hand the opening, closing, and general order of the Sermon are similar in both cases; on the other hand, not only are large portions of Matthew's account wanting in Luke (which might be readily accounted for), but there are also in Luke important additions and variations of connection.

In these Lessons the question does not arise, as Matthew's account is taken, and Luke's not referred to.

2. Although the Sermon on the Mount is the greatest example left us of Christ's work as a Prophet or Teacher, it has a special interest when regarded as His 'manifesto' in the character of *King*. The reasons for so regarding it are sufficiently explained in the Sketch.

As has been truly and acutely observed, the Jews regarded their own nation as God's 'kingdom,' and God Himself as its King in the highest sense—as having *founded* it when He called Abraham, *legislated* for it when He gave Moses the law, and as *judging* it by His system of retributive justice. David and Hezekiah were mere viceregents and administrators: they could neither found, legislate, nor (in the full ultimate sense) judge; and Messiah was expected to be like them. Jesus, however, while declining the outward splendour and dominion of David, did actually claim to perform the higher kingly acts. He proceeded to 'call out' men, as God called Abraham, into a *new* 'kingdom.' He promulgated laws on His own authority (see, however, Note 3); He proclaimed Himself the arbiter of

man's future destiny: thus assuming the character of Divine royalty as Founder, Legislator, and Judge.

Now, in the Sermon on the Mount, He most plainly claims *this* royalty, as is shown in the Sketch. The character of those called into the kingdom, the laws of the kingdom, and the ultimate judgment upon its professed subjects, are really the three topics of the Sermon.

3. The view that Christ appears in this Sermon as a Legislator, is not opposed to His words in chap. v. 17. He came to fulfil the Law—rather to fill it out, or to fill it up, as a painter fills up a sketch (*Theophylact, quoted by Alford*). His 'But I say unto you' was in opposition, not to the Mosaic commands, but to the Rabbinical interpretation of them; yet His teaching was new, nevertheless, for (1) while the general character of the old Law, and, still more, of even the best traditions, was *negative* ('Thou shalt not'), Christ's commands were mostly *positive*: and (2) He expounded the great *principles* underlying particular laws. The 'golden rule,' in chap. vii. 12, illustrates both these points:—(1) The great Jewish teacher Hillel had said, 'Whatsoever ye would not wish that your neighbour should do to you, do it not to him'; Christ's words, so far from being a mere repetition (as has been insinuated) of Hillel's maxim, are as much higher as *love* is higher than *restraint*. (2) Instead of giving a multitude of rules for the guidance of our conduct, Christ, in this wonderful sentence, supplies one all-embracing principle, *viz.*, *love*, which, as St. Paul says (Rom. xiii. 10) is the fulfilling of the law.'

4. Ver. 20—'Except your righteousness,' &c. The 'exceeding' righteousness here referred to is to be understood as referring, not (at least not

directly) to the obedience of Christ imputed to His people, but to a spiritual as opposed to an external righteousness—to that obedience to the *spirit* of the Law which Jesus immediately goes on to describe. The very effort, however, to live up to the full requirements of the Law would satisfy a man that he could never work out a perfect or sufficient righteousness; on the contrary, the more He realised the spirituality of God's commands, the more would He feel that 'by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight,' and be led, as St. Paul was led (Phil. iii. 4–9), to trust only in the righteousness of Christ; see Rom. i. 17, iii. 19–26, iv. 1–8, 22–25, v. 18, 19, x. 4. Thus the Law would be his 'schoolmaster to bring him to Christ.'

5. The word 'alms,' in chap. vi. 1, should be 'righteousness,' the original (in the best MSS.) being the same as in chap. v. 20. It is a general term, inclusive of the three duties specified in the following verses, *viz.*, *alms* (the correct word in ver. 2–4), prayer, and fasting.

6. The following is an abstract of Westcott's analysis of the Sermon (*Introd. to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 358):—

(1) The Citizens of the Kingdom (v. 1–16).

(a) Their character—In themselves (3–6).
Relatively (7–12).

(b) Their influence (13–16).

(2) The New Law (17–48). Fulfilling,

(a) The Old, generally (17–20).

(b) The spirit of special commands (21–48).

(3) The New Life (vi.—vii. 23).

(a) Acts of devotion (vi. 1–18).

(b) Aims (19–34).

(c) Conduct (vii. 1–12).

(d) Dangers (13–23).

(4) The great contrast (24–27).

Lesson XXVI.—The Sermon on the Mount.—II.

'Your Father which is in heaven.'

Read—Parts of Matt. v., vi., vii.; Learn—Matt. xi. 27; Rom. viii. 15.
(Hymns—15, 20, 21, 22, 157, 180, 183, 191, 369.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The fact on which this Lesson is based—that the Fatherhood of God is one of the chief revelations of the Sermon on the Mount—will probably be new to many teachers; yet a perusal of the following Sketch, with Matt. v.—vii. open, will satisfy any one that it is a fact. On the reason for treating the Sermon in this way, see preceding Lesson.

Let none think the Lesson will be unattractive in actual teaching. The writer has tried it with a class of dull country boys, strangers to him, and found it easy to maintain the interest throughout. Certainly it is a subject requiring the free use of illustrations. Several are suggested in the Sketch, and it is recommended that the one referred to at the commencement, and given in Note 2, be at all events used.

Some care will be needed in the allusions to the fathers of the scholars. There are cases of bad parents, absent parents, dead parents, which are not applicable. Each teacher must be guided by his knowledge of his class, and modify his illustrations accordingly.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

When a child—even the youngest—prays to God, what does it call Him? Who first taught men to say 'Our Father'? When did Christ teach it? *On that mountain*

where we saw Him last Sunday [*question on the scene*]. We have seen what He said about the 'kingdom,' its people, and its King [*recapitulate*]. To-day see what

He told the people *about God*—what to think about Him—how feel towards Him.

I. THAT GOD IS A FATHER.

Why should Jesus tell them that? It is just what people don't feel till they are told. (a) Many heathen nations believe in a 'Great Spirit' above all their idols; but think of Him as far off—caring nothing for them. (b) Mahometans not idolaters—worship one God—yet think just the same. [See illustration in Note 2.] (c) But Jews different?—Yes—knew much more—yet knew not *this*. [See Note 1.] In Old Test., God is called Almighty, Jehovah, God of Abraham, &c.—hardly ever 'Father.' Never by Jews praying to Him, except by Isaiah (Isaiah. 16, lxiv. 8), and once by David (1 Chron. xxix. 10). True, God had promised to be their Father (Hos. i. 10, Jer. iii. 4), but this not understood or felt—no doubt almost all that great crowd on the mount thought like the Mahometans [in illustration].

So one great thing Christ came for was to 'reveal' [i.e., draw veil or curtain aside (illustrate)] the Father. Why could He do it—and only He? (See 1st text for rep.) See the very first words we have of His, Luke ii. 49 ('My Father's business') and His words when He first appeared as Messiah in the Temple, John ii. 16 ('My Father's house'). [See Lesson XVII.] Thus He told of God as His own Father—now tells of Him as our Father. Had told one person already (John iv. 23) [see Lesson XVI.]; now tells all this great multitude.

See how many times in the Sermon He speaks so: fifteen times of 'your Father' (chap. v. 16, 43, 48; vi. 1, 4, 6, 8, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32; vii. 11), once of 'our Father' (vi. 9), once of 'My Father' (vii. 21), once of the children of God (v. 9). Look at some of these—and will see how astonished the people must have been.

II. HOW GOD IS A FATHER.

Think of some things in which your father is to you different from other men. So see if God is like a Father.

(a) If people want anything from the Queen, hard to get at her—many obstacles in the way—*she is not accessible*. [Illustrate further:—the mayor or squire—even the clergyman—not always at hand.] But your father—close to you—go to him without fear at any time—*accessible*.

So is God (see vi. 4, 6, 18)—'seeth in secret' even—always near—not far from every one of us' (Acts xvii. 27)—is that dreadful?—but it is 'your Father'—can always 'draw nigh' to Him (Jas. iv. 8)—*accessible*. And this more than earthly fathers—they sometimes away—God never.

(b) Do fathers refuse what children ask? Almost always *wish* to give, if able—sometimes even too ready, over-indulgent. And what sort of things do good parents give their children?—bad things? See what Jesus says, vii. 11—but what does He add? 'Much more your heavenly Father.' So

our Collect (12th Sun. after Trin.)—'more ready to hear than we to pray'—gives 'more than we desire or deserve.' Look, too, at vi. 4, 6, 18—no merit in our alms and prayers, yet God so kind as to 'reward openly' (as father, unobserved, sees boy doing little kindness to sister, and commends it before family). No doubt the widow (Luke xxi. 1—4) hoped none would see her 'two mites,' yet how openly rewarded!

(c) Is not a father *provident* for his children?—looking forward, thinking, reckoning what they will want. [Illustrate—e.g., winter clothing.] So the heavenly Father—see vi. 8, 32—'knoweth what things ye have need of'; and not only knows, but provides—even for flowers and birds (vi. 26—30)—'shall He not much more clothe you?'

(d) Parents kind to all their children—even to bad ones. Is not God like that? To whom does he give warm sun and gentle rain? See again what Jesus says, v. 45.

Now think of that great multitude—had never thought of all this—scribes never told them—what good news for them! You are told—do you think of it? Then will wish to see the third thing that Jesus taught them, viz:—

III. HOW WE SHOULD TREAT OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

(a) Remember that He is near—sees 'in secret'; feel everywhere, at all times, 'Thou God seest me!' Could the 'hypocrites' have done as they did (vi. 2, 5, 16) if they had felt this?

(b) 'Draw nigh' to the Father who is so nigh—not merely 'say prayers,' like the 'hypocrites,' as if only 'seen of men'—but ask for what 'have need of'—*this* real prayer. Perhaps don't know what to say, so Jesus gives the 'Lord's Prayer.'

(c) Trust in the Father's provident care, just as would in earthly parent's; not be over-anxious about 'to-morrow' (vi. 31).

(d) Be like our Father, chap. v. 48 (comp. Eph. v. 1); especially in loving and being kind to those that ill-treat us (v. 45), forgiving them (vi. 14, 15), making peace between those that quarrel—then will be recognised as ('called') the 'children of God' (v. 9).

(e) Bring honour to Him—how? See chap. v. 16 ('men see good works, and glorify,' &c.) Just as a boy seen to be good is a credit to his parents.

But all this is of children at home—in the family—with the Father.

Are you so? Or are you like the Prodigal—a wanderer from home—a 'lost sheep'? All are, naturally—born so (just as if Prodigal had had a child in the far country—that child would have a grandfather at Prodigal's home—yet never been at home—born an outcast). So, too, in daily life, all must say, 'Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep.'

But God wishes us to be His children indeed—shews His willingness by letting us be brought to baptism and marked as His own

How can we be His true children? Sec

Gal. iii. 26—only 'by Faith in Christ Jesus.' For Christ's sake restored, 'adopted' (Gal. iv. 5 and 2nd text for rep). He the 'Elder Brother'—we to be like Him (1 John iii. 1—3).

NOTES.

1. It is not intended to convey the idea that the Old Testament saints did not trust in and come to God as to an ever-present Friend. Numberless examples could be cited to prove the contrary, and the fact that the Psalms are still the highest expression of the devotion of God's children, is of itself sufficient testimony. Still, it is the fact that the Fatherhood of God is scarcely at all referred to in the Old Testament. The following appear to be the only passages directly affirming it, though a few others do so indirectly:—Deut. xxiii. 6; 1 Chron. xxix. 10; Isa. lxiii. 16, lxiv. 8; Jer. iii. 4, 19, xxxi. 9; Hos. i. 10; Mal. i. 6, ii. 10.

Contrast with this the frequent mention of the Father in the New Testament: see, particularly, Rom. viii. 14—17; Gal. iv. 4—7; Eph. iv. 6; 1 John iii. 1, 2; and the salutations of all St. Paul's epistles. And it is certainly in the Sermon on the Mount that our Lord first publicly speaks of 'your Father.' The true Fatherhood of God in relation to His people, is, in fact, dependent on the Incarnation and Atonement, and, like other truths, could not be fully revealed before Christ came.

2. In *Domestic Life in Palestine*, p. 231, Miss Rogers gives a remarkable instance of the popular oriental ideas about God and prayer to Him, which well illustrates the subject of this Lesson. She had to spend a night in the harem of an Arab sheikh, several women being in the same room. Before retiring to rest, she knelt in silent prayer: and after she had lain down, the sheikh's young wife came to her:—

'She said, "What did you do just now, when you knelt down and covered your face with your hands?" I sat up and said, very solemnly, "I spoke to God, Helweh!" "What did you say to Him?" said Helweh. I replied, "I wish to sleep: God never sleeps. I have asked Him to watch over me. I am very weak, God is all-powerful. I have asked Him to strengthen me with His strength." By this time all the ladies were sitting round me on my bed, and the slaves

came and stood near. I told them I did not know their language well enough to explain to them all I thought and said. But as I had learnt the Lord's Prayer by heart in Arabic, I repeated it to them, sentence by sentence, slowly. When I began thus—"Our Father, which art in heaven," Helweh directly said, "You told me your father was in London." I replied, "I have two fathers, Helweh: one in London, who does not know that I am here, and cannot know till I write and tell him; and a Heavenly Father, who is with me always, who is here now and sees and hears us." For a moment there was perfect silence. They all looked startled, and as if they felt that they were in the presence of some unseen power. Then Helweh said, "What more did you say?" I continued the Lord's Prayer, and when I came to the words "Give us day by day our daily bread," they said, "Cannot you make your bread yourself?" The passage, "Forgive us our trespasss, as we forgive those who trespass against us," is particularly forcible in the Arabic language; and one of the elder women, who was rather severe and relentless-looking, on hearing it, said, "Are you obliged to say that every day?" as if she thought sometimes it would be difficult to do so. . . . Moslems, both men and women, have the name of "Allah" constantly on their lips; but they do not appear to realise the presence of God. This explains why these women were so startled when, in answer to Helweh's question, I said, simply and earnestly, "I spoke to God," for that took them by surprise, and gave them the idea that I believed my words were really heard. Whereas, if I had answered in common-place language, such as, "I was saying my prayers," or, "I was at my devotions," probably they would not have been impressed in the same way.

The whole narrative, of which the above is only an extract, is extremely interesting. See also Dr. Thomson's account of Moslem prayers in *The Land and the Book*, p. 25.

Lesson XXVII.—The Leper.

'Sometime far off'—made nigh.'

Read—Matt. viii. 1—4; (*comp.* Mark i. 40—45; Luke v. 12—14); *Learn*—Luke xviii. 27; Eph. ii. 12, 13; (*Hymns*, 60, 93, 112, 142, 145, 146, 150, 343.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This narrative brings before us the first of a series of cases in which the various miracles of our Lord can be taken as figuratively representing the various aspects of sin and salvation. Thus we have spiritual blindness and sight; spiritual deafness and hearing; spiritual dumbness and speech; spiritual disease and health; spiritual death and life. In the paralytic we have a picture of the sinner's impotency for good; in the demoniac, of sin's slavery; in the lunatic, of sin's madness; while their respective cures show us the Gospel in its *enabling*, its *liberating*, and its *sense-imparting* power. It is important to

bear in mind this variety in the instruction to be gained from Christ's miracles; otherwise our teaching upon them will be monotonous, and therefore uninteresting.

In the case of the Leper, we have two distinct aspects of sin and its remedy. The disease itself exhibits the corrupting power of indwelling sin; and, in the special curse put upon it by God, we have a type of the exclusion from His favour which sin involves. So the cure, bringing with it both bodily health and restoration to covenant privileges, strikingly typifies the two branches of the work of redemption, sanctification and justification; the latter alone, however, being immediate—the former (unlike the leper's cure) gradual.

The Lesson, therefore, affords an excellent opportunity of giving important doctrinal instruction which shall be *clear* and yet not *dry*: and the teacher should take special pains to use this opportunity well. The element of attractiveness is sufficiently provided in the narrative itself, and in the particulars given below respecting leprosy.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

A long sickness—how painful! [*illustrate by any known case among the scholars*]. Yet might be worse—suppose born with it, and had it all these years. Or worse still—suppose never can be cured. Or worse still—suppose not keep as now, not get a little better, but worse all through life. Or worse still—if sick one's children sure to have it too, and *their* children, and so on. Or much worse than all this—sick people often treated so tenderly, best room, best food, kind friends, &c.; but suppose not allowed to live with family, compelled to live only among people with same disease, must not let any one else come near—how dreadful!

There is a disease like this—*Leprosy*. Read to-day of a leper. A bad case—'full of leprosy' (Luke v. 12).

I. THE LEPER'S DISEASE.

(1) *Its character*. Not the poor man's limbs only, or skin, or blood, diseased; his whole body. Perhaps he was born with it; if so, was never a bright healthy baby; but pale, ghastly, corpse-like (Numb. xii. 10; 2 Kings v. 27). Or it began with a little white spot—how terrible to see it!—no stopping it—slowly and secretly it poisoned all the body—just as 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' Can he hope to be cured? Even a bad king of Israel knew only God could cure a leper (2 Kings v. 7). Will get worse and worse—lose hair, feet, hands—die miserably. But something sadder than all this—

(2) *Its Curse*. All the time this poor man had been a leper. had been obliged to live only with lepers like himself—forbidden to be with others; if some one came near, must utter a dreadful cry (Lev. xiii. 45) to warn him off; counted as one dead; must have head bald, face half-covered, clothes torn, like mourners (Lev. xiii. 45; comp. Numb. vi. 9; Ezek. xxiv. 17); shunned and shuddered at by everybody; never could go to Passover, &c., at Jerusalem, or to Temple, because 'unclean'; (Lev. xiii. 46; Numb. v. 1–3). The law very strict, too; even a prophetess and a king had to submit, Numb. xii. 14; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19–21.

II. THE LEPER'S CURE. [*Read passage*].

Even to the haunts of the lepers comes the report of the wonderful things Jesus has done: cripples, blind, fever-stricken healed—even demons—might He not cure us? Perhaps some sadly shake their heads; but *one* will try—he follows Jesus at a distance—perhaps, standing behind, hears Sermon on Mount—hears blessed words, 'Ask, and it shall be given you'—feels that *He* not like scribes, speaks 'with authority'—believes *He can* heal—but *will He?* Will He not turn from the poor outcast?

At last, courage to try. See the crowd starting aside in horror as he presses through, for every one that touches him will be reckoned 'unclean.' What will Jesus do? will He risk being made 'unclean'? See, He steps forward—*touches* the prostrate leper! The pure and the foul touching—the pure not defiled by the foul, but the foul cleansed by the pure! The leper feels the touch—hears his own words ('*will*,' '*clean*') echoed back, and, in a moment, the glow of perfect health rushes through him—his leprosy gone!

But see Christ's command, ver. 4—why 'tell no man'? (a) Crowds already great—if more come, too much excitement, rulers may interfere. (b) The leper not restored yet—not till examined and pronounced clean by priest (Lev. xiv.)—the curse upon him still; if priests hear *how* he was cured, perhaps refuse to give him release. But why go to priest at all? cannot all see he is well? (a) If they give him release, and *then* the miracle known, what a testimony to Jesus's power!—a testimony against the unbelieving priests themselves. (b) The law to be obeyed—did Jesus come to put it aside? Matt. v. 17.

III. THE SINNER'S DISEASE.

Why had God excluded lepers from His sanctuary, &c.? why reckoned unclean, dead? why kept apart? [*see Note 2 (e)*] To teach men *about sin*. In leprosy see the disease of sin—its *character*—its *curse*.

(1) *Its character*. (a) Hereditary, Rom. v. 12. See it in children almost as soon as

leprosy. Why infants disobedient, deceitful (Ps. lviii. 3), passionate?—it is the disease of sin beginning to appear. (b) Secret, subtle, pervading—spoils the *whole soul* (Isa. i. 6)—‘no health in us.’ (c) It grows worse—does not one lie lead to another (as with Jacob), the vain and willful boy become the ungovernable man (as Absalom)? And how a bad habit spreads in a school! Beware—‘touch not the unclean thing’ (2 Cor. vi. 17). (d) Incurable by man. See St. Paul’s experience, Rom. vii. 14–24; comp. Jer. xiii. 73. People try to be outwardly good, but this as if the leper had painted himself and dressed finely (see Matt. xxiii. 27)—it is the *heart* that is wrong (Jer. xvii. 9; Mark vii. 21).

(2) *Its curse.* The first thing sin did was to exclude Adam and Eve from God’s favour and presence; and so always, Isa. lix. 2; Ps. lxxvi. 18. This what David so feared, Ps. li. 11. What does Isaiah say we all are? lxiv. 6—and St. Paul, that we are reckoned? Eph. ii. 1. And so at the last, Rev. xxi. 27.

IV. THE SINNER’S CURE.

Like the leper, he must *come to Christ*. But is He *able* to cure sin as He did leprosy? (Heb. vii. 25, and 1st text for rep.). And *willing*? does He not invite (Matt. xi. 28) and promise to receive (John vi. 37)? But *how* can He do it? (a) He has *touch*ed our nature, taken hold of it, taken it on Himself, Heb. ii. 14. (b) He has borne the curse, Gal. iii. 13. (c) He gives the Spirit, who can purify and make strong and well, Rom. viii. 3–9.

Then what result? *Curse* removed directly—can come to God now—those ‘far off’ made ‘nigh’ (2nd text for rep.). But recovery from disease itself slow and gradual—not complete till where ‘no more sin.’

But suppose the leper had *not known* he was leprosy; or, knowing it, cared not, felt not how different he was from others? Would he then have come to Christ? This just why men not cleansed, see Rev. iii. 17. Is it so with us?

NOTES.

1. Many harmonists separate this miracle from the Sermon on the Mount, with which Matthew so distinctly connects it. The object of doing so is to follow the order of Mark and Luke; but there is absolutely nothing in Mark to prevent our inserting the Sermon between ver. 39 and 40 of his first chapter; and as to Luke, it is quite doubtful whether the discourse in chap. vi. is identical with the Sermon, and, even if it be so, the marks of time in his Gospel are too indefinite to be relied upon. See *Additional Note V*, p. 57.

2. LEPROSY. Much might be said on this subject, but the following brief particulars will suffice for these Notes:—

(a) There were, and still are, different kinds of leprosy. The ancient Greek physician Hippocrates names three sorts. The fearful disease described by modern travellers in the East (see *Land and the Book*, pp. 651–654) seems to be much worse than that legislated for in Lev. xiii., xiv. Full particulars are given in Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*.

(b) All leprosy is hereditary. Dr. Thomson describes the gradual appearance of the disease in the infant children of lepers (*L. & B.*, p. 654).

(c) The Levitical regulations contemplate the possibility of a leper’s cure; but all other notices of the disease imply that it was incurable by any ordinary medical treatment; and with this modern accounts agree, describing it as gradually getting worse, until limb after limb drops off, and the victim perishes miserably (*L. & B.*, p. 653).

(d) The leprosy of Scripture was certainly not (as is often supposed) contagious. The priests freely handled the lepers in the exercise of their office (Lev. xiv.); Gehazi, when a leper, could approach the king (2 Kings viii. 5); Naaman, as a leper, commanded the Syrian army. Lightfoot says that lepers were not excluded from the synagogues. Modern medical evidence is to the same effect. Yet leprosy is certainly regarded, and feared, as contagious in the East (*L. & B.*, p. 652), and possibly the worse forms may be really so.

(e) If the disease was not contagious, why were the Levitical regulations about lepers so strict? The true answer is this:—Being the worst form of disease, leprosy was fixed upon by God to be the *especial type of sin*, and the injunctions regarding it had reference to its typical character. It was accompanied by the emblems of death—the rent clothes, the covered lip, the shaven and bare head (Lev. xiii. 45, comp. with Numb. vi. 9, Ezek. xxiv. 17); it involved ceremonial uncleanness (see Numb. xix. 13, Ezek. xlv. 25); the restoration of the leper was accomplished by the same rites as that of one unclean through contact with the dead (Lev. xiv. 4–7, 49, comp. with Numb. xix. 6, 13, 18), and to them David seems to allude when he says (Ps. li. 7), ‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.’ And the exclusion of the leper from the congregation (Lev. xiii. 44–46; Numb. v. 1–3, xii. 14, 15; 2 Chron. xxvi. 19–21) strikingly typified the separation of the sinner from God’s presence; compare particularly Numb. v. 3 with Josh. vii. 12. Perhaps for this reason, also, leprosy was sent as a special judgment for sins of a sacrilegious character, as in the cases of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah. This view is confirmed by the fact that where the Mosaic law was not observed there was no exclusion; as in the case of Naaman, and of Gehazi (who lived in the northern kingdom). The appropriateness of leprosy to be the disease stigmatised as the *especial type of sin* is shown in the Sketch. See Trench, *On the Miracles*, p. 212.

(f) The ‘leprosy of house and garment’ was similar to our ‘dry rot,’ &c., and caused by the growth of vegetable fungi. See an elaborate article by the Rev. Hugh Macmillan in the *Sunday Magazine* for July, 1867, p. 674.

3. Several commentators observe that the leper, by calling Jesus ‘Lord,’ expressed faith in His Messiahship. Whether this faith existed or not, the Greek word (κύριε *kurie*) is the same as that used by the Samaritan woman (there rendered ‘Sir’), who certainly only meant it as a title of respect.

Lesson XXVIII.—The Roman Officer and his Servant.

'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.'

Read—Luke vii. 1—10; (comp. Matt. viii. 5—13); Learn—Matt. viii. 8—10; Rom. iii. 29, 30. (Hymns, 40, 103, 144, 225, 238, 345.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Nothing is more important in a lesson than a good introduction. When the attention of a class is once really gained, it can generally be kept; the difficulty is, how to get it at first. A fruitful source of failure in this respect is the practice of reading the whole passage round at the very beginning. The teacher would act more wisely by opening with some illustration that will lead up to the subject (such as have been several times suggested in these Lessons), or with a recapitulation of such points in the preceding Lesson as will fitly introduce the one about to be taught. This having been done, should the passage then be read round *in extenso*? or should the several verses or groups of verses be referred to as they are wanted? In most cases, the latter will be found the best way, because *curiosity* may thus be often aroused, which is a great help to the teacher. For instance—'Now, what do you think so-and-so said?—or 'did'?—or 'thought of that'?—'Well, look in the next verse, and you'll see.' But there are exceptions to this rule.

The present Lesson seems to be one of these exceptions. In the following Sketch, the mere external narrative is not much dwelt upon, as it affords little scope for picturing, and the important teaching underlying it is intended to occupy the whole time. In a case like this, it will be well to read the passage round at the beginning (*i.e.*, after the opening illustration), merely giving any brief incidental explanations (as, *e.g.*, what a *centurion* was) in passing, and then to work upon what the class already knows.

Although, at the first glance, the Sketch may appear to be constructed for elder classes, there is in it one feature specially favourable to the teachers of the junior classes, *viz.*, the paucity of references. Almost the whole of the instruction suggested is drawn from the passage itself. Those who wish for more texts will find them in the Notes.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What kind of people are the most easily surprised? Is it not ignorant people? [*Illustr.—Little child astonished at new toy—not so those older; chemical experiments astonish audience—not lecturer, &c. &c.*] The more we know, the fewer new things to be surprised at. What wonderful things those that could make Christ 'marvel'! Twice we read of His 'marvelling'—what could it be at? Once at *unbelief* (Mark vi. 6); once at *faith* (read of to-day). Were these such strange things? Unbelief strange, when He saw so much of it? Faith strange, when the wonder rather why so few believed? How great the unbelief, how great the faith, that could surprise Jesus!

[*Read the passage.*] 'Great faith'—so He called it. Now see three things about it.

I. WHERE THE 'GREAT FAITH' WAS FOUND.

In a learned Rabbi, knowing prophecies, so recognising Jesus as the Messiah? in a strict Pharisee, with his regular prayers, alms, fastings? Would not be such 'great faith' in these—ought to have known—yet did not. *Not in a Jew at all*—in a Gentile—and he one of the hated Roman conquerors.

Three uncommon things about him:—

(a) *His slave* [*see Note 4*] was 'dear unto

him.' Roman masters often very cruel to slaves—had bought them with money, or taken them in war—their own property—could do as they liked with them—never thought of *loving* them. So this centurion good and kind like few others.

(b) *He loved the Jews.* Romans despised Jews—disliked them because so troublesome, would not submit quietly like other conquered nations of empire (see Acts v. 36, 37, xvi. 20, xviii. 14—16). What could have made this centurion different?—must have come to feel that Jews knew true God—perhaps, like the other centurion, Cornelius (Acts x. 2), was 'devout,' 'feared God,' 'prayed to God alway.' What had he done for Capernaum? ver. 5—that synagogue where Jesus so often taught, *his gift* [*see Note 3*].

(c) *The Jews loved Him*—loved commander of troops stationed there to keep them in subjection!—what were their chief men ready to do for him?—and that even when the sick one only his slave.

But a more uncommon thing about him yet—the 'great faith' Jesus marvelled at.

II. HOW THE 'GREAT FAITH' WAS SHOWN.

(1) Here is the greatest man in Capernaum seeking help of a humble carpenter—a prophet, certainly, but not acknowledged

even by his own nation. Is it just because he is so great—thinks Jesus sure to do His best for him? Compare the Nobleman [see Lesson XXI.]. No, the very reverse. Does not think himself great—'not worthy' to receive Jesus at his house (ver. 6)—not even worthy to go to Him (ver. 7)—gets Jewish elders to go instead. Why this? Very likely had heard scribes teach in that synagogue—knew they expected great King from heaven—but He to be king of the Jews—should drive away Romans—no blessings for them (unless they became Jews). Might well feel he was *outside* the 'kingdom'—no use *his* asking for miracle. *And yet he did.*

(2) What did the elders ask Jesus to do? ver. 3 ('to come and heal'). So the Nobleman we read of before (John iv. 49). But look at the centurion's message when he heard Jesus was coming, ver. 6—8. What meant? [See Note 5.] He thinks, 'Why should He come? Is not His word enough wherever He is? I give orders myself—get immediate obedience—my soldiers and my slave go here and there as I tell them—I, too, obey my superior officer ('under authority'); and He is captain of a greater army—not a hundred men, but ten thousand angels—all things in heaven and earth—surely diseases under His control—can He not *speak the word only*, at any distance, and command the disease to leave my poor slave?' (comp. Ps. cvii. 20—'He sent His word, and healed them').

What he thought of Jesus we know not, but we see he believed with all his heart (1) *in His all-embracing love*, reaching even to a Gentile soldier's slave—(2) *in His supreme authority*, governing all things. Had of the Jews, of the disciples even, had 'great faith' like that?—'no, not in Israel.' No wonder Jesus marvelled.

III. HOW THE 'GREAT FAITH' SHOULD BE REWARDED.

By the request being granted? Yes; but more than that—see how.

The elders, perhaps, thought, if Jesus healed the slave, it would be because *they* asked (just as, if *they* wanted something of Roman Emperor, would try and get some one at court to ask for them). Jesus had been going about proclaiming 'the kingdom at hand'—well, true or not, *this* (they thought) certain:—When that 'kingdom' did come, it should be for Abraham and

his children, for *their nation*—they should be like guests at a feast (Isa. xxv. 6), in light and gladness—and others, the Gentile 'dogs,' in the darkness outside; they the favoured ones at court, though the King might, perhaps, if they asked Him, grant a few crumbs to any poor outcast they cared for.

Now what does Jesus say? [Read Matt. viii. 11, 12.] [See Note 7.]

(a) Yes, the kingdom shall be like a feast—rest, enjoyment, provision for all want. Yes, Abraham shall be there—plenty of guests, too—but who? where from?—from whence Israel's enemies came, Babylonians from East, Romans from West. When brought in? who preached over Roman empire? *we*, too, in the West—America, &c. And East—some had come then (Magi)—even now, Hindoos, Chinese, &c. *But outside?* Yes, there is 'outer darkness'—who there? Some of those very children of Abraham to whom God first gave the kingdom—who *would not now* eat with Gentiles—*should not then*—think of their bitter despair—'gnashing of teeth'!

(b) But should *all* the Gentiles be *in*—*all* the Jews *out*? Where the real difference?—what *would* give right of entry? *What the centurion had so much of*—FAITH. But what faith? The same as the centurion's—faith in Jesus Himself—in the despised Nazarene—in His all-embracing love—in His supreme authority—that would admit *any one*, Jew or Gentile, to God's banquet—nothing else would admit either. (See 2nd text for rep.)

Can we not see the faces of the elders as they heard that?

OUTSIDE OR INSIDE—*which shall we be?* Do you say, 'I go to church, &c.—pretty good boy at home and school—God very kind—it will be all right'? That will not do. Sin—any sin—shuts out; but Christ died to take sin away, and the question is, Have we come to Him, taken Him as our Saviour, Friend, King? do we love Him? trust in Him? have we *faith*? (John iii. 16, 36.) Many boys and girls who thought well of themselves will see some they have despised (poorer than themselves—or foreigners, negroes, &c.) at the feast with Abraham, with the King Himself—and themselves shut out!

NOTES.

1. It is not easy to reconcile the variations in Matthew's and Luke's accounts of this miracle. From Luke's it certainly appears that the centurion did not himself go to Christ at all, though the word 'Go' (*singular*) in Matthew seems addressed to him individually. Augustine, in reply to one who objected to the narrative on the ground of these variations, says, 'Does not our human custom furnish abundance of such instances? could we expect that Scripture would speak with us otherwise than in our own manner?'—(quoted by *Alford*).

2. 'A centurion,' in the Roman army, was commander of a *centuria*, or company of infantry, the number varying with the size of the legion, of which the *centuria* was the sixtieth part.

3. 'He hath built us a synagogue'—*lit.*, Himself (i.e., at his own expense) built our synagogue (i.e., the synagogue of Capernaum).

4. The servant is called by Luke, a slave (*δούλος, doulos*). Matthew calls him a boy (*παις, pais*)—a word often used in the sense of a servant, like *puer* in Latin and *garçon* in French.

5. 'For I am a man under authority,' &c. Commentators have disputed as to whether the centurion thought of *diseases* as being among the 'hosts' at Christ's command, or the *angels* who should be the ministers of His power in driving away diseases. Probably he thought of neither specially, but only derived a general idea of Christ's supremacy from the character of his own, which, though in so limited a sphere, was absolute. 'The Lord appears to him as the true *Cæsar* and *Imperator*, the highest over the hierarchy, not of earth, but of heaven (Col. i. 16)'—(*Trench*). 'He saw the unseen, clothed in the vividness of material substance. Health and sickness, ease and pain, gladness and sorrow, life and death, were to him as one great army, and He to whom he was speaking the Lord of Hosts. They marched at His bidding'—(*J. Vaughan's Sermons*).

6. 'He marvelled.' Difficult as this expression is, as applied to Christ, it is our plain duty to accept it as simply as 'He rejoiced' or 'was sorrowful.'

7. 'Many shall come from the east and the west,' &c. This solemn utterance of Christ's stands in remarkable contrast to a Rabbinical utterance (*quoted in Lange on Matthew*):—'In the world to come, saith God, I will spread a vast table for you, which the Gentiles shall see and be confounded.' So, by their tradition, the scribes

'made of none effect' the promises of the Old Testament to the Gentiles. They were willing to receive proselytes to Judaism; but the admission of the Gentiles, as such, to the covenant, was a 'mystery' (Eph. iii. 3-6) that even the Apostles were slow to believe. How little the elders of Capernaum understood Jesus is shewn by their pleading for their friend on the ground of his loving 'our nation,' as if that might overcome Christ's presumed unwillingness. The cure being wrought at a distance would fitly symbolise the proclamation of the Gospel to 'them that are afar off'—the Gentile world. The phrase 'children of the kingdom,' as applied to the Jews, is explained by Matt. xxi. 43. 'They were children of the typical kingdom, the theocracy'—(*Lange*).

The 'kingdom' is frequently described in the Bible as a feast; see Ps. xxii. 26-29; Isa. xxv. 6; Matt. xxii. 1-13, xxvi. 29; Luke xiv. 15-24; Rev. xix. 9. It must not be understood as referring directly to heaven; the 'kingdom' is the Gospel dispensation; but of this heaven is the consummation, the blessings of the 'kingdom' on earth being only an earnest of what are yet in the future.

'Outer darkness,' &c. Comp. Ps. cxlii. 10; Isa. lxxv. 14, lxxvi. 24; Matt. xiii. 42, 50, xxii. 13, xxiv. 51, xxv. 10, 30; Luke xiii. 28; Rev. xxii. 15 ('without').

LESSON XXIX.—The Widow's Son of Nain.

'The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.'

Read—Luke vii. 11-16; Learn—Isa. xxv. 8; John v. 21, 25,

(Hymns, 41, 45, 71, 96, 206, 213, 215, 376, 387.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The most inexperienced teacher will find the narrative part of this Lesson easy. The more experienced will find great care necessary in applying it. We are apt to get into confusion between natural death, spiritual death, and eternal death, and our scholars cannot always grasp the distinctions we make in our own minds. Although all are alluded to in the Sketch, the teacher had better not attempt to take the whole (unless he has a quick and intelligent class), but deliberately select a portion, and, having made his plan, strictly adhere to it. With junior classes it will be best to omit the section about spiritual death; and the concluding paragraph of the Lesson can be followed quite independently of it.

But the central points of this Lesson are not this and that human condition, but the sympathy and power of Christ. It will be observed that this is not always the case. Our Lord was the leading figure in the Lesson on 'A Sabbath at Capernaum,' but not in those on the cures of the Nobleman's Son, the Leper, and the Centurion's Servant. In these latter, attention was concentrated on *the applicant* in each case. The teacher will do well to notice this distinction, as his exposition and picturing of the narrative should be directed so as to lead always to the central point of application presently to be drawn. In the present Lesson, if, for want of time or any other cause, not a single word of personal application should be got in, yet, if the sympathy and power of Christ be clearly exhibited, *the Lesson is taught*; and, sometimes, to enlarge on our Lord's character and work is the very best of applications—just as the true way to inspire in any one love for some kind friend or benefactor is, not to insist on the duty of loving him, but just to dwell upon his goodness.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

You have all seen funerals often—know they are sad things; but have you ever *felt* the sadness—ever had funeral *at home*?—recollect the distress when doctor said no hope—the watching by the sick bed, &c.—then the word passed round, 'gone'—silence—weeping—last look—then the burial—the grave—'never see him (or her) in old place'—[*the teacher will modify these recollections according to local and special circumstances*].

Sad enough when one of a large family taken—how much more when *one of two*. Such a case see to-day.

1. *The Widow and her Son separated.*

A widow—then had had a sad funeral before this one: perhaps only lately—and had been glad that, though husband gone, her son grown up, and could support her; perhaps years ago—left with little baby—had brought him up—all her 'treasure' in him—(how wisely Jesus said, 'Lay not up treasures on earth,' &c.). Was he a good son? We know not—but if so what a loss to her! Any of you 'only son of mother, and she a widow'?—how tender should be to her!

She is alone in the world now—perhaps poor—knows not what will do—dark future. Yet many kind friends—she and her son loved in the town—see how many following the bier. Through streets—out of gate (Jews buried outside cities)—moves the mournful procession—not silent as with us—loud wailings and cries (Jer. ix. 17, 18; Amos v. 16; Matt. ix. 23)—*one* weeping bitterly (comp. Jer. vi. 26; Amos viii. 10; Zech. xii. 10).

2. *The Widow and her Son re-united.*

As procession moves out of gate, another company coming up hill [see Note 1] towards city. They have come a long way, 25 miles, over mountains, since the morning—we should think very weary—would scarcely notice a passing funeral. But *One* does—He knows it all—sees into the widow's desolate heart. Hear His gentle voice as He speaks to her.

'Weep not!'—not weep?—is there not a cause? but see—startled bearers stopping at Jesus' touch—crowd silent in wonder—Jesus speaking to a corpse that cannot hear (comp. Rom. iv. 17) But it does hear—the soul that had flown far away hears and comes back—the heart is beating again—the blood flowing through the veins again—the lungs breathing again—there is a *living man* on the bier—sitting up. Can the gazers be in a dream? No, for he *speaks*—and it is the voice of the widow's son! We have seen happy meetings, read of them (*e.g.*, Jacob and Joseph)—but what *this* have been?

Now look at the people—they of Nain probably never saw Jesus before—what think? Ver. 16—'a great prophet'—they remember what El'jah and Elisha did—but

was Jesus like *them*?—*they* raised dead with much prayer and effort (1 Kings xvii. 19—22; 2 Kings iv. 32—35)—how did *He* do it? Truly God *had* 'visited His people' in a sense they never thought of—not sending a prophet, but coming Himself.

But those who had come with Jesus—people of Capernaum—the disciples—they had seen other miracles—why they surprised? It taught them *more about two things*:—

I. THE COMPASSION OF JESUS.

Had He not been kind before to the sick of their town one Sabbath evening [Lesson XXIV.]—to the leper—to the centurion? Ah, but *then He was asked*. Now they see He loves those who know Him not—longs to bless those who never think of asking—feels for *all* suffering; His 'compassion' *spontaneous* (*i.e.*, moves of itself).

So it is still. Have you had sorrow, trouble, disappointment, pain? Jesus saw it all—pitied you though you never went to Him. Did it go away after a time? *He* had interfered, though you knew it not. Might He not well *stop* thinking of you? But 'His compassions fail not'—He is 'the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy.' Think of the kindest person you know—he not so tender-hearted as Christ. Does His love seem so natural—not much in it to marvel at? But think—*who suffers most* at seeing misery?—hard man or tender man? Then how must He have suffered at all He saw? (Heb. iv. 15; Isa. liii. 3, 4, lxiii. 9.)

II. THE POWER OF JESUS.

This, too, they had seen before—over fish in Lake, devils, fevers, leprosy, &c.—power even to heal at a distance (centurion's servant); but power over the dead—over the lifeless body—over the spirit that has 'returned to God who gave it'—*this* a new thing indeed.

So, again, His power the same now. But does He raise the dead now? He *will*, John v. 28, 29. Death shall not keep our bodies; if we trust in Him and love Him, death cannot hurt our souls. See why. Heb. ii. 14, 15, Rev. i. 18.

And the day is coming, when no more tears, and no more death (Rev. xxi. 4, and 1st text for *rep.*).

Is this great power—great compassion?

THERE IS GREATER YET.

See whom God calls 'dead,' Eph. ii. 1; 1 Tim. v. 6. Why called so? Can a dead body see, hear, feel, speak, act? And a dead soul *sees* not its own state, *hears* not God's voice, *feels* not God's love, *speaks* not in true prayer and praise, *does* not God's will. Which of us like that?

Upon dead souls Jesus had compassion. Looked down and saw us dead, so dead that we knew it not. Who asked Him to have pity, to come down? *He came unasked*—

lived Himself among dead souls—let them kill Him—that He might purchase life for them.

Upon dead souls Jesus has power. These also hear his voice (*2nd text for rep.*), as He calls, 'I say unto thee, Arise.' He sends the 'Giver of Life' (*Nic. Creed*), the Holy Ghost, to 'breathe into them the breath of life.'

But the soul must be alive before the body dies—or else eternal death. When will your bodies die?—not till you are old? are you sure?—[*Illust.—A boy being told he might die young, went to the cemetery and measured the graves. He found some shorter than himself.*]

Then hear Christ's voice now, and say, 'I will arise.'

NOTES.

1. The modern *Nain* is undoubtedly the ancient *Nain*. Though now a miserable village, the ruins indicate that it was once a town with walls and gates. It stands on the northern slope of Ed-Dūhy, or Little Hermon, one of the hills at the south-east end of the Plain of Esdason. The traveller, coming down from the Galilean hills southward, sees Nain on the opposite slope. A little to the east of the village is the Moslem burying-ground, and the rock on the west side is full of sepulchral caves. Nain is about 25 miles from Capernaum. See Stanley, *Sinai and P.*, p. 352; Robinson, *Bibl. Res.*, vol. ii., p. 361; Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 127.

2. On funeral customs in the East see Thomson, *Land and the Book*, pp. 99–108. The only exceptions to the general practice of burying outside the cities, that are named in the Bible, are in the case of kings (1 Kings ii. 10, xvi. 6, 28; 2 Kings x. 35, xiii. 9; 2 Chron. xvi. 14, xxviii. 27) and

occasionally others of high rank (1 Sam. xxv. 1, xxviii. 3; 2 Chron. xxiv. 16). It was denounced as a judgment against Jehoiakim, that he should not have kingly burial (Jer. xxii. 18, 19). Coffins were rarely used, and when used were open. Generally the body was simply wrapped in the grave-clothes, and carried on an open bier. The burial took place before sunset on the day of the death.

3. Our Lord's three miracles of raising the dead varied as to the length of time that had elapsed since the death: Jairus's daughter was still lying on the bed; the widow's son was being carried to his grave; Lazarus had been in the grave four days. It is remarkable that these miracles were wrought on an only son, an only daughter, and an only brother. In each case Christ addressed the dead person directly: 'Young man!'—'Damsel!'—'Lazarus!'

Lesson XXX.—The Paralytic.

'Who is this that forgiveth sins also?'

Read—Mark ii. 1–12; (*comp.* Matt. ix. 2–8; Luke v. 17–26); *Learn*—Ps. ciii. 2, 3
Acts v. 31. (*Hymns*, 15, 19, 76, 93, 145, 148, 381.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The Sketch of this Lesson is constructed differently from those that have gone before. By the plan of putting the title of each division at the end of the division instead of the beginning, the teacher will be led to see that the three statements so placed are the points to which he is to work up. This plan is often effective in teaching, even when not indicated in the printed sketches.

In teaching on narratives like the one before us, it is too generally the custom, even with painstaking teachers, to draw a series of pretty pictures of what occurred, and then to conclude with a general application about the kindness of Christ, and the consequent encouragement to come to Him. The infant-class teacher, indeed, may fairly be satisfied with this; but with older classes something higher and more definite should be attempted. In the following Sketch the narrative is used to illustrate two great truths: (1) The Divinity of Jesus, as shown in the points to which the three divisions lead, and as the true answer to the question which stands above as the motto of the Lesson; (2) The superiority of spiritual over temporal blessings, which is suggested in the introductory paragraph, and made the chief point of application.

The Paralytic might be taken as a type of the sinner in his helplessness and incapacity; and the bodily strength imparted to the former of the spiritual strength needed by the latter. But this point will come better in the lesson on the Cripple at Bethesda.

Care must be taken that the children's minds are divested of English ideas with regard to the roofs of houses and to beds. A class has been known to leave school with the impression that the ability of the man to carry his *four-poster* was the great point in the miracle. See Notes 3 & 6.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Do not boys and girls, when told that God answers prayer, sometimes think this in their hearts?—'Yes, perhaps, if pray for grace, &c.—but if pray for everyday things we really wish for, not get them.' But God will give all that is good—would you give baby the poisonous berry it cries for? Only boys and girls don't care for *best* things (spiritual blessings)—why?—don't feel their value (as baby will prefer plaything to bank-note). To-day read how Jesus gave His best gift first, and then the lesser one too.

I.

'Jesus at home [see Note 1] again!'—this the cry from mouth to mouth in Capernaum. See the concourse gathering, pouring into the house—doorway now filled up—crowd even in street—can't get in.

Here come four men—what carrying?—'Oh, pray let us pass in!'—impossible—what to be done? Cannot they wait till to-morrow, or till Jesus comes out? But the poor man not only helpless in body because of palsied limbs—miserable in mind too [see Note 4]—feels his sinfulness—knows *that* is why he is afflicted—has heard of Jesus being 'sent to heal the broken-hearted' (Luke iv. 18)—perhaps He will say something comforting, even if He will not cure one so sinful—cannot wait for this—must get at Him at once. Here is a man sadly needing a temporal blessing—yet which does he think most of?—this or the spiritual?

But how to get at Jesus? Suddenly his good friends who are carrying him think of a plan—beg admission next door—up on to flat roof there—then step over on to roof of the house—look down into courtyard—see it filled with people—Jesus sitting under verandah teaching [see Note 3]. Quickly they take up tiles of verandah just over His head—then what do?

Now come inside. See the throng, filling up every corner—all silent—as the mat [see Note 6] and its burden are gently let down to Jesus' feet. They know His kindness—but will not this make Him angry?—interrupted in the middle of His teaching—intruded on so strangely? Yet no anger in His face—only pity—then He will heal—no—why, what is He saying?—'*sins forgiven!*'

What do they think? ver. 7—'blasphemies' (comp. Matt. xxvi. 65; John x. 33).

Were they right? Yes, so far as they knew. *Who can forgive sins?—why only God?* [Illustr.—*If John injures Henry, of whom must he ask pardon? of William?*] Every sin an offence against God (1 John iii. 4; see Gen. xxxix. 9; Ps. li. 4)—so God only can forgive. In the Absolution the minister forgives no individual; he only 'declares and pronounces' God's forgiveness of 'all that truly repent'—[*William might say to John, 'I know Henry*

will forgive you if you ask him—he told me so']. Did Jesus simply say, 'God will forgive you if you ask Him'? No, but 'Thy sins are forgiven'—how could He say that? *Because He was God*; and, just as God in heaven could forgive sin, so when He came down and became 'the Son of Man,' the Son of Man could forgive sin on earth (ver. 10). Thus we see,

(1) CHRIST FORGIVING SIN.

II.

(a) But why did Jesus forgive this man? When does God forgive any one?—'He pardoneth and absolveth'—whom? How know if 'truly repent'? *God knows the heart* (1 Chron. xxviii. 9; 2 Chron. vi. 30; Jer. xvii. 10). What must Jesus have known? see His first words, 'Be of good cheer' (*Matt.*)—why this?—He saw the man's heart—his misery of soul—his humble penitent state—saw that he cared most for spiritual blessing.

(b) What else are we told Jesus knew?—'*seeing their faith*'—would the poor man's friends have taken all that trouble if had not trusted His power and love? Do we also try, in faith, to bring any one to Christ? Be sure He sees, and will not disappoint.

(c) One thing more Jesus knew, ver. 8. The Pharisees had not spoken out—we are not told they even whispered to each other—yet He read their thoughts (comp. Matt. xii. 25; Luke vi. 8, vii. 39, 40; John ii. 24, vi. 61, 64, xxi. 17; Rev. ii. 23).

Jesus had claimed to do what God only could do. Has He not proved His right by showing He knows what God only can know? Penitence, faith, murmurs—He knows all. Thus we see,

(2) CHRIST SEARCHING THE HEART.

III.

But perhaps they might think, 'After all, it's easy to say, Thy sins are forgiven—but how know if they really are?' Jesus will show them that His Divine authority is not only a thing that He professes to have, but a thing they can all put to the proof. Already He has done this by reading their thoughts; now will give a yet clearer proof. What sort? Just as you, if saw a prayer for temporal blessing answered, *more struck* than if it were spiritual, so they would think more of a miracle on the body than of one on the soul—though which greatest? He is speaking to the scribes—'But that ye may know,' &c.—then He stops short—turns to the helpless cripple at His feet—'*Arise!*'

How can a man with paralysed limbs stand up? He does, instantly. See the crowd, which could not make way for him to get in, now making way for him to pass out. Are they in a dream?—they look and feel like it; wonders they have seen before, but this quite a new thing (*Luke*). [See Note 7.]

Follow the man, forgiven and healed, blessed both in body and soul—carrying the mat that had so long carried him—fancy his arrival at home! Thus we see,

(3) CHRIST HEALING THE BODY.

Authority to forgive—knowledge of all hearts—power to give bodily health and every good thing—all in Jesus. Why in Him? Because, though really a man, *not only a man*—‘GOD WITH US’ (Matt. i. 23; John i. 1, 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. i. 8).

He knows our hearts, reads our thoughts now. Which does He see we care most for—His spiritual or His temporal mercies? If (as in the story-books) a fairy promised us whatever we liked best, what would it be?

Do we care little for pardon and grace,

but much for money, pleasure, getting on in life, having everything comfortable and prosperous? Is that loving the Saviour who died for us? Can we expect Him to give us what we want?

But do we wish for pardon and grace above all? Are our sins a burden which we long to have removed? And do we long for grace to ‘sin no more’? Then be sure that Christ *will give us our wish* (1 John i. 7–10). And will He then leave us to shift for ourselves?—no, will give every good thing too (Rom. viii. 32; Matt. vi. 33). We shall be able to take up David’s joyful song (*1st text for rep.*).

You would *like* to care most for soul-blessings—but somehow you don’t. Then ask for another of Christ’s gifts, ‘*repentance*’ (*2nd text for rep.*).

NOTES.

1. *Ver. 1*—‘*In the house*’—the idiomatic expression for ‘at home.’ Some think that Mary and her family had removed to Capernaum; others, that Jesus made Peter’s house (Mark i. 29) His head-quarters. Our Lord certainly, at that time, ‘dwelt’ at Capernaum (Matt. iv. 13). The oft-quoted words, ‘The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head,’ simply mean that He had no residence that could be called *His own*.

2. The Pharisees and Scribes mentioned in this passage are said by St. Luke to have come ‘out of every town of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem.’ Evidently the gathering had been arranged among them. But their motive seems not, at that early period, to have been a hostile one; they came to ascertain for themselves the truth of the reports that had reached them. They must be carefully distinguished from the scribes, who subsequently (Mark iii. 22) ‘came down from Jerusalem’ (not from all parts) and who were no doubt sent purposely to watch Jesus and stir up a feeling against Him, for they attacked Him openly and bitterly. In the present instance, the murmurs (and they were not unannounced ones) were not openly expressed at all.

3. Various explanations are given of the method by which the paralytic was conveyed into our Lord’s presence. See Kitto’s *Daily Bible Illustrations*; Thomson’s *Land and the Book*, p. 358; Miss Rogers’ *Domestic Life in Palestine*, p. 47; Smith’s *Student’s N. T. History*, p. 204. The most common view is that adopted in the Sketch. All Syrian houses of any size are built in quadrangular form around a courtyard. There is often only a ground-floor; sometimes one upper story. A staircase ascends from the courtyard to the roof, which is flat, and surrounded by a parapet, and on which most of the household operations are carried on. The court is partially covered with a kind of verandah, of wood or ‘tiling,’ as a protection from the sun. From the court an open passage leads out to the street. Our Lord sat under the verandah, teaching the people who crowded the court, the rooms opening on to it, and the passage. The roof was reached either from that of the next house, or by a flight of steps direct from the street (which is frequently provided, and which explains Matt. xxiv. 17). The ‘tiling’ taken up was that of the verandah.

4. The view of the paralytic’s state of mind, adopted in the Sketch, is that of Alford, Elliott,

Hanna, Trench, Stier, Olshausen, &c. A careful comparison of the treatment by our Lord of the several afflicted persons who came to Him shews that it varied in different cases, apparently according to the applicant’s moral condition. The simple fact, therefore, that He gave the paralytic forgiveness before healing, seems to imply that forgiveness was the blessing He most desired. And the words, ‘Be of good cheer,’ recorded by Matthew as having immediately preceded those of pardon, are scarcely explicable on any other supposition.

5. ‘*Power to forgive sins*’—rather, *authority*, which is something higher than mere power.

Trench (*Miracles*, p. 210) thus paraphrases Christ’s assertion of His right to forgive sins:—‘This power is not exercised, as you deem, only by God in heaven, but also by the Son of Man on earth. You rightly assert that it is only exercised by Him whose proper dwelling is in the heavens; but He who, in the person of the Son of Man, has descended also upon earth, has brought down this power with Him here.’

He thus illustrates the question, ‘Whether is easier,’ &c.:—‘It would be easier for a man, equally ignorant of the French and Chinese languages, to claim to know the last than the first; not that the language itself is easier, but that, in the one case, multitudes could disprove his claim: in the other, hardly a scholar or two in the land.’

6. The Greek word rendered ‘bed’ is a different one in each of the three Gospels. Matthew uses the ordinary word. Luke, who is always more elegant in language than the others, uses a more classical term. Mark alone specifies the kind of bed, by employing a word used to designate the very poorest substitute for a couch—a pallet or mat. The same word is found in Mark vi. 55; John v. 8–12; Acts v. 15, ix. 53.

7. St. Luke gives the most graphic account of the effect of the miracle upon the bystanders. He alone mentions their ‘fear.’ The words, ‘They were all amazed,’ should be, ‘Amazement seized them all’; and ‘amazement’ in the Greek is a remarkable word: it is the original of our *ecstasy*, and is the one rendered ‘trance’ in Acts x. 10, xi. 5, xxii. 17. ‘Strange things’ are literally ‘*paradoxeis*,’ i.e., things contrary to all experience.

Lesson XXXI.—The Call of the Publican.

'A friend of publicans and sinners.'

Read—Matt. ix. 9—17; (*comp.* Mark ii. 14—22; Luke v. 27—39); Learn—Mark ii. 16, 17 (*Hymns*, 62, 95, 132, 144, 147, 341.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Short as this passage is, it has been necessary to devote almost the whole space allotted to the Sketch to suggestions respecting the teaching of the narrative, as well as to append long Notes. The application is, in consequence, reduced to the merest outline.

The larger part of the second division ('Christ the Bridegroom') must be omitted in teaching junior classes; but enough of it should be taken to prepare the way for the second point of application—'to what Christ calls us,' as this should by all means be included.

The application suggested by the words, 'Follow Me,' has already been taken in Lesson XXIII., and it will not be well to attempt to include it here. '*One thing at a time*' is a good maxim in teaching.

Care must be taken that the children do not understand 'publican' in the modern English sense of the word. The opening illustration will serve to clear their minds.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

The tax-collector—not usually glad to see him, because often inconvenient to pay—but does any one hate the *man*? Only collects what quite necessary—no making us pay more than we ought—no cheating—pays it all to the authorities—and they spend it for ships, soldiers, police, schools, &c. But suppose England conquered by foreigners—taxes raised to pay for *their* soldiers, &c., instead of ours—how hateful, having to pay! And suppose the collector might get all he could out of us, and then pay them only a fixed sum, keeping the rest himself—who would like him or trust him? And suppose he were an Englishman, willing to serve the enemy to make gain for himself—should we not all dislike and shun him?

This exactly how it was among the Jews when Christ on earth. The 'publicans' (a) collected taxes for Roman conquerors; (b) were often Jews, so the more hated; (c) oppressed and cheated the people, to get rich themselves [*see Note 1*]. At the first collection (when Jesus ten years old) people in Galilee refused and rebelled (Acts v. 37) [*see Lesson IX., Note 1*]; but afterwards forced to submit. A publican shunned and despised by all good and respectable Jews (Luke xix. 7)—especially by the Pharisees (xviii. 11); so could only have had and low people for friends.

At Capernaum one named Matthew [*see Note 2*]*—*a busy place, with many to collect from, so would make money fast. No doubt he often saw and heard Jesus; but,—

(a) Would he care about Him? What sort of people had Jesus spoken well of? (Matt. v. 3)—was Matthew 'poor in spirit'? was he not selfish and covetous? what was he 'laying up for Himself'? would he like

the Prophet who said 'Lay not up' (Matt. vi. 19)? And even if he were willing to listen to and obey Jesus,—

(b) Would Jesus receive him? did not He want those who were more righteous than the Pharisees (Matt. v. 20)—those who were unselfish and did good to others (v. 44, 46, 47)? how could He have anything to do with a grasping irreligious publican?

Yet see two strange things, ver. 9. (a) Jesus choosing the publican—the publican 'leaving all' (Luke) to follow Jesus! (b) A 'great feast' given by Matthew (Luke)—his fellow-publicans and other friends, bad and disreputable people, invited—and who else there?

No wonder a commotion in Capernaum. Two complaints made: (a) As to those Jesus was allowing to be His friends and followers; (b) As to what He was allowing them to do. In answering these, what two things does He claim to be like? [*Read ver. 10—17.*]

I. CHRIST THE PHYSICIAN.

Think of the feast—great company—Jesus in place of honour next Matthew—disciples and publicans all sitting together. An interruption—others at the door—who? See their proud looks—the broad fringes (Matt. xxiii. 5) to their robes as a sign of sanctity. How can they come into a publican's house?—would not *as guests*—but will to *accuse Jesus*. To whom do they speak? ver. 11—why? perhaps to set Peter, John, &c., against their Master. What said?—'We thought this Jesus was well-conducted and respectable, at all events—but how is this? what is He doing in such a place? how can He make, such people His friends—how come to one of their feasts?' (see Matt. xi. 19; Luke xv. 2).

Does Peter answer? Perhaps knows not what to say. But Jesus hears—see His reply: 'Are you so good, and these men so bad? To which, then, should I go? Who need the physician—the healthy or the sick?' Then He reminds them what God had said of old (Hos. vi. 6)—a loving heart more pleasing to Him than much outward service (compare Prov. xxi. 3; Mic. vi. 8)—if they so good, why not try and do the publicans good, instead of proudly standing aloof? [See Note 3.]

Christ the Physician—this the reason,—

(a) *Why Jesus went among the publicans*—not to be like them, but to make them like Him. Why does doctor go to sick man?—to catch his disease, or to cure him? Jesus treats them as—? and calls them to—? (ver. 13).

(b) *Why the publicans followed Jesus.* His words had made them feel their wickedness, and they wanted a friend—not a companion to join them *in* sin, but a Saviour to deliver them *from* sin. What does a man feel and know when he sends for a doctor?

II. CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM.

Now look at the second complaint. Other men have also come in, not proud and angry like the Pharisees, but perplexed—who? ver. 14. They do not mind Jesus receiving publicans; did not their own master do so (Luke iii. 12; vii. 29) before Herod put him in prison? But then how would he deal with such sinners? would he not appoint them long and strict fasts? were not even they, his faithful followers, at this very time fasting [see Note 5] as he had directed? But Jesus is letting these publicans feast, and joining them at table!

How does Jesus answer this?

(1) Does He say fasting is wrong?—no, His disciples to fast one day—but then it should be, not just because right thing to do, but because a reason for it, not able to help it for sorrow. Fasting no use as a mere thing to be done, nor prayer either—must come from heart [see Note 5]. (So,

church-going, prayer-saying, &c., only pleasing to God if really meant.)

(2) But *why* not the right time to fast then? Because *He* with them. Could a bridegroom's friends be mournful at wedding-time?

Christ the Bridegroom—the very name the Baptist had given Him, and did not he rejoice to see the long looked-for Bridegroom come at last? (John iii. 29). Who could help being glad?—what had He come among men at all for? Not to punish—not to set hard tasks by which men might get to heaven—but to invite them freely to be happy, as people are happy at a wedding. Could their new devotion to Him be cramped by the old regular forms?—their joy be kept in by the old strict rules about fastings and prayers? That would be like mending a worn-out coat with an *un-shrunk* piece out of a new one—like putting fresh wine, while yet fermenting, into old skins. To do so would be to spoil everything. [See Note 6.]

CHRIST IS STILL CALLING—

Calling, as of old, sinners to repentance. Any of you not think yourselves sinners?—then nothing to do with Him. Any feel sin—want to get rid of it?—Come to the Physician.

Calling us, as of old, not to hard rules and a gloomy life, but to be happy. If a Jew in those days loved God, would show it by his many washings, fastings, formal prayers, &c., because taught so—and yet never quite happy, ever fearing he had not done enough to satisfy God. We know better. If we love God, can try and do everything to please Him—pray, work, deny selves—but why? Not to get accepted, but because 'accepted in the Beloved' (Eph. i. 6). Our love to show itself in being happy and making others happy.

We cannot, like Matthew, invite Jesus to a feast, but He invites us, Isa. lv. 1.

'All things are ready, come!'

The door is open wide;

Oh, feast upon the love of God,
For Christ His son has died.'

NOTES.

1. The 'publicans' of Scripture answered rather to our excise or customs officers than to what we call tax-gatherers. Matthew sat at 'the receipt of *custom*,' and probably collected dues on the fish or the fishing-boats, or tolls on the Roman road that ran through Capernaum. (The distinction, however, is not worth making in actual teaching.)

By the system of *farming* the revenue, the right to collect in a certain district was sold, for a fixed annual payment, to a 'publican,' who then made what he could out of it; and as only low-class, unscrupulous men were willing to be the agents of the Roman conquerors, much illegal exaction was the result; see Luke iii. 13, xix. 8. The unpopularity of the publicans is seen in numerous passages in the Gospels; perhaps most of all in our Lord's own injunction that an incorrigible offender was to be reckoned

'as an heathen man and a publican' (Matt. xviii. 17). It was a common saying among the Jews that 'vows made to thieves, murderers, and publicans, might be broken.'

2. It is clear that Matthew is identical with the *Levi* of Mark and Luke. As these two Evangelists give the name of *Matthew* in their lists of the Apostles (Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15), it is supposed that *Matthew* (i.e., the 'gift of God') was the *apostolic* name of *Levi the Publican*, as Peter was of Simon, and Paul of Saul. Mark calls Levi 'the son of Alphaeus'; from which some have supposed that he was brother of 'James the son of Alphaeus,' and therefore (on the common view) one of Christ's 'brethren.' This seems improbable in itself, and Alphaeus was not an uncommon name.

3. 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice—i.e., 'I

desire the religion of the heart, which shows itself in deeds of mercy and love, rather than the religion of mere ceremonial observance.' See Butler's *Analogy*, Pt. II, ch. 1. Had the scribes, the appointed teachers of the people, gone among the 'publicans and sinners' to win them to a better life, they would have pleased God more than by the most scrupulous care not to mix with such persons. The expression 'and not sacrifice' is *comparative*, as in Jer. vii. 22.

4. 'I came not to call the righteous'—rather 'to call righteous persons.' There is no article in the Greek, so that the words do not even superfluously imply that there were any actually righteous.

5. The fasting of the Baptist's disciples must not be understood as a spontaneous mourning for their master's imprisonment, but as a regular ascetic practice enjoined by him. Luke's narrative makes this quite clear. He mentions that the question also included 'making prayers,' *i.e.*, praying, not from a sense of need, but as a formal duty at set times; and obviously the 'fasting' would be of a similar kind. Otherwise Christ's argument loses all its point, as He distinctly contrasts the *being made to fast* with voluntary fasting in time of sorrow or calamity: 'Can ye make,' &c.—'then shall they fast' (v. 34, 35).

The words, 'Then shall they fast,' therefore, do not ordain a rule to be kept, but predict what will happen: 'they shall fast because there will be occasion for it' (comp. John xvi. 20). See Alford on St. Matthew. 'All external acts and exercises should spring naturally out of some pure and deep emotion of the heart seeking for itself an appropriate expression' (*Hanna*).

St. Mark's words 'used to fast'—*lit.*, 'were fasting'—imply that one of their set 'fasts' was then going on.

6. The two illustrations of the rent garment and the old wine-skins are universally understood to describe the disastrous effects of an attempt to combine the old Jewish and the new Christian systems. But in explaining their details expositors differ considerably. The following seems the most natural interpretation:—

(a) The old garment represents the forms and ceremonies of the old dispensation, useful in their day, but now worn out (comp. Gal. iv. 3, 9; Heb. viii. 13). The new represents the forms

(*i.e.*, outward expressions of inner life and spirituality of the Gospel dispensation. If a piece is cut out of a new garment (*Luke*) to mend a rent in an old one, two effects follow: the new one is spoiled (*Luke*—the words, 'the new maketh a rent,' should be 'he will rend the new'); and the old one is not repaired, for the new piece does not agree with it (*Luke*), and if the new is *raw, unfulfilled* (*Matt. and Mark*), the piece will, when it shrinks, tear away the threads of the old, and make a worse rent. So, it will not do merely to supplement the old system of ceremonial by a few new forms. The robe to be worn at the wedding (for this figure seems continued) must be a new one altogether.

(b) As the garments typify outward forms, so do the 'bottles' (*i.e.*, wine-skins; wine was kept in goat-skins prepared for the purpose, see Josh. ix. 4). But in this second parable the life or spirit of the Gospel (as distinct from its outward expression) is introduced under the image of wine. If new, *i.e.*, unfermented, wine be put in old and stiff skins, which cannot expand as the wine ferments, the skins will burst, and the wine be lost. So, the expansive joy and the (*then*) partially developed freedom of Christianity could not be safely confined in the old unyielding forms of Judaism, but must have new and more elastic ones of their own. Thus both, the spirit and the forms, would be preserved.

Our Lord's concluding sentence, only given by Luke, is a gentle apology for the Baptist's disciples. They were not to be hastily condemned because they did not yet care for the 'new wine.' He would also encourage them to 'taste and see'; by-and-by they would enjoy it.

7. Harmonists are not agreed whether Matthew's feast followed immediately on his call, or after an uncertain interval of time; whether the complaint of the Pharisees was made at the feast or subsequently; and also as to when the question of the Baptist's disciples was put. In the Sketch they are supposed to have all come together, and many think this was the case; but some, wishing to adopt the order of Mark and Luke with regard to the application of Jairus (see next Lesson, Note 1) assume one or more intervals of time between them. Greswell, and some who follow him, think there were *two* feasts, and two conversations exactly alike; but this is in the last degree improbable.

Lesson XXXII.—The Sick Woman and the Ruler's Daughter

'All things are possible to him that believeth.'

Read—Mark v. 22—43 (comp. Matt. ix. 18—26; Luke viii. 41—56); Learn—Luke viii. 48—50. (*Hymns*. 76, 145, 146, 148, 183, 345.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson affords an excellent example of what has already been said on Lesson XXX. The narrative is very familiar, and very easy to picture; and a general application can readily be found to wind up with. But when this has been done, what has the class learned of the great truth underlying the history? Has the teacher himself noticed it? In the accompanying Sketch, the illustrations suggested for opening the Lesson prepare the way for the inculcation of this truth; the narrative throughout is presented specially

with a view to its apprehension; and the application is strictly confined to the object of bringing it home to the children themselves. And what is this truth? *The place of faith in the Christian system*, as the indispensable *connecting link* between our need and Christ's power to supply it. This truth is taught by many of the Gospel narratives; but there is a twofold advantage in giving it special attention here, viz., (1) that the woman's *touch* so strikingly illustrates it, (2) that it unites the teaching of both the incidents recorded in the passage.

The various applications suggested by the *raising from the dead* of Jairus's daughter are not taken in the Sketch. They have already been introduced in Lesson XXIX.; and if used here, it would be necessary to omit the incident of the sick woman.

In actual teaching, there should be no break between sections I. and II. The words 'See her edging her way' naturally follow 'get near Him unnoticed.' The heads, as usual, are designed as *land-marks* or *mile-stones* for the teacher.

The two boys whose cases are suggested as illustrations were both scholars of the writer.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Under our streets great pipes full of water, to supply cisterns, &c. When house on fire, that water could put it out—but what use if can't be got at? [*Or, dark school-room—gas in pipes no use unless can turn it on and put light to it. Or, starving children at home—plenty of bread in cupboard—but no key to open it.*] We want pardon of sin, grace to be better, kind feelings, gentle ways, strength against temptation: *provision for all in Christ*—He willing to give—yet how few get it! [*Illust.—Boy once with bad temper, wished to overcome it, knew Christ able, yet said, 'Teacher, I CAN'T' (a fact).*]

To-day read of two people who wanted blessings from Christ, and how they got them.

I. WHAT THEY WANTED OF CHRIST.

(1) *The Ruler.* When a father and mother have only one little girl, how much loved! If she ill, what distress! In Capernaum, in large house, great trouble—the *one little girl* dying—how old? (*see Luke*). What to be done? Jairus remembers what he has seen as he sat in ruler's seat in synagogue [*Lesson XXIV.*]*—how he and his colleagues went to Jesus to plead for the kind Roman [Lesson XXI.]—will go now for his own child. See him hastening—where to? Whom Jesus still talking to? Matt. ix. 18 [see Note 1]. Before all—proud Pharisees and disreputable publicans—he, who sits above them all in the synagogue, falls down in his anguish at Jesus' feet. Look at Jesus—He has been refusing to tell His new publican-disciples to look sad and gloomy [last Lesson]—but now that one really sad comes to Him, does He turn him away?*

(2) *The Sick Woman.* Go back twelve years—when Jesus quietly working as village carpenter—what then happening in Capernaum? ver. 25, 42—(a) Jairus and his wife very happy—little girl born; (b) a Jewish lady ill, sending for doctor. Who could think that the humble Nazarene would by-and-by cure, on same day, that child and that lady? All the time while

the little girl growing to be twelve years old—(some of you know how long that is)—that lady suffering. She had plenty of money, but by-and-bye all gone—how? Now poverty as well as sickness; and, after trying every remedy, worse than before (ver. 26).

She, too, knows Jesus—but modest and retiring—does not like to tell Him all the long, sad story—yet surely He could heal—and if such power, could He not heal *without knowing it*? Would it not be enough to *touch* Him? She sees the people crowding after Him as He goes along the street from Matthew's house to Jairus's—now a chance—may get near Him without being noticed.

II. HOW THEY GOT WHAT THEY WANTED.

(1) *The Sick Woman.* See her edging her way through crowd—she is close to Him—sees the fringe on His robe [*see Note 3*]*—not broad like the Pharisees', certainly, but (she thinks) sacred—that she will touch. In a moment—cured!—the Great Physician [last Lesson] has done what all others failed in. She drops back into the crowd—how thankful! But—oh! she will be found out—what is Jesus asking? ver. 30—He has turned round—His eye upon her (comp. Nah. i. 7—'He knoweth them that trust in Him')—trembling she falls before Him, and openly confesses all.*

How did she get the blessing? Here was her malady—there was Christ's power: what was it that brought the one to the other? *The touch*? But what did Peter say? (*Luke*)—was it not true? and yet Jesus says *her touch* quite different from the crowd's touch—how? See what He told her, ver. 34—*what saved her*? The crowd touched Him without thinking—meant nothing by it; *she touched Him because believed—what*? So, as her hand touched His robe, *her faith touched His Divine power and love.* And Jesus called her out purposely that she might know this—not think some strange magic in His dress—but that His power and love healed because she trusted. (*See Notes 4, 5.*)

(2) *The Ruler.* Poor Jairus!—how impatient he must have felt at the delay on the road!—ah! and too late now—see the message from the sick room, ver. 35. What does Jesus say? ver. 36. Jairus, too, must learn *what it is that can get His help*—not enough that the child ill—*other children ill too, yet not cured—something wanted—faith—and if 'only believe,' no matter to Jesus whether child dying or dead.*

At the house at last. The paid mourners there already—hear their noisy wailing (see 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; Jer. ix. 17—20; Amos v. 16). But—suddenly it is turned into mocking laughter—what at? ver. 39, 40. Why did Jesus call death *sleep* (comp. John xi. 11—14)?—how easily we wake a sleeper!—*just as easily* He wakes the dead (John v. 28; 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16). Now He stands by the bed. There the lifeless body—here its Maker and Redeemer: what can bring His power to it? Just as before—*only faith.* Who there also? Only the believing ones: father and mother weep—Peter, John, and James wonder—yet they are *trusting*; the scoffers turned out—if the miracle depended on *their faith*, when could it be done? (Matt. xiii. 58, xvii. 20).

Listen!—He speaks to the dead child—how tenderly—in the very words her mother might call to her in the morning—'My child, get up' [see Note 6]. See—she rises—is she really alive?—yes, can *walk and eat*, ver. 42, 43.

DO NOT WE NEED HELP AS MUCH AS THEY DID?

For ourselves, like the woman. Feel there is 'something the matter with us,'

causing bad thoughts, bad words, bad deeds. 'We have left undone those things, &c., and 'done those things,' &c.—why? 'no health in us.' Try 'physicians'—change way of living [Illustr.—A boy, feeling he could not be 'religious' at his workshop, gave up situation and got another (a fact)]—no use—nothing 'bettered'—the evil in ourselves.

For others, like Jairus. [Name any instance in the class—e.g., girl may wish her brother 'a better boy.']

Is not Christ as ready and able to help now as He was then? (Heb. vii. 25, xiii. 8; see Hymn 76).

WHAT CAN BRING HIS POWER TO OUR NEED?

Not enough to have Him in the midst of us—what good was it to that pressing throng? What good all His love and power at Nazareth (Mark vi. 6)? The water may be close to the fire [or gas, or bread—whichever illust. taken]—but what good if not used? Church-going, prayer-saying, like *touch*, no use in themselves.

What, then, is the 'missing link'? THE TOUCH OF FAITH.

What is that? Just kneel down and ask Christ for what you want, (1) because you want it, (2) because you *know* He will hear and help. Then not go away and forget—(did Jairus?—why not? He *wanted* it so much). [Illustr.—When you take messages, or ask favour, don't you wait for an answer?]

'I bring my wants to Jesus:
All fulness dwells in him;
He heals all my diseases,
He doth my soul redeem.'

NOTES.

1. The question when these miracles occurred is one on which harmonists differ greatly. Mark and Luke agree in placing them immediately after the return from the eastern side of the Lake, but without any strictly connecting particles. Matthew's words, 'While He yet spake there came,' &c., distinctly connect Jairus's request with the conversation with the Baptist's disciples; but apparently, this conversation took place at the feast in Matthew's house; but see preceding Lesson, Note 7. In the original (in the best MSS.), too, Matthew says, 'There entered a certain ruler,' as if *into the house*.

2. Jairus was not a 'ruler' in the sense that Nicodemus was, i.e., one of the Sanhedrim; but a 'ruler-of-the-synagogue' (one word in the Greek) at Capernaum. On this office see Lesson XXII., Note 2.

3. The 'hem,' or 'border' (same Greek word in Matthew and Luke)—rather the *fringe* or *tassel* which the Jews wore at each corner of their garments, in obedience to Numb. xv. 37—40.

4. 'Virtue'—lit., *power*. See similar miracles in Mark vi. 56; Luke vi. 19; Acts v. 15, xix. 12. The woman's faith was certainly mixed with superstition: and yet this was graciously overlooked, and the benefit conveyed to her notwithstanding. There may be true, albeit imperfect, faith underlying a superstitious use of the means

of grace. But Christ would not let her go away uninstructed; she must be taught that the cure was not a matter of course, but dependent upon *His will and her faith*.

Trench says, 'Many throng Christ: His in name; near to Him; in actual contact with the sacraments and ordinances of His Church; yet not touching Him, because not drawing nigh in faith.'

5. Christ's question, 'Who touched me?' was, of course, not for information, but to elicit the woman's confession. 'A father coming among his children, and demanding, Who committed this fault?—himself conscious, even while he asks, but willing to bring the culprit to a full confession—can he be said in any way to violate the laws of the highest truth?' (Trench). Comp. Gen. iii. 9, iv. 9; 2 Kings v. 25; Luke xxiv. 19.

6. 'Talitha'—in the ordinary dialect of the people, is a word of endearment to a young maiden, so that the words are equivalent to *Rise, my child!* (Afford). The use of diminutives is characteristic of Mark: v. 23—'little daughter'; v. 41—'young damsel'; vii. 27—'little dogs' (in the Greek); viii. 7—'small fishes.' He also preserves the exact Aramaic words used by Christ: Boanerges, Talitha cumi, Corban, Ephphatha, Abba.

Lesson XXXIII.—At Jerusalem—The Cripple at Bethesda.

'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'

Read—John v. 1—16; Learn—Isa. lvii. 18; Rom. vii. 18; Phil. iv. 13.

(Hymns, 108, 151, 158, 170, 173, 175, 330, 350.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The miracle recorded in this passage is chiefly important because of its consequences—the persecution which it brought upon Christ. So far as the history is concerned, therefore, the present Lesson (on the miracle) merely serves to clear the way for the following one (on the persecution). But by thus taking the cure of the impotent man by itself, and viewing it in this Lesson apart from its results, an opportunity is afforded of drawing from it spiritual instruction, of a very important and practical kind, which requires much more than the usual ten or twelve minutes at the close of the teaching to make it effective. What this spiritual instruction is will be seen from the accompanying Sketch, which—unlike the preceding Sketches, and in seeming violation of the rule laid down in Lesson XXX.—consists exclusively of narrative and application. The subject is, in brief, this—*How to do the Impossible.*

Very many Sunday scholars admit the urgency and feel the graciousness of God's invitations—do not doubt that the way to be quite happy is to obey them—intend to obey them—yet never do obey them. Why do they not? The real cause is 'the chain of their sins.' But the reason which many of them would urge, if they were asked, is the unquestionable truth of the natural inability of man to will or to do any good thing. It is a mere excuse, but it deceives their own minds, and they think that if ever they really 'repent and believe,' it will be because an irresistible supernatural force seizes them. Let it be our object in this Lesson to deal with this sadly common distortion of what is really a solemn truth. If illustrations are needed, either of these may prove useful:—The harvest depends on God's rain and sunshine, but the farmer must plough, sow, &c.; the wind impels the ship, but the sails must be hoisted to catch it.

There is a practical difficulty in teaching the passage before us, in the probable spuriousness of the fourth verse. [See Note 3.] There seems little doubt that this verse is really one of those 'traditions' which no Protestant wishes to put on a level with Scripture. At the same time it is not well to dwell upon errors of transcription with any but intelligent senior classes. The Sketch will enable those who accept the writer's conclusion, that the verse is an interpolation, to avoid the difficulty.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Have you ever watched the crowd at a hospital door? how sad to see so many sick and infirm people! How blessed is health! Do you ever thank God for it?

(1) No hospitals in ancient times—never thought of till Christ had taught men to care for others. Many sick in Jerusalem when Jesus there, but no place where could have gentle nurses and skilful doctors for nothing. Yet might see there a great throng of infirm people crowded together under arches of colonnade surrounding pool of water [see Note 2]. [Read ver. 1—5.] Why there? Sometimes strange moving of the water—then wonderful healing power in it—how eagerly they would watch for the time—how eagerly get in when saw the bubbling! [See Note 3.]

(2) Look at one lying there—a cripple for thirty-eight years!—all the time that Jesus had lived, and seven years before—how weary! At length had come to the pool—lay there waiting with the rest—had seen the moving water—tried to get in—why not

quick enough? why stopped when another in first? ver. 7. [See Note 3.] Now in despair—'hope deferred, heart sick' (Prov. xiii. 12)—his hopes withered, like his limbs.

(3) Another crowd there too (ver. 13)—friends of the sick—others come to see the waters moving—many from distant parts—why?—come to Jerusalem for one of the feasts [see Note 1]. One comes up to the poor man—a Galilean—a stranger. But the cripple no stranger to Him—He knows all about him—the long suffering—and the old sin of forty years ago (ver. 14). When did we see Jesus healing without being asked? [Lesson XXIX.] Now He will do so again.

(4) 'Do you want to be made whole?'—of course he does—why such a question? But listen again—'Rise!'—how can he? for thirty-eight years helpless—how walk now? Yet he does, instantly! What then? does he thank his Healer? but Jesus is gone—ver. 13. See the man walking away, like the paralytic at Capernaum, with his rough

mat. It is pleasant to walk after a few days' confinement at home—what must it have been to him!

(5) Suddenly he is stopped by some of the rulers—'What are you doing? don't you know it's the Sabbath?' What law was he breaking? see Exod. xxxi. 13—17; Neh. xiii. 15—19; Jer. xvii. 21, 22. But how could he question what his Healer had told him?—surely one with such a power must have the right to command. Why, they think, *that* is worse, deliberately to tell a man to break the Sabbath—'Who is it?' See, they care not to ask *who worked such a cure—only, who broke the Sabbath.*

(6) The man is in the Temple—what would he be there for? See Ps. xxvii. 6, ciii. 2, 3, cxvi. 12—14; Luke xvii. 15; Acts iii. 8. But is it enough to thank God? see the solemn reminder Jesus comes and gives him—a 'worse thing!'—'worse than thirty-eight years' pain and helplessness! Let him 'shew forth God's praise not only with his lips, but in his life'!

What this miracle brought on Jesus we shall see next Sunday. Now look at it to find the key to a difficulty that often puzzles boys and girls—*how they can do what seems an impossibility.* Ask three questions:—

I. THE COMMAND—*What was it that Jesus told the man to do?*

To 'rise and walk.' So He tells us to do. He sees us just living on from day to day as if no God, no judgment to come, no danger from sin and Satan, no Saviour to deliver us—like those asleep or dead—and what does He say?—Eph. v. 14—'Awake! arise!' And then to 'walk'—how? 'In newness of life' (Rom. vi. 4); 'as He walked' (1 John ii. 6; see also i. 6, 7, ii. 10, 11; 2nd John 4; 3rd John, 4); so as 'to please God' (1 Thess. iv. 1). And to 'run' too, like a racer (1 Cor. ix. 24; Heb. xii. 1).

II. THE DIFFICULTY OF OBEYING THE COMMAND—*Why was it difficult to 'rise and walk'?*

Because the man was a cripple, 'im-

potent,' helpless. That is just what we are. Not in our bodies—run well enough. Not in our minds—learn quick enough. But in our souls. You know it is so—often feel it—feel it would really be a happy thing to be 'religious,' but somehow *can't*. This habit, that companion, must then be given up—*can't* do it. This and that duty must then be done—*can't*. Why?—'without strength' (Rom. v. 6). And why this?—without Christ, and so—look at John xv. 5. Just as hard, as impossible, to change our lives as for a negro to change his colour (Jer. xiii. 23). Even when *have* 'risen up,' when a true Christian, not easy to 'walk'; see how St. Paul found it, Rom. vii. 15—23.

III. THE COMMAND OBEYED—*How was the man able to 'rise and walk'?*

Because Jesus gave him power?—yes—but *how* gave it him? Simply told him to get up. Suppose the man had said, 'But I can't'—then not healed. *He tried*, and found he was able. What made him try? Did Jesus first give him a *feeling that he could?*—not at all—just gave the command. But he looked into Christ's face, and felt sure He would not mock him by bidding him do what was impossible—so obeyed; and *when* he obeyed, he got the strength.

Many boys and girls who would like to 'rise and walk'—who know this the way to be happy, but who feel they *can't*—think they are not to blame—not their fault that they are still 'impotent.' But it is your fault. Christ says, 'Arise!' He commands—'Be converted' (Acts iii. 19)—does He mock us? If wait for some overwhelming feeling, may wait for ever. Only obey Him honestly, and, though quite true you 'can't,' will find you *can*. (See 3rd text for rep.) The Holy Spirit is indispensable, but is given to those who ask (Luke xi. 13). But must be honest—did the impotent man try to rise, *secretly intending not to succeed?*

Say, with the Prodigal, 'I will arise!'

NOTES.

1. What was the 'feast of the Jews' named in ver. 1? Few difficulties of the Gospel history have been so much debated as this. Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, Dedication, Purim—each has had its advocates. Modern opinion is pretty equally divided between the Passover and Purim. The question would be devoid of interest, were it not that it also involves the question of the length of our Lord's public ministry. That ministry lasted from the Passover of John ii. to the Passover of the Crucifixion. The only other Passover mentioned in the Gospels is that of John vi 4; and if this was the only other one, then the ministry lasted two years. But if the 'feast' of John v. 1 was also a Passover, then the ministry lasted three years. A few writers make its duration four, five, and six years, considering that the Passovers are not all named. There is no reason why we should expect them all to be

named; but the weight of evidence in other respects is in favour of the *three years*, and if this be the correct conclusion, the 'feast' before us is most likely to have been a Passover. The arguments, critical and chronological, are much too voluminous to be even noticed here.

The question, where to place this chapter with reference to the 'Galilee ministry,' is quite an independent one. On this see *Additional Note V.*, page 59, and Note 8 of next Lesson.

2. *Bethesda* means 'house of mercy,' just as *Bethsaida* is the 'house of fish,' *Bethlehem* the 'house of bread,' *Bethany* the 'house of dates,' 'Five *porches*'—rather *arcades*. 'Market' is not expressed in the original: probably the *sheep-gate* is intended (see Neh. iii. 1, xii. 39).

The position of the pool is uncertain. The large reservoir north of the Temple area, which

is traditionally called Bethesda, is almost certainly not the true site. Robinson, Porter, and others, identify the Pool of Siloam, on the slope of Ophel, south of the Temple, with Bethesda. Traces have been observed there of the five porches. The water which supplies it flows underground from the 'Fountain of the Virgin,' higher up the hill-side, and this is connected with a spring under the Temple, the flow of which is *intermittent*. On March 14th, 1815, there was an unusual gush of water, lasting twenty minutes, and causing the pool at the Virgin's Fountain to rise 6½ inches. For this and other curious particulars, see Hengstenberg on St. John (Clark's edn.), i. 257.

3. Great difficulty attaches to ver. 4. Of the three earliest MSS., it is not found in the Sinaitic and the Vatican, and the wording is different in the Alexandrine. Several other early copies are also without it. On this ground many of the best critics reject it as an interpolation. On the other hand, those who reject it are charged with sceptical doubts respecting the strange miracle it describes. No true believer in the Bible would hesitate to accept the account of the miracle if

the inspired Apostle really wrote it; but the simple and only question is, Did he write it? And the evidence is very strong that he did not.

How then are the impotent man's words in ver. 9, and the fact of the gathering of sick people at the pool, to be explained?

Probably the spring that supplied the pool was an intermittent one (see preceding Note), and at the times of flow the water possessed medicinal properties, like those of a mineral spring. How the idea arose, both of the peculiar *extent* (healing *any* infirmity) and of the peculiar *limitation* (healing only one at a time) of its virtue, it is hard to conjecture. That such was the popular belief is clear, whatever the cause was; and to attribute such a supposed virtue to angelic power was in accordance with all Jewish ideas (see, e.g., the Book of Tobit). Some transcriber of St. John's Gospel might then (following a not uncommon custom) attach a marginal note to his MS., explaining what the popular belief, alluded to by the Evangelist, actually was. Later transcribers would suppose the marginal note to be a verse accidentally omitted, and insert it in the text; and so it would come down to us.

Lesson XXXIV.—At Jerusalem—Persecution.

'All men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.'

Read—Parts of John v.; Learn—Luke xx. 13, 14; Heb. xii. 25.

(*Hymns*, 43, 83, 85, 86, 94, 102, 167, 212, 311, 320.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The subject of this Lesson is, probably, the most difficult that has yet come before us. None of our Lord's recorded discourses are more profound, or more worthy of the deepest study. It is obvious that a Sunday-school Lesson can but skim the surface and light upon one or two salient points. Teachers are strongly recommended not to add to the undoubted arduousness of their task, by having, in this case, the passage read round in class, even if they prefer that practice as a general rule. Nor must they expect to find, in the notes below, explanations of all the difficulties they will meet with in a study of the chapter, verse by verse. The Sketch suggests the method upon which the Lesson may (it is believed) be effectively given, and the Notes are designed solely to assist the teacher in his use of that method.

The two divisions of the Sketch are not strictly accurate. For example, the latter portion of the first might, perhaps, as suitably come into the second. But they will serve to give a rough plan of the course the Lesson is to take. The application at the end is but brief, but it is similar to the one in Lesson XXII., and the teacher can refer to that. But the chief teachings of the passage come in the body of the Lesson, viz., the Divinity of Christ (a point of vast importance, which can be effectively taught in the way sketched out below), and the doctrines of resurrection and judgment. Incidental points of application, such as the 'burning and shining light,' 'Search the Scriptures,' &c., cannot be pressed in this Lesson, except by omitting its more prominent features. The question raised by the Jews respecting Sabbath observance is treated fully in Lesson XXXVII.

The 'notes' on this chapter, in Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on St. John*, are very full and able. Alford is clear and satisfying, as usual, on argumentative passages.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

A great commotion among the chief men of Jerusalem. A year has passed since the Stranger from Nazareth drove the traders out of the Temple. They heard of Him afterwards baptizing, like John—got un-

easy at that (John iv. 1); then lost sight of Him for a while; then strange reports from Galilee, of wonderful cures such as John never did, of great crowds following the new prophet. But now He has turned up

again at Jerusalem—has dared to break the Sabbath publicly, and to order another to break it—and that, too, when the city crowded at feast-time [*refer to last Lesson*]. What to be done? Dark thoughts in their minds—they must get rid of Him somehow—*by death, even.*

But greater offence to come. See what Jesus says when accused of Sabbath-breaking. 'God works on the Sabbath'—how? preserving, sustaining, &c. Are not children born—do not people die—are not sicknesses cured—on the Sabbath? Who does all this? Well, they know that—of course He does; but, they would say, how can that justify a *man* working on the Sabbath? Look again at His words—'*My Father and I.*' 'Why, that is making Himself equal with God! blasphemy! worse than Sabbath-breaking—die He must.' [*See Notes 1, 2.*]

Now see Jesus face to face with the rulers [*see Note 3*]. Think—On one side many of their greatest men—members of the 'Sanhedrim' (like our Parliament)—learned Rabbis, as Gamaliel, Nicodemus, &c.—rich men, as Joseph of Arimathea (comp. Matt. xxvii. 57 with Luke xxiii. 50, 51)—chief priests—crafty scribes, and proud Pharisees. On the other side *one man*, humble, plain, who never learned from the great Rabbis (John vii. 15), a carpenter from a despised country village!

What they said to Him not preserved; but see what He said to them—

I. ABOUT HIMSELF AND THE FATHER.

They blamed Jesus for calling God His Father, for making Himself equal with God—does He confess the error? does He say He did not mean that? Ver. 19—says it again. Ver. 23—says that He, the poor despised Nazarene, ought to be honoured just as God is. Why? two reasons [*see Note 5*]:—

1. *What He does, God does.*

They blamed Him for doing the miracle on the Sabbath. What does He say? Ver. 19 (and 30)—He was not alone in it—God had a share in it—He could do nothing without God. Why? Because Father and Son *ONE* (comp. x. 30). [*Illust.—What your hand or foot does, done by you—no part of body can act of itself—all united together.*] So, in persecuting Him they were persecuting God. What must they have thought!—'worse blasphemy than ever.'

Now, what kind of person was Jesus? untruthful? proud? seeking great things for Himself? Was He not 'lowly in heart'? Yet here He exalts Himself as God—why? could it be for any reason except this, that *He really was and is God?* (Comp. Matt. i. 23; Phil. ii. 6; Col. i. 15; Heb. i.)

2. *What God does, He does* [*see Note 6*].

What do they think is God's greatest work? Creating?—what kind of creating?—not earth, air, water, &c., but living

beings. *To give life* is the greatest work. Well, *that* He does too—He, Jesus the Nazarene. Did they marvel because His word '*Rise*' gave strength to the cripple?—they shall marvel more than that (ver. 20). His word shall do God's great work, *give life*—life to the dead (ver. 21). His voice shall be heard by dead souls now (ver. 25), by dead bodies at the last day (ver. 28). The cripple *rose up* at His command, but there shall be a far more wondrous *rising up*:—souls, from the death of sin [*refer to last Lesson*], to a new, holy, happy life (ver. 24); bodies, from green churchyard, cold vault, deep sea, to be joined again to the souls that had left them, and be ready for the great judgment (ver. 29). (Comp. Dan. xii. 2).

And who shall judge men? Is not that God's own work too?—yes (Ps. i. 6, lviii. 11, lxxv. 7)—yet who will be the Judge? (ver. 22, 27). (Comp. Acts xvii. 31; 2 Cor. v. 10). And who is this Son of God and Son of Man? *He*, the humble Galilean they are persecuting! They, the Sanhedrim, can summon Him to their bar *now*; but *then* they shall stand at His bar, and receive His sentence! And who are they to whom alone 'no condemnation' then?—(ver. 24; comp. ii. 18, 36; Rom. viii. 1)—*those that hear Him*. Learned Rabbis and strict Pharisees must receive the Nazarene, if to be saved! Think of the mingled awe and hatred as they hear *that!*

Is that judgment a dreadful prospect to us? It is to some (Heb. x. 27). It need not be. The Judge is the *Son of Man*, One who knows us, loves us, lived and died for us—

'See the Judge, our nature wearing.'

There is a way by which we may 'not be ashamed before Him at His coming,' 1 John ii. 28.

II. ABOUT HIMSELF AND THE JEWS.

How could they know that all this was true? [*See Notes 7, 8.*] Jesus does not ask them to believe it on His own word (ver. 31); but He reminds them of the evidence—the testimony [*see Lesson XVI.*].—they have, ver. 32—39. The accused calls His witnesses for the defence. Have they forgotten the Baptist, now in Herod's prison, but a year ago so much thought of? What did he tell their deputation? (i. 19, 34). But a greater Witness than John—who? ver. 32, 37. True, they had not *seen* or *heard* that Witness, ver. 37; but they had His testimony—two kinds:—(a) *The Miracles*—did not these prove that God was with Him? ver. 36 (comp. iii. 2, ix. 33; Acts ii. 22). (b) *Their own Scriptures*—let them 'search' these, ver. 39; then would see how all the prophecies pointed to Him (comp. Luke xxiv. 27, 41).

Yet He knew they would not believe in Him, ver. 40; though He desired to save them, ver. 34. Why not? ver. 44 (comp. Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16)—to be His disciples would

be such a low thing; they, looked up to by all, to join the Nazarene!—what would be said of them! Some of them *were* inclined to join Him, yet even they afraid (see iii. 2, xii. 42, 43, xix. 38).

We know not what came of this wonderful discourse *then*. But for long after (probably eighteen months) Jesus could not go to Jerusalem; why? (vii. 1.) For the second time rejected by the rulers (first time in chap. ii.); God had sent His Son—

'the Heir'—to the vineyard, and they said, 'Come, let us kill Him!' (1st text for rep.)

ARE WE REJECTING THE SON OF GOD?

How much more we know than the Jews! To them Jesus was the Nazarene; to us He is the crucified, risen, ascended, almighty and all-loving Saviour. Were they blind and wicked? What must those be who *now* reject Him! [See application of Lesson XXIII.] What is God's message to such? (2nd text for rep.)

NOTES.

1. This is the first of the many cases in which Christ was attacked for working miracles on the Sabbath. It is remarkable that His line of defence is here quite different from what it was on other occasions. Instead of justifying His conduct *as a man*, by an appeal to the true principles of Sabbath observance, He here proclaims Himself to be greater than the law, because He is God. The separation of one day in seven, though needful for human nature both as a discipline and as a privilege, is not needful for God, whose works of providence and grace go on every day alike—('What would become of the Sabbath, unless God worked on the Sabbath?' *Bengel*); and Jesus, as the Son, claims the same exemption as the Father.

Doubtless, the ultimate object of His healing the cripple was to bring about the conflict that ensued, that He might speak plainly to the dominant priestly party (the 'Jews' of St. John's Gospel).

2. Ver. 18. In the Greek the words are 'that God was *His own* Father' (comp. Rom. viii. 32). The Jews quite understood that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God in a special and peculiar sense, involving equality; and the fact that He never corrected them is one of the strongest arguments for the true doctrine of Christ's Divinity.

3. The discourse from ver. 19 to the end of the chapter is supposed by many writers to have been delivered as a formal defence before the Court of the Sanhedrim. It seems scarcely likely that He was actually arraigned as a prisoner, but there may have been an informal meeting of the leading men to hear His answer to the charges now openly made against Him. The unusual regularity of the whole discourse, the reference to the deputation which had been sent to the Baptist ('*Ye* sent unto John'), the peculiar solemnity of the closing sentences, all point to such an occasion.

There is, probably, a certain interval of time between verses 17 and 19.

4. On the discourse generally, observe that our Lord three times in it uses His solemn asseveration, 'Verily, verily' (ver. 19, 24, 25); which each time introduces a statement of special importance.

5. Ver. 19.—'The Son can do nothing of Himself.' Comp. viii. 28, xii. 49, xiv. 16. Cannot—on account of His oneness with the Father, as explained in the Sketch. The same thing is said of the Holy Ghost in chap. xvi. 13. Contrast what is said of Satan (viii. 44). In this verse is embodied both the sub-divisions of the first bead of the Sketch: the first half states that

what the Son does is done by the Father; the second, that what the Father *does* is done by the Son. '*Likewise*'—*lit.*, 'in like manner'—the unity is perfect: the same things done, and done in the same way.

6. Ver. 21—29. The two great Divine works, quickening and judging, are briefly claimed by Jesus as His own in ver. 21, 22; and of these two verses ver. 25—29 are an expansion. That two distinct resurrections are referred to in this passage is the view of the best expositors. Of the resurrection of dead souls to spiritual life it is said, 'The hour is coming, and *now* is,' ver. 25; which latter expression is not used of the future general resurrection of the body, ver. 28. Probably the *judging* also includes the present administration of the world as well as the ultimate sentence on it (see texts cited above).

7. Ver. 32—40. There are not here, as is sometimes stated, *four witnesses*. 'Another,' in ver. 32, is the Father. Then the following verses are equivalent to 'I do not especially refer to John, though he did testify of Me; I depend not on human testimony: I have greater witness than that'—*viz.*, the Father's testimony, given in two ways, 1st., indirectly, by the miracles Jesus did (ver. 36); 2nd., directly—not by communication to their eyes and ears (ver. 37)—not (to these unbelieving Jews) by the inward witness of the Spirit (ver. 38)—but through the Scriptures of the Old Testament. And, by *searching* (the word is a strong one) them *diligently* (comp. 1 Pet. i. 11), they would find the Father's testimony. In them they considered they had life, and yet—how inconsistent!—they *would* not come to Him of whom those Scriptures testified, and who could really give them life.

Many writers read ver. 39 thus: '*Ye search the Scriptures*, for in them,' &c.; which somewhat alters our Lord's argument. The Greek may be rendered either way, and authorities are about equally divided on the point. After careful consideration, Alford's reasons for retaining the imperative have been accepted as conclusive.

8. Christ's words concerning the Baptist—'He was'—for a season—imply that the latter's ministry had closed, and apparently that some time had since elapsed: a strong evidence that this chapter should not be placed before the Galilean ministry, which began as soon as Jesus heard of John's imprisonment (Matt. iv. 12). 'A burning and a shining light'—rather, '*the lamp burning and shining*'. John was not the *Light*, as Christ was; not *φῶς* (*phōs*) but *λύχνος* (*luchnos*); yet he was '*the lamp*,' pre-eminent among prophets.

Lesson XXXV.—The Message from John the Baptist.

' Art Thou He that should come ?'

Read—Matt. xi. (comp. Luke vii. 17—35); *Learn*—Luke vii. 22, 23. (*Hymns*, 24, 87, 90, 101, 145, 167, 232, 238, 321, 370.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson will probably be found one of unusual difficulty, because the passage is comparatively unfamiliar one. Unfamiliar, that is, as a whole: several of the verses are well-known enough, but they are usually quoted without reference to their context. Yet it is a passage of great importance in the history, as shewing the light in which both Christ and His Forerunner were regarded by the people—the result, so far, of the gracious words and works which have come before us in preceding Lessons. The last Lesson and this one come well together, and it will be helpful in teaching to refer to the former.

The unusual length of the Sketch arises from the necessity of giving the argument almost in full, for the sake of clearness. The quantity of matter is not greater than usual, but it is less compressed. The teacher should be careful, in preparation, to read both the Sketch and the Notes *with the chapter open before him*; otherwise he will fail to catch the significance of many sentences and even single words.

It should be noticed that some technical terms are now freely used in these Lessons without explanation, having been fully explained before. Thus, the teacher can turn to Lesson XIV. for illustrations of the word “testimony”; and to Lessons XI., XVIII., XXV., and XXVIII., for elucidation of the term “kingdom of heaven.”

The various points of application are, in this Sketch, not grouped together at the end, as usual, because verses 16 to 30, which occupy the second and third divisions, are really Christ's own application to His hearers of what has gone before, and in this case it will be more impressive to take up each of His points as they come, and apply them directly to the scholars.

With so full a subject, it may be well to indicate what portions of the Sketch may be omitted in teaching junior classes, or wherever time runs short. The following, though of great intrinsic importance, are perhaps less essential to the general purpose of the Lesson than the others:—In the introductory paragraphs: the clauses indicating the feelings of John's disciples. In division I.: the second paragraph of section 1; (a) and (b) in section 2; the second paragraph of section 3. In division II.: the allusions to Tyre, &c., in section 2. In division III.: section 1. In other words, the important verses of the chapter are 2—5, 9, 10, 16—19, 20, 28. But if the teacher, by especially careful preparation, can succeed in making the Lesson *his own*, he will need to omit very little.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Down by the Dead Sea, in the old country of Moab, a gloomy castle—thick walls, strong doors, &c.—belonging to King Herod. In a dungeon there, a prisoner whom we know—John the Baptist (Luke iii. 19, 20) [see Note 1]. What has become of all the people who flocked to Him to be baptized? Some gone back to their old ways; some now running after the greater prophet at Capernaum. A few followers still attached to him—come and visit him in prison. Many things to tell him: particularly about Jesus—what crowds come to Him (comp. John iii. 26)—what wondrous miracles done (see Luke vii. 16—18); and yet very strange!—He *can't* be Messiah after all—makes no effort to incite nation against Romans—just goes about quietly—is not strict or stern, either—and, if He can do such mighty works, why not get

John out of prison? No wonder the rulers at the capital have rejected Him' [*last Lesson*].

John is perplexed too—why? Does He forget that Voice at the Jordan—'My beloved Son'? No—cannot doubt it—Jesus is the Son of God. Is he offended at being left to pine away in prison? No—would gladly suffer much more if God willed it. And yet—'it is strange—is He not to purge His floor and burn up the chaff (Matt. iii. 12)—to sweep away oppression of kings, hypocrisy of Pharisees, all sin? Why this delay? is He only to be the suffering Lamb of God—another to come as the conquering King and Judge?' [See Note 2]. Will send to Jesus and inquire.

Jesus back in Galilee again—crowds about Him as before—but not believers—glad to get their sick healed, but as to His

being Messiah, think much as John's disciples [*above*]. What would they think of John's message?—'even *he* doubts.' Jesus knows their hearts—must answer them as well as John. His reply, marvellous in wisdom, we have in this chapter. See in it three things:—

I. THE PROOFS THAT JESUS WAS MESSIAH.

1. *His Works and Words*, ver. 4—6.

Before answering the messengers, what does Jesus do? Luke vii. 21—what a blessed sight to see!—eyes opened, tongues loosed, &c. Let them tell John what they have *seen*; and what *heard* too—other miracles—and what else? *the poor preached to*—anything wonderful in that?—very unlike the Scribes (Matt. xxiii. 4, 14)—and just what Messiah should do (Isa. xxxv. 3—6; lxi. 1).

But all this they knew before—had told John already [*see above*].—why then only this message to him? He is to be content, to trust, not judge Jesus by his own ideas, not to be impatient, not to 'fret because of evil-doers' (Ps. xxxvii. 1, 7, &c.); all that the Messiah was to do shall be done in proper time.

2. *The Testimony of John*, ver. 7—15.

The messengers are gone. Now Jesus has a word for the people. A year ago, they were hastening from all parts down to the Jordan [*refer to Lesson XI.*]. What for?—Jesus now asks. [*See Note 4.*]

(a) Merely to stare at [*the lit. transl. of 'see' in ver. 7*] one of the waving reeds by the river? The idlest trifler must have gone for more than that. And the stern, unyielding man they did see (see Matt. iii. 7)—how unlike a reed—would he be in prison now if easily 'shaken'?

(b) To see an easy, indulgent man, who would introduce them to a life of pleasure? But would go for that to Herod's court at Tiberias—if any one went into the desert for it, how disappointed! for what was John's life? Matt. iii. 4.

(c) To see a prophet? Well, then should believe what he said—what was that? Matt. iii. 11—his work only to announce One yet to come—and to Whom had he pointed? [*See Lesson XIV.*]

3. *The Fulfilment of Prophecy*. What had they often heard out of the book of their last prophet? (comp. ver. 10, 14, with Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5). *John* was that 'messenger,' the expected 'Elias' [*see Note 6*].—therefore greater than all the prophets. But if John the 'messenger,' who the 'Lord' he came to announce? Surely He means Himself, Jesus of Nazareth, then speaking to them! (Jesus does not *say* so, but see ver. 15—like 'you see what I mean'). And if John 'more than a prophet,' what must *He* be? Even the least (poorest and humblest) in His 'kingdom' greater than the greatest prophet (ver. 11; comp. Matt. xiii. 17)?

Then to be in the 'kingdom' something worth an effort—and only by great effort

could be in it (ver. 12: comp. Luke xiii. 24)—why? because to be in it must be a follower of *Him*, the despised Nazarene; and to be *that* needed a great *wrench* of feelings—and no sitting still—must be 'up and doing.' [*See Note 7.*]

II. THE FOLLY AND GUILT OF THOSE WHO REJECTED HIM.

1. *Folly*, ver. 16—19. Children's games then as now—imitating real things [*illustrate*]; used to play at having weddings and funerals. Sometimes very changeable—would start first one game, then another—and be angry because others not inclined, or too busy, to join; is that right? Now see who Jesus says was like such children? [*See Note 8.*] The Jews offended, first with John, because not light and merry as they wanted to be—did not like his stern rules and strict life; then with Jesus, because He kept not all their fasts, &c.—did not like His going to publicans' feasts [*see Lesson XXXI.*]. But how foolish, how *childish*, to object just because their whims not humoured! [*Illustr.—Would a man in prison refuse a pardon brought to him because the messenger not dressed as he would like, or because his face too grave or too gay?*]

[*Apply.*] How do we receive God's messages? Some Sunday-scholars come to school from curiosity, or to play, or for what they can get—don't care for Gospel; or won't take it *as it is*—want to have stories told them. Or want a religion of their own, not too strict; or else selfish and not kind to others. All these like the Jews. Are you so?

2. *Guilt*, ver. 20—24. It was not *only* silly; it was ungrateful and wicked. They had had wondrous blessings; that very day, what great things He had done for them [*see above*].—and how many before! They thought of Tyre and Sidon, of old Sodom, with horror—so wicked! but these cities never had such blessings—if they had, what then? see ver. 21, 23. Yet had *they* repented? But a day coming, when all would see the men of Tyre and Sodom not so bad as they.

[*Apply.*] Our blessings far greater than those of the Jews. How guilty those who care not for Christ now!

III. THE HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO RECEIVED HIM.

For some did receive Him. Who?

1. '*Babes*,' ver. 25. Not *childish*, but *child-like*—those not proud of their own wisdom—not (like the others in ver. 16, 19) offended because Jesus not exactly what they expected—but ready to be led and taught. Peter, Andrew, &c., like that. Yet even they would not have come to Jesus of themselves; how was it, then? ver. 25 (comp. John vi. 44).

[*Apply.*] May each of us 'receive the kingdom of God as a little child' (Mark x. 15)! Pray for the Spirit, that we may be children 'taught of God' (Isa. liv. 13).

2. *The weary and heavy-laden*, ver. 28—30. Who are they? Those who want to get rid of the burden of sin, *but can't*—to be better and holier, *but can't*—to be really happy, *but can't*. See one next Sunday.

[*Apply.*] Any of us like this? What

does Jesus promise? When we are very tired, how good to lie down and rest! He will give '*rest to our souls.*'

John asked, 'Art Thou He that should come?' Here is the answer—'*Yes; there is no other; therefore—COME UNTO ME!*'

NOTES.

1. The place of John's imprisonment is mentioned by Josephus (*Antiq.* xviii. 7). It was a castle called Machærus, on the east side of the Dead Sea.

2. Why did John send the message to Jesus? This is a question which always has divided expositors, and which probably always will. On the one hand, the early Fathers generally, thinking it impossible that the faith of such a man could have wavered, held that John only sent his disciples for their own benefit—a view advocated also in our day by Wordsworth, Ellicott, Stier, Ryle, &c. On the other hand, all the leading German Divines (except Stier), and many English ones (including Alford, Hanna, Birks, Kitto, Abp. Thomson, Brown and Fausset, &c.), consider that John asked for his own satisfaction; some thinking that his faith in the person of Jesus actually faltered; others, that he was dissatisfied with the way in which Jesus was manifesting Himself; others, that he was only impatient, and wished to draw from Jesus an immediate public declaration about Himself. As the point is an important one, the following considerations are submitted:—

(a) An ordinary reader, taking the natural sense of the passage, would certainly conclude that John asked for himself.

(b) On the other hand, it seems incredible that one who had received such a revelation concerning Jesus, and had borne such a testimony to Him, could ever have had a moment's doubt that He was Messiah. And if such a doubt did arise, why did John send to Jesus Himself? Again, Our Lord's allusion to the 'reed shaken by the wind' seems partly intended to prevent the people fancying that John's faith had wavered.

(c) Yet John might well have been perplexed, because Jesus was not doing what he had himself predicted He would do. Where was the manifest 'baptizing with the Holy Ghost'? where was the 'purging of the floor,' the 'burning up of the chaff'? Herod's court as vicious as ever, the Pharisaic rulers as hypocritical as ever, and the Messiah spending His time healing the sick and teaching the poor in Galilean villages—what could it mean? John did not for an instant doubt *Who* Jesus was; but could it be that *He* was only to be the meek sufferer, the 'Lamb,' and the sterner Messianic work to be done by 'another'? This is well put by Lange, Birks, and Kitto, and seems to combine all the requirements of a true interpretation.

A strong confirmation of this latter view, however, does not seem to have been observed. In point of fact, *John was to a great extent right*. In a sense, Jesus, the human mortal Jesus of Nazareth, was *not* to do these things. The Baptism of the Spirit should not fully take place till after the Ascension; the gathering out of the 'wheat' would be done *then* by the Spirit, through the Apostles; the judgments on the Jewish nation were not to come from a visible

but from an invisible King, from Jesus glorified; and the great final judgment should not be till He came the second time in glory. That John did not know the *whole* of the great Divine plan is not to be wondered at.

3. '*He that should come*'—*lit.*, 'the coming-One.' A common appellation of Messiah, derived from Ps. xl. 7, 8, cxviii. 26; Mal. iii. 1.

4. Our Lord's questions after the departure of the messengers, though incidentally vindicating John from a possible misapprehension, were evidently designed to remind the people of the means they had of themselves answering John's question. The common explanation of the passage, as only a defence of John, ignores the *form* of the questions. It is not, 'When ye went out, what did ye see?'—but, 'What went ye out to see?' Probably the three questions may refer to three classes of people—the merely inquisitive, the worldly and self-seeking, the sincere inquirers; and the argument is—'Whatever your object in going, you found something very different: not a passing spectacle, not a source of earthly profit and pleasure, not even a mere stirring preacher; no, but the long promised 'messenger,' the expected 'Elias'—and before *whose* face has he gone? *whose* way did he prepare? He that hath ears to hear let him hear.'

5. Two verses in Luke's account (29, 30) give the effect of Christ's appeal upon His hearers, if (as is probable) they are not a part of the discourse, but the Evangelist's comment

6. Here Jesus says that John was 'Elias.' John himself said he was not Elias (John i. 21). But he came 'in the spirit and power of Elias' (Luke i. 17).

7. '*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,*' &c. Many and various are the explanations of these words. Regarding them in the light of the context, the following (suggested by Mr. G. Warrington) seems a fair paraphrase:—The law and the prophets—the preparatory dispensation—were until John; men just went on quietly in the old paths, waiting for what was to come. Since John came, all has changed: the 'kingdom' has come, and it is not given to the Jews in virtue of their descent, as they expected, but every one must enter by strong personal effort, involving a tearing of himself away from much that he is accustomed to. A similar expression might have been used in the early history of Israel: *The covenants and promises were until Moses; from his days the Promised Land suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* So also we might speak of the contrast between the preparation of school-time and the battle of life.

In fact, the words are an implied rebuke to the capricious, purposeless people spoken of both before (ver. 7—9) and after (ver. 16—19).

8. '*Like unto children sitting in the markets,*' &c. Whom does our Lord mean by the 'children'? The common exposition implies that they were

Himself and John: *John*, the austere preacher, 'mourned to' the Jews; *He*, condescending to their 'eating and drinking,' 'piped' to them: yet nothing would please them. But this is plainly wrong. Christ distinctly likens '*this generation*' to 'children sitting,' &c. And observe the order in which He names the 'piping' and 'mourning' in ver. 17, and John and Himself in ver. 18, 19. Wordsworth thus paraphrases the

passage:—'Ye are like a troop of wayward children, who go on with their own game, at one time gay, at another grave, and expect that every one should conform to them. You were angry with John, because He would not dance to your piping; and with Me because I will not weep to your dirge. John censured your licentiousness; I rebuke your hypocrisy: you vilify both.' So Trench, Alford, Lange.

Lesson XXXVI.—The Pharisee and the Penitent Woman.

'Which of them will love Him most?'

Read—Luke vii. 36—50; Learn—1 John i. 7—9; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

(Hymns, 63, 90, 95, 115, 146, 322, 343, 347.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The teacher has two things to bear in mind in giving this lesson to his class:—(1) That the Oriental customs referred to must be explained with particular clearness, if the narrative is to be understood; (2) That love to Christ must be carefully represented as the fruit, not the root—the effect, not the cause—of repentance and forgiveness.

It is unnecessary to add more to what is suggested and explained with sufficient fulness below

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Last Sunday we saw how some rejected Christ, and some came to Him. To-day look at an example of each class—two portraits; and see *what it was* that made the difference between the two.

I. TWO WAYS OF TREATING CHRIST.

1. *The Pharisee's Way.*

What did the Pharisees of Capernaum, &c., think of Jesus? Did not like Him—objected to His ways, e.g., eating with publicans [see Lesson XXXV.]—would not receive Him as Messiah [see *last Lesson*]; but not yet His open enemies—shall see how they became so next Sunday.

One of them (his name? ver. 40) thinks he would like to do Jesus a kindness—and, perhaps, shew off his own hospitality at same time; asks Him to dinner. See the guests coming in—Simon receiving them courteously—embracing them: servants ready to wash the dust from their feet, and anoint them with oil to soften the parched skin. Now see the tables spread—the guests (according to custom) on couches or 'ottomans' as high as the tables, reclining on their left arms, with their feet (unshod) outwards. And who are all these strangers in the room, looking on? [See Note 3.]

But see—one guest not looking like the rest—has neither been washed nor anointed—when He came in Simon gave Him no kiss: who is that? ver. 44—46. Why this? No need, thought Simon, to shew Him any particular attention. Very willing to honour Him with an invitation, as so well-known and popular; more could not be expected—could not treat Nazarene carpenter like rich friends—anything good enough for Him.

2. *The Woman's Way.*

One of the strangers in the room weeping—a wicked woman—known in the city as openly bad. Why weeping? For her sins. Knew all along how bad she was; but now *feels it*, can think of nothing else. See what others have felt—Ps. xxxviii. 3, 4, xl. 12; Ezra ix. 6; Luke xviii. 13. Why has she come here? She knows Jesus to be the friend of sinners; very likely, when He said those words, 'Come unto Me,' &c. [see *last Lesson and Note 1*], she had heard them—they went to her heart—she was 'heavy-laden'—she longed for 'rest'—and she *believed* Him who spoke—knew not much about Him—but felt sure God had sent Him to win sinners from their bad ways. She will sin no more now—will try and be like that pure and holy Saviour. She must do something for Him; but what? she so unworthy—what can she do?

She has a chance now; has seen how un courteously Jesus treated—can make up for it. See her, trembling and weeping, coming behind Him; what does she do? ver. 37, 38. Simon would not spare common oil for His head; she devotes to His feet her precious ointment. Simon did not employ his slaves to attend on Jesus; she is content to be the slave herself [see Note 3].

What a difference in these two ways of treating Jesus! Now ask,—

II. WHY HE WAS TREATED SO DIFFERENTLY.

Silence at table—all surprised at Jesus allowing this. See what Simon thinks, ver. 39 (comp. Isa. lxxv. 5). Were his feel-

ings unnatural? He was looked up to as a religious man. What 'good boy' likes to be seen in company with bad boys? But it is one thing to avoid sin—another to despise sinners, forgetting *what we are ourselves*. See Luke vi. 37; 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Yet Jesus has a rebuke to utter, but not to the woman. It is he, the scrupulous Pharisee who would shrink from such a sinner, that is to be rebuked. Jesus will shew him just what we are asking about—the real difference between him and the woman. Will He do it severely, as one offended by the incivility? See how gently, ver. 40—47.

Now, what was the difference?

(a) See ver. 47—'Loveth much'—'loveth little.' The woman loved Jesus 'much,' thought nothing too good for Him, no trouble too great for Him. Simon loved Him 'little,' scarcely at all; so neglected His comfort.

(b) But much more than this in the parable. Why was one debtor more grateful to the creditor than the other? Simon could see that, ver. 43 ('forgave most'). Was the woman a great sinner?—well, *she felt it*, and therefore 'loved much' Him who had said to sinners, 'Come unto Me.' Was Simon so good?—so he thought—then of course he would not care so much for a Saviour. Yet Jesus, by the parable, reminds him that *he is a debtor too*, though he may think but a small one; that his good deeds of no avail before God ('nothing to pay'); but that he too may get pardon ('forgave them both'). [See Note 4.]

(c) But more yet. Simon might say, 'Suppose the woman is penitent, why go to this Nazarene? and does he mean that He is the creditor—that my sins are debts to Him—He to forgive them?' What other difference, then, between him and her? She believed Jesus had the right to forgive, and would forgive—did Simon believe that? She had faith; and her faith 'saved her,' ver. 50. [See Note 5.]

Now we see the difference:—

The woman—(c) had faith in Jesus as the Saviour; (b) felt her sins, and so loved Him that forgave them; (a) loving Him, shewed her love in her treatment of Him.

The Pharisee—(c) had no faith in Jesus; (b) had no feeling of his sin—so no special reason for loving Jesus; (a) shewed his lack of love in his treatment of Jesus.

WHICH OF THESE TWO ARE WE LIKE?

1. Do we neglect Christ? Perhaps not openly bad—regular at church and school, &c.—outward respect for His name, His day, His book, &c.; yet no trying to please Him—no sacrifice for His sake—care for self most. This like the Pharisee. But what the cause? [To illustrate 'cause and effect':—*Roots and fruits: 'do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' (Matt. vii. 16). Pleasant and unpleasant sounds and perfumes: can tell whence they come.*] This the cause—no sense of sin—so no care for a Saviour. But if so, deceived (1st text for rep.)—the sin is there—the debt is due—'nothing to pay'—if not freely forgiven now, 'the uttermost farthing' demanded at the 'day of reckoning.'

2. But do we feel sin—feel our debt—feel how poor our goodness is—'nothing to pay'?—

'Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow; &c.

Then, like the woman, shall come to Christ—confess our sins—then what? (1st text for rep.). And we know more of Him than she did: not only know His kindness, hear His 'Come unto Me'—know, also, that He died for those very sins, has paid the debt Himself. Can you think of this and not love Him? See what produced St. Paul's love (2nd text for rep.). And if love Him, ready to be His slave, give up all bad things for His sake, all good things to His service.

'Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.'

NOTES.

1. This incident is placed by St. Luke (who alone relates it) immediately after the discourse arising out of the Baptist's message, which, as given in the parallel passage in Matt. xi., concludes with the words, 'Come unto Me,' &c., (see preceding Lesson). Hence the probability that the woman was brought to repentance by that very invitation which has been the salvation and comfort of so many souls in every age. Observe, too, that the narrative affords an example of both the grounds of complaint against Jesus, alluded to in that discourse: attending feasts ('a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber'), and showing Himself the 'friend of publicans and sinners.'

2. The act of the penitent woman must be carefully distinguished from that of Mary of Bethany recorded in Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., John xii. Many of the older writers, and some modern critics of the 'destructive' school, confound them; but the only point of resemblance in the two narratives is the name of the host; and

Simon was the commonest of Jewish names, there being eleven persons bearing it mentioned in the N.T. The idea that the woman was Mary Magdalene (which is the origin of the modern term 'Magdalen') is also purely traditional, and rests on no evidence whatever. The latter is introduced in the next chapter (viii. 2) as a new character, and is described in altogether different terms.

3. It is the custom in the east, where there has never been such a separation of classes as with us, for the houses to be open even at meal-time, and for strangers to enter and converse with those present, though not joining them at table; and this would be particularly the case at a large entertainment. See an extract in *Trench on the Parables*, p. 294.

On the customs at dinner, see Kitto, *Daily Bible Illustrations (Life of our Lord)*, p. 301. The Greek word rendered 'sat down to meat,' in ver. 36, is literally 'reclined.'

On the civilities neglected by Simon, see Gen. xviii. 4, xix. 2, xxiv. 32; Ruth iii. 3; 1 Sam. xxv. 41; Ps. xxiii. 5, cxli. 5; Eccl. ix. 8; Dan. x. 3; Amos vi. 6; Matt. vi. 17. With the feet only shod with sandals, washing is both a necessity and a luxury. Oil and ointment are in common use in all hot countries, to prevent the skin from cracking. It was a Jewish custom to show affection and esteem for a Rabbi by embracing his feet (comp. Matt. xxviii. 9).

The woman probably entered the house to hear Christ's words, and, observing His condition, hastened on to fetch her ointment; thus devoting to Him what had been purchased for her own personal adornment. Alford says that the Greek implies that she only intended to anoint and embrace his feet; the washing, &c., being the involuntary result of her excessive weeping. It was considered a humiliation for female slaves to be set to wipe their master's feet with their hair.

'*Alabaster box*,'—one word in the original—an *alabastron*, a vessel (probably a bottle) made of alabaster: just as we say 'a glass,' meaning a cup or vessel made of glass. The name was derived from a place called Alabaster, in Egypt, the marble from whence was believed to have special qualities as a preserver of unguents.

4. There are apparent difficulties in the parable of the two debtors, which are variously explained. But the drapery, scenery, and other adjuncts of our Lord's parabolic teaching must never be pressed too far, as though every point had a spiritual meaning. Certainly He did not intend to imply that Simon's 'debt' was as 'fifty pence' in comparison with the woman's 'five hundred'; nor that Simon had actually been forgiven at all, or loved at all. Yet these points had their purpose. They gave Simon very impressive teaching, the significance of which he could not fail to perceive; see Sketch. Neither must it be supposed that, because in the parable the one who is forgiven most loves most, the greatest sinner will become the greatest saint: it is not so much the actual amount of sin that is spoken of, as the degree in which it is realised; a *debt* is a thing *known and felt*.

5. Verse 47 does not mean that the woman was forgiven *because* she loved much. The exact reverse was the fact: she loved because she was forgiven. Yet the word 'for' is quite correct, and the sentence should be read thus: 'You can see that her sins are forgiven, for see how much she loves.' As we might say, 'The child is better, *for* he is laughing.'

Lesson XXXVII.—Sabbath Controversies.

'*The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.*'

Read—Mark ii. 23—28; iii. 1—6; (comp. Matt. xii. 1—14; Luke vi. 1—11); Learn—Matt. xv. 8, 9; Isa. lviii. 13. (*Hymns* 268—272.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Every conscientious teacher will feel that special wisdom and tact are required to teach this lesson rightly. All will desire that its practical result may be to promote the observance by the scholars of the Lord's Day; and yet many will be perplexed by the feeling that the apparent tendency of the passage is the other way. It will not do simply to say that the dangers of the present day in England are exactly opposite in character to those of Christ's day in Palestine, and that His teaching upon the subject does not apply to us because, were He here now, He would speak quite differently. It is doubtful whether this would be true, and certainly it would not carry conviction to a sharp boy's mind. But let it be put in this way—that Christ's words are directed against a mistaken notion which lies at the root of *both* evils—of both Pharisaic intolerance and modern laxity; and then we bring, not our ideas, but the all-powerful teaching of the Lord Himself, to bear upon the conscience. And what is this mistaken notion? Simply that the 'one day in seven' is (so to speak) an exacted tribute, a badge of servitude, rather than a gracious gift—a notion leading naturally to ostentatious punctiliousness in some and to rebellious discontent in others. The great object, therefore, of the accompanying Sketch is to exhibit the Sabbath as a boon designed for the happiness of men, and only guarded by law in the interest of men themselves, and to show that the first requisite of true Sabbath observance is the childlike and happy spirit of the true Christian. In this way the children may be *drawn* to care for the day of rest, when an attempt to *drive* them would fail.

It should be carefully borne in mind, that the essence of the institution is the sacredness of *one day in seven*: whether that day be the first, or the seventh, or any other, being of no moment whatever. No doubt the first day became the weekly festival in the early Church, in commemoration of the great events of Easter and Pentecost.

On the teachings suggested by the cure of the withered hand, see Lesson XXXIII.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How pleasant Saturday night is to those who work hard all the week! [*refer to instances*—why? Looking for Sunday rest.

Who was the first to rest on the seventh day, after six days' work? Gen. ii. 1—3. And God ordained that men also should have a weekly rest-day. What for? to take them from their pleasure, and make them gloomy? or to make them happier? Not a notice to trespassers, but a royal gift.

But men spoil whatever God gives them [*Illust.—ink blackens whatever put in it*]. So God gave the Fourth Commandment to guard His gift, to prevent men from robbing each other of the sacred rest. But men disobeyed the command, and still spoiled the gift. In two ways:—1st, by making the Sabbath a day of work (see Isa. lvi. 2, 6, lviii. 13; Jer. xvii. 21—23; Neh. xiii. 15—22); and the second we shall see presently. When Christ came, one thing He did was to make men think more of God's gifts, and not spoil them. To-day see how He did this with the Sabbath [*see Note 1*].

I. HOW THE PHARISEES TREATED THE SABBATH.

Pharisees were looked up to by people as 'very religious': no wonder, for their religion just what could be 'seen of men,' all *outside*—boastful charity, long prayers in public, &c. (Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16, xxiii. 5, 14, 23, 25); but what was it they had not got? (1st text for rep.; Matt. xxiii. 27, 28). So, while they took no pains to obey some of the Commandments (*Fifth*, Mark vii. 9—13; *Tenth*, Luke xvi. 14), took great pains about *Fourth*, because in keeping it could be 'seen of men'; made hard rules about it which God had not made—very harsh with poor people who could not remember them or always obey them (Matt. xxiii. 4). So the Sabbath a burden: people afraid to do this or that, for fear of Pharisees. Was this what God intended?

But the Pharisees' Sabbath-keeping like the rest of their religion—*only outside*. See this by—[*read passage*]—

(a) *Their conduct in the cornfields*. Why did the disciples pluck the ears? Matt. xiii. 1. How came they to be hungry? Very likely the crowds so great that Jesus obliged to go on teaching many hours, and no time for meals (comp. Mark iii. 20, vi. 31). The Pharisees not hungry—Sabbath a feast-day with them (comp. Luke xiv. 1)—no doubt had had plenty. What should they have felt when they saw the poor hungry disciples eating the dry grains? glad they should get something? Gladness *was* the feeling; but why? Because now a chance of fault-finding [*see Note 4*]. Was that keeping the Sabbath with holy and kind thoughts?

(b) *Their conduct in the synagogue*. 'Watched Him' (comp. Ps. xxxvii. 32,

lvi. 5; Jer. xx. 10)—was that what they should come to the synagogue for? Why did they 'watch Him'? Out of love, or—? Was that obeying our 2nd text for rep.? And while so particular about Jesus keeping Fourth Commandment, which were they breaking themselves by their malicious looks and thoughts? 1 John iii. 15.

II. HOW CHRIST TREATED THE SABBATH.

Did He abolish it? [*Illust.—An architect who repairs and improves a house does not pull it down.*]

Did He say it was only meant for the Jews, and now He had come, to be put away? '*Made for man*' (chap. ii. 27)—for every man; a gift to all.

If a gift to all, did He say all might do as they like with it? No, because cannot be trusted to use it right; so God makes laws about it, which to be obeyed. But *One* is 'lord' of the Sabbath [*see Note 6*—not under laws—can use it as He pleases—who? (chap. ii. 28). Why can He? Not only as God; as 'the Son of Man.' Because He is *perfect man*—can be trusted. And whosoever is *most like Him* is most free to do as he likes with the Sabbath, because is sure to use it rightly.

But *how* use it rightly? See this by what Jesus said in reply to Pharisees:—

(a) How did Jesus justify the plucking and eating corn? What had David's taking the sacred bread to do with it? (ii. 25, 26). David and his men were hungry—unless fed, not strong enough to flee from Saul—so did what was against rules *because necessary*. And see Matt. xii. 5—priests were *commanded* to work on Sabbath, *because necessary* [*see Note 5*]. So (a) works of necessity to be done—Sabbath not to be a burden to ourselves.

(b) How did Jesus justify the healing? (iii. 4)—'to save life or to kill?' (What a rebuke to them! which were they going to try and do? ver. 6.) How did this justify it? nobody thought of killing the poor man. But *neglecting to do good may be doing harm*. [*Illust.—if wounded man in parable had died before Samaritan came, would not priest and Levite have been guilty?*] So (b) works of mercy and kindness to be done—Sabbath not to be an injury to others.

III. HOW WE SHOULD TREAT THE SABBATH.

God has given us seven days in the week; six for ourselves—our work, &c.; one to use for Him. Is it fair to take the one as well as the six for work or play? [*Illust.—Father gives boy seven shillings, six for himself, one to be spent as directed. What think of boy if he kept the one too?*]

How, then, use the Sabbath? The great thing is to have what the Pharisees had not—thankful and obedient hearts. Each Sunday, think, 'To-day my Saviour rose

from the grave into which He went for my sake—I must love Him; to-day the Holy Spirit came down to make our hearts holy—I must seek His aid.' Then, the Sabbath no burden. Works of necessity—will do them cheerfully, and make as little as can 'necessary,' to get more time for God's service. Works of mercy—will do them, not because *must*, but because *love* to do

them. Worship God—learn more about Him—study His word—will do all this because delight in it.

Boys and girls all want to 'go to heaven.' But what is heaven called? Heb. iv. 9—'Sabbath-keeping' [*lit. transl. of 'rest'*]. Would you care for *that*? If to enjoy eternal Sabbath, must learn to enjoy earthly Sabbaths.

NOTES.

1. Nothing is more remarkable in Jewish history than the change wrought by the Babylonian Captivity in the national habits. Before that event, the people were constantly lapsing into idolatry: afterwards, never. Before, their most sacred institutions were but partially observed: afterwards, not only was every jot and tittle of the ceremonial law most punctiliously attended to, but Rabbinical tradition was continually adding to it.

Of this the Sabbath afforded a remarkable example. The incidental notices in the Babylonian books reveal the prevailing neglect of the day under the kings; while in later times, the utmost Pharisaic ingenuity was exhausted in making its observance a burden. Thirty-nine kinds of work were separately specified as illegal. Grass was not to be trodden, as being akin to harvest work. Shoes with nails were not to be worn, as the nails would be a 'burden,' and a 'burden' must not be carried. A tailor must not have his needle about him towards sunset on the Friday, for fear the Sabbath should begin while he was yet 'carrying' it.

Christ evidently made it one special object of His ministry to free the Sabbath from these vexatious intolerances. Seven of His recorded miracles (Luke iv. 35, 39, vi. 10, xiii. 14, xiv. 1; John v. 9, ix. 14) were worked on the Sabbath. Of these, six were done spontaneously; and of His miracles of healing all except two that were done spontaneously were done on the Sabbath. This is clear evidence of design; and it is obvious that our Lord acted so on purpose to raise the question, as all these cures could have been as easily effected on other days. Moreover, the two cures at Jerusalem, which were the most important in their effect upon the minds of the people, were both accompanied by injunctions ensuring their publicity (John v. 8, ix. 7). Observe, too, that the only instance of Christ's 'anger' being mentioned is the case before us in this Lesson. Can it be doubted that the hypocritical tyranny of the Pharisees in regard to the Sabbath was especially hateful to Him?

2. It is equally certain that our Lord's treatment of the Sabbath did much to render him obnoxious to the ruling party. For this His life was first conspired against, both at Jerusalem (John v. 16), and in Galilee (Mark iii. 6). It is probable that the change in the feelings of the Galilean priests and Pharisees towards Him, which the latter passage marks, was due to the influence of 'the scribes that came down from Jerusalem,' who are mentioned a few verses later (Mark iii. 22), and who were very likely sent down from the capital, after the events of John v., to stir up the Galileans against Him. See *Addit. Note V.*, and Lesson XXX., Note 2. It is strange to find the Herodians (the adherents and courtiers of Herod Antipas) joining in this persecution, as they, living in the lax atmosphere of

a vicious court, could have little sympathy with the scrupulous Pharisees; and the latter, hating all foreign and semi-foreign rule, certainly had no sympathy with them. But the Pharisees probably applied to them for help because Galilee was part of Herod's domain, and they might require his interference.

3. St. Luke states (the two oldest MSS., however, omit the word) that the walk through the corn-fields took place on the 'second-first Sabbath' (*lit. rendering*). This expression is found nowhere else, and its meaning is uncertain.

4. Plucking the corn in another man's field was expressly permitted by the law (Deut. xxiii. 25), and is still a recognised custom in the East. Dr. Hanna (*Ministry in Galilee*, p. 36), Porter (*Giant Cities of Bashan*, p. 194), and Thomson (*Land and the Book*, p. 648), relate instances which came under their own eyes. The fault of the disciples lay in their doing so on the Sabbath. Plucking was regarded as a kind of reaping, and rubbing the ears in the hands (Luke vi. 1) as a kind of threshing; and both reaping and threshing were forbidden.

5. The 'shew-bread' (*i.e.*, bread to be shewn before God) was placed hot every Sabbath on the table in the sanctuary, as an acknowledgment that all sustenance came from God. David apparently took it on a Sabbath-day (1 Sam. xxi. 6, comp. with Lev. xxiv. 8), which adds to the significance of our Lord's reference. The point of His argument, however, is the subordination of external rules to real necessity. Observe the words 'gave also to them that were with him,' showing how exactly the illustration applied. The second argument, given only by Matthew (xii. 5, 6), is equivalent to—'If the priests may without blame profane the Sabbath in the service of the Temple (see Numb. xviii. 9), much more may my disciples profane the Sabbath in the service of One greater than the Temple.'

6. 'The Sabbath was made for man,' &c. 'The end for which the Sabbath was ordained was that it might bless man; the end for which man was created was not that he might observe the Sabbath' (*Trench*).

The 'Son of Man' here is not *man*, as is sometimes affirmed. The expression occurs eighty-eight times in the N. T., and always refers to Christ. He is so called as being the ideal man, the perfect man; and since, as such, He is 'rightful lord over all creation as granted to man (see Heb. ii. 6–9), and of all that is made for man' (*Alford*), He is Lord also of the Sabbath.

7. It is a familiar Bible difficulty that although, according to St. Mark, Christ called the high priest who gave David the shew-bread *Abiathar*,

in 1 Sam. xxi. he is stated to have been *Ahi-melech*, who was the father of Abiathar. Many explanations of this have been offered; but the two names are so curiously interchanged in the

O. T. (comp. 1 Sam. xxii. 20 with 2 Sam. viii. 17 and 1 Chron. xviii. 16), that it is hard to say which was the father's and which the son's, or whether both names did not belong to each.

Lesson XXXVIII.—The Twelve Apostles.

'Feed My sheep.'

Read—Mark iii. 6—19; (*comp.* Matt. ix. 35—38, x.; Mark vi. 7—13; Luke vi. 12—16, ix. 1—6); *Learn*—Luke vi. 13; 1 Pet. v. 2—4.

(*Hymns* 124, 122, 134, 141, 162, 232, 329, 330.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In the 'Additional Note' on the Chronology of the Galilean Ministry (see page 59), it was remarked how much space is occupied in the Gospels by the occurrences of one or two particular days. At one of these days we have now arrived, and the next *five Lessons* are devoted to the incidents which appear, on a careful comparison of the passages, to have signalled it. This fact may be advantageously used to invest these Lessons with special interest, by giving *reality* to the narratives on which they are based. In the present one, the event with which that great day opened—the appointment of the Twelve (see Luke vi. 13)—is connected with what had gone before, for reasons explained below in Note 1.

Our Lord's words in Matt. ix. 36—38, which are the key to a great part of the Lesson, suggest two illustrations of the apostolic work, viz., tending the sheep, and reaping the harvest. The former alone is taken, for the sake of clearness, the latter having already been used in Lesson XX.

In all subjects of this kind the application can be directed, either to those who are 'sheep' to be tended, or to those who are, or ought to be (in however humble a way), 'shepherds' themselves; to the mere *disciples*, or to those who may be 'sent' as *apostles*. Obviously, the former is the natural application to the great majority of our Sunday-schoolers; and it affords a good opportunity of showing the true relation of 'disciples' to those who teach them—of the 'sheep' and 'lambs' to those who tend them—i.e., to the *pastor* or his Sunday-school delegates. Yet the latter point should by no means be omitted with elder scholars, or even younger ones who may be piously disposed. A child may act a 'shepherd's'—an 'apostle's'—part towards a younger brother or sister. Only let the caution always be given, that *the 'apostle' must be the 'disciple' first.*

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Jesus is now in danger. His enemies at Jerusalem have sent scribes into Galilee to stir up the Pharisees there against Him [*see last Lesson, Note 2.*]. What could they say of Him? Would tell of His Sabbath-breaking, and get men to watch His conduct—we saw how last Sunday. The chief men at Capernaum did not like Him before, but now they are roused—will not bear it—what shall they do to get rid of Him? Herod the ruler of Galilee—they must go to his 'noblemen' to help them; see strict Pharisees and gay courtiers plotting together against Jesus! (ver. 6).

What will He do? His 'hour' to suffer not yet come. Will go aside for a time, out of the city, down to the Lake (ver. 7)—can always there get a boat and cross over; up into the hills (ver. 13)—nooks and corners there.

While in retirement, Jesus did a very important thing—talk about it to-day.

Have you ever seen a flock of sheep

without a shepherd—scattered, tired, timid, looking this way and that, afraid to move? This is what Jesus saw—we will see what He did. [*See Note 1.*]

I. THE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD.

Does He get retirement by leaving the city? ver. 7, 8—greater crowds than ever from distant parts; *they* don't want Him killed—Him who comforts, teaches, heals them. Such crowds that He has to escape from *them* to the boat, ver. 9. But they have not come in vain—see what He does, ver. 10, 11. And why does He heal them? to make Himself popular? to excite them against the Pharisees? ver. 12—He wants to do as much good as He can, as quietly as He can. Just what Isaiah said Messiah should be like (comp. Isa. xlii. 1—4 with Matt. xii. 15—21). [*See Note 3.*]

But now see what Jesus thought and felt as He looked at these multitudes, Matt. ix. 36 [*see Note 1.*]. He thought, not of what the Pharisees wanted to do to *Him*,

but of what they had *not* done to all these people. They ought to have been *like shepherds* to them, leading them in right way, feeding them with good teaching, treating them gently. Had they? If so, why such a new and strange thing when Jesus preached glad tidings to the poor (Matt. xi. 5) [see *Lesson XXXV.*?] The scribes like the shepherds denounced by Ezekiel (xxxiv. 1—10); so the people are *faint* (for want of food for their souls) and *scattered* (not taken care of).

Jesus sees all this; what does He feel? Had He never felt compassion before? What brought the 'Good Shepherd' (John x. 11) down from heaven, but 'to seek and save the lost sheep'? see Matt. xviii. 11—13. And these He now looks on are but a few of them—there are 'other sheep' (John x. 16) scattered abroad—He has 'compassion' for them too—for all.

What will He do for them? Will appoint *under-shepherds* to take care of them. See who these were.

II. THE SHEPHERDS APPOINTED FOR THE SHEEP.

Up among the hills Jesus now goes, away from the crowds, only His own followers with Him. All of them '*disciples*'—i.e., learners (under *discipline*); some He will choose to be more than that—'*apostles*,' men *sent forth*, missionaries. It is a solemn thing He is going to do—how does He set about it? Luke vi. 12, 13—think of that long night of prayer! (How do we set about important things? do we need to pray about them less than He did?) Then, in the morning, all around Him, waiting His selection.

1. *The men chosen*, ver. 16—19 (comp. Matt. x. 2—4; Luke vi. 14—16). Seven of them we have seen already specially called—the four fishermen (chap. i. 16—20) [see *Lesson XXXIII.*], the publican (Matt. ix. 9) [see *Lesson XXXI.*], Philip and his friend (John i. 43—51). Now five more. Think what kind of men chosen to care for the 'faint and scattered sheep': no grave and learned scribes, but fishermen, a publican, &c.—Peter the head-strong, Thomas the doubter, Simon the fierce zealot, James and John almost as fierce (see ver. 17; comp. Luke ix. 54). But all of them alike in one thing—they believed in Him—were ready to obey Him. They most fit to look after the sheep who obey Him to whom the sheep belong.

2. *The work given them to do*, ver. 14, 15. (a) *To go and preach*. What to say? see Matt. x. 7—just what Jesus had been proclaiming. (b) *To work miracles*—just like those that Jesus had done. To whom were they to preach? whom to heal? The very

people Jesus was pitying—'*lost sheep* of house of Israel' (Matt. x. 6)—these first—by-and-bye the 'other sheep' too (John x. 16; see Matt. x. 18).

3. *How they should be trained for the work*. See ver. 14 again—'that they might be *with Him*.' Peter and others already always with Him—henceforth all the Twelve. Thus they would be *disciples* (learners) still. Learning what? (a) How to preach: would hear Jesus in public, and He would teach them in private. (b) How to work miracles: what to learn about that? *The power He gave them*, but [*illust.—a gun useless if cannot handle it rightly*] they could not use it without *faith* (Matt. xvii. 16—20), i.e., being sure that when He told them to heal, He meant that they should be *able* to heal—and how get this faith but by being with Him, knowing Him, learning more of His love and power?

But while still *disciples*, now *apostles* too. Would go out on short journeys preaching, two and two (Mark vi. 7)—so would be *practising* what had learned. [*Illust.—Child learning to write—two things to do—look at copy, and practise. Senior scholar, in Bible class in morning, teaching in afternoon.*] Thus prepare for larger work by-and-bye.

4. *What should be the result of their work?* See Matt. x. They must expect to be treated no better than their Master (ver. 24, 25); should be rejected (14), persecuted (17, 18), hated (22); yet not to fear—God would care for them (26—31); some would listen and believe—if one in a family did not, another would (34—36); and in the last day *He* would acknowledge them (32).

WE ALSO ARE LIKE SHEEP IN CHRIST'S SIGHT.

'We are His flock: He doth us feed,
And for His sheep He doth us take.'

But are we '*lost sheep*'? What do we say every Sunday?—'We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep' (*Gen. Conf.*); comp. Ps. cxix. 176; Isa. liii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 25.

But Christ sends shepherds to look after and care for the sheep. What was Peter told to do? John xxi. 15—17. And when Peter wrote to other ministers, he told them the same, 1 Peter v. 1—4. God's ministers called '*pastors*'—'*pastor*' means *shepherd*. And *we teachers* are shepherds too—lesser ones—for the '*laubs*.'

Should not a sheep follow and take food from the shepherd? How silly if it will not! What are you doing?

One thing more. The *spiritual sheep* can become *shepherds* themselves—*disciples* may become *apostles*—the taught become teachers. Who will say to Christ, 'Here am I, send me'?

NOTES.

1. The appointment of the Twelve, and their first mission, should be carefully distinguished. Their appointment is related by Mark (in this passage) and Luke (vi. 12—16), and is by both connected with the conspiracy against our Lord's

life, which was the occasion of His temporary retirement. Their first mission is also recorded both by Mark (vi. 7—13) and Luke (ix. 1—6), but placed by them at a later period, viz., just before another retirement of Christ in consequence of

the Baptist's death. Matthew also mentions both the retirement after the conspiracy (xii. 14—21) and that after John's death (xiv. 13); but he gives the instructions for the first mission (evidently a fuller report of what is briefly recorded by Mark and Luke) in an earlier chapter (x.), and in the same place gives the names of the Twelve, their *appointment* being assumed (see ver. 1) but not related.

In this Lesson, which is properly on the *earlier* event (the *appointment*), the *later* event (the *mission* and preceding instructions) is also brought in by anticipation, for the sake of completeness. The comparison of the people to 'sheep having no shepherd' is placed by Matthew (ix. 35—38) immediately before the *instructions*, but has the appearance, though mentioned there once for all, of being a *prevailing* feeling in our Lord's mind, and may, therefore, fairly be introduced in connection with the crowds from whom Jesus retired when about to *appoint* the Twelve.

2. Four lists are given us of the Twelve Apostles, viz., in Matt. x., Mark iii., Luke vi., and Acts i. It is one of the 'undesigned coincidences' of Scripture that Matthew and Luke (*Gospel*) give the names in couples, which Mark does not; and yet Mark alone, in recording their mission, mentions their being sent 'two and two' (vi. 7). On a comparison of the four lists, the names fall into three groups of four names each; and, in every list, Peter, Philip, and James the son of Alphæus stand first in the three groups respectively; while Judas Iscariot is always last.

The number of the Apostles corresponded with that of the tribes of Israel, and was probably so fixed in order to indicate the typical resemblance of Israel to the Christian Church. See Matt. xix. 28; Rev. xxi. 14.

St. Peter, in his address to the waiting Church after the Ascension, describes (Acts i. 21, 22) the qualifications for an Apostle as that he should have been constantly with Jesus, acquainted with His ministry from the time of John's baptism, and a witness of His resurrection. The latter qualification is claimed by St. Paul in vindicating His apostolic authority (1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 7—10). Barnabas is also called an Apostle in Acts xiv. 14; and the same title is applied (in the Greek) to certain of St. Paul's companions

(2 Cor. viii. 23), and to Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25). Christ Himself is called 'the Apostle' (Heb. iii. 1).

3. The quotation in Matt. xii. of the Messianic prophecy in Isa. xlii. 1—4, is very appropriate. Christ *should* manifest Himself as King and Judge, but only after a period of conflict, which should *issue* in his 'sending forth' (a strong word, implying struggle) the 'judgment' (the long-pending cause) unto victory; and, *during this period*, He should not act as the terrible Judge, but meekly and tenderly, not 'striving,' &c. Thus, when His enemies conspire against Him, He does not crush them, as He might, but quietly retires, and occupies Himself with the poor people who need His help.

4. The great discourse to the Twelve, given in Matt. x., may be thus briefly analysed:—

I. Instructions for their immediate mission, ver. 5—15.

Whither, ver. 5, 6.

For what purpose, ver. 7, 8.

The equipment, ver. 9, 10.

The method of proceeding, ver. 11—14.

Solemnity of the mission, ver. 15.

II. Predictions concerning their larger work after Jesus is taken from them, ver. 16—23.

Not only rejection (as in ver. 14), but persecution, ver. 16—18.

Yet promise of help, ver. 19, 20.

The conflict to last to the end, ver. 21—23.

III. A general review of the conflict as it affects all Christ's people, ver. 24—42.

They must suffer as their Master suffered, ver. 24, 25.

Yet not to fear; God cares for them, ver. 26—31.

The reward, and its contrast, ver. 32, 33.

The reward only to be obtained by resolutely preferring Christ to family or life, ver. 34—39.

But if Christ's side is taken, then reward for the very smallest service, ver. 40—42.

Each of the three sections closes with a solemn 'verily'; see ver. 15, 23, 42.

The above is chiefly taken from Alford and Stier. The discourse is also well analysed in Mr. Warrington's *Lessons on St. Peter*, *Church Sunday School Magazine*, 1863, p. 141.

Lesson XXXIX.—Opposition from Foes and from Friends.

'He hath a devil, and is mad.'

Read—Mark iii. 20—35; (*comp.* Matt. xii. 22—50; Luke xi. 14—26); *Learn*—Matt. x. 24, 25, xii. 30. (*Hymns*, 95, 127, 151, 167, 359.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson affords another example of the expediency of teaching our Lord's discourses in connection with the incidents which gave rise to them, and of the way in which passages of peculiar difficulty become comparatively easy when so taught.

The subject before us is one of great value in its practical application. It is, of course, necessary to be cautious in speaking to children on 'the sin against the Holy Ghost'; yet religiously-trained children have a peculiar danger in this respect, which teachers would

do well on this occasion to point out:—they know the great Gospel truth of free pardon through Christ, and sometimes are secretly encouraged to sin under the idea that it will be easy to repent and be forgiven by-and-bye; and this is the *germ* of that condition of mind—that conscious rejection of consciously-received warnings of grace—which our Lord in this passage so solemnly describes.

Again, how many boys and girls who wish to be thought 'good,' and wish even to *be* 'good,' will join in the conversation or the act which they know to be wrong, not because they like it, but simply from want of courage to stand out alone on the right side. The second application, and the second of the texts for repetition, are specially directed at these cases.

On spiritual relationship to Christ, see, further, the application to Lesson IV., where the subject is more fully expounded.

Further information on demoniacal possession will be found in Lesson XXIV., Note 2.

In this Lesson, as in all others where a good many Scripture references are given, it is only intended that *some* of the texts should be used in teaching. Each teacher must select those most suitable for his own class.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How painful it is to be misunderstood, ridiculed, falsely accused!—especially after acting rightly and kindly; to have our best deeds made out to be bad, &c. [*Illust., e.g., gentle and truthful child ill-treated and slandered by schoolfellows.*] How much David suffered in this way! Ps. xxxv. 11—15, 19—25, lvi. 5, 6, lix. 3, 4. Worst of all if it comes from family or friends, see Ps. xxxi. 11, xli. 9, lv. 12—14, lxix. 7, 8, 20.

But Jesus (of whom David was a type in suffering as well as in royalty) had more of this than any one. See some of it to-day.

I. THE OPPOSITION.

1. *From friends* [see Note 8]. What does the mother of Jesus think of all that is going on—of His teaching and miracles—the crowds following Him, &c.? Must she not be glad?—remembering what the angel had told her, Luke i. 32—He should have 'the throne of His father David.' But now she is perplexed—perhaps thinks, 'Strange! the leaders and teachers of the people, priests and scribes, are opposing instead of welcoming Him—how can it be?—is He going too far?—can it be right to offend the rulers and choose publicans, &c.?' (What would she feel if she knew of the plot [last Lesson]?) And some of the family do not believe in Him at all, John vii. 5—they would add to her perplexity. 'One good thing—He has very wisely retired now [last Lesson]—perhaps may be going to act differently.'

One morning, news of His open return to Capernaum—twelve of His followers with a new office—'then He will brave the Pharisees.' And another danger now—such crowds that, after night on mountain [last Lesson], He can get no food, ver. 20—'will not His strength fail?' See Mary and the others hurrying along the streets, ver. 21—'Surely He is mad—we must fetch Him away and take care of Him.' How could they think that of Him?

2. *From foes.* Now come into the house (perhaps Peter's) where Jesus is. Full of

people, as when once before He returned from a circuit (Mark ii. 1, 2). Great excitement—He has wrought three miracles on one man!—see Matt. xii. 22, 23—devil gone out, blind eyes seeing, dumb tongue speaking—'Surely!' (is the cry) 'He is Messiah!' 'What can the Pharisees do now?' (comp. Luke xix. 47, 48). The wily men sent from Jerusalem [see Lesson XXVII. Note 2] hit on a plan. See them going among the people—'Of course he can cast out devils—has one himself—the chief of them, Beelzebub, in him—nothing strange if even devils obey their own prince.' [See Note 3]. Fancy saying this of Jesus, of the 'Holy One' whom the devils hated and feared (Mark i. 24). Worse than what His relatives thought—strange that any could think Him mad—but *this!* that He was one of Satan's allies, used by the enemy of men to deceive them! Worse even than the worst said of Him before (Matt. xi. 19). It was as if the cast-out devil had gone into them—blinded their eyes—made their tongues, not dumb, but blasphemous. Yet these the religious leaders, the shepherds who should have looked after the 'lost sheep' [last Lesson].

II. HOW HE MET THE OPPOSITION.

1. *The Opposition of Foes.*

Might He not well be angry, and denounce them loudly? But He has to undo the mischief done, to satisfy the people—will quietly reason about it. See how, ver. 23—30.

(a) *He shows how unreasonable their words are.* ver. 23—26. 'If what they said true, if Satan in Him, would He be likely to save men from Satan—casting out devils, curing diseases, delivering men from sin, making people happy? Then Satan would be fighting against himself—and what then? could a country torn by civil war resist the common foe? would a family always quarrelling be prosperous? Satan not so foolish as to undo his own work.'

(b) *He makes them reflect who He must really be,* ver. 27 (comp. Luke xi. 20—22)

[see Note 5]. 'Satan is strong; yet here you see his goods (what he had robbed God of, the man's mind, heart, &c.) taken from him; *who* could do that?—must be *one stronger*.' Who would that be?—what had Isaiah (xl. 10, xlix. 24, 25, liii. 12) and John the Baptist (Luke iii. 16—'one mightier') predicted of Messiah? What then? who must Jesus be? (Comp. Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 8.) Then, indeed, the 'kingdom' had come.

(c) *He warns them of the danger of so blaspheming*, ver. 28—30. [See Note 6.] How were they in danger? because such a sin to revile Jesus? yes; but even then they might turn, repent, be forgiven (like Saul of Tarsus, 1 Tim. i. 13). But *could* they turn and repent? Only if the Holy Ghost worked in their hearts (Rom. viii. 9, 14; 1 Cor. xii. 3; so in the Absolution—'Let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance and His Holy Spirit'). But how could He, if they 'always resisted' Him (Acts vii. 51)? And what shewed they were doing that?—they were sinning *wilfully*, saying about Jesus what they *knew* could not be true. Then what danger! their sin might be on them *for ever*! Pray, with David, 'Keep me from presumptuous sins' (Ps. xix. 13).

2. *The Opposition from Friends.*

While Jesus yet speaking, who come to the house? ver. 31. What for? ver. 21 [*recapitulate*]. No getting in for the crowd—send in message. Now see the reply of Jesus, ver. 33—35.

Think what He meant. He had an earthly mother and relatives; but also was the Son of God—all God's family related to Him—more nearly even than His mother was naturally. *Who were* God's family? ver. 35—'do the will of God'; and who are they? See what He had said just before (*2nd text for rep.*)—those '*with Him*.' All

others '*against Him*.' On which side were Mary and her family just then? so, were they doing God's will, acting as His children, as the *spiritual* relatives of Jesus? *But who were?* ver. 34—His disciples not ashamed of Him, 'on His side.'

Was this a rebuke to Mary? Jesus too tender, too *filial*, to rebuke her openly; yet would she not feel how mistaken she was—that to be one of His true family she must trust more in Him—take His side more boldly?

ON WHICH SIDE ARE WE? *For Christ, or against Him?*

Are we His open enemies?—disliking His house, His book, His day, His people, His commands? Suppose a bad companion of yours suddenly changed, became true Christian, Satan 'cast out'—would you be pleased at it? or vexed, call Him names, laugh at Him, &c? *This* like the scribes, who were vexed at Christ's miracles, and spoke against them.

Are we His half-hearted friends?—having a regard for Him, wishing to belong to Him; but when He or his people attacked, getting afraid, and taking the wrong side? Are such 'against Him'? Would say, No; yet what does *He* say? (*2nd text for rep.*)

Are we His faithful disciples? If so, what are we to expect? (*1st text for rep.*)—shall be disliked, reviled, called names, as He was. Not pleasant, yet to be borne cheerfully, see Matt. v. 11, 12; Acts v. 41; Heb. x. 32—34; 1 Pet. iv. 12—16;—

'Though opposed by many a foe,
Christian soldiers! onward go.'

And what a reward! to be Christ's 'brethren and sisters'—and what does that bring? Rom. viii. 17.

FOR AND AGAINST—see what the end of both will be, Matt. x. 32, 33.

'—May this my glory be—
That Christ is not ashamed of me'

NOTES.

1. The accounts in Matt. xii. and Mark iii., referred to in this Lesson, are obviously parallel; but some regard that in Luke xi. as referring to another occasion, because it occurs in so different a connection. The similarity, however, between it and Matthew's is as close as that between any of the most undoubted parallel passages. But there is no necessity to suppose, with some writers, that all the discourses in Luke xi. and xii. belong to this same day. Their *tone* is certainly that of a later period of Christ's ministry; and Luke's arrangement is too irregular to involve any difficulty on this account (see *Addit. Note on the Chronology*, page 59). Another instance of our Lord's miracles being attributed to Satanic power, which apparently occurred before the present one, is found in Matt. ix. 34. His own allusion to the accusation in Matt. x. 25, was probably a little later (see last Lesson, Note 1).

2. '*Son of David*,' Matt. xii. 23—a common designation of Messiah; see Matt. xxi. 9, xxii. 42; John vii. 42.

3. '*Beelzebub*'—i.e., 'lord of flies,' the name of one of the old Philistine deities (2 Kings i. 2).

The best MSS. read '*Beelzebub*,' which is interpreted by some to mean 'lord of the dung-hill,' by others to mean 'lord of the dwelling,' i.e., either *hell* or the *soul of man*. The latter seems the most likely, since Christ, in Matt. x. 25, refers to it in connection with the exactly similar term, 'master of the house,' which He applies to Himself. Probably it was a mocking designation of Satan current among the Jews of that day.

4. '*By whom do your sons cast them out?*' (Matt. and Luke). Most expositors think these words imply that the Jewish 'exorcists' (Acts xix. 13) really did cast out devils. Josephus (*Ant.* viii. 2, 5) refers to it as a common thing; and Justin and Irenæus also mention it. If so, there must have been some very great difference between such exorcisms and Christ's miracles; see Matt. ix. 33, and comp. Luke xi. 20 with Exod. viii. 19. But the argument in the text would not be less forcible if the Pharisees only *professed* to have the power.

5. '*A strong man*,' and '*a stronger than he*' (Luke), are literally 'the strong one' and 'the stronger one.' The latter expression evidently

refers to 'the mightier one' of whom the Baptist spoke (the Greek word is the same), and to the passages in Isaiah cited in the Sketch. The 'first binding the strong man' may refer to our Lord's personal conflict with Satan, when He 'bruised the serpent's head,' and 'led captivity captive.' Compare the texts cited above.

6. 'The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,' &c. An attempt has been made in the Sketch to explain simply the meaning of this solemn and difficult passage; but it may be also noted that,

(a) The aggravation of the sin lies, 'not in the rank of the person against whom it is committed, but in the clearness of the revelation despite which it is committed' (Stier). It is not worse to revile the Spirit, than to revile the Father or the Son.

(b) Nor is it a blasphemous word or thought itself that Christ refers to. It is the state of mind of which such word or thought is the fruit (comp. Matt. xv. 19)—a state of mind in which the grace of the Spirit is knowingly and determinedly rejected,—which manifests itself in slanderous blasphemies against that grace,—and which is necessarily hopeless, for the simple reason that, without that grace, repentance is impossible. It is not stated that the Pharisees were in this state, but their words showed that they were in danger of falling into it.

(c) It is most important, as a guard against despondency, to remember that *anxiety lest this sin has been committed proves that it has not been committed*, because such anxiety is incompatible with the state of mind indicated above.

See further, Alford on Matt. xii.; Stier, *Words of the Lord Jesus*, ii. p. 157; Bp. Browne, *Articles*, p. 355, &c.

The passage has an indirect theological importance, as supplying one of the clearest proofs of the personality of the Holy Ghost.

7. The subsequent portion of the discourse, as given by Mark and Luke, is omitted by Mark; and notes upon it will, therefore, not be required. But observe that the remark in the preceding note, as to a state of mind of which blasphemy is the fruit, is confirmed by our Lord's words in Matt. xii. 33—37; and that His refusal of a 'sign from heaven' (ver. 38—42), comes naturally after so gross a misrepresentation of the 'signs' He had given.

8. The object of 'His mother and His brethren' in calling Jesus, is evident from Mark's narrative only. On Mary's feelings, see a good paper in the *Sunday Magazine*, Feb. 1866, 'On an imperfectly understood Scripture character.' Wordsworth (on Matt. xii.) gives some striking passages from Chrysostom, showing that great father's opinion of Mary's 'folly' and 'vain-glory' on this occasion. On the 'brethren' of Christ, see Lesson IX. Note 4.

The Greek word rendered 'He is beside himself,' expresses the idea, not so much of absolute insanity, as of that condition which we vaguely refer to when we say, 'Why, the man must be mad.' The same word occurs in 2 Cor. v. 13. In John x. 20 and Acts xxvi. 24 the word is different, and means actually 'mad.'

Lesson XL.—Teaching by Parables—I.

'Take heed how ye hear.'

Read—Matt. xiii. 1—23; (*comp.* Mark iv. 1—34; Luke viii. 1—18); *Learn*—Jas. i. 21, 22; Ps. cxix. 18. (*Hymns*, 116, 117, 118, 259, 263, 264.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In the present course there is not room for separate Lessons on our Lord's Parables, and those only are introduced which have an importance in relation to the history. In this and the following Lesson, the Parables of the Sower and the Tares are made specially prominent, for the sake of the practical instruction to be derived from them; yet the *subject* of the two Lessons is our Lord's 'teaching by parables,' and not the individual parables. Several illustrations are suggested in this Sketch, with a view to explaining His design in adopting this method of public teaching: and it is obvious that the practical issue of the Lesson—'Take heed how ye hear'—will flow as naturally from this part of it as from the consideration of the four kinds of soil.

In applying the Parable of the Sower, the teacher should aim at making the 'wayside,' the 'stony ground,' and the 'thorny ground,' really describe the different states of mind in which his scholars are, or into which they are likely to fall. Let the 'birds' be made to represent *particular* thoughts which the teacher knows of, the 'sun's heat' to stand for *particular* persecutions, the 'thorns' to illustrate *particular* cares or desires; and then scarcely any Lesson is likely, by the Divine blessing, to be more effective. The names given in the Sketch to the four classes of hearts only partially indicate their respective features, but they may serve to help the memory. In Lessons of this kind, which turn upon the portrayal of character, it is sometimes well, at all events with younger classes, to embody each in an imaginary individual with a distinct name: thus, Mary the hard-hearted, Sarah the faint-hearted, Ann the half-hearted, Jane the true-hearted. But such names should be chosen as are *not* borne by any in the class.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Jesus has rebuked the enemies who called Him Beelzebub, and the half-hearted friends who thought Him mad [*recapitulate*]; yet there they are still—the friends wanting to stop His work—the foes wanting to take His life (Mark iii. 6, 21); what shall He do?

Down to the Lake again—the boat (Mark iii. 9) ready for Him there—can get out of the way. But the people (*i.e.*, the crowds that want to see and hear Him—not the scribes)—do they disperse? See them thronging the shore—they remember how He taught them from the boat before (Luke v. 3)—perhaps He will again. All can see and hear—some on jutting rocks, the rest lining the sloping beach in rows one above the other. See what He says to them.

I. THE NEW WAY OF TEACHING.

1. *How Jesus taught, ver. 3–9.* [See *Addit. Note on next page.*]

We have seen how He used to teach, sometimes explaining Scriptures in synagogue, sometimes giving plain commands like 'Love your enemies,' 'Swear not,' 'Pray in thy closet,' &c.—always unlike Scribes, 'with authority' [see *Lessons XXII., XXIV., XXI'*]. But now, quite different. He is just 'speaking *parables*,' little stories that mean something good, only not easy to make out the meaning. The people have often heard the Scribes teach so, but did not understand, did not often try, thought it like guessing hard riddles. But Jesus!—strange (they think) that *He* should take to parables—He who 'preached to the poor'—so easy—such 'gracious words.' And His parables—they seem very simple—but what *mean*?—that is all true about the seeds, the tares, the leaven, &c.—often see these things—but what have they to do with God and His law, with Messiah and His kingdom?

The disciples puzzled too, and, as soon as the first story done, ask Him quietly, while the crowd is discussing it.

2. *Why Jesus taught so, ver. 10–17.*

Because He could not now treat all alike—must make a difference between those 'with Him' and those 'against Him' [see *last Lesson*].

He has been teaching plainly a long while—what result?—some not caring, some disliking, some blaspheming. Now He has deeper and harder things to tell—these must be taught only to those 'with Him,' not to the careless or the blasphemers—would do them no good—why not? ver. 15—what good is sunlight to the blind, or music to the deaf? Jesus will not 'cast pearls before swine.'

So Jesus uses parables. Why parables? A parable does two things: makes some see less of the truth, some more. [*Illust.*—*As shade of lamp makes light brighter on one side, but hides it on the other; or, the Pillar of cloud and fire—dark to the Egyptians,*

bright to Israel.] If any one attentive and painstaking, might learn wonderful things by a parable; yet the careless would see nothing in it. [*Illust.*—*If learn to handle telescope, see more of stars; if look through carelessly, see nothing.*] But why the parables spoken to the crowd, if only to be understood by disciples? *Some* in the crowd might be humble and willing to learn—then, just because could not understand, might come to Jesus to know more—so become disciples too.

II. THE NEW THINGS TAUGHT.

'*Mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,*' ver. 11—what were these? Things not yet known—*secrets* [see *Note 2*]. There were things the disciples could not make out, and Jesus could only teach them little by little [*illust.*—*a man coming suddenly out of dark prison into sunlight, would only be dazzled*]; see Mark iv. 33; John xvi. 12. Next Sunday, shall see some of the 'mysteries' His parables taught them. To-day look at only one, viz.—

'*How was it that so few cared for God's gracious messages—that Jesus, with all His mighty words and works, seemed so unsuccessful?*'

This puzzled the disciples. This perplexed Mary [*last Lesson*]. This prevented many from joining Him (comp. John vii. 48). And does not this same thing seem strange to us still? Think of all the churches, sermons, Bibles, &c.—why so few true Christians? *We teachers* feel it—how is it that *this class* cares so little for Christ's love?

See how He explained this in His very first parable [*read ver. 3–8*]. When a sower sows his seed, do all the seeds spring up? ver. 4. Do all that spring up take root and grow? ver. 5, 6. Do all that grow ripen? ver. 7. Where is the fault? In the sower? in the seed? No, *in the soil*.

A teacher like a sower [see *Lesson XX.*]—scatters his teaching like seed, to get a harvest of souls, 'fruits of righteousness'—does not succeed everywhere—why?

Is it the Sower's fault? Not if he sows as Jesus did. Who could have more diligence, patience, wisdom, than He?

Is it the Seed's fault? Not if it is the seed Jesus sowed, God's Word, Luke viii. 11 (comp. 1 Pet. i. 23). What could be better than that?

BUT IT IS THE FAULT OF THE SOIL—OF THE HEART. Of four kinds of hearts Jesus shews us pictures—only one good. Look at them—see which is ours:—

(a) *Hard-hearted, ver. 4, 19.* Some seed 'by wayside'—on path hardened by tread of men's feet—seed can't get in, lies loose—birds pick it up. Teacher speaks to class—his words fall on boy's ear, but not into his heart—why?—hardened by bad habits—so Satan sends a passing thought (of yesterday's game or to-morrow's work), quick and

light like a bird, and the teacher's words are snatched away from the memory.

(b) *Faint-hearted*, ver. 5, 6, 20, 21. Some seed on ground where earth thin, hard rock just beneath—springs up quickly—then withered by sun—why? no root. Teacher's words fall on boy's ear, and into his heart too—boy feels his sin and Christ's love, wants to change, goes home and prays, keeps right a little while—then the sneer and the hard word—he can't stand that—goes back again—why? no 'root'—what is that? Eph. iii. 17; Col. ii. 7. Yet the warm sun good for rooted plant—so is trial for rooted soul, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

(c) *Half-hearted*, ver. 7 and 22. Some seed on ground already occupied with thorns and briars—these spring up too—take seed's nourishment—so no fruit. Teacher's words fall into boy's heart—he

does change—does not quite fall back—still outwardly religious—yet no 'fruit'—why?—thinks so much of other things: of 'cares' (struggle to 'make both ends meet,' &c.); of 'riches' (getting on in life, &c.); no time for God's service.

Yet the Sower fails not entirely; nor will the teacher. For there are—

(d) *True-hearted*, ver. 8, 23—do receive Word—do take root—do grow up—do bear fruit. How get this true heart? Only from God. He has remedies for hard path (Deut. xxxii. 2), rocky ground (Jer. xxiii. 2^o), thorns (Isa. lv. 11—13).

Yes, there will be ripe and good fruit. But which of our souls will bear it? Pray, in the words of the Litany, 'Give us grace to hear meekly Thy Word, &c., and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.'

NOTES.

1. On the Parables generally, and on our Lord's design in using this method of teaching, see *Additional Note*, below.

2. *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,* &c. A 'mystery,' in the New Test., does not mean a thing incomprehensible, but a thing not yet revealed; see Rom. xi. 25, xvi. 25; 1 Cor. xiii. 2, xv. 51; Eph. i. 9, iii. 3, 4, 9; vi. 19. The truths concerning the 'kingdom of heaven,' which are wrapped up in the parables of this chapter, were emphatically *mysteries* at that time. Through the medium of the parables, 'to him that had' faith and humility 'was given' the revelation of these truths; while 'from him that had not' faith and humility to perceive their full meaning, they 'took away' even the poor and imperfect notions of the 'kingdom' which he 'had.' It was thus the people's own guilty hardness of heart that deprived them of the knowledge of the 'mysteries'; but as it is in virtue of the Divine moral law of retribution that this hardness of heart produces incapacity to receive truth, the incapacity can, in a sense, be attributed to God, as it is in the words, in ver. 14, 15, quoted from Isa. vi. Compare the quotations of the same prophecy in the parallel passages, and also in John xii. 40; Acts xxviii. 26, 27; Rom. xi. 8.

3. The seven parables evidently form a connected series, illustrating (1) the obstacles to the progress of the kingdom, (2) its mingled character during the present dispensation, (3) its nevertheless certain outward development and (4) inward power, (5) and (6) the different ways in which

men would secure an interest in it, (7) the ultimate separation of the bad and good which had for a time been mingled in it. The first four were delivered from the boat to the people standing on the shore; the last three to the disciples only, in the house.

4. Some suppose that Jesus actually pointed to a sower 'going forth to sow.' That the four kinds of soil might be in view at once, is shown by Stanley (*Sinat and P.* chap. xiii. § 2) and Thomson (*Land and the Book*, p. 82), who both describe precisely similar cases. The 'stony ground' is not earth mixed with loose stones, but a thin layer of earth over rock, which would not give room for the seed to 'take root downwards.' The 'thorns' were probably the *nabk*, which forms very dense thickets; see Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 429. Of the 'bearing fruit a hundred fold,' Thomson (*Land and the Book*, p. 83) gives interesting illustrations, and see Gen. xxvi. 12.

5. We have several Scripture examples of the four characters. Pharaoh and Festus may be named as 'way-side' hearers. King Saul, Herod Antipas, the Galatians (Gal. v. 7), some of the disciples in Galilee (John vi. 66), proved to be like the 'stony ground'; Balaam, Judas, and Ananias, like the 'thorny ground.' The young ruler, Simon Magus, and Demas, combine some of the features of the two latter classes; Felix combines those of the first and second. Peter was in danger of being one of the second class; Lot and Martha of belonging to the third. Of the good soil, Nathanael and Lydia are striking instances.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.—THE PARABLES OF CHRIST.

The word 'parable' is used in the New Testament to describe various kinds of illustrative teaching; e.g., pithy proverbial sayings (as in Matt. xv. 14, 15; Luke iv. 23), brief passing illustrations (as in Matt. xxiv. 32), and Old Testament types (as in Heb. ix. 9, where the word 'figure' should be 'parable').

But in its common use, as applied to such narratives as Christ employed to convey spiritual truth, the 'parable' has a very exact character of its own, and may

be distinguished—(a) from the *fable*, by the more natural and possible character of its incidents, and by its higher spiritual purpose; (b) from the *myth*, by its truthfulness; (c) from the *proverb*, by its more expanded narrative form; and (d) from the *allegory*, by being complete in itself, whereas in the allegory the symbols and the things symbolised are mingled together. In the Old Testament, Jotham's story of the Trees choosing a King (Judg. ix. 8—15) is a *fable*; Nathan's of the Poor

Man and his Pet Lamb (2 Sam. xii. 1—4) a *parable*. The figure of the Vine is presented in an *allegorical* form in Ps. lxxx., and in a *parabolic* form in Isa. v. Our Lord frequently used both forms; for example, in the well-known *parable* of the Lost Sheep, He leaves the hearers to apply the story; but His discourse in John x.—‘I am the good Shepherd,’ &c.—is *allegorical*, the symbol and that which is symbolised not being kept separate.

Parables have always been popular in the East. They were very commonly used by the Rabbis in their teaching; and Trench (*Parables*, Intro. Essay, chap. iv.) gives some of the most striking of those preserved in the Talmud. It is probable that the novelty of Christ's earlier public discourses lay partly in their being *not* clothed in this enigmatic form, but, on the contrary, direct and plain. Hence the surprise of the disciples when He ‘began to teach many things in parables.’ His object in doing so must be regarded as twofold: partly to reveal and partly to conceal truth; partly to present it in a shape attractive and easy to remember, and partly to veil it from those who would only add to their own condemnation by further blasphemies against Him who uttered it.

Nothing can better illustrate this twofold office of the parables than the simple fact that while they can be freely used in the most elementary lessons, their full interpretation has taxed the profoundest minds. Even the easiest of all in its direct teaching, the Good Samaritan, has been a bone of endless contention as to its inner meaning. As a general rule, it may be said that the simplest interpretation of a parable—that which looks most steadily at its central idea and purpose—is the best; and yet, that there often is a real significance in the *accessories* of the story is shewn by our

Lord's own explanations of the Sower and the Tares: in which He not only enforces the general lessons—the unreadiness of men to receive the Word, and the inevitable mingling of bad and good in the world—but also gives a distinct meaning to the birds, the thorns, the sun's heat, the reapers, &c.

The Parables may be roughly divided into three groups:—(1) The seven in Matt. xiii., with the accompanying one found only in Mark iv. These have the common subject of the ‘kingdom of heaven,’ its nature and progress. (2) Those peculiar to St. Luke, almost all apparently delivered during the later journeys to Jerusalem, generally occurring in answers to questions and not in regular discourses, and marked in many cases by the tone of tenderness characteristic of Luke's Gospel (*e.g.*, the Good Samaritan, the Great Supper, the Prodigal Son). With these, as belonging to the same period, are classed the Unmerciful Servant and the Vineyard Labourers, recorded by Matthew. (3) The prophetic parables of the last week (Matt. xxi.—xxv.), with that of the Pounds in Luke xix. Only two parables are found in all the three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke), *viz.*, the Sower, and the Wicked Husbandmen. None occur in St. John, though he records several allegorical discourses.

On the general subject, the student may further consult Trench, *On the Parables*; Plumptre's article in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (reproduced also in the *Student's New Testament History*); Lange, on Matt. xiii. (Clark's Ed.); Westcott, *Introduction to Study of Gospels*, pp. 361, 368, 454; and, for teaching purposes, the well-known works of Guthrie and Arnot; a little book by the Rev. F. Bourdillon (Tract Society); *The Parables Illustrated*, by T. B. Bishop; and the Institute's *Notes on the Parables*.

Lesson XLI.—Teaching by Parables—II.

‘Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?’

Read—Matt. xiii. 24—52; (*comp.* Mark iv. 21—34); Learn—Matt. xiii. 41—43; Mal. iii. 18. (*Hymns*, 85, 86, 120, 166, 194, 297, 331.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It would, perhaps, have been more strictly in accordance with the historical method pursued in the present Course, to have combined in this Lesson the main features of the parables before us, as forming together a picture of Christ's ‘kingdom’ and its progress on earth, with an application respecting our relation to it. But this subject has been taken, in three or four previous Lessons, from different points of view; and therefore the larger portion of the following Sketch is devoted to the direct teaching of the ‘Tares.’

Two very solemn and difficult topics occur incidentally in this Lesson, *viz.*, the influence of the Evil One in the world, and the ultimate fate of the wicked. On no subjects can children generally speak more glibly and unhesitatingly; but such readiness is an evidence, not of the existence, but of the total absence, of any true apprehension by them of the devil and hell as dread realities. Let it be the effort of every teacher, in this Lesson, to

convey the idea that these things are too terrible to be spoken of otherwise than 'with bated breath.' Let none think that in so doing there is any yielding to sceptical theories, or any shrinking from what the Church of Christ has always accepted as the truth. The more convinced any one is of the truth of the Church's belief, the more solemn and guarded will be his utterances on the subject.

The mingling of metaphors ('harvest' and 'shining like the sun') at the end of the Sketch is, it will be observed, required by the passage itself.

The Scripture references in the Sketch are too numerous for actual use. The teacher will, however, find them all worth referring to in his preparation.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

To-day come again to the Lake—Jesus sitting in the boat—crowds on the shore. How is He now teaching? and why? [*recapitulate*].

Four more parables He tells to the people: Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven, and Seed growing secretly (Mark iv. 26—29). Then He dismisses them, comes to shore, back to house, there explains the parables to disciples, and tells them three more: Hid Treasure, Pearl, Net.

What were the truths called which Jesus thus taught in parables? What was the 'mystery' revealed in that of the Sower? [*last Lesson*]. Now see what 'mysteries' in the others.

(a) The 'Sower' might discourage Peter, John, &c.—how sad such failures! Well, but the Kingdome *should* get on in spite of that: growing secretly but steadily, just as seed does (Mark iv. 26—29)—becoming great tree, just as little mustard-seed does (Matt. xiii. 31, 32)—spreading unobserved, but irresistibly, like the leaven when bread is made (ver. 33) [*see Note 7*]. Was not that encouraging?

(b) Some, who never thought of the salvation which the Apostles were to preach, would come unexpectedly upon it, like a man finding money or jewels hidden in the earth (ver. 44); others, who were always seeking for valuable things, like the pearl-merchants, would at last find this greatest treasure of all (ver. 45, 46); and both would give up all they had to get it. Was not that encouraging?

(c) Did their hearts sink when they saw all the evil in the world? was this a sad 'mystery'? Well, they would see more yet. Wherever they went 'sowing good seed,' there the great Enemy would follow, 'sowing tares' (ver. 24—26, 37—39); wherever they went 'fishing' 'to catch men' [*see Lesson XXIII.*], good and bad fish would come into the net (ver. 47, 48). But God was not forgetting them; and the 'end' would surely come, good and bad be separated for ever, the Kingdom be victorious and perfect (ver. 30, 40—43, 49, 50). Was not that, too, encouraging?

Now look a little more at one of these parables—THE TARES. [*Read ver. 24—30.*]

What do the Wheat and the Tares mean? Men and women, boys and girls. Jesus speaks of no third kind—all either Wheat or

Tares. Which are we? Is it hard to tell? Well, the Wheat and the Tares looked almost alike; yet there were *three great differences*:—

I. DIFFERENT IN THEIR ORIGIN.

Whence came the Wheat? The farmer sowed it—in hope of what? Who is the farmer? ver. 37 [*see Lesson XX.*]. What does the Son of Man expect from His sowing? (Luke xiii. 6; John xv. 8, 16; comp. Isa. v. 2). Are any in *this class* 'wheat'? If so, all because of Christ's work.

Whence came the Tares? 'An enemy'—how malicious the man who could spoil his neighbour's crop like that! [*see Note 2*]—and how subtle, to do it unobserved! Who is the Enemy of the Son of Man? ver. 39 (comp. Gen. iii. 15). A malicious enemy, wanting to spoil Christ's 'harvest'—will do *anything* for that. A subtle enemy, doing mischief deceitfully. Wherever Christ sows, he sows too. What 'very good' seed at the beginning (Gen. i. 31)!—who came and spoiled it then? The Apostles sowed good seed in Jerusalem after Pentecost, and then, just when the 'fruit' appearing (self-denial and brotherly love, Acts iv. 32—37), who 'filled the heart' of Ananias 'to lie to the Holy Ghost' (v. 3)? See, too, Elymas (the 'child of the devil and enemy of all righteousness,' Acts xiii. 10), Judas (Luke xxii. 3), Simon Magus (Acts viii. 9—24, in the very place where Jesus Himself sowed, John iv. 34—42). Paul sowed in Galatia and at Corinth—see what he said of the 'tares' there (Gal. iii. 1, v. 7; 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21). And what a mixture in the Seven Churches (Rev. ii., iii.)! So ever since.

What does Jesus call the two kinds? ver. 38—'children of the kingdom,' 'children of the wicked one' (comp. John viii. 44). Think!—each in *this class* one or the other.

II. DIFFERENT IN THEIR NATURE.

The Tares and the Wheat looked alike for a time, but could not always—why not? Their nature different—would grow up differently—bear different fruit. Could the Tares produce the wholesome grain for grinding into flour? Comp. Matt. vii. 16—18; Jas. iii. 12.

So with us. See how different the two kinds of 'fruit' produced, Gal. v. 19—23. Which of these to be seen in us?

Could the nature of Tares and Wheat be changed? *But ours can.* What was Adam

at first? what did he become? And all his children—we too—'tares' like him (Job xiv. 4; Rom. v. 12). A *degenerate* stock. But the *degenerate* may become *regenerate*. How? John iii. 5—7; Tit. iii. 5. Why were we baptized? An 'outward sign' of what?—of 'inward grace,' by which 'tares' made 'wheat,' 'children of wicked one' made 'children of kingdom.' Yet some forget their baptism, and prefer to be 'tares'! Take the Collects for Christmas-day and 25th S. after Trin.—pray them—then the Spirit make you true and fruitful 'wheat.'

III. DIFFERENT IN THEIR END.

The farmer could not pluck up tares while growing—why not? But when both grown, could be distinguished—no mistake—what then? Any chance of tares being gathered into the barn?

If try and make out, in a Church, congregation, school, class, which 'tares' and which 'wheat,' may make mistakes. *Some* clear enough, but many doubtful. But when 'harvest-time' comes (when? ver. 39), *no mistake*—the angels can tell—may be two brothers, sisters, friends, school-mates, at one occupation, in one *bed* even (Luke xvii. 34, 35)—*separated—for ever.*

Then *know* what each one is (2nd text for *rep.*). And then the 'kingdom' perfect, as predicted (Isa. lii. 1, lx. 21).

And what to be the end?

Of the Tares—all that 'do iniquity'—'all things that offend,' *i.e.*, *snares* (that make men fall into sin)—what of them? 'Rooted up' (Matt. xv. 13), and then—dreadful words!—'fire,' 'wailing,' &c., ver. 42 (comp. Mal. iv. 1; Matt. iii. 12, vii. 19; Mark ix. 43—48; Rev. xx. 15)—but *Whose* words are they? The words of Him who died to make a way of escape for us. Then 'how escape if neglect so great salvation?' (Heb. ii. 3).

Of the Wheat—the 'righteous.' Is it hard to 'discern' them now? why? because their 'light' shines not as it ought to do (Matt. v. 16; Phil. ii. 15). But *then* will 'shine forth' (comp. Dan. xii. 3)—be seen clearly (Rom. viii. 19; Col. iii. 4); shine 'as the sun'—be 'like Him' (1 John iii. 2) who is the 'Sun of righteousness' (Mal. iv. 2).

May none of us fail to be 'gathered into the barn'!

'Lord of harvest, grant that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be!'

NOTES.

1. On the general design and order of these parables, see preceding Lesson, Notes 1 and 2; and accompanying *Additional Note*.

2. The malicious practice on which the Parable of the Tares is based is stated by Thomson to be unknown in modern Palestine. But Trench gives instances in India and Ireland, and Alford mentions that a *field of his own* in Leicestershire was once sown with charnock over the heat. The Romans had a law against the practice.

The Greek word rendered 'tares' is *zizania*, which is derived from the Arabic *zavan*, the name of a weed known in England as *darnel*, and very common in the countries around the Mediterranean. The Latin name is *lotium*, and Virgil (*Georgics* i. 154) speaks of 'infelix lotium.' The seeds are poisonous, and the name *zavan* comes from the Arabic word for *vomiting*. Stanley saw women and children engaged in pulling up the *zavan* that had grown here and there naturally; but this could not be done if it had been sown purposely all over the field, as in the blade it is scarcely distinguishable from wheat. Some writers, following Trench and, state that the weed is a degenerate wheat, and the belief is still entertained by the natives; but there is no real foundation for it. See further, Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 486; Thomson, *Land and the Book*, p. 421.

3. The 'field,' in this parable, is commonly interpreted to mean the Church; but our Lord says, 'the field is the world,' throughout which the 'seed' is to be sown (Matt. xxiv. 14; Mark xvi. 15). The Church is *in* the 'field,' and will be *in* the 'barn.' But the application so often made of the parable in controversy, from the days of Augustine downwards, is equally true and forcible. The reply of the farmer to the servants' suggestion may certainly be taken as conveying Christ's disapproval, both of the persecution of 'heretics' (by which the 'wheat' has so often

been 'rooted up' in mistake), and of the attempt (always futile) to make a pure Church by 'transplanting the wheat.' This, however, should not be regarded as the central point of the parable, the design of which is rather (1) to give to the old question of the origin of evil ('whence the tares?'), the answer—'An enemy hath done this'; (2) to reveal the *end* of it all.

4. The words rendered 'world' in ver. 38 and 39 are different: in the latter it should be 'the end of the age' or 'dispensation.' 'Things that offend'—*lit.* 'sandals,' *i.e.*, traps or snares. The 'children of the kingdom' here are not the same as those named in chap. viii. 12 (see Lesson XXVIII., Note 7), the 'kingdoms' referred to being different.

5. 'The Son of Man shall send forth His angels'—one of the many indirect assertions of His own Divinity which we so often find in Christ's discourses. This great truth does not rest on a few formal statements, but is continually *implied*.

6. On the mustard-seed and tree, see Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of B.* p. 472; Thomson, *L. and B.*, p. 414; and an interesting extract in the *Ch. S. S. Magazine*, May, 1869, p. 265. Christ only speaks of it as a *tree*—a comparison with other *herbs*.

7. The Parable of the *Leaven* certainly does not refer to the insidious spread of evil, as some have said. Such a view makes Christ teach that the *whole* 'kingdom' shall be *leavened with evil*, besides which spoiling the sequence of the seven parables. It is true that leaven is elsewhere in Scripture a type of evil; but other symbols are used in two senses, *e.g.*, Christ and Satan are both called a *lion*.

8. On the practice of hiding treasures in the earth, see Job iii. 21; Prov. ii. 4; Jer. xli. 8; Thomson, *L. and B.*, p. 135; Kitto, *Daily B. Ill.* (*in loco*); *Domestic Life in Palestine*, p. 115.

Lesson XLII.—The Night Voyage on the Lake.

'Even the winds and the sea obey Him.'

Read—Mark iv. 35—41; (*comp.* Matt. viii. 23—27; Luke viii. 22—25); *Learn*—Ps. lxxii. 8, cvii. 28—30. (*Hymns*, 46, 47, 197, 198, 220, 311, 379, 380, 382.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Most teachers will come to the subject now before us with a sense of relief, after the comparatively difficult Lessons that have preceded it. Certainly they have a fine opportunity, and an easy one, of vivid picturing (only some care and pains will be necessary in the case of children who have never seen the sea). But when the picture is finished, what is the narrative to *teach*? What truth about Christ? What practical counsel for the scholars themselves? The answer is obvious enough—(1) that few passages exhibit so clearly at once the Manhood and Godhead of Christ; (2) that life is a voyage in which many storms have to be met. But how to bring in this teaching naturally and effectively—so that the *doctrine* may be not only *stated*, but its truth *felt*, and that the *application* may be really useful—requires not a little thought. It is hoped that the suggestions offered will enable the teacher to do this; and, in particular, let it be observed that the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd sub-divisions in the three chief sections respectively correspond one to another. But the teacher must very carefully consider *what storms* he is to mention to the class. Troubles, in the ordinary sense, are not familiar things to a child's mind: even those that do come upon them are not much felt. So true are the words of the hymn (197):—

'Young and erring travellers, we
All our dangers do not know;
Scarcely feel the stormy sea,
Hardly feel the tempest blow.'

In the Sketch, *spiritual* trials are chiefly referred to; but temporal ones may also be alluded to, such as poverty, sickness, bereavement, &c.; only care must be taken to explain that faith in Christ will *not keep these away*, only *give peace* in them.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

The long day nearly over. Think what had happened in it: Jesus up among the hills after night of prayer—the twelve chosen—return to Capernaum—crowds—demoniac healed—blasphemy of the scribes—Mary and the others trying to stop Him—then down to Lake—in boat—parables—into house again—explaining parables to disciples. [*See last four Lessons.*]

Jesus exhausted—no wonder! Yet people still thronging—what to be done? Down to shore again—hastily into boat, not stopping for refreshment or preparation (*'as He was,'* ver. 36)—will cross over Lake—find retirement and rest among the wild hills on the other side.

But another reason for going. What has Jesus been telling the disciples? [*last Lesson*]. Why? They had been sadly cast down: just when solemnly appointed to their new office, it seemed that 'all things were against them'—priests and rulers, whom they looked up to, openly attacking Jesus—His own family against Him. So He had told them all this to be expected—men's hearts bad (*'Sower'*)—Satan at work (*'Tares'*); and yet the kingdom should grow, and they, if faithful, one day 'shine as the sun.' And now He is going to teach them the same thing—about trial and how to meet it—in another way.

I. THE VOYAGE.

1. About six miles to go—pleasant evening sail over calm blue waters. Presently black clouds coming over hills—fierce gusts of wind whirling down the steep valleys—sea beginning to toss as if boiling. But Peter and his comrades used to this—know well how to steer the boat and manage the sails in a storm—enjoy the waves—forget their sad fears about the 'kingdom.' But see—even they, the hardy fishermen, frightened now!—never in such a storm before—have done all they can in vain—waves fast filling the boat—they will sink! (See other storms at sea, Ps. cvii. 23—30; Jonah i.; Acts xxvii.)

2. Where is Jesus? Look—fast asleep—worn out with the long day's toil and conflict. The wind howling over His head—waves dashing on to His face—water in boat rising round His body—yet all fails to disturb that sound, peaceful sleep! (Who else slept in a storm? Jonah i.—but how different!—*there* the sleeper the *cause* of it—*here* the *lord* over it.) Wit's despairing cries they wake Him—perhaps even now He might somehow save them. Does He start up at the roar of the storm? What does He do *before* He rises? Matt. viii. 26. But why did they deserve to be rebuked? had they not shown faith? What made

them cry to Him? But two faults in their faith:—

(a) *Not enough of it* ('little faith')—shewed this by being 'fearful'—how could they fear if they believed in Him? But believe what? that He would keep them from calamity?—no—but that, *whatever* came (even drowning), *all well* if with Him.

(b) *Not ready for use* ('Where is your faith?'). Perhaps, if could have sat down quietly and *thought*, would have trusted; but when faith wanted suddenly, not ready. [*Illustr.—So, general would say, 'Where is your sword?'—(or 'shield?'* see Eph. vi. 16)—*to soldier who went to battle without it.*]

3. Now Jesus rises. Sometimes we say, 'Might as easily speak to the winds'—what meant? *That* is what He does. What then?—'a great calm'—the air still, lake smooth like glass, boat motionless. He has shewn His power over diseases, devils, death—now over nature. Was not the centurion right?—all these His subjects—to all He can say, 'Do this,' and they do it [*Lesson XXVIII.*]; see Col. i. 15—18. Look at the question of the seamen, ver. 41—'What manner of man?'—can we answer that? think—

(a) He is a man—no angel—did not that night prove it? Weary with long day's work, want of food, the 'contradiction of sinners' (Heb. xii. 3)—just as we should be. Lying there asleep—think—'what manner of man?' See Heb. ii. 14, 17, iv. 15—'He knoweth our frame'—will He not sympathise?

(b) Yet more than a man—and still no angel—did not that night shew WHO He is? See Job xxxviii. 8—11; Ps. lxxv. 5—7, lxxxix. 8, 9, xciii. 3, 4. Might He not have said to the trembling disciples, '*Be still, and know that I am God.*' (Ps. xli. 10)? Then they might have said the first three verses of that psalm.

II. WHAT THE VOYAGE TAUGHT THE APOSTLES.

(1) *What they would be sure to meet in their ministry.* Storms—difficulties threatening to overwhelm them, and the 'boat' (the 'kingdom'—the Church) too. So they did; see Acts iv. 17, 18, viii. 1; 2 Cor. i. 8. And so again and again ever since: Per-

secution, false doctrine, sin, 'the craft and subtlety of the devil and man' (*Litany*).

(2) *How they should meet such storms.* With faith. 'In quietness and confidence' (Isa. xxx. 7, 15; comp. Exod. xiv. 13). Not, like Elijah, to give up all for lost (1 Kings xix. 4). True, they might not always be delivered—might die (and so they did)—but the *cause* safe—the Church safe.

(3) *Why they should meet them with faith.* Because Christ with them. In the boat they thought His being asleep kept His help from them. But need never fear that again—why? Ps. cxxi. 4; Isa. xl. 28. And if He with them, who could be against them? (Ps. cxviii. 6; Rom. viii. 31).

III. WHAT THE VOYAGE TEACHES US. *Just the same things.*

(1) *What we shall certainly meet.* Storms—troubles and difficulties—things to make us afraid. That is, *if on the voyage*—what voyage? The life of a Christian like a voyage. Christ has said to us, 'Let us go over unto the *other side*'—what 'other side'? Do we 'fear to launch away'? But if really 'sailing' with Him, must not expect all to be smooth—storms will come—opposition of all kinds from those who love not Christ—hard looks, bitter words, unkind acts—think them not 'strange things' (1 Pet. iv. 12)—Christ has 'told us before' (Matt. xxiv. 25; John xvi. 4, 33; Acts xiv. 22; 1 Thess. iii. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 12).

(2) *How we are to meet these storms?* With faith. When to trust? (*1st text for rep.*)—'at all times'—so must be always ready—never off guard—never let Christ say, 'Where is your faith?' Then what will protect us? Ps. xxxii. 10. And how shall we feel? Isa. xxvi. 3—not 'perfect peace' because no danger, but because we know 'all must be well.'

(3) *Why have such faith?* Because Christ with us (Isa. xliii. 2). And why such trust in Him? Because we remember *the two things about Him* [*recapitulate*]:—(a) Being Man, He can feel for us; (b) Being God, He can strengthen us, save us, and (*2nd text for rep.*) 'bring us to the desired haven.' And may we all 'so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that we finally come to the land of everlasting life!' (*Bapt. Service.*)

NOTES.

1. St. Mark's words in ver. 35—'the same day at even'—fix the voyage across the Lake as occurring at the close of that great day, the events of which have occupied the last four Lessons. Matthew's account is evidently not in correct order of time. See *Add. Note* on Chronology, page 59.

2. On the Lake of Genesareth, see *Additional Note*, page 64. Small as the Lake is, and placid as its waters usually are, it is subject to most violent tempests, owing to the gusts of wind which rush down the mountain gorges into the deep hollow. St. Luke expressly says that the storm 'came down.' Macgregor (*Rob Roy on J.*, p. 420), Thomson (*L. and B.*, p. 374), and Tristram

(*Land of Israel*, p. 430), describe storms witnessed by themselves; and Mrs. M. Mott, in her *Stones of Palestine*, gives a graphic account of one in which her party were caught on the Lake and tossed about for twenty-five hours. The words used by the Evangelists are remarkable: Mark and Luke speak of a 'hurricane of wind'; Matthew speaks of the effect *upon the sea*, employing a word descriptive of violent agitation, being the very word used elsewhere in the N. T. for an earthquake.

3. 'A ship' should be 'the ship,' the one that 'waited on' Jesus. On the 'littic ships' see Lesson XXIII., Note 5. 'A pillow' probably means the boat-cushion.

Lesson XLIII.—The Demoniac of Gergesa.

'The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.'

Read—Mark v. 1—20; (comp. Matt. viii. 28—34; Luke viii. 26—39); Learn—1 John iii. 8; John viii. 34, 36. (Hymns, 24, 93, 151, 155, 166, 330, 359.)

TO THE TEACHER.

A good many difficulties surround the subject of this Lesson, and it will be well for the teacher to bear in mind that they are such as we have no means of explaining, on account of our total ignorance of the conditions attaching to the existence of either good or evil spirits; and that this ignorance is a sufficient answer to any cavils directed against such difficulties. It is possible that in elder classes it may be found necessary to state this.

It will be observed that the narrative is, in the Sketch, so treated throughout as to pave the way for the application; which is one of great importance, and exhibits the natural condition of unrenewed man in the light of an analogy not before introduced into these Lessons. If time permit, the mighty and ever-increasing (though scarcely felt) power of a *sinful habit* should be enlarged upon; and it may be observed that the very word 'habit' (*habet*) implies that it *has* the soul, holds it fast in its grasp.

Many useful incidental points of application occur in the Lesson, such as the folly of banishing Christ, the duty of proclaiming to others the mercy we have ourselves experienced, that prayer is sometimes *refused in love* (as the demoniac's) and *granted in wrath* (as that of the demons and that of the Gergesenes), &c. But it will be simply impossible to touch upon these if the main subject—'bondage and liberty'—is thoroughly taught.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How fond boys and girls are of *liberty*!—dislike being controlled—want their own way. Our Lesson to-day on bondage and liberty—see *who* is a slave, and *who* is free.

I. THE GERGESENE IN BONDAGE.

Go to-day to a new part of Palestine—the wild hills east of Lake of Gennesareth—Gaulonitis, formerly Bashan. If went there now, might see many tombs cut in sides of hills. At the time we have been talking of lately, the time when Jesus preaching in Galilee, people afraid to go near those tombs—always went some other way. Why? [*Read ver. 1—5; comp. Matt. viii. 28; Luke viii. 27.*] Observe what is told us about the man's dwelling (*Mark*), his dress (*Luke*), how he treated himself (*Mark*), when he might be seen and heard there (*Mark*), why people afraid of him (*Matt.*), how long in that state (*Luke*);—and one thing more (*Mark*).—

Was he in bondage, or at liberty?

Think how the people of Gergesa [*see Note 1*] had brought chains and fetters, pursued him, caught him, chained him, thought 'safe at last'—then what? Was he not a *free* man—one who would not be bound by others—would go own way?

Yet he was a miserable slave—slave to whom? see ver. 15, 16, 18—'possessed with (or by) the devil.' The evil spirit had conquered him, and now kept him fast, held him in his grasp—how dreadful!

So here was one who seemed to be free, yet was really a slave.

II. HOW THE GERGESENE WAS RESCUED.

Early morning, bright and clear—in the

night a fearful storm,—but now the Lake like a sheet of glass—how came it so? [*See last Lesson.*] A Galilean fishing-boat coming to the eastern shore. Look at the demoniac, naked and fierce, rushing down the hill, to meet the party. What would Gergesene travellers have done? [*above*]. Do these turn away in alarm? It is the wild man who is crouching in terror before Jesus. Why? [*Read ver. 6—10.*] When have we met with that cry of fear and hatred (ver. 7) before? [*Lesson XXIV.*] What are the evil spirits afraid of? see *Luke*—of being banished from earth, cast into hell [*see Note 4*].

Now turn and look up on to the hill—swine in immense numbers—they are feeding quietly; suddenly—[*read ver. 11—13*]—what a scene! Why such a panic? The cruel power of the evil spirits is turned [*illustr.—as a rushing stream turned into another channel*] from the poor man to the animals. But what does this show? why, that he is rescued—and he can himself be sure of it by seeing the panic in the herd.

Now, how was he rescued? Could not escape himself—the evil spirits too strong. Friends could not rescue him—what happened when they tried? Hopeless, until some one *stronger* than the devils should come—*then* deliverance (comp. *Luke xi. 21, 22*). Jesus not only stronger than one evil spirit—an army of them here, ver. 9 [*see Note 4*]—yet see His supremacy:—(a) they could go nowhere against His will; (b) besought Him, like bad boy begging for slighter punishment: (c) even then He de-

feated them—the poor animals they hoped to torture delivered from them by death. Must not the disciples have asked again [see last Lesson], 'What manner of man is this? not only powers of nature, but powers of hell, obey Him!' How true our first text for rep.!

III. THE GERGESENE AT LIBERTY.

People crowding out of city, hastening to shore—what looking for? anxiously for their herds, nervously for the wild man? Neither to be seen! But what instead? [Read ver. 14—20.] The very man that had been their terror is in the midst of a party of Galileans—not chained, yet sitting quietly, his decent clothing and mild look showing the 'right mind.'

Now we can test these Gergesenes—see what sort of people they are—[*illust.—as real and sham gold tested by drop of acid*]—what do they feel most?—selfish vexation at loss of swine, or grateful pleasure at cure of man? If the latter, what would they have asked of Jesus? and what did they ask? (Comp. Job xxii. 17; contrast John iv. 40.) So Jesus gets no rest that side of the Lake—is driven back again.

But the man—what is he now? free? But consider. (a) Is it like a free man to be sitting at another's feet like that? (b) What does he ask of Jesus? Would it be freedom to have to follow another everywhere? (c) Jesus gives him an order—is that like liberty, to obey it so implicitly? Yes, for it is his own free choice to be, like St. Paul afterwards, the 'slave of Christ' (Rom. i. 1, *orig.*)—his greatest delight to work for Christ, just as Christ, 'in the form of a slave' (Phil. ii. 7, *orig.*), delighted to do the Father's will (Ps. xl. 7, 8; John iv. 34).

We do not now meet these miserable demoniacs, and yet—

There are some in bondage now.

Who are they? [*Describe two boys, or girls—one home-loving, thoughtful of parents' wishes, willingly under control—the other*

wilful, going 'own way,' chafing at all restraint.] Which of these two in bondage—the one with the *home-fetters*, or the one that does as he likes? Which is called 'free'? But which most like the Gergesene demoniac? He boasts of his liberty, but really is Satan's slave without knowing it; see both texts for rep., and Eph. ii. 2. (Then is the devil a being to jest about?)

There are some, too, at liberty now.

Who are they? Those like the Gergesene after the devils left him. But is it liberty to 'sit at Christ's feet,' *i.e.* (Luke x. 39), to be His docile and submissive pupil? Is it liberty to be His diligent servant, making His love and power known to others? Yes; 'His service is perfect freedom'; see Matt. xi. 29, 30, and 2nd text for rep.

WHICH IS THE HAPPIER? The wilful boy thinks the submissive boy can't be happy, because can't do as he likes. Is he happy? Think of fear of being found out—of conscience pricking (it will be like 'cutting oneself with stones' some day)—of loss of friends and prospects, &c. Where was the Prodigal Son happy?—where miserable? And think of the *end* (see Isa. lvii., 20, 21; Rom. vi. 21; Gal. vi. 7, 8; Heb. x. 27).

Which, then, is 'in his right mind'? Festus made a great mistake (Acts xxvi. 24); it is not the Christian who is 'beside himself,' but all others. No one 'in right mind' till has changed his mind (*i.e.*, repented).

Then the great question is—

HOW CAN THE SLAVE OF SIN BECOME FREE?

Not by his own strength. Could the Gergesene escape from the devils? St. Paul could not. Rom. vii. 24. [*Illust.—Bird chained to perch can't fly into the air.*] But see next verse (25)—

By the power of Christ. How encouraging are Heb. ii. 14 and vii. 25! Then pray, 'though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of Thy great mercy loose us.'

NOTES.

1. The name of the district, town, or people, named in this passage, has been, from the earliest times, a question of much difficulty. Existing MSS. are divided between 'Gergesenes,' 'Gadarenes,' and 'Gerasenes,' the text being equally uncertain in all three Gospels. The 'city' could not have been either Gerasa or Gadara, both which were many miles distant, but no other town having a similar name being known, it was long supposed that the *Gadarene* district was meant. Origen, however, who wrote before any existing MSS. were written, mentions the city of *Gergesa*, close to the Lake; and this place has been identified by Dr. Thomson (*L. & E.* p. 375) with the modern Khersa (see Map on page 65). Mr. Macgregor (*Rob Roy on Jordan*, p. 422) describes a spot, a little south of Khersa, answering exactly to the narrative of the destruction of the swine—caves for tombs in the hill-side, pasture suitable for swine, and a steep beach (*not cliff*), with very deep water quite close to the shore.

See *Ch. S.S. Magazine*, May, 1870, p. 215. Thomson suggests another but less probable spot.

2. Matthew mentions two demoniacs, Mark and Luke only one. Many explanations have been offered of this discrepancy; but none seem quite satisfactory. Certainly two must have met Jesus, and if both were healed (which Matthew does not distinctly assert), one of them may have been, in some unknown way, more prominent than the other. Greswell observes that the *moral effects* upon the one man, noticed by Mark and Luke, are not alluded to by Matthew, who gives a bare record of the outward miracle; and suggests that these moral effects may not have been produced in the other man, and that, therefore, the accounts of Mark and Luke would, quite naturally, pass him over.

3. On the general subject of demoniacal possession, see Lesson XXIV., Note 2. The special question raised by this miracle, as to the sus-

ceptibility of the lower animals to demoniacal influence, cannot be discussed here. It is ably treated by Alford and Trench *in loco*. The request of the evil spirits to be allowed to go into the swine is accounted for by some, on the supposition that they could only escape expulsion to 'their own place' by inhabiting some living being, and that they knew Christ would not permit them to enter another man.

4. On 'What have I to do with Thee?' see Lesson XVI., Note 3. 'Before the time' (*Matt.*), see Ep. of Jude, ver. 6. 'Into the deep' (*Luke*), not the sea, but literally the *abyss*. Wycliffe's Bible renders it 'hell.' The same word is rendered 'bottomless pit' in the Revelation. '*Legion*,' a division of the Roman army, usually 6,000 men. This word is seemingly used as expressive of overpowering force.

5. Christ's question, 'What is thy name?' seems addressed to *the man*, to remind him of his personal self; but it is answered by the *demons*, who thus assert their entire mastery over him.

6. Why did Christ allow the demons to go into the swine? The following reasons have been suggested:—To punish the Jewish (if they were Jewish, which is uncertain) owners for keeping them, contrary to Lev. xi. 7. To give the demoniac a visible evidence that the spirits had really left him (comp. Exod. xiv. 30). To show the disciples Christ's control over the movements of the spirits. To test the Gergesenes. To make the miracle more notorious, and thus to enhance the effect of the cured demoniac's preaching. No difficulty need be felt on the swine's own account: if myriads of animals are daily slaughtered for man's bodily sustenance, 2,000 might well die for his spiritual benefit.

7. Warburton, in the *Crescent and the Cross* (ii. p. 352) narrates an encounter, in a cemetery in the Lebanon, with a naked maniac, who attacked and nearly unhorsed him. In Miss Rogers' *Dom. Life in Pal.*, p. 108 there is a strange account of a similar maniac at Haifa.

Lesson XLIV.—The Death of John the Baptist.

'Faithful unto death.'

Read—Mark vi. 14—29; (comp. *Matt.* xiv. 1—12; *Luke* iii. 19, 20, ix. 7—9); *Learn*—Eph. v. 11; Heb. vi. 11, 12. (*Hymns*, 124, 127, 168, 171, 209, 224, 324, 363, 390.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In the following Sketch, as in the passage on which the Lesson is based, incidents are included which occurred some time before the period at which we have now arrived, and before those of Lesson XXXV., in which the Baptist's imprisonment was referred to but not accounted for.

With the view of shewing the teacher, in the clearest manner, that the account of Herod's feast, which occupies so large a portion of the Gospel narrative, should not be equally prominent in actual teaching, it is barely referred to in the Sketch. It will, of course, be read and briefly explained, but the attention of the class should be concentrated as much as possible on the Baptist himself. It is well to remember that the relative importance of passages of Scripture is not always in proportion to their length.

The opportunities of practical application afforded by this passage are numerous, and as there is no great central truth or lesson requiring exclusive attention, the several points may, in this instance, be profitably taken up as they arise, as indicated in the Sketch. The main application has been chosen for its novelty and peculiar impressiveness, and it is just one of those considerations which seem likely, by the Divine blessing, to have a direct effect upon the mind of a child. A touching narrative illustrative of it will be found in chaps. IX. and X. of the Rev. E. Spooner's 'St. Oswald's Sunday-school,' in the *Church Sunday School Magazine* for 1863.

The title 'faithful witness' belongs primarily to Christ Himself (Rev. i. 5, iii. 14); but, like many other of His titles, it may, in a subordinate sense, be rightly applied to His servants.

The Collect for St. John the Baptist's Day can be referred to with advantage, and might be learned by the scholars.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What was John the Baptist sent to do? John i. 7—'came for a witness.' [*Illustrate by witnesses in court of law; see Lesson XIX.*] For whom was he a witness? And when Jesus appeared, and he had pointed Him out (*John* i. 19—36), his public work done (see *John* iii. 26—30). But would he

cease to 'bear witness'? No, he was a 'faithful witness,' would not give up, went on to the last. To-day see how, and how his work came to an end.

I. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS FEARED AND HATED.

In Galilee and Peræa (beyond Jordan)

Herod Antipas king, son of the great Herod. Bad man—cared for his own pleasure—not for God and His law. Heard of the great preacher in the wilderness—wished to see him. Think of John, in his rough garment and leathern girdle (Matt. iii. 4), standing in the royal palace amid the gay courtiers [see *Lesson XXI.*]. What shall he say to Herod? tell him about Jesus? but would he care? How had John prepared the people for Jesus? [see *Lesson XI.*]—told them of *their sins*. So he will do with the king. There, by Herod's side, sits the queen; why ought she not to be there? ver. 17 [see *Note 1*]—which commandment broken by those two? But can John dare to mention *that*? The 'faithful witness' has not come to flatter, but to tell of the very sin that will keep from salvation, ver. 18 (so Elijah with Ahab and Jezebel, 1 Kings xxi.). What is the result?

1. *Hated by Herodias*, ver. 19. Whom do wicked people dislike most? Is it not those that rebuke them? e.g., Ahab and Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 8. No wonder Herodias hated John. When hatred indulged in heart, result may be terrible (e.g., Cain); what was it here? But she could not have John put to death—why?

2. *Fearred by Herod*, ver. 20. Think of the two men:—the king, with all his lords and officers, his word law, could do as he liked; the prophet, alone, unprotected, at the king's mercy: which afraid of the other? John bold and fearless, Herod trembling and alarmed (comp. Acts xxvi. 25; Prov. xxviii. 1). Why alarmed? Conscience-struck—the sore point touched, *the sin*. What shall he do? give up the sin? give up Herodias? *That* he cannot do—yet 'does many things' (perhaps prayers, alms, fasts, like Pharisees)—so may make up for it. Would these make up for it? [*Illust. If a leak on one side of boat, what the use of putting extra plank on the other side?—one leak will sink it.*] It is just the sin that 'most easily besets us' which must be given up (comp. the young ruler, Mark x. 21, 22). But what does he do to John? Dares not kill one whom he feels to be God's messenger, whom he likes to hear on other matters; yet 'for Herodias' sake' (how strong the sin was!) shuts him up in his gloomy castle by the Dead Sea [see *Note 2*]; this may satisfy her, and keep him safe from her designs [see *Note 3*].

II. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS SILENCED.

See John, once so popular ('all Judæa,' &c., went after him then)—pining away in the dungeon—shut up there (probably) a whole year. We have seen [see *Lesson XXXV.*] how he felt there—the message he sent Jesus, the message Jesus sent him. No doubt happy after that, like Paul in prison (Acts xvi. 25; comp. xx. 24, xxi. 13). Month after month goes slowly by in the dark cell. At length one day comes a soldier, one of Herod's guardsmen—what does he want? *John's head*—at once—can't

wait—and, in a few minutes, *where is John*? The foul prison and rough garments exchanged for—what? Look at Rev. vii. 9—17. No wonder St. Paul could say, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

How came it about? The wicked queen not satisfied as long as John is alive—sees how uneasy he makes Herod—what if some day he should persuade the king to put her away?—he must die, somehow. How cruel!—yet do boys and girls now never plot revenge against those they dislike? Month by month she watches for a chance. At last a 'convenient' day. [*Read ver. 21—25*]—imagine her malicious delight. Think, too, of Herod's feelings: though inflamed with wine, 'exceeding sorry'; what shall he do? Keep to his oath?—the sooner a wrong oath broken the better. Avoid the scorn of his courtiers?—how often are bad things done for fear of scorn! But was he obliged to give the fatal order? what would he have done if Salome had asked for *his own head*?

The deed does not take long to do, ver. 26—28; the queen soon sees the head of her enemy—he is silenced at last. No, not yet; his blood has a voice in God's ear (Gen. iv. 10)—how shall she silence *that*? and one day the voice of God's broken law will accuse her—how shall she silence *that*?

III. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS REMEMBERED.

Remembered by Herod, ver. 14—16. News comes to the court of a wonderful prophet in Galilee, of His teaching and miracles. There is one of Herod's lords who can confirm the news—was not his own son healed? [*Lesson XXI.*] But Herod's guilty conscience can think of only one prophet—him he murdered; 'can this be he—mightier now than before—sent back by God to the world with new powers?'—(the Baptist had done no miracles, John x. 41). How true Zech. i. 5, 6—the prophet may die, but his word remains.

Remembered by his followers, ver. 29. They have stood by him to the last—not forsaken him in his trouble—visited him in prison (Luke vii. 18)—tried to fulfil his wishes (Luke v. 33). Now they cannot even take a last look at the face they loved—only the *headless* body cast out to them. That they sadly bury—*then*, what to do? where to go? What would their dead master wish them to do? They remember of Whom the 'faithful Witness' testified—to Whom their old fellow-disciples went—to Him they turn now, Matt. xiv. 12. Are any of us sad? Let us 'go and tell Jesus' likewise. How will He receive us? Matt. xi. 28; 1 Pet. v. 7.

Remembered by Christ. What did Jesus do when He heard the sad news? Matt. xiv. 13—does not that show how much He grieved for His steadfast servant, His 'faithful witness'? And it reminded Him of *another murder* that should be com-

mitted, see Matt. xvii. 12. Yet think! how wonderful!—it is because of THAT death that a place in glory was ready for John, and is ready for every other 'faithful witness' like him (Col. i. 12—14).

THE DEAD REMEMBERED—Think of this for a moment.

1. Faithful witnesses speak to us [*name minister or teacher, parent or friend*]. If such an one died now, how we remember them? As Herod remembered John—as one who had warned and pleaded with him, but whom he had rejected and ill-treated? Should we have to say, 'Too

late now to listen to or please that dead one'? [*Illustr.—Boy standing by grave of neglected parent or teacher.*]

2. If one of us died now, how be remembered? As a 'faithful witness'? as one who obeyed St. Paul's precept (*1st text for rep.*)? Seek for grace to be faithful, in protesting against sin, in pointing to Christ, in bearing opposition for Christ's sake, 'Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end.' Then, not only be remembered as John was, but, like him, 'inherit the promises' (*2nd text for rep.*); see Rev. ii. 10.

NOTES.

1. Herod the Great (the Herod of Matt. ii.) had ten wives and fifteen children. Four of these children are named in the Bible:—Archelaus (Matt. ii. 22), and Herod Antipas (Matt. xiv. 1; Mark vi. 14; Luke iii. 1, ix. 7, xiii. 31, xxiii. 7), sons of Malthace; Philip (Luke iii. 1), son of Cleopatra; and Herod Philip, son of Mariamne (Matt. xiv. 3; Mark vi. 17; Luke iii. 19). Another son, Aristobulus, was the father of the Herod of Acts xii., and of Herodias. Herodias was married to two of her uncles in succession, Herod Philip (not Philip the tetrarch) and Herod Antipas. The latter, in order to marry her, put away his own wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petraea (named in 2 Cor. xi. 32). The marriage was, therefore, unlawful in three ways:—(1) Herod's wife was living; (2) Herodias' husband was living; (3) Herodias was Herod's niece.

The 'daughter of Herodias' was her child by Herod Philip. Her name was Salome, and she subsequently married (1) her uncle, Philip the tetrarch, and (2) Aristobulus, a more distant relative—not the one named above, who was her grandfather.

Herod Antipas was only called 'king' by courtesy. His proper title was tetrarch (Luke iii. 1), i.e. ruler of a fourth part of Herod the Great's kingdom. He was subsequently induced by Herodias to go to Rome to ask for the royal title; but the emperor Caligula banished him to Gaul.

The above facts are recorded by Josephus

(*Antiq.* xviii.) A complete genealogical table of the Herodian family is given in Smith's *Student's New Testament History*, p. 56.

2. From Josephus we learn that the Baptist was imprisoned at the castle of Machærus, on the east coast of the Dead Sea. This castle, however, is stated to have belonged to Aretas. But Aretas made war on Herod when the latter put away his first wife (the former's daughter), and it is supposed that, in the course of the war, it fell into Herod's hands. If Herod were at this time engaged in a campaign on the frontier, his head-quarters might be at Machærus; which would account for the apparent quickness with which the order to behead John was carried out. Such an absence from Galilee would also account for his not hearing of Jesus till after John's death. Subsequently, Herod's army was totally routed by Aretas, which was regarded by the Jews as a judgment for the murder of the Baptist (*Jos. Antiq.* xviii. 7).

3. Some words in this passage need explanation:—'Would have killed him,' rather, 'desired to kill him.' 'Observed him,' in ver. 20, should be 'preserved him,' i.e., kept him safe from Herodias. 'Convenient day,' i.e., for the designs of Herodias. 'Chief estates of Galilee,' i.e., chief men. 'Unto the half of my kingdom,' an oriental mode of expressing liberality, comp. Esth. v. 6, vii. 2. 'Charger,' an old English word for a large dish or tray. 'Executioner,' one of the body-guard.

Lesson XLV.—The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

'He hath filled the hungry with good things.'

Read—Mark vi. 30—44; (*comp.* Matt. xiv. 13—21; Luke ix. 10—17; John vi. 1—13);

Learn—Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10; John vi. 27, 35. (*Hymns*, 9, 48, 144, 156, 193, 243, 248, 253.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The great importance of the Miracle which is the subject of this Lesson is evident from the fact that it is the only one recorded by all four Evangelists; and its teachings are so full and varied, that it is a somewhat perplexing task to select and arrange them. They are of four kinds:—

1. Historically, the Miracle is a leading epoch in our Lord's ministry. His popularity in Galilee culminated with it (as will be shown in Lesson XLVI.), and immediately afterwards came that 'disappointment and desertion' which will be the subject of Lesson XLVII., and that departure of Jesus from the chief scene of His labours which

will be mentioned in Lesson XLVIII. As, however, the historical importance of the Miracle will appear in these three succeeding Lessons, it is omitted in the Sketch below.

2. The direct moral teaching of the Miracle is on Providence—on God's care for man's temporal wants, and His method of supplying those wants. This is the subject of the second division of the Sketch.

3. The Miracle conveyed typical teaching to the Apostles respecting their ministerial work. This is briefly taken in the third division of the Sketch, and will give the teacher a valuable opportunity of speaking to the class concerning his own office.

4. The Miracle prepared the way for our Lord's great discourse (in John vi.) on Himself as the Bread of Life. This subject will have some space allotted to it in the Lesson on that discourse (XLVII.); but it will be well, if possible, to refer to it briefly in this one, and it is, therefore, in the Sketch below, put in the place of a general application, as the practical points occur in the other portions.

It is, of course, open to the teacher to omit any of the sections. It would be scarcely possible to take them all, except in very intelligent classes, on account—not of their intrinsic difficulty—but of their variety.

The familiar scene of a school-treat can be referred to in illustration of some points in the narrative—the large numbers, the sitting in ranks, the quantity of provisions required, the labour devolving on the disciples, &c.

The teacher should refer to the map of the Lake on page 65, and have it (or some other) with him to show the class.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Two companies of men come to Jesus at Capernaum:—(a) John's disciples—where from?—why? [see last Lesson]; (b) The Twelve—where from? see ver. 7—13, 30;—have been journeying round Galilee, two and two, in their new office of preaching, with their new power of working miracles in their Master's name. No doubt excited by success (comp. Luke x. 17), perhaps a little vain—what do they need? To be quiet for a while, and to learn their own weakness. Can they get quiet at Capernaum? ver. 31. So two reasons for Jesus going away: this, and His sorrow for John's death [see last Lesson].

Down to the shore, into the boat—the old way of retiring [see Lessons XXXVIII., XLII.]. Across the Lake—not to the Gergesenes again—to a lonely place [see Note 1] where may be undisturbed—up to the hills there (John vi. 3).

But—scarcely arrived, before crowds of people surrounding them! Whence? ver. 33—some have run six miles, from Capernaum, round head of Lake—across Jordan; multitudes joining them as they went. How does Jesus receive them? ver. 34 [comp. Lesson XXXVIII.].—He cannot turn away from them (see Rom. xv. 3)—spends the long day teaching and healing—then will give them a wonderful proof of His love and power, and at the same time teach the Apostles not to be vain or self-confident. See how.

I. THE MIRACLE.

It is getting late—people still hanging on Jesus' words—never thinking of the time. (Which of us like that in church or school?) At length Jesus stops—here are Andrew and Philip in the crowd—what inquiring for? ver. 38, John vi. 5—9. The people now thinking what to do—tired

and hungry—too far for some to go home—must find 'lodging,' &c., where they can (see Luke ix. 12). But now all the disciples moving about among them—what saying? Fancy the looks and words of wonder as they sit down—what can it all mean?

Here they sit, on the grassy slopes, the orderly ranks and groups looking like beds of flowers [see Note 6]. There is Jesus, in sight of all—what doing?—like 'saying grace' [see Note 7]. But the provisions—where?—not even one basket-full. Now see the disciples—from man to man, from rank to rank—bread and fish in abundance—round again—and again—surely in awe-struck silence—till all 'filled'! More than that—the ground strewn with fragments, making up far more than there was at first!

II. WHAT THE MIRACLE TAUGHT THE PEOPLE ABOUT BODILY FOOD.

1. What had they come out there for? Not as afterwards (John vi. 26), to get fed—no idea of such a thing; no—but to be taught. If they had thought most of what they would need by-and-by, would they have come so far, and stayed so long, unprovided? But, had been so eager for Jesus' words that they could think of nothing else (comp. Job xxiii. 12). Would Jesus let them suffer through this eagerness? What had He said in His great sermon? Matt. vi. 25, 33. By the Miracle, He has taught them how true those words were.

2. But how did Jesus supply their wants? Worked a great miracle, certainly; yet used human means. What is that? Think—He could have turned all that green grass into bread, for them to gather and eat as they sat. But what did He do? (a) Used what food was to be had; (b) made the

disciples work hard in distributing: (c) allowed no waste (John vi. 12). What taught by this? That, though God would not forget them, though they not to think too much of bodily wants, yet not to expect miracles always, but to be content with getting supplied in common ways.

3. Yet, were these 'human means,' these 'common ways,' enough? Could the disciples and the 'little lad' have fed them? His blessing indispensable. And so always: therefore they must look to Him as the Giver of all good things, even of those which seem to come from own or others' labour.

These three lessons for us, too [recapitulate]. (a) If 'seek first' to do God's will, 'all these things added to us.' [Illustr.—e.g., giving up Sunday trading; preferring church and school to a 'place' with Sunday work.] (b) Shall be helped without miracles, in 'common ways'; so must not neglect these (see 2 Thess. iii. 10–12)—and not waste what we have—gather up fragments, of money, time, &c. (c) But 'see God's hand' in all the earthly blessings we get: so pray, 'Give us day by day our daily bread.'

III. WHAT THE MIRACLE TAUGHT THE DISCIPLES ABOUT SPIRITUAL FOOD.

1. They had been giving spiritual food to the people of Galilee—how? ver. 12, 30. With what feelings had they come back? [above]. Now what does Jesus do? He will show them how little reason they have for boasting—how? Ver. 37—'Give ye them to eat'; John vi. 5, 6—why did He say that to Philip? How perplexed they are!—suppose they spend all their money [see Note 4], not near enough. Yet presently—all that vast crowd 'filled'! Can they not see how helpless they are without Him?—the spiritual food (the teaching,

&c.) which they give as apostles, *not their own*—can satisfy no 'hungry soul' themselves—only give what Jesus gives them.

2. Yet had they nothing to do themselves? Had they not to search for provisions (ver. 38), to bring what they found to Jesus (Matt. xiv. 18), to distribute it when blessed? So in giving spiritual food: not to think, because all from Jesus, they to do nothing—not to be downcast, or idle—much would depend on their being earnest and diligent.

So with us teachers. We bring you children spiritual food, as you sit in ranks and groups (like the people on the grass). We must work hard—yet what we give you is not our own—all from Christ. But—

WHAT IS THIS SPIRITUAL FOOD?

Jesus tells us, John vi. 35, 48, 51—'I am the Bread of Life.' How is this?

What does bread (and other food) do for our bodies? *Sustains*—keeps life going—so called 'the staff of life.' *Strengthens*—not only just keeps alive—makes healthy and strong. *Satisfies*—how does a hungry man feel after a meal?

So Christ does for our souls. *Sustains*—no life without Him, Eph. ii. 5 (comp. John i. 4, vi. 53, xiv. 6). *Strengthens*, Phil. iv. 13, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *Satisfies*, Ps. lxxiii. 5, 6, lxxiii. 25 (comp. Ps. cvii. 9, Isa. lv. 2). [Illustr.—If go to work without breakfast, will be weak and faint; so, if meet little daily temptations (give instances), no strength to overcome them unless had spiritual breakfast, i.e., read and thought about Christ, prayed to Him, &c.]

Are our souls hungry? Happy if they are—why? Matt. v. 6. It was when the Prodigal felt hungry that he came back to his father, Luke xv. 14–17. All invited to the feast, Is. lv. 1. 'O taste and see that the Lord is good' (Ps. xxxiv. 8).

NOTES.

1. The 'desert place' (i.e., uncultivated and solitary) which was the scene of the Miracle, is stated by St. Luke to have been near Bethsaida. This Bethsaida was at the north end of the Lake, not in Galilee, but on the east side of the Jordan, in Gaultonitis, in the dominion of Philip the tetrarch (Luke iii. 1), who converted the fishing-village into a handsome city, and named it Julius, after the daughter of Augustus Caesar. Its site is now marked by a mound, called by the natives Et-Tell (see map on page 62). Close by is the fertile plain of Buthaina, at the east end of which rise the hills of Bashan, and their grassy slopes meet every condition of the Gospel narratives. See Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* III. p. 301; Thomson, *Land and the Book*, p. 372; Stanley, *Sinai and P.* chap. x.; Macgregor, *Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 327.

Almost all writers distinguish between Bethsaida Julius and Bethsaida of Galilee, the residence of Peter, Philip, &c. Dr. Thomson argues that they are the same, but Mr. Macgregor clearly disproves this. See next Lesson, Note 1.

2. Opinions differ as to whether the words in ver. 34, 'When He came out' ('went forth' in Matt.

but the same Greek word)—mean out of the ship, or from the place of retirement. St. Mark's account seems to imply the former, St. John's the latter. It may well be that some of the fastest runners met Jesus when He landed, but that He withdrew from them up into the hills, and only turned back when the crowd followed after Him.

3. Some think that St. John's allusion to the approaching Passover implies that the crowd consisted of travellers to Jerusalem; but the east side of the Lake would be quite out of the way of such, and their being unprovided with food shows that they were not on a journey. John's remark is evidently designed to show the special appropriateness of the discourse in the synagogue. The 'five thousand' are stated by Matthew to have been *men*, which is curiously confirmed by the Greek words used by John. The 'women and children' with them would probably be few, not (as sometimes fancied) 5,000 more.

4. The apparent discrepancy between St. John and the other Evangelists, as to the first suggestion about feeding the multitude, is variously explained. If we had all the details of what

took place, which of course we have not, no doubt the difficulty would disappear.

In Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*, it is suggested that Christ asked Philip about providing food for the people, because he was 'of Bethsaida' (John xii. 21). But if Bethsaida Julias and Bethsaida of Galilee were different places (see Note 1), there is no coincidence here; and a sufficient reason for the question being put to Philip is mentioned by St. John. Though so ready to follow Jesus (John i. 43-45), he may have been intellectually dull and slow; comp. John xii. 20-22, xiv. 8, 9.

'Two hundred pence,' nominally equal to £6 9s. English, but really a far larger sum, owing to the different value of money. The 'penny' was a labourer's day's wages (Matt. xx. 2); therefore the amount may be estimated as equal to wages for 200 days. It seems likely that it was the amount of the Apostles' common fund at that time, and that Philip meant to say, 'If we spend all we have, it will not be nearly enough.'

5. In Matt. xiv. 15, 23, the *two evenings* of the Jews are named; the first beginning at 3 p.m., answering to our 'afternoon,' and the second at sunset.

6. There are several remarkable expressions in this narrative. '*By companies*' (Mark vi. 39) means 'companies of guests at table.' '*In ranks*' (ver. 40) means 'like garden-beds,' the people sitting in rows and squares on the slope of the hill like the terraced gardens of Palestine. '*Fif-*

ties in a company' (Luke ix. 14) means that there were fifty in a row (*lit.*, 'on one couch.') '*Gave to the disciples*' (in Mark and Luke) is literally 'was giving,' 'went on giving,' implying that the multiplication of the loaves occurred in Christ's hands, not (or not chiefly) as the Apostles went round. The '*baskets*' were of wicker-work, and are mentioned by the Roman satirist Juvenal as habitually carried by the Jews, probably to prevent their having to defile themselves with Gentile food.

7. The 'giving thanks' (*John*) and 'blessing and breaking' (*Matt., Mark, Luke*), though essentially the regular Jewish custom of 'grace,' must have been done by our Lord with peculiar impressiveness; see the subsequent reference to it in John vi. 23, implying that it was a thing remembered (comp. Luke xxiv. 30, 31). The same expressions occur in the accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the Greek word for 'giving thanks' is the original of our 'Eucharist.'

8. This miracle, involving the use of *creative* power, is an especially wonderful one, more beyond the grasp of our faculties even than that of the water made wine. (See Lesson XVI., Note 7.) It should be compared with the similar miracles in the Old Testament, 1 Kings xvii. 16; 2 Kings iv. 2-5, 42-44. Philip's unbelieving question may be compared with that of Moses, Num. xi. 22.

LESSON XLVI.—Walking on the Sea.

'Without Me ye can do nothing.'

Read—Matt. xiv. 22-33; (comp. Mark vi. 45-52; John vi. 14-21); Learn—Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24; Isa. xliii. 2; 1 Cor. x. 12. (*Hymns*, 22, 76, 154, 155, 180, 197, 291, 344, 380.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The narrative part of this Lesson is, of course, familiar and easy; but, as in similar cases, it should on this account be all the more carefully made the vehicle of imparting spiritual instruction. To do so effectively, it is necessary to examine what the incidents of that eventful night taught the disciples, so that the practical lessons we draw may flow spontaneously from the narrative. Now the disciples, just at that time, especially needed to be taught two things, viz., (1) their entire dependence upon Christ, lest they should be 'exalted above measure' by their miraculous power; (2) in what the real glory of Christ consisted, lest they should be carried away by the popular notions of an earthly kingdom. The second of these points is introduced in the Sketch only incidentally, yet it should not be wholly omitted. The first, in its twofold aspect, supplies the two leading lines of thought which the Sketch suggests.

The method of application is but meagrely indicated below, for want of space. No teacher will find any difficulty in applying the first of the two points; but the second requires some consideration of the particular circumstances and surroundings of the individual scholars. To give one example of the way in which it would work out:—A boy, kindled with an eager (though perhaps temporary) desire to act with perfect uprightness, exemplary gentleness, or steadfast self-denial—in a word, to be like Christ—will find, as Peter found, that, though the *first step* is not difficult, the subsequent ones are extremely so. What is the remedy—what the secret of strength? To keep the thoughts (eyes of the mind and heart) fixed upon Him whose eyes are watching us.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What must those 5,000 have felt as they rose up after their ample meal? They have seen Jesus heal sick people—He has done so to-day (ver. 14)—but now every man feels that a miracle has been done *for himself*—he was hungry, he is satisfied—it comes home to each one. Think of the wondering looks, excited talk, amazement, as the Apostles bring together the ‘twelve baskets full’ of remains of what *did not exist* three hours ago! They remember how the hungry Israelites in the wilderness were fed with ‘bread from heaven’ (see John vi. 31)—‘and did not Moses (Deut. xviii. 15) speak of a Prophet whom God would send, *like unto him*?—surely *this* is that Prophet!’ See John vi. 14, 15. All the morning He had talked to them of the coming ‘kingdom’ (Luke ix. 11)—‘*He shall be our king,*’ they cry—‘To Jerusalem! proclaim Him king at the great feast (John vi. 4)—away with the murderer of John, and with the hated Pilate!’

But the Apostles would know better, surely, and calm the people? No, it seems not; see ver. 22—Jesus has to send them away (and then they will hardly go—He has to ‘*constrain*’ them), before He can disperse the people. They are more excited than ever—have been able to work miracles [*last Lesson*])—to-day have been distributing bread never grown, reaped, threshed, ground, or baked—and now at last the people will receive their King—surely the great time of glory is at hand!

That distribution should have taught them something [*last Lesson*]; but now Jesus will give them a more solemn lesson, of their weakness, and of His glory—His *real* glory, not the false glory they would thrust on Him. That same night He did so; see how.

I. HOW CHRIST LOOKS UPON HIS SERVANTS. [*Read ver. 22—25.*]

It is getting dark. With heavy and perplexed hearts Peter and his comrades go on board their boat. For a while they linger near the shore, in hopes of Jesus coming down to them (John vi. 17); but the wind and sea are rising—if they are to get across they must start at once—and they cannot disobey His express orders.

Look again at them some hours after—the night almost gone [*see Note 3*]—and they still in middle of Lake, tossed about with winds and waves—striving in vain to reach the shore. How well they must remember that other night when they were nearly lost! [*Lesson XLII.*] Ah, but *then* Jesus was with them—and what did He do for them?—but now (they think) He is out of the reach of their cries. What, then, makes them dejected?—the furious wind, roaring sea, long weary night?—Something more than all this—their *Master’s absence*. They feel now how much they want Him, how badly they get on without Him.

But Jesus will shew them that He can be near them without their seeing Him—can watch over and care for them when they know it not. Where was He all this time? ver. 23. Just think—He came over there *for rest*—and what has He been doing, in the morning (Luke ix. 11), afternoon (ver. 19), evening (ver. 22)? and now, all that dark stormy night, out on those bleak hills, praying! But has He forgotten His chosen Twelve? See Mark vi. 48—‘*saw them toiling in rowing.*’ How could He see, through the black darkness, down on to the far distant waters? see Ps. cxxxix. 12 (comp. Exod. iii. 7; 2 Chron. xvi. 9; Ps. xxxiii. 18, xxxiv. 15, lvi. 8).

Jesus looking! with what loving pity—with what gracious readiness to help! ‘Saw them toiling’—every weary pull at the oar, every anxious glance at the waves, every downcast thought in the heart, seen and marked by Him. But He will not help too soon—they have a lesson to learn [*above*].

And now another wonder. His eyes—what had they done? His feet—what do they now do? Is not that God-like? see Job ix. 8; Ps. lxxvii. 19. Here is His true glory:—He is a King, ruling over all nature (see Ps. xxix. 10)—how can He care for an earthly crown? His royal power to be used, not to give honour to the Jews, but to watch over and care for His own people.

II. HOW CHRIST’S SERVANTS SHOULD LOOK UNTO HIM. [*Read ver. 26—33.*]

Now look at the boat again. All terrified—not at the storm—at what? Would they have been frightened if they had *expected* to see Jesus? But that He should see them then, come to them so!—no idea of that. They can’t trust their eyes; but their ears—whose voice is that? ‘It is I!’—yes, their Master, who has so often used their boat, now shewing them He can do without it.

In a moment Peter’s courage has come back—‘Yes, it is true: He is all, more than all, that we thought He was.’ Peter has healed the sick and cast out devils, like Jesus—a few hours ago he was helping in that wondrous distribution of bread and fish—surely (he thinks) we can do all that He does—can tread the waters too. See him venturing—yes, he is walking on the sea—suddenly a cry—he is sinking—the swimmer’s skill (John xxi. 7) no use—then a mighty hand stretched out, and he and Jesus are in the boat. Then two more wonders, ver. 32, John vi. 21.

Now ask two questions:—

1. Why did Peter sink? see ver. 30—‘*afraid*’; and why afraid?—‘*when he saw the wind boisterous.*’ Then he was looking—at what? Was not the storm as great just now, when He leaped from the boat?—but he *saw* it not then—never

thought of it then—his eye fixed on Jesus then—*therefore* could walk on the sea. 'Looking unto Jesus'—that the only way to be strong and brave.

2. What was it that he needed? See what Jesus says to him, ver. 31. 'Little faith'!—was it not *great* faith to venture on the water?—no, he was thinking partly of himself, how *he* was going to do a mighty thing—there was a *little* faith, but vanity too—he would do more than the others (comp. Mark xiv. 29, 30, and 2nd text for rep.). Then, when he was sinking, wanted the *hand* of Jesus to save him—but could not Jesus have saved him at a distance?—should have believed *that*. He wanted more faith.

THUS WE SEE THE SECRET OF STRENGTH.

1. *Jesus is looking at us*. Is that a pleasant thought? Not for His enemies: see what a *Divine look* may do to them, Exod. xiv. 24. But see how it can strengthen His people, Judg. vi. 14. The thing is to remember that He is looking. The disciples thought He was far away; so

He seems to us. We cannot see Him, but He is there [*illust.—sun, hidden by clouds, is still there*]. He is at God's right hand, and what is He doing there? Rom. viii. 34; and He can see all the way to earth, and be with us just when we want help. It may seem very dark, but—

'It is not night if Thou be near!'

2. *We must 'look unto Jesus'* (Heb. xii. 2). When in trouble, danger, anxiety, must look out for Him—He may come when we don't expect—in a way we never think of. And at every step we take—difficult steps, doubtful steps, dangerous steps—trying to be like Jesus, to act like Him, to imitate Him, in the midst of difficulty and danger—what to do? *To keep our eyes on Him*—the eyes of our mind—*our thoughts*; then shall find how true is the promise of Isa. xliii. 2. If begin to sink, cry, 'Lord, save me!' (comp. Ps. lxi. 1, 2); then shall say with the Psalmist (xciv. 18), 'When I said, my foot slippeth, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up!'

NOTES.

1. The voyage of the Apostles was from the 'desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida' (Luke ix. 10) across the Lake 'unto Bethsaida' (Mark vi. 45). The former was Bethsaida Julias, in Gaulonitis; the latter Bethsaida of Galilee; see last Lesson, Note 1. It would be impossible here to enter into the controversy respecting these places and the direction of the voyage. Mr. Macgregor's minute examination of the narrative, while himself on the Lake, seems satisfactorily to settle the point (*Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 374). The voyage was from the Plain of Butaiha to Khan Minyeh. After rowing '25 or 30 furlongs' (*John*), the ship would still be at a point sufficiently far from Khan Minyeh to be called 'in the midst of the sea' (*Matt. and Mark*). The wind, being contrary (from the west), would come out of the high gorge in the mountains called the Valley of Doves, and sweep across the Plain of Gennesareth on to the Lake, lashing its waters to fury, and blowing in the very teeth of the ship. See Map on page 65.

If the going to Bethsaida was simply coasting along the shore to Bethsaida Julias, or if Capernaum was at Tell Hum, the difficulties—from either the distance rowed, or the action of the wind, or the other circumstances named—seem insuperable.

2. Our translation, in John vi., accurately represents the original in regard to the two Greek words used, πλοιον (*plōion*), 'ship,' and πλοῦριον (*plōurion*), 'boat,' and the distinction is very interesting. The disciples crossed the Lake in their 'ship,' or large fishing-vessel; but St. John says that the people who were next day looking out for Jesus saw there was no 'boat' there except the one in which the disciples went, and that Jesus had not gone in that one. He adds, that other 'boats' came from Tiberias, and that the people took shipping (rather, 'ships') to return to Capernaum. Unless these distinctions

are carefully observed, difficulties arise: for instance, in John vi. 17, it is implied that after the disciples had launched forth, they expected Jesus to follow them, but, if they had gone in the only vessel, how did they think He could do so? Probably (as is suggested to the writer by Mr. Macgregor), the single 'boat' belonged to the place, or to some neighbouring fishing-port, and was there to put people on shore from the larger 'ships,' which lay a little way off. This 'boat' conveyed the disciples to their 'ship,' and then returned; and they thought Jesus might use it by-and-bye to come out to them. But He did not, as we know; and the people next day might be told by the boatman that *he* had not taken Jesus. For a similar elucidation of other points see *The Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 354.

3. 'The fourth watch of the night, i.e., from 3 to 6 a.m. Originally the Jews only reckoned three watches (mentioned respectively in Lam. ii. 19; Judg. vii. 19; and Exod. xiv. 24); but in later times the Roman division of the night into four watches came into use. All four are named in Mark xiii. 35.

4. 'It is a spirit'—rather, 'apparition,' or 'phantom'; in the Greek φάντασμα (*phantasma*).

5. 'Would have passed them by' (*Mark*). To try their faith. Compare Luke xxiv. 28.

6. Peter's words, 'If it be Thou,' do not imply a doubt whether it was Jesus; 'if' has the sense of 'since.' Our Lord's 'Come!' is not strictly authoritative—rather permissive. Yet Peter's act, though partly prompted by vain self-confidence, is not wholly to be condemned. To dare great things for Christ is not in itself wrong; all depends on the spirit in which it is done. Jesus does not rebuke the act itself, does not say 'Wherefore didst thou come?' And it must not be forgotten that Peter *did* for a moment or two, walk on the sea: a wondrous illustration of Matt. xvii. 20.

Lesson XLVII.—Disappointment and Desertion.

‘Will ye also go away?’

Read—Parts of John vi.; Learn—John vi. 66—68; Heb. iii. 12—14. (*Hymns*, 94, 95, 141, 145, 166, 335, 377.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The Sketch comprises a great deal more than can be properly taught in one Lesson, even with a senior class. But it has been thought best to give the argument somewhat fully for the teacher's information, and to leave him, after studying it, to select what portions may be suitable for his scholars. The two facts represented by the words ‘Disappointment and Desertion’ should be stated; which implies that neither of the two divisions of the Sketch should be wholly omitted, and that the narrative verses of the chapter (22—26, 41, 60, 61, 66—68) should, at all events, be referred to; while the causes of the ‘Disappointment and Desertion’ can, if necessary, be briefly mentioned without full explanation. The ‘Bread of Life’ is a most important subject itself; but on this occasion it is still more essential to dwell upon the revulsion of feeling produced by Christ's teaching in the minds, both of the people generally and of some of His disciples, as it appears to have been a chief cause of that departure of our Lord from the chosen scene of His ministry which the next Lesson relates. It will, therefore, be sufficient (if more cannot be done) to explain shortly the contrast between the desires of the people and the higher, but unappreciated, blessings which Christ was ready to give them; and to allude to the mystery of Christ's ‘flesh and blood’ in language similar to that which we are all wont to use concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, as something true, but (in its fullest sense) *incomprehensible*.

The two heads of application may be taken separately, if preferred, after the two divisions to which they respectively refer. The thoughts suggested by Peter's confession in ver. 68, 69, are deferred to the Lesson on Matt. xvi.

On the relation of the discourse in this chapter to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, see Note 5. The subject has not been introduced in the Sketch, because it would not be suitable for the bulk of our children. But with senior scholars this Lesson would be an excellent opportunity of explaining what really is, and what is not, ‘feeding on Christ.’ There is no error into which our pious elder boys and girls are more likely to fall than to attribute to the simple outward partaking of the Holy Communion a virtue which attaches only to the actual participation in the ‘body and blood of Christ’ *by faith*; an error which arises from thinking, not too *highly*, but too *lightly*, of the Sacrament.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What became of the 5,000 men miraculously fed? Most of them, who had not very far to go, no doubt went home when Jesus dismissed them; but those from Capernaum?—stayed there all night—in morning thought would get hold of Jesus again—perhaps He would give them breakfast as well as supper. But (ver. 22—25) can't find Him—is He gone back?—how could He? [*see last Lesson, Note 2*]. By-and-bye they recross the Lake to Capernaum—there He is!

Now, why did they follow Him so eagerly?—wanted Him to be their king (ver. 15)?—but why wanted that? Was it because they ‘saw the miracles,’ so learned His love and power, and wanted to be forgiven and made holy? or because they ‘did eat of the loaves,’ and thought if He were king He would feed them all for nothing? See what Jesus says to them when they find Him, ver. 26. All through this long chapter He shows them their mistake.

A very difficult discourse, but try to understand a few things in it, and see *two results* of it—people disappointed, disciples offended.

I. THE PEOPLE DISAPPOINTED WITH CHRIST.

Last evening they were disappointed—at what? ver. 15. Now still more so at what He tells them. What does He tell them?

(a) *What they ought to be eager for*, ver. 27 [*see Note 6*]. ‘You are eager to get food, and anything else of the kind that I could give you (riches and honour from earthly king, &c.); but suppose you get it, what then? It won't last (*perisheth*,) the best bread can only satisfy for a few hours—more and more wanted—and what good to you when you die? Why not be as eager for that which will feed the soul—(sustain, strengthen, satisfy it) [*Lesson XLV.*]—and not decay, but last for ever?’

(b) *How they could get this heavenly food*, ver. 27—29. It should be given them, if—*if what?* They asked, like the young ruler (Mark x. 17) and the jailor (Acts xvi. 30), 'What shall we do?' See the answer, ver. 29—'Believe in Him.' Well, did they not believe? had they not wanted to make Him king?—ah, but that showed *unbelief*, after all He had told them about the 'kingdom' [Lesson XXV., &c.].

(c) *What this heavenly food was*, ver. 30—35. They thought of the manna their fathers had in the wilderness—how could this Jesus give them anything better than that? But the manna, though God's special gift, not 'heavenly food'—why? did it 'endure to everlasting life'? did it feed soul or body? see ver. 49, 50. What then? *Himself*—the 'Bread of Life.' Why is He like bread? Sustaining, strengthening, satisfying [see Lesson XLV.]. Why called 'Bread of Life'? Earthly bread is the 'staff of life,' but only of the *body's* life. Jesus gives the *soul* life, and that life everlasting.

(d) *What He would do for those who came to Him to get the 'Bread of Life.'* 1st. Not one should be refused, ver. 37. 2nd. They should never hunger or thirst, *i.e.*, should have all their souls could want, and enough of it, ver. 35. 3rd. They should have everlasting life, ver. 40. 4th. And though this life for the soul, not for the soul *only*—the *body too* to be 'raised at the last day'—flesh and bones might decay and be broken up, but nothing to be lost, ver. 39, 40. (Comp. Communion Service—'preserve thy *body and soul* unto everlasting life').

Is it hard to understand all this? No doubt; but all can see that Jesus promises great and wondrous blessings—hard to be understood just because so great and wondrous (comp. 1 Cor. ii. 9). Could a little ragged boy understand a description of the Queen's palace? Yet, if told that *all that* might be his own, would he not be eager for it? Were the people of Capernaum eager for what Jesus offered them?

They were *disappointed!* Why? 1st. Because they cared more for earthly food, money, anything to give them pleasure *now*. 2nd. Because, though ready to call Jesus 'prophet,' and make Him 'king,' they remembered His family and home, and could not believe that He, the Nazarene carpenter, could have 'come down from heaven,' ver. 41, 42.

What was it they needed to make them different? The grace of God, as Jesus told them, ver. 44, 45—and that they *would* not have (see John v. 40; Matt. xxiii. 37; Acts vii. 51).

II. CHRIST DESERTED BY SOME OF THE DISCIPLES.

Deserted by His own friends!—how sad! We know how, just before His death, the Apostles forsook Him (Mark xiv. 50); but then they came back afterwards. *Now*, we see some forsaking Him *altogether*.

1. The 'Hard Saying.'

Jesus is now in the synagogue (ver. 59). The people's murmurings have increased and spread, and the chief men have come together again to hear these strange things about the 'bread from heaven.' Jesus has to defend Himself before them, as He had done a year before at Jerusalem (John v.). [See Note 1.] Does He speak more cautiously now? First, He repeats what He said before, ver. 43—51. Then He tells something new, something more startling than all, ver. 51—58.

'Eat the flesh' of Christ—'drink His blood.' Truly a 'hard saying' to understand [see Note 4]. Like a deep well—we can't see to the bottom of it. Yet see two things:—

(a) It showed that His flesh and His blood were to be *separated*; and how could they be separated but *by His death*? So when He speaks of giving everlasting life, &c., it is by His death. Of this the Jews then knew nothing; but *we* know. What had His death to do with our everlasting life? see 1 Pet. ii. 24; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. i. 7.

(b) 'Eaten'—'drunk.' When we eat and drink, what we take becomes *part of us*, goes to make our flesh, &c. So the words show that Christ is to become *one* with us (ver. 56); and that our souls can no more *live* without Him, than our bodies can without food (ver. 53).

Does all this seem very mysterious? Well, it is very mysterious how food makes our bodies grow; yet, if we take food, we know *it is so*. So, *come to Christ—then* will know what it is to 'feed on Him in thine heart by faith with thanksgiving.'

2. The result of the 'Hard Saying.'

See ver. 60, 61. Who are these 'disciples'? Not the Twelve. Not the people generally. Those who looked on Jesus as a great prophet, as, perhaps, Messiah—admired Him—liked to hear Him—followed Him about (see ver. 66, 'walked'). No doubt some of them among those who wanted to make Him king—hoped that by and bye He might claim the throne, and so turn out to be really Messiah. But now they are shocked. True, He offers them wondrous blessings [*above*], but how?—by their 'eating His flesh,' 'drinking His blood'—'what can He mean?' Whatever He means, it is not what they care about—why should they trouble any more about Him?—clearly He will never be the leader *they* want. See the offended looks—hear the discontented words—look! ver. 66—'went back—walked no more with Him.'

What must Jesus have felt? comp. Luke xix. 41, 42. See how He turns to the Twelve, ver. 67—hear His sad inquiry (not reproachful, He did not doubt them), 'Ye will not go away too?'

And what of the Twelve? are they wavering too? It must be a severe trial to them—their own friends, no doubt,

perhaps some they have brought to Jesus, turning away; and that is a strange saying of His—are not our friends right? Had we not better go back to our fishing? Perhaps Satan thus tempts them; but what is it they *desire*? Not only earthly gifts, but 'eternal life'—strange as His words are, they feel sure no one else can give them *that*—and what is their reply to Jesus? ver. 68, 69 (more of this another day).

ARE WE TEMPTED TO 'ALSO GO AWAY' FROM CHRIST?

There are some who are disappointed with Christ—but why? They thought of what they would *get* if they became 'religious'—credit, good reputation, prosperity in earthly things. Is this what He promises?

see John xv. 18–21, xvi. 33 [see *Lessons XXXIX., XLII.*]. What does He promise? [*above*]. Do we care for *that*? If so, shall we be disappointed? Rather exclaim, with the Queen of Sheba, 'The half was not told me!' (1 Kings x. 7)—see 1 Cor. ii. 9; Ps. xxxi. 19.

There are some who desert Christ because of His 'hard sayings'—want to understand everything, and, when cannot, are offended. But which is the *way* to understand? see John vii. 17; Hos. vi. 3; Ps. xxv. 14.

The Lord Jesus looks down: He sees us wavering, drawn this way and that. He says, 'Will ye also go away?' Go away from such a Friend? Lose 'eternal life'?

'O Thou who on the cross
Didst for my sin atone!
Preserve me by Thy mighty power,
And keep me for Thine own.'

NOTES.

1. Some harmonists assume that the discourse in this chapter was delivered the day after the feeding of the 5,000, and (because 'in the synagogue,' ver. 50) on the Sabbath; and, from this, draw various chronological inferences. But the assumption is in both respects a doubtful one. Certainly the conversation in ver. 25–40 occurred on the day after the miracle, but ver. 25 does not read as if Jesus was then in the synagogue. It seems probable that ver. 41, 42 may represent an interval of some hours, or even days; and the word 'murmured' is literally 'were murmuring'—a thing *going on*. Then the expression in ver. 43, 'Jesus answered and said unto them,' is in form the same as that in chap. v. 19, where it is believed to mark the opening of a formal defence (see Lesson XXXIV., Note 3). May it not be that the 'murmuring' came to the ears of the rulers and chief men (the '*Jews*' of 41, 52—see Lesson XVII., Note 5), and that the discourse of ver. 43–59 is Christ's formal vindication of Himself before them in the synagogue? If so, the day would probably *not* be the Sabbath. Ver. 66 also seems to indicate that the concluding verses of the chapter relate what occurred some days after the discourse.

2. It is interesting to compare the conversation in ver. 25–40 with that of Jesus with the Samaritan woman in chap. iv. In the one we have 'living bread,' in the other 'living water.' In the one there is an appeal to 'our fathers' and the manna; in the other to 'our father Jacob' and his well. In both Jesus contrasts the temporary and unsatisfying character of the natural with the eternal and satisfying character of the spiritual. In both, a half ignorant prayer is made to Him, 'Give me this water,' 'Give us this bread.' Yet how different the *results* of the conversations!

3. The gradual revelation of the spiritual food and feeding in this chapter should be noticed. First Jesus speaks of 'meat' (*i.e.*, literally, food generally), ver. 27; then, of 'bread from heaven,' ver. 32, 33; then of Himself as that bread, ver. 35; then, of the bread being 'His flesh,' ver. 51; then, in all its full mysteriousness, of 'eating his flesh and drinking His blood,' ver. 53. This order is somewhat obscured by a mistranslation in ver. 33, where '*he*' should be '*that*.' The Greek is, indeed, ambiguous; but the true sense is plain, for had the word been '*he*,' the prayer in the

next verse could scarcely have followed. Observe the '*Verily, verily,*' which introduces four of the most important statements, ver. 26, 32, 47, 53.

4. It would be impossible, in a brief note, to enter into the profoundly difficult teaching of our Lord respecting His flesh and blood. What appear to be the two leading ideas in it are shortly stated in the Sketch. It may be further observed that,—

(a) There is a plain reference to the *death* of Christ. For it is only by death that blood is separated from flesh; and the terms used are very precise—the 'blood' is not to be 'eaten' with or in the 'flesh,' but to be 'drunk.' The death, also, would obviously be a violent one. The fundamental thought, therefore, is that the life of the soul would be by the death of Christ.

(b) The precision of the language would seem to imply that there is a distinction between 'eating the flesh' and 'drinking the blood,' and some writers consider them to refer to the participation in the benefits of Christ's *Incarnation* and *Atonement* respectively. The repeated reference, too, to the resurrection of the *body* (ver. 39, 40, 44, 54) reminds us of the importance of Christ's resurrection in his human 'flesh,' see 1 Cor. xv.

5. Is there any reference in this discourse to the Sacrament of the Lord's supper? Few questions have been more hotly disputed. Apart from all controversies, the simple truth seems to be this: that Jesus here describes in symbolic language, not the Sacrament, but that which the Sacrament signifies—not the 'outward and visible sign,' but the 'inward and spiritual grace.' He speaks of a 'feeding': this 'feeding' is not the partaking of the Lord's Supper, nor is it a spiritual act exclusively connected with such partaking, but can it be doubted that the Lord's supper is the ordained outward expression of that same spiritual 'feeding'?

6. Words in this chapter needing explanation:—'*Labour*,' in ver. 27, is the same Greek word as '*work*' in ver. 28. It does not refer strictly to *labour*. The people had not *laboured* for the food Jesus had given them, nor were they *labouring* to get more. The idea is that of *eagerly seeking*.

An unusual and remarkable word is used for 'eat' in ver. 54, 56, 57, 58. 'Properly it is not

applied to food prepared by man, and it signifies the eager appetite with which animals fix on their food and devour it. . . . It shows the need of coming to Christ in the Holy Communion [and at other times also] with spiritual hunger, and with devout cravings and earnest longings

and yearnings of a famished soul for heavenly food.'—(*Wordsworth*).

'A hard saying,' in ver. 60, means, not a *difficult* saying, but a *harsh*, and therefore offensive one. The same Greek word is used in Matt. xxv. 24 ('a hard man') and Jude 15 ('hard speeches').

Lesson XLVIII.—In Phœnicia.

'The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.'

Read—Matt. xv. 21—28; (*comp.* Mark vii. 24—30); *Learn*—Rom. x. 12; Heb. xi. 6.

(*Hymns*, 40, 149, 150, 185, 342, 345, 380.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The epoch in our Lord's ministry at which we have now arrived (see Note 1) is of so much interest and importance, that it has been thought well to give it considerable prominence in this Lesson; and, so far from interfering with the more practical topics of the passage to be read, this plan, by exhibiting the contrast between the unbelief of the Galileans and the faith of the Phœnician mother, enhances the brightness of the latter's example. The introductory paragraph of the Sketch is not essential to the Lesson, but if taken, it will help to explain our Lord's words to the disciples.

It is always well to refer to passages in the Prayer-Book which illustrate, or are illustrated by, our Lessons. Nothing tends more to show the Scriptural character of the Liturgy, and its value as a guide to devotion. For instance, the subject before us is strikingly suggestive of the touching petition in the Communion Service—'We do not presume,' &c., 'we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table: but thou art the same Lord' (see 1st text for rep.), &c.

It has often been said that our Lord, while appearing outwardly to repel the woman, by His grace inwardly helped her to persevere. This is illustrated by Bunyan's picture of the fire which burned brightly, although water was thrown on it, owing to the oil that was being poured upon it from behind.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

When God promised Abraham that 'his seed' (*i.e.* Christ) should be a great blessing, what people did He say should have the blessing? Gen. xxii. 18—'all nations.' And when John saw the redeemed in glory, whence had they come? Rev. vii. 9—'all nations,' &c. But when all the world had forsaken God, He chose one nation to be His own specially—that He might train them to know and obey Him, and give them His messages to men to write down and keep safe—that from them the Saviour might come. When the Saviour did come, who, then, would be told of Him first? Acts xiii. 46. But not they only. When He had gone back to heaven, then 'all nations,' Luke xxiv. 47.

Yet one or two Gentiles came to Jesus while He was on earth [*illustr.—like first drops of coming shower*], Matt. ii. 2, viii. 5; John xii. 20, 21; [*see Lessons VII., XXVIII.*] See one to-day. See contrast between unbelieving Jews and believing Gentile.

I. CHRIST WITHDRAWING FROM THE UNBELIEVING JEWS.

For more than a year Jesus has been in Galilee. What doing? [*Lesson XXIV.*]

How many hundreds have been healed, or had their sick relatives healed—how many thousands have heard His gracious teachings! Yet what result? Open hatred and opposition of some; careless half-heartedness of others. [*Lesson XXXIX.*] True, the multitude, when miraculously fed, ready to make Him King, yet when He offered them *spiritual* food, what did even some of His own followers do? [*Last Lesson—recapitulate.*]

And now another attack upon Him. They have been up to the Passover (see John vi. 4), and come back with more of the malicious scribes from Jerusalem [*see Lesson XXXVII., Note 2*]. Never tired of finding fault with Him—now a new accusation, ver. 1, 2; *comp.* Mark vii. 1—5. See what He calls them, ver. 7; how He openly warns the people against them, ver. 10, 11; how this scandalises [*lit. meaning*] them, ver. 12. No doubt the rest of the people, already wavering in their feelings, now still more turned against Him.

What does Jesus do? ver. 21—*He leaves them*. Just as He left Jerusalem when persecuted [*Addit. Note IV., page 58*]*—just as He retired for a while when attacked at*

Capernaum [*Lesson XXXVIII.*—so now He quits Galilee—goes to the country where Elijah found refuge (1 Kings xvii. 9). What to do? Not to preach, but to be in retirement, see Mark vii. 24 (comp. vii. 36. viii. 26, ix. 30). [*See Note 1.*] Why? (a) His 'hour' not yet come to suffer; (b) the rest He had not yet found [*Lesson XLV.*], He may now get by going further away; (c) He may so get time to instruct His faithful ones.

His faithful ones—there are some—who? see John vi. 66—69. They are sure He is Messiah, is the Son of God—particularly after what they saw on the Lake that night (observe Matt. xiv. 33)—so, when their friends turn from Him, they remain steadfast [*last Lesson*]. With these Jesus goes away.

Very likely the apostles are sadly dejected at such an end to the year's labours. But they shall have several encouragements—see one to-day.

II. CHRIST SOUGHT BY THE BELIEVING GENTILE.

It is a heathen country in which Jesus now is [*see Note 2*]. He has not been here before, but the people have heard of Him—some have been into Galilee to see Him (Mark iii. 8).

Here are a mother and daughter. How pleasant, when a daughter is a help and comfort to her mother!—why cannot this one be so? Suddenly, a rumour that the wonderful Nazarene, who casts out devils with a word, is *here!* Shall the mother go to Him about her child? 'But He is a Jew—will He not regard her as a dog [*see Note 5*], turn from her in disdain? is she not one of the accursed race of Canaan? were not her forefathers Israel's worst tempters and enemies of old?' (1 Kings xvi. 31; Ezek. xxvi. 2). Yet she will risk contempt and denial, and go. Now see three things about her:—

(a) *Her faith.* She sees Jesus walking with the Twelve, How does she address Him? ver. 22—"Son of David"—then she knows of the expected Messiah—believes this is He. Did the Jews believe that? And, like the leper (Matt. viii. 2), she has no doubt about His *power*—only pleads for 'mercy.'

(b) *Her perseverance.* What answer does she get? ver. 23. Yet she 'cries after' Him. The disciples are alarmed—if she goes on crying out, they will be noticed—if she follows to the house, it will be known where they are (see Mark vii. 24)—she must be got rid of, whether answered or not [*see Note 4*]. But Jesus is going to give them an encouragement in their dejection [*above*] by shewing them that there is such a thing as faith in Him, though so little of it at Capernaum—therefore, will test her faith (like gold in the fire, see 1 Pet. i. 7). What He says (ver. 24) is true, but He will prove to them that this poor Gentile is one of the true children of

Abraham (see Rom. iv. 11; Gal. iii. 8, 9). Now see her perseverance. They have gone into the house [*see Note 3*], but will she be left out? See, she has burst in, and is at Jesus' feet—hear her urgent cry, ver. 25—surely the tender Saviour must yield now—no. He gives her the hated name of 'dog'—how can He give her what belongs to the chosen people?

(c) *Her humility.* Yes, let her be a 'dog'—she does not mind that—but then how can He refuse her?—do not dogs eat the crumbs?—she wants nothing of the children's—only let her have the dogs' portion. [*See Note 6.*]

Once we saw Jesus 'marvelling' at 'great faith' [*Lesson XLVIII.*—and that, too, was in a Gentile; so here again. See its reward: she is 'sent away' (Mark vii. 29)—but how? How true is our first text for repetition!

Thus we see,—

1. *The Result of Unbelief—Blessings removed.* The Galileans had Jesus with them a long while—did not believe—some who did turned away—then what did they lose? How many blessings we have; not only earthly, but heavenly too—Bibles, churches, schools, teachers—above all, a mighty Saviour and Friend 'waiting to be gracious.' Are we careless of all this? Then may lose opportunities even here; and if death comes?—What if one day a 'great gulf' (Luke xvi. 26) between us and Christ? It may be so with some who (like the Jews) think 'all well with them, at all events.'

2. *The Result of Faith—Blessings bestowed.* See what kind of faith the Phœnician mother's was:—

(a) *Rightly directed.* She trusted in Jesus, in God's Messiah—in His power—in His willingness to help. So let us. Many trust in something else—they want to be happy—trust in money; want to be forgiven—trust in their idea that God 'could not be so hard as to condemn them'; want to be sure of heaven—trust in their 'not being worse than other people,' or in their church-going, &c. But remember,

'None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good;—

and 'helpless sinners' we all are, whether we feel it or not.

(b) *Persevering.* Have you prayed, and not been answered? Some have. Perhaps Jas. iv. 3 gives the reason; but perhaps Christ is *waiting* for you to go on asking. Who would grant you a favour, if you asked it, and then ran away and forgot it? If you really wanted Christ's blessings, you would go on asking *even if not sure* how He would receive you. But are we not sure? What is His own promise? John vi. 37; and see 1's. xxvii. 14, xl. 1; Isa. xxx. 18; Lam. iii. 26; Luke xviii. 1—8. Go to Him, believing that (*2nd text for rep.*) He is 'the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'

NOTES.

1. Most expositors agree in regarding the epoch in our Lord's ministry at which we have now arrived, as one of great importance. The 'Galilean ministry,' properly so called, was now at an end; and it is doubtful whether Jesus appeared again publicly at Capernaum. We find Him on the borders of Phœnicia (see next Note), in the half-heathen districts of Decapolis, on the east of the Lake (see next Lesson), and in the extreme north of Palestine, near Cæsarea Philippi (Lesson L.); and, although he more than once passed through Galilee, His movements seem to have been carefully concealed (see references in the Sketch). It is usually assumed that this period of seclusion lasted about six months, from the Passover of John vi. 4, which He appears not to have attended, to the Feast of Tabernacles of John vii. The remaining six months of His life, from this Feast to the last Passover, seem to have been spent chiefly in Peræa and in the 'journeys toward Jerusalem,' as will be more fully explained hereafter.

It is considered that the retirement from Capernaum was partly on account of the revulsion of feeling in the popular mind described in John vi., and partly for the sake of the Apostles—that they might receive fuller instruction from their Master's lips. It was during these northern journeys that the coming death of Jesus was revealed to them (Lesson LI.).

The chapters which refer to this period are Matt. xv., xvi., xvii., xviii.; Mark vii., viii., ix.; Luke ix. 18—50.

In Bishop Ellicott's *Lectures on the Life of Our Lord*, the characteristic features of the period are very clearly presented.

2. Phœnicia is the narrow strip of plain between the mountains and the sea, extending about 100 miles northward from the rocky headland called the Ladder of Tyre. On this district see Mr. Bardsley's 'Notes of a Tour in Palestine,' *Church S. S. Mag.*, April, 1869, p. 150; Thomson's *Land and the Book*, chaps. V. to XIV.; Porter's *Giant Cities*, &c., p. 271.

It is doubtful whether our Lord actually entered Phœnicia, or only approached its borders ('coasts'). Ellicott argues for the former view, on the ground that several of the oldest MSS. (including the Sinaitic and Vatican) read, in Mark vii. 31, 'from the coasts of Tyre He came through Sidon.'

The woman is called by Mark 'a Greek,' *i.e.*, a Gentile, and a 'Syro-Phœnician by nation,' *i.e.*, one of the Phœnician race in Syria, as distinguished from the Liby-Phœnicians or Carthaginians. Matthew calls her 'a Canaanitish woman' (*lit.*), the Phœnicians being included among the ancient nations of Canaan (see Judg. i. 31, 32, iii. 3).

3. From a comparison of the accounts in Matt. and Mark, it appears that the latter omits the woman's first application to Jesus, which, since she 'cried after them,' must have been as He was walking—and his reply to the suggestion of the disciples; and that she followed Him to His dwelling, and there renewed her entreaties.

4. '*Send her away.*' These words, which are simply equivalent to 'dismiss her,' leave it uncertain whether the disciples wished the woman's prayer to be granted or not. But our Lord's answer seems to imply that they did.

5. '*Unto the dogs*'—the common term of contempt applied by the Jews to the Gentiles, as now by the Mohammedans in the East to the Christians. It always implied reproach, the nobler qualities of the dog not being referred to in Scripture; see 1 Sam. xvii. 43, xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. xvi. 9; 2 Kings viii. 13; Matt. vii. 6; Rev. xxii. 15. Jesus, however, softened the term by using the diminutive and more domestic word '*little-dogs.*'

6. '*Truth, Lord, yet,*' &c. Rather, '*Yea, Lord, for.*' The word (*vac*) rendered 'Truth,' is the same as that rendered first 'surely' and then 'even so' in Rev. xxii. 20—'*Surely (vac) I come quickly*'—'*Even so (vac), come, Lord Jesus.*' '*Yea*' is distinctly wrong: the woman does not argue against Christ's words, but accepts them, and adopts them, as furnishing her with a new plea. Wordsworth thus paraphrases her rejoinder:—'*Yea, Lord, Thou sayest true; it is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs: for the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table. Let me, therefore, not have bread, but only crumbs: and do not give me even them, but let me pick up those that fall: for this is our [the dogs'] lot.*'

Luther, on these words, exclaims, 'Was not that a master-stroke? she snares Christ in His own words.'

Lesson XLIX.—In Decapolis.

'My God shall supply all your need . . . through Christ Jesus.'

Read—Matt. xv. 29—39; (*comp.* Mark vii. 31—37, viii. 1—9); Learn—Isa. xxxv. 5, 6; Phil. iv. 19. (*Hymns*, 22, 48, 76, 93, 134, 180, 341.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The obvious points of practical application in this passage are the same that have arisen in previous Lessons. To avoid monotony, however, they are taken up in the Sketch in a way somewhat different from what has been before suggested. Thus, the insufficiency of either *power* or *compassion* by itself, the spiritual purpose of temporal mercies, and the impressiveness of the sight of a great crowd, are new points. and, if

adequately grasped by the teacher, will prove interesting to the scholars. The *first* of these three is well treated and happily illustrated in the second chapter of Jacob Abbott's *Young Christian*. The *third* has been suggested by a thoughtful sermon in the *Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*.

The sub-sections (*b*) and (*c*), under Division II., have been introduced to complete the subject, and also because no other special instance of a deaf or dumb person being cured occurs in the Course. But they are not essential to the general plan of the Lesson, and can be omitted if necessary.

With elder classes, the interesting circumstances, mentioned in Note 3, of the distinction between the two kinds of 'baskets' used on the two occasions of 'gathering up the fragments,' should be clearly explained. Such 'undesigned coincidences' do much to confirm faith in the truth of Scripture, and they have the great advantage of doing this *directly*, and not in the way of reply to sceptical objections.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

A great crowd—have you ever been in one?—ever looked down upon one? Cannot distinguish people in it—all mingled together—yet how different really! If could only *know each one*—his home, family, occupation, &c.—his troubles, sorrows, pleasures, &c.—his thoughts and feelings, good and bad—what strange differences! Some things to make one glad; but how much more to make one sad! [*Illustr.—When Xerxes looked on his vast Persian army, he wept to think that none would be alive in 100 years.*] Once there was One on earth who looked on many crowds, and did know all about each person in them.

To-day see a great crowd come to Him—how He felt—what He did.

1. An Infirm Crowd. [Read ver. 29—31.]

Where did we leave Jesus? why in distant Phœnicia? [*recapitulate.*] He is still journeying about with the twelve Apostles—has now come into another part of the country, Decapolis (Mark vii. 31) [see Note 1], east of Lake of Gennesareth—is there on the mountains. The people here very different from the Jews of Capernaum—various nations mingled, Jews, Greeks, Syrians, &c.—not so many scribes and synagogues—more ignorance, &c. Yet had heard of Jesus—some had seen Him (Matt. iv. 25)—and that man whom we know, the demoniac who once lived in the tombs—see what he had done in this country. Mark v. 20.

And now that the great Teacher and Healer is here Himself, what do they do? See the long lines of people toiling up the steep hills—carrying and dragging whom? See them, each eager to be first, *throwing down* their sick friends before Jesus, ver. 30! Then the wonder—new voices from speechless tongues—cripples leaping from their mats, throwing away their crutches—those who used to feel their way now *looking joyously* at their friends. What prophecy thus fulfilled? [1st text for rep.]

Is wonder the only thing? Praise also—and *who* is praised?—they knew not that Jesus was God, so rightly looked up to God in heaven, ignorant heathen joining with Jews to 'glorify the God of Israel.'

2. A Hungry Crowd. [Read ver. 32—39.]

Not a different crowd—the same people. In wonder and gratitude cannot leave Jesus—hour after hour, day and night, listening to His gracious words—can't have too much of them—(are we like that?). At last, on third day, what does Jesus say? Have the disciples forgotten that great evening when they went round the ranks of the 5,000 with the pieces of bread and fish?—surely not—but they never think of Jesus repeating the miracle—so their question (ver. 33) natural—Jesus not angry with them [see Note 2]. Yet—what follows? Another little store brought to Him—another solemn thanksgiving—another going round and round the ranks—another 'filling' of the hungry—another gathering of the fragments—perhaps another cry of 'Let Him be king'—certainly another hasty departure, ver. 39.

Here was a crowd with all sorts of various bodily needs—then with a great common need. Now for two questions:—

I. HOW WERE THESE NEEDS SUPPLIED?

By the Compassion of Jesus? Yes, partly; see ver. 32 and Mark viii. 2. As those crowds came up the hill, He could see every heart—knew every circumstance. How much for Him to pity—and how deeply *He* would feel it all! [see Lesson XXX., under 'Compassion']. And see Mark vii. 34, viii. 12—Jesus *sighing*. But then *we* also feel compassion for the needy and suffering, yet do we always supply the need? why not?—have not the *means*, the *power*. So Compassion not enough by itself.

By the Power of Jesus? Yes, partly this too; and how blessed to have such power! But we, again, sometimes have power (in our little ways) to help others; yet do we always help them? why not?—are selfish—do not feel compassion. So Power not enough by itself.

Willing, and also able—able, and also willing—what a Friend is the Lord Jesus!

II. WHY WERE THESE NEEDS SUPPLIED?

Was it just because Jesus was willing and able?—because He pitied their infirmi-

ties and their hunger, and therefore did the miracles? Well, He *was* always ready to do good. Yet, another object too—a greater one still. When He looked on that crowd and knew all about them, was His compassion only for their bodily needs? Ah, He saw what was at the bottom of it all—*sin*; His ‘sighs’ because the people ignorant, living without God (see Eph. ii. 12). Now, these miracles—what might they do?

(a) Tell of God’s power and love—that He cared even for these poor, untaught, despised herdsmen, shepherds, &c.—that the ‘God of Israel’ cared for all, Greeks, Syrians, Arabs, as well as Jews. *Did* the people learn this? whom did they ‘glorify’? ver. 31.

(b) Show what Jesus could do *spiritually*. What would the lame walking be a picture of? [*Lesson XXXIII.*] The blind seeing? 2 Pet. i. 9; 1 John ii. 11; Acts xxvi. 18. Look at one miracle which Mark tells us all about, vii. 31–37. *Deaf and Dumb*—how sad and helpless [*picture*]. Yet there are deaf and dumb worse than that: deaf to God’s voice (Ps. lviii. 4; Matt. xiii. 15; Acts vii. 57; Heb. v. 11), dumb to speak in prayer, praise, &c. And to these Jesus can say ‘Ephphatha’—can open the mind (Luke xxiv. 45) and heart (Acts xvi. 14), so that they say, ‘Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth’ (1 Sam. iii. 9; comp. Ps. lxxxv. 8; Hab. ii. 1); can loosen the tongue, so that it shall speak to God (Ps. v. 3, xxx. 12—*margin*), and for God (Acts v. 20). ‘O

Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.’

(c) Might be done in particular *ways*, likely to do the *soul* good too. See *how* Jesus treated the deaf man—not like the others:—(1) the man had sight and feeling, but not hearing and speech—so Jesus made signs which he could *see* and *feel*, ver. 33—to make him understand *who* cured him; (2) the cure not in public—‘took him aside,’ ver. 33; (3) Jesus forbade them to make it known. We know not exactly *why* all this; but clearly it was to do the man’s *soul* good in some way.

HAVE WE NOT NEEDS LIKEWISE?

Earthly needs: health, friends, employment, education, enough to live upon, &c.

Spiritual needs: pardon of sin, a new heart, the Holy Spirit, strength to overcome sin, &c.

CHRIST KNOWS OUR NEEDS—all of them. He looks down on many *crowds* (e.g., on the crowd of scholars in *this* school), but He knows *each one separately* (*you*, and *you*).

Has He compassion? Ps. lxxxvi. 15; Isa. lxiii. 9; Lam. iii. 22.

Has He Power? Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2; Heb. vii. 25.

Does He supply our need? Think—[reckon up *temporal mercies*]. But these earthly good things ought to make us thankful, loving, obedient—so do good to our souls too; do they? Let not our spiritual needs be unsupplied because we *refuse* the help. Let Him (2nd text for rep) ‘supply *all* our need.’

NOTES.

1. Decapolis was a large district on the east and south-east of the Lake of Gennesareth, including portions of the ancient Bashan and Gilead, and so called from ten cities (*deca*, ten; *polis*, city), which were rebuilt, partially colonised by foreigners, and endowed with special privileges, when the Romans conquered Syria, B.C. 65. Among them were Gadara, Gerasa, Hippos, Pella (whither the Christians fled just before the destruction of Jerusalem), Philadelphia (the ancient Rabboth-Ammon), and Scythopolis (the ancient Bethshan), the last on the *west* side of the Jordan.

Probably Christ journeyed eastward from Phœnicia across Northern Palestine, then southward through Gaulonitis, and so to the mountains on the east of the Lake. After the feeding of the 4,000, He crossed the lake to Magdala (*Matt.*), the modern Mejdal, just opposite. Mark says He came ‘into the parts of Dalmanutha,’ which is supposed to refer to some adjoining place.

2. It is usual to charge the Apostles with great unbelief, on account of their reply to Christ’s remark about the hungry multitude, after such a miracle as they had seen Him do before; and sceptical writers have argued, from the supposed impossibility of such unbelief, that the narrative is only a different account of the original miracle. But, although their repeated unbelief was quite possible (comp. Numb. xi. 21, 22, with

Exod. xvi.), their words do not necessarily imply it at all. Christ’s remark would seem to them quite natural; there was no hint that He intended to work a second miracle of the kind; and for them to suggest it would have been (as Alford says) as unbecoming as it was in Mary (John ii. 3, 4).

3. The ‘baskets’ named in this passage are not the same as those used on the former occasion. The Greek words are different. All the four Evangelists use the same word (*κόφινος*, *kophinos*) in their accounts of the *first* miracle; Matthew and Mark, who alone record the *second*, both use another word (*σπυρίς*, *spuris*) in their accounts of it. The distinction is also preserved in the passage (Matt. xvi. 9, 10; Mark viii. 19, 20) where Jesus refers to both miracles; which is one of the most remarkable of the ‘undesigned coincidences’ of Scripture. The *spuris* was a very large basket, as is shown by the use of the word in Acts ix. 25, where it is said that St. Paul was let down over the wall in a ‘basket.’

4. The following remark of Luther’s on our Lord’s *sigh* (Mark vii. 34) is quoted by Stier:—‘This sigh was not drawn from Christ on account of the single tongue and ear of this poor man; but it is a common sigh over all tongues and ears. The greatest mischief which has been inflicted on Christianity has not risen from tyrants, but from that little bit of *flesh* which abides within the jaws.’

LESSON L.—Peter's Confession.

'Thou art Peter.'

Read—Matt. xvi. 13—19; (*comp.* Mark viii. 27—29; Luke ix. 18—20); *Learn*—John vi. 45; 1 Pet. ii. 4—6. (*Hymns*, 43, 102, 120, 123, 158, 320.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Many teachers will be a little afraid of this Lesson, under the not uncommon idea that the famous verse, 'Thou art Peter,' &c., needs to be rather anxiously explained away for fear of its supporting the claims of the Papacy. For this fear there is no ground whatever. Whether the word 'rock' refers to Peter or not (on which see Notes 3, 4) is a purely critical question, which does not affect the actual privilege conferred upon him: a privilege which cannot be disputed, though it gives not the slightest warrant for Papal pretensions. (See Note 6).

Teachers of elder classes should be prepared to deal with this subject, only let them do so calmly and confidently, and not as though our controversy with Romanism depended on the interpretation of a difficult metaphorical expression. There are boys and girls, in neighbourhoods where Roman Catholic influences are at work, who think that if the 'rock' in this passage does mean Peter, then the Church of Rome is the true Church; and it is just this conclusion that should be shown to be absurd.

No passage shows more impressively than this the essential nature of the great doctrine of Christ's Divinity. However limited Peter's knowledge may have been, the faith which made him a 'foundation-stone' in the Church was obviously a faith in that doctrine. Its importance, therefore, should be earnestly urged, especially on thoughtful senior scholars, who are often open to Socinian influence. A good opportunity is afforded by this Lesson to explain that the bowing of the head when the name of Jesus occurs in the Creed is an ancient custom signifying personal assent to the doctrine that 'Jesus' is one of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity; and reference may be made to the fact that in the Baptismal Service the question is put, 'Wilt thou be baptized in *this* faith? (*i.e.* the faith of the Creed); and that the formula of baptism itself is, in accordance with our Lord's command, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son,' &c., implying belief in the coequal Godhead of Christ. At the same time, it must always be carefully pointed out that mere orthodoxy is useless—that it is only the faith of the heart that can make the most accurate theologian a 'stone' in the true Church.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How strange it must seem to the Apostles to be now wandering about the mountains and distant parts of the country because Jesus has been rejected by the people! When left homes, fishing, &c., expected great success—so it was at first—wondrous miracles, great popularity—then opposition from the chief men—then, just when popularity greatest, change of feeling, desertion of disciples [*Lesson XLVII.*—now, all seems to look dark. True, grateful crowds in Decapolis [*last Lesson*], but these only poor country-folk. Since then, been once again into their own neighbourhood (Matt. xv. 39), but set upon by Pharisees and obliged to sail back to east side of Lake (xvi. 1—5). Now far away again, near Philip's Gentile city [*see Note 1*].

Why do they still stay with Jesus? We shall see.

I. PETER'S FAITH, ver. 13—16.

As they walk along (*Mark*), what does Jesus ask them? ver. 13. After all those teachings and miracles, what do the people think of Jesus? They had fancied He was Messiah sometimes (see Matt. xii. 23), but

the Pharisees had made them doubt that, and then He would not be the king they wanted. [*Lesson XLVII.*] Still they could not think badly of Him—perhaps He might be a prophet—Elijah or Jeremiah—or the murdered Baptist risen again (see Matt. xiv. 1, 2). [*See Note 2.*]

But the Twelve—what do they think? They might well doubt and hesitate—but no—the answer is ready, ver. 16—and decisive too, not 'we say,' or 'we think,' but 'Thou art.' 'Art' what? (a) *The Christ*. No doubt Peter is perplexed and downcast by the seeming failure, yet sure of one thing—'He is Messiah, it will come right by-and-by.' (b) *Son of the living God*. Peter did not then know all we know about this—about the Trinity; but would remember Ps. ii. 7—Jesus had often spoken of 'My Father'—they had been with Him when He prayed (*e.g.* just now, Luke ix. 18)—they could see He was in some way nearer God than other men.

II. THE SOURCE OF PETER'S FAITH, ver. 17.

Source, where it came from (like river).

How did he know that Jesus was Messiah and Son of God? Had the Baptist said so? (John i. 27, 29, 34)—but all the people had heard that too. Was He like what the Scriptures predicted? (John v. 39)—but they too had the Scriptures. Did His miracles settle the point? (John v. 36, x. 37)—but the people had all seen these. Yet they believed not—why then (despite all doubts and obstacles) did Peter believe?

See what Jesus says, ver. 17. 'Flesh and blood' (his own ideas about Messiah, and others' opinions) never would have taught Him this. But God did. That was why he had come to Jesus (1st text for rep.; comp. Matt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. xii. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Gal. i. 12, 15, 16). Well might he be called 'blessed'! God had made him feel his sin (Luke v. 8) and wish for eternal life (John vi. 68)—felt no use going to any one but Jesus.

III. WHAT PETER'S FAITH QUALIFIED HIM TO BE, ver. 18.

Qualified, made fit [illust.—pupil teacher being qualified for mastership, apprentice for trade].

You have watched masons at their building work [name some instance]. Stones all carefully cut to right size and shape, so qualified for their places. Those at bottom, how large, strong, firm!

What does Jesus tell Peter He is doing? ver. 18—*building His Church*. Not a church of stones from the quarry; a Church of souls—men, women, and children are the 'stones' in it—'living stones,' built up into a 'spiritual house' (2nd text for rep.). Who are the foundation-stones, the great ones laid first? see Eph. ii. 20 (comp. Rev. xxi. 14).

Now, was Peter fit to be a great foundation-stone in the Church? Not naturally—was ardent and affectionate, but unsteady. But what had Jesus said to him when they first met? John i. 42 [see Lesson XV.]—'thou shalt be called *Cephas*, i.e., a stone, firm and strong. His own name Simon—but should be called *Peter* (Greek, same as *Cephas*, Heb.) by-and-bye. See now what Jesus calls him, ver. 17, 18: first, 'Simon Barjona' (son of Jonas), his own name; then, 'Thou art Peter,' the promised new name. What made *Simon* now worthy to be called *Peter*? It was *his faith about Jesus*. Because he believed in 'the Christ, the Son of God,' he would be firm and strong, fit to be a great foundation-stone in the Church. [See Note 3.]

In the Church—'well, but (Peter might think) is the Church being built?—it looks more like being pulled down just now—every one falling away from us.' Still—'*I will build*.' It is on a rock, on the safe and sure foundation. Jesus Himself (so firm, never changing, Heb. xiii. 8) underneath all, Isa. xxviii. 16 (comp. 1 Peter ii. 6); 1 Cor. iii. 11. The Apostles built in next, so that Peter himself, joined on to Christ, becomes like the rock (the *petra*) too—be-

comes, as it were, part of the rock [see Note 4]. Darker days to come yet—death should come on them (they little thought how soon on Jesus Himself)—but the grave should not conquer—its 'gates' not shut them in for ever [see Note 5]—the Church triumphant at last—not one 'stone' missing.

IV. THE SPECIAL REWARD OF PETER'S FAITH, ver. 19.

Peter not only to be in the Church himself, but to have a special work to do [see Note 6.]

Keys—Jesus now speaks of the Church in another way, as like a city or a palace—men to be invited to come in. Who could open the gates? [illust.—who opens door of church or school? he who has the key.] Who has the key of God's palace, God's heavenly city? see Rev. iii. 7 (as prophesied, Is. xxii. 22). The gates shut against sinners, but Jesus, taking away sin, opened them (Eph. ii. 13, 18)—'Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers' (*Te Deum*).

To Peter Jesus gives the key—what for? Not to do what the Pharisees did, Matt. xxiii. 13. No, but to throw open the gates wide to Jews and Gentiles. What meant? *His preaching*—was not Peter the first to proclaim the glad news to Jews (Acts. ii.) and Gentiles (Acts x., see xv. 7)? And something else—'bind' and 'loose'—should make laws, say what to be done and what not to be done, in the Church; see how he did afterwards, Acts v. 9, xv. 7, 22. But not Peter alone; the same authority to the other Apostles, see Matt. xviii. 18.

Why these privileges and honours given to Peter? Not for anything of his own, not as *Simon*; but for the faith God gave him, as *Peter*. He and the others could have no fitness, except by God's grace in them, see 1 Cor. iv. 6, 7, xv. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Eph. iii. 7.

We cannot have Peter's office, nor his privilege in being a foundation-stone. But 'stones' we may be—'living stones' in the Church.

HOW CAN WE BECOME STONES IN CHRIST'S CHURCH?

Not naturally. No more fit for it than 'Simon son of Jonas.' Like rough, shapeless stones in the quarry—want to be cut, polished, prepared. There must be a *change* in us, as in Peter.

Only by having Peter's faith. What was his faith? (a) In Jesus as 'the Christ,' the Deliverer from sin. Do we trust in Him as our Saviour? (b) In Jesus as 'the Son of God.' Do we adore and obey Him as our Lord and our God?

How may we get this faith? God alone can give it—ask Him.

You say you believe all that. You can say the Creed, and accept it. Yes, but Peter's faith made him—(a) cleave to Christ when others turned away (see John vi. 66—69); (b) confess Christ openly (comp. Rom. x. 9, 10). Is our faith like that?

NOTES.

1. Cæsarea Philippi must not be confounded with the Cæsarea on the coast, so often named in the Acts. It was situated at the foot of Mount Hermon. Its original name was Panium (the Greeks having there a shrine of the god Pan), which has been corrupted into the modern Banias. Philip the tetrach enlarged and beautified it, and named it after his imperial master and himself. The scenery is the finest in Palestine. Behind the ruins rises a towering cliff, 1,000 feet high, one of the spurs of Hermon, on the top of which are the remains of a Saracen castle, which for grandeur is compared by Hanna to that of Heidelberg. Under the cliff is a dark cave, from which springs one of the three streams which ultimately unite and form the Jordan. See Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* iii., p. 258; Stanley, *S. & P.*, p. 394; Porter, *Giant Cities*, p. 103; Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 581; Thomson, *L. & B.*, p. 229 (where a sketch of the cave is given). If our Lord's words to Peter were spoken at this spot, the great cliff would give peculiar force to the expression, 'on this rock.'

2. The belief that Elias should precede Messiah (see Matt. xvii. 10) arose from Malachi's prophecy (Mal. iv. 5); and as the Baptist had said he was not Elias (though he did fulfil the office, see Luke i. 17), the people fancied Jesus might be he, and that the Messiah might be expected to follow. There was also a Rabbinical idea (perhaps based on 2 Esdras ii. 18) that Jeremiah would re-appear. The third opinion named, that Jesus was the Baptist risen again, might be that of the Herodians (Matt. xiv. 2).

3. 'Thou art Peter.' Comparing this expression with the 'Thou shalt be called Cephas' of John i. 42, it is clear that by it Christ intimates to the Apostle that the predicted change in his character has now taken place, and that the evidence of this is the confession of his faith. That faith gave him what he had not naturally—a *petrine* character (as it has been well called). By addressing him just before by his own name, Simon, Christ would mark the contrast between the natural and the renewed man—'Thou, Simon, son of Jonas, art now Peter'; and thus shew him that it was only as Peter—i.e., only by grace—that his high commission could be given him. So, when, after his great fall, this commission was renewed, Jesus addressed him as 'Simon, son of Jonas' (John xxi. 15-17), to remind him of 'the weakness of his mortal nature.'

4. 'Upon this rock.' Three explanations have been given of these words: (a) That the 'rock' is the doctrine confessed by Peter; (b) That the 'rock' is Christ; (c) That the 'rock' is Peter.

(a) Concerning the first view, it may be said, that it is contrary to the usage of Scripture to apply such a metaphor to a *doctrine*; and the words, so explained, do not read naturally—'Thou art Petros, and upon this *petra*, this *confession of faith*, &c. Why, on this view, did our Lord say, 'Thou art Petros' at all?

(b) The second view expresses what is an unquestionable truth, viz., that Christ is the real foundation of the Church, the rock on which it is built (see texts cited in the Sketch). The question is whether our Lord is here referring to this truth; and, it may again be asked, if so,

what is the meaning of the words, 'Thou art Petros'? No interpretation can be correct which *denies* that the true 'rock' is Christ; but many of His titles are applied to His servants in a subordinate sense. They are shepherds; He is the chief Shepherd. They are apostles; He is 'the Apostle' (Heb. iii. 1). They are to 'shine as the sun' (Matt. xiii. 43); He is the Sun of righteousness. They, like Him, are 'the light of the world'—not merely light-bearers (as in Phil. ii. 15), but 'the light' (in Matt. v. 14 φῶς, the very word applied to Christ in John i.). The fact, therefore, that He is the 'Rock,' does not necessarily prove that the same name cannot be given to His servants.

(c) If the *thira* view be correct, why are the words used (*petros* and *petra*) different? If Jesus spoke in Aramaic (Hebrew), there would not be a difference; but, as it is doubtful whether He did not speak in Greek, this cannot be pressed. Alford urges that the difference is inevitable, because *petra* is feminine, while the name given to Simon must be in the masculine form, *petros*. And the larger term might be used to shew that Peter was not alone; the Church should be built on 'the foundation of the apostles and prophets.' But, it is asked, how can the Church be built upon a fallible and sinful man? To which it is replied, that it was only the *renewed, believing, grace-changed*, nature of the Apostle that is referred to (see preceding Note). The words would then mean, 'Thou, Simon Barjona, art in thyself quite unfit to be a foundation-stone in My Church, but now thy faith hath made thee a *Peter*; thou hast become transformed into the likeness of Me, the true Rock; and upon such a foundation, such a *petra*, I will build My Church.' Certainly this is the most *natural* interpretation.

On this latter view, a singular force is given to Christ's subsequent remark to Peter, 'Thou art an offence unto Me,' literally, 'a stone of stumbling.' See next Lesson, Note 4, and comp. 1 Peter ii. 6, 8.

5. 'The gates of hell,' lit. 'of Hades.' When the abode of evil spirits, the place of punishment, is referred to in the N.T., the word used is 'Gehenna.' 'Hades' always means simply the place of the departed—the region of the dead. The term 'gates of Hades' cannot, therefore, mean, as commonly interpreted, the *power of Satan*, but rather, *death and the grave*; and the idea is that death, though seemingly victorious over the Church (as when Christ Himself died, and when the Apostles were martyred), should not really 'prevail against it.' Death is represented as having 'gates,' in Job xxxviii. 17; Ps. ix. 13, cvii. 18; Isa. xxxviii. 10; comp. Rev. i. 18. And by 'gates' is symbolised not only imprisonment, but power—the gates of eastern cities being the places of authority and judgment; see Deut. xvi. 18; 2 Sam. xv. 2, xix. 8; and compare the common appellation of the Turkish empire, 'Ottoman *Porte*.'

6. On ver. 19, Stier quotes a statement of the Rabbinical writer Maimonides, that it was the custom, when a Scribe was formally authorised to teach, to hand him a key, and give him 'power to bind and loose'; which throws great light on our Lord's words. The key is the symbol of *stewardship* (see Isa. xxii. 15-22); and Christ's

ministers are 'stewards of the mysteries of God,' (1 Cor. iv. 1). The idea, therefore, is involved of dispensing the treasures of God's Word, as well as of opening and shutting. 'Binding' and 'loosing' are expressly spoken of *things*, not of *persons*—'whatsoever,' not 'whomsoever,' and the reference is to the administration of the Church.

The same power is given in Matt. xviii. 18 to all the Apostles, a sufficient refutation of the Romish theory of the Primacy of St. Peter. In

the Gospels and the Acts, although Peter is frequently the spokesman of the Apostles, there is not a trace of any supremacy; and still less in his own Epistles. Even if such supremacy were granted, its supposed descent to his successors would still be a pure invention; and even if *this* were granted, who are the successors? Certainly not the Bishops of a city over the church of which there is no evidence that Peter ever presided.

Lesson LI.—The New Revelation to the Disciples.

'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Read—Matt. xvi. 20–28; (comp. Mark viii. 30–ix. 1; Luke ix. 21–27); Learn—Gal. vi. 14; Luke xiv. 27. (*Hymns*, 57, 63, 82, 127, 171, 312, 324, 355.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson is one of the most important in the Course, and the teacher should do his utmost to grasp it thoroughly, and teach it well, as much that is to follow will hang upon it. To insure its effectiveness great pains will be necessary to make quite clear to the children that what is to them so familiar, and so natural, was to the Apostles most strange and shocking; and this not only as regards the *death* of Christ, but particularly as regards the *mole* of that death, the peculiar ignominy of which must be especially dwelt upon. It may be mentioned that in Mrs. Charles's story, *The Victory of the Vanquished*, this ignominy is several times very vividly depicted.

In the second division of the Lesson, the Baptismal covenant should be referred to, and particularly the use of the sign of the *cross* as a token of dedication to Christ's service.

Section 2 of the second division may be omitted in case of need, as being less essential than the rest to the main subject; but its intrinsic importance should cause it to be retained if possible. A sermon preached at St. Paul's by Canon Liddon—*The True Profit*—deals very powerfully with the topic of this section.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What do people do who hear good news?—keep it to themselves? If something good happened to your family [*suppose a case suitable to local circumstances—e.g., 'if your father were made a foreman'*], whom would you tell?

What good news have the disciples got now? [*last Lesson—recapitulate*]. To whom would they want to tell such great things? Would they not want to go about proclaiming, "We were quite right—He is Messiah—says so plainly—the 'kingdom' going to be set up now—nothing shall 'prevail against it'—we to be His chief men—To Jerusalem!—rally round Him—turn out the Romans!"

Now see what Jesus says, ver. 20—'Tell no man'—how strange!—why not? Because they are all wrong—not wrong to be sure He is Messiah, Son of God, but wrong about the kingdom being set up—wrong about what is going to happen to Him and to them. He will tell them why they are wrong. To do so, must tell them a new thing, something they have never thought of, something that would seem very sad and painful. [*See Note I.*]

1. CHRIST'S CROSS BEFORE CHRIST'S CROWN.

What does He say? ver. 21 (comp. Mark viii. 31). (a) Yes, he is going to Jerusalem. But what for?—to be received with joy? to be set on David's throne? no—(b) To be 'rejected,' just as before, by the rulers. (c) Worse than that, to 'suffer many things' of them. Ah! but He will overcome them, be king in spite of them, as prophesied, Ps. ii.? No—(d) To be KILLED! Can we not see Peter's indignation, John's silent amazement, Thomas's despair, Judas's selfish dismay? Stay, something else—(e) To rise again; but this they understand not—scarcely hear it for horror.

Look at Peter, seizing hold of Jesus—what does he say? ver. 22—'shall not'—he is quite sure—why? has the Father again taught Him (see ver. 17), that he should rebuke his Master because he knows better than He? See the reply—is it 'Blessed art thou' again? Why does Jesus call Peter 'Satan'? It is the same temptation that came once before (Matt. iv. 8–10) [*Lesson XIII.*], to take the kingdom without suffering, the crown without the

cross. Jesus knows *who* is at the bottom of *that*—not even 'flesh and blood,' ver. 17 (comp. Eph. vi. 12), but—? And He knows why Satan suggests it—to make Him fall if possible; so what is Peter now? not a 'foundation-stone' but a 'stumbling-stone' [see Note 4], put right in the path of Jesus for Him to fall over.

But why was it such a temptation? why so dangerous? Think—what did Jesus come for? Matt. i. 21; John i. 29. How save from sin, how take it away, unless bear the penalty, unless *die*? This is why Jesus said '*must*' (ver. 21) [see Note 3]—no salvation without it. And no crown, no glory, either: if He died not, He *failed* in His work—and the glory only to be His when it was finished, John xvii. 4, 5; Phil. ii. 8, 9; Heb. xii. 2. But Peter knew not this—thought death would be ruin (comp. Luke xxiv. 20, 21).

This not all. Jesus has spoken of Himself—now speaks of *them*.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S CROSS BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN'S CROWN.

The people have gathered together now (see Mark viii. 34)—doubtless at the news that Jesus is come. What an opportunity for Peter! would he not like to use his 'keys' and tell them about Messiah?—but *this*, this strange and fearful announcement—cannot tell this to any one. See what Jesus does—calls them to Him; speaks before all—will have no one deceived—all shall know what 'following Him' means. What does He say?

1. *That following Him shall be shameful and painful*, ver. 24.

What do people think the greatest disgrace to any one? Is it not to be *hung* as a criminal? Among the Romans, several ways of putting to death: one, the most painful and disgraceful of all, kept for rebellious slaves, robbers, and all low and despised people—*nailing alive to a wooden cross*. This thought of as a horrible and shameful thing; if met a man carrying a cross (as the criminal was made to do) and being led to execution, would know he was some bad and worthless fellow. Now see what Jesus says—*Every follower of His to 'take up his cross'*! (comp. Matt. x. 38; Mark x. 21; Luke xiv. 27). What could this mean?

(a) If to do this was to follow *Him*, then *He*, too, must have to carry a cross; and what did *that* mean? It told *how* He should die—as a common felon! What must Peter think now!

(b) But why should they, His followers, carry crosses? Was that what they were coming to—instead of the glory and power they were expecting, to die a lingering death, scorned and pointed at as the vilest of men? Well, every one must be *ready* to face that (see Luke xxii. 33; Acts xxi. 13), and on some it should really come.

(c) Another strange word—'*daily*' (Luke). How could they be crucified *daily*? No,

but every day they must be content to bear shame and contempt: every day cheerfully bear painful and wearisome trials (*little* ones sometimes, but not pleasanter for that); every day struggle against, conquer, *crucify*, their sins. See Gal. v. 24; Col. iii. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2, 12—16.

2. *And yet, that following Him is the only wise and safe course*, ver. 25, 26.

Why wise, when scorn certain? why safe, when death likely? But suppose the worst—a cruel death—what then? What is lost? life and property? Well, these may, perhaps, be saved by *not* following Christ, but what is lost *then*? You may have the 'whole world'—be richer and more thought of than the greatest person you know [*illust. locally—e.g., 'may be owner of this estate' or that 'factory, 'have servants, carriages, &c.'*—but if soul lost, what 'profit'? see Luke xii. 20, xvi. 25. Profit—all look after that—[*illust.—tradesman, or even boys exchanging marbles*]—'What shall I make by it?' And when the soul gone, *lost*, how buy it back? sold for earthly good things, what is the price to redeem it again? 'What give in exchange for soul?' (comp. Ps. xlix. 6—8). [See Note 5.]

3. *Because He will Himself most surely be the Judge of men*, ver. 27, 28.

The Apostles might well be struck down with disappointment; but now Jesus tells of brighter things—He is to conquer yet—there shall be another Coming—and how?—in humiliation?—to suffer? 'In glory,' 'with His angels' (comp. Matt. xiii. 41, xxiv. 30, xxv. 31, xxvi. 64). And then—what? Whose will be the 'profit' and the 'loss' then? Those who have borne the cross shall wear the crown!

But how to be sure of this? ver. 28— even in this life they shall see the proof of it. Some shall see the real glory of the Son of Man [*next Lesson*]; some shall see the 'kingdom coming in power'—the Church spreading everywhere, the impatient judged; thus have a taste of the triumph to come. [See Note 6.]

IS THE CROSS FOR US ALSO?

Christ's Cross. We know about it and admire it; some put the figure of it on churches, books, ornaments; we sing '*When I survey the wondrous cross*,' &c. But are we trusting in what Jesus did on the cross? is that what we care for and think about? or are we hoping to be saved for our prayers, church-going, good conduct? Look at Acts iv. 12; Gal. vi. 14.

The Christian's Cross. Are we carrying ours '*daily*'? [*above*]. Think of just that *little thing* which is hard to bear, and which you *must* bear if you are faithful. *That* is your '*cross*'—carry it. Must you give up something you like if you do? Think of the '*profit*': what kind of boy is he who drops a sovereign to pick up a stone?

Would you 'follow Christ'? It is he,

'Who patient bears his cross behind
He follows in his train.'

NOTES.

1. 'Tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.' The word 'Jesus' is not in the oldest MSS., and should plainly be omitted. There was nothing new in the simple fact that His name was Jesus. The news would be that Jesus, the well-known Nazarene prophet, was indeed 'the Christ.' The connection of the prohibition with the Lord's announcement of His approaching death is obvious from Luke ix. 21, 22.

2. Our Lord had given intimations of His death before, see Matt. x. 38, xii. 40; John ii. 19, iii. 14, vi. 51; but they were not understood. And that the present was the first occasion on which He spoke plainly of it, is evident from the words, 'From that time,' &c.

3. The word 'must' (δεῖ), in ver. 21, is the same that is so often used emphatically of Christ's work. See Lesson X., Note 5.

4. 'An offence unto Me.' The word is *σκάνδαλον* (*scandalon*, whence our 'scandal') and signifies a snare or stumbling-block in the path. The use of this expressive term in many places is very interesting: see Matt. v. 29, xi. 6, xiii. 21, 41, xviii. 6, 7, xxvi. 31, 33; John vi. 61; Rom. ix. 32, 33, xi. 9, xvi. 17; 1 Cor. i. 23, viii. 13; Gal. v. 11; and the passages parallel to these.

Our Lord's application of the word to Peter shews that his fitness to be a 'foundation-stone' was not natural, but of grace; left to himself, he would become a stumbling-stone. See last Lesson, Notes 3, 4. It is remarkable that Peter, in his 1st Ep. (ii. 6-8) applies *both* these terms to Christ Himself. He is the chosen foundation-stone (Isa. xxviii. 16), made the 'head of the corner,' although 'rejected' by the 'builders'; and yet He is a 'stumbling-stone' (Isa. viii. 14) to those who believe not.

5. The Greek word (ψυχῆ) rendered 'soul' in ver. 26 is the same as that rendered 'life' in ver. 25. But both translations are correct: for, that the word cannot always mean bodily life is clear

from Matt. x. 28—'them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul' (ψυχῆ); while, that it cannot always mean spiritual life is equally clear from Matt. vi. 25—'Take no thought for your life' (ψυχῆ). The meaning must be determined by the sense. 'Give *in exchange*' is literally 'give as an equivalent'; the word strictly means the price offered by the *seller* to buy back an article from the *buyer*.

6. The meaning of ver. 28 is much disputed. (a) Some think that Christ refers to His actual Second Advent, and interpret the words 'taste of death' as meaning *eternal* death, which the Apostles would not taste 'until' then, *nor after*. (b) Some think that the reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem, which is spoken of as a type of the final advent in Matt. xxiv., and which John and Philip are said to have lived to see. (c) Some regard the 'coming of the kingdom' as the progress of the Gospel after Pentecost. (d) Some think the words were fulfilled only a week after at the Transfiguration, when Peter, James, and John, saw Jesus in glory.

The first of these views is grammatically inadmissible, the words, 'not taste of death *until*,' implying that death *should* be tasted when the limit of time was passed. But there seems no good reason why the three others should not be all right. What was wanted when Jesus spoke was some assurance that the 'coming' predicted in ver. 27 would really occur, and this assurance would be given in successive and different ways. Those who saw the Transfiguration ought to have been satisfied by it that Jesus had a glory yet to be revealed. Those who witnessed the Church's success after the Ascension would have an earnest of the final triumph of the 'kingdom.' Those who lived to see the exact fulfilment of Christ's predictions concerning the guilty city would see in it the foreshadowing of the still more awful judgment to come.

Lesson LII.—The Transfiguration.

'Eye-witnesses of His majesty.'

Read—Luke ix. 28—36; (*comp.* Matt. xvii. 1—13; Mark ix. 2—13); *Learn*—2 Pet. i. 16—18; Col. iii. 4. (*Hymns*, 43, 49, 75, 101, 226, 315, 351, 357, 391.)

TO THE TEACHER.

There can be no difficulty in making this Lesson interesting. The very vagueness which will be inevitable in picturing what is so mysterious will be an element of attractiveness. But let the teacher be on his guard lest the interest of the narrative should prevent the great truths underlying it being appreciated. And let him not be dissuaded, by any thought of drawing the main application from the familiar use of the words, 'It is good for us to be here,' from giving these truths due prominence. The central point of the Lesson is the connection between 'the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.' If the preceding Lesson insisted on 'Christ's cross before Christ's crown,' this one gives the sure evidence of the crown to follow the cross. In order to give proper time to this point, it may be well, if necessary, to omit the conversation concerning Elias, or even those portions of the Lesson which dwell on the relation to Christ of the Law and the Prophets.

In the Sketch, the design and influence of the Transfiguration is traced simply as they concerned the Apostles (and so, indirectly, ourselves). But the event, no doubt, also concerned the heavenly visitants and our Lord Himself; and this subject may, if it be thought desirable, be at least alluded to in senior classes. See Note 8.

The junior class teacher must never assume that all the words of a verse which are read are also understood. The word 'decease,' for instance, which occurs in this Lesson, will be found less generally familiar than might be supposed. Many children, too, will not of themselves identify Elias with Elijah.

The passage is beautifully expounded by Abp. Trench, in his *Studies in the Gospels*. Dr. Hanna's chapter upon it is an excellent one. In Bishop Hall's *Contemplations* there are two most quaint sermons on the Transfiguration, preached before James I.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How perplexed and downcast the Apostles must have been after what Jesus told them [*last Lesson*]. True, He spoke of glory by-and-bye—but the *cross*—that must mean shame and death. See to-day how Jesus encouraged three of them, Peter, James, and John.

Evening—tiring journey up steep mountain [*see Note 3*]. Night—on the top [*see Note 4*]. Lonely place—far away from houses and men (Mark). If daylight, could see splendid view, but now all dark and still. What is Jesus doing? ver. 28; and the three? ver. 32. When besides did those three sleep while Jesus prayed? Mark xiv. 32—40.

Suddenly they wake up—a blaze of dazzling light—what can it be? They are startled and amazed—see what at.

I. AT WHAT THEY SAW.

(a) *The glory of Jesus.* 'Transfigured' (Matt. and Mark)—what is that? see ver. 29 [*see Note 6*]. See what is said (Matt.) of His face, and (Mark) of His dress. Comp. Acts. xxvi. 13; Rev. i. 14—16; also Ps. civ. 2; 1 Tim. vi. 16. What must they have felt! Their Master, the plain carpenter from Nazareth, with whom they walk, talk, lodge, eat, &c., every day—now like—like what?—they know not—such glory never on earth before! But what then? Why, 'He is all, more than all, that we thought—whatever the *cross* may mean, the *glory* is real.' And *such* glory!—heavenly, not earthly—not of the king of the Jews, but of the King of heaven.

(b) *The companions of Jesus.* Two other figures there, glorious too (ver. 31)—the great Lawgiver and the great Prophet—the two greatest men the disciples have read of in the Scriptures. Both fasted miraculously (as Jesus had done), Deut. ix. 9; 1 Kings xix. 8; both had wondrous visions of God, Exod. xxxiii. 18—23; 1 Kings xix. 11—13; both passed away mysteriously, Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6; 2 Kings ii. 11; both now come from heaven to talk with Jesus [*see Note 5*]. Again, what must Peter and the others have felt! what new ideas of their Master's greatness! And, no more perplexity because Jesus seemed to break the Law and not fulfil the Prophets (as the scribes made out)—here are Moses and Elijah themselves with Him!

II. AT WHAT THEY HEARD.

(a) *The conversation.* What about? ver. 31—'His decease' [*see Note 6*]. The very thing that had so shocked Peter! To be 'accomplished'—a thing planned out, designed by God! 'At Jerusalem'—the city where they thought He should reign! That death which they could not bear to think of, known about in heaven [*see Note 8*].—looked forward to by glorified saints!

But now Moses and Elijah are moving away. What does Peter say? ver. 33—'Why should they go?—it is so glorious—so happy—let us get boughs of trees, and make three booths.' Ah! but that would not do—cannot have this always—there is the sinful world down below—that is where the Apostles should be, working for Christ—the glory not yet—only a glimpse of it. [*Illust.—How unwilling we are to end a day of pleasure! yet it cannot last—days of work to follow.*] But see—a glorious shining cloud covering them [*see Note 7*].—Jesus, Moses, Elijah, fading into it; then upon the ears of the trembling Apostles falls something more wondrous yet—

(b) *The Father's Voice.* What does it say? 'My beloved Son'—God Himself telling them who that humble and despised Galilean is. 'Well pleased'—whoever may hate and scorn Him, the Father is satisfied, comp. Isa. xlii. 1; John viii. 29. (How blessed, even to Jesus Himself, to hear this [*see Note 8*], just when the time of suffering fast coming on! comp. Isa. liii. 10.) 'Hear Him'—quite right to hear Moses, and keep his law—to hear the Prophets and obey their voice—but these only pointed to Messiah, prepared His way—now He is here.

But could the disciples take in all this then? See—flat on their faces, stricken with terror (Matt.); comp. Exod. xx. 19; Hab. iii. 2. And then another voice, one they well know, the voice of a man like themselves, of a gentle friend; and with it a touch (comp. Dan. x. 10; Rev. i. 17). They look up—the light vanished—dark again—'Jesus only.'

Now consider again—what would this great event teach Peter, James, and John? Three things [*work these out by questioning back*]:—

1. What the real glory of Jesus was [*above*, I. (a)].

2. What He had to do with the Law and the Prophets. They were with Him, and not against Him [*above*, I. (b)]. He was superior to them [*above*, II., (b)].

3. The necessity of His death, just that which they could not reconcile with His glory and supremacy [*above*, II (a)].

Did they understand it all then? Did not even think about it—began to puzzle about other things of less consequence [*like some people who reject the Gospel because of some petty Bible difficulty*]: see what they discussed as they came down next day (Mark ix. 10), and what they asked Jesus (11). How did Jesus answer them? (12, 13)—yes, it was true the Scriptures told of Elijah's coming (Mal. iv.), but so they did of His sufferings (Isa. liii.); well, the one had been fulfilled (see Luke i. 17)—why would they not believe the other would be? But no wonder, while they are so dull, they are not to talk about it (Mark ix. 9)—not till all has come to pass and is clear to them. [See Notes 9, 10.]

Yet, could they ever forget that night? But they *did* once—think of Peter saying he 'knew not the man' whose divine glory he had seen! How weak we all are! Still, he did remember. In his old age, after years of toil and persecution, he could look

back to the night when he was an 'eye-witness of Christ's majesty,' and with his own ears heard the Father's voice;—thus *knew* in Whom he had believed—it was no 'fable'; and that, though *his* 'decease' near, glory awaited him beyond; see 2 Pet. i. 13—18 [see Note 6].

Eye-witnesses! Should we not have liked to see Jesus as He used to be in Galilee—to see His works—to hear His words? That we never can see. But—

WE SHALL SEE HIM IN HIS GLORY, as He was that night on the mount. Everybody will, see Matt. xxv. 31, 32, xxvi. 64; Rev. i. 7. What will happen then?

His people will be in glory too, just as Moses and Elijah were (2nd text for rep., and Dan. xii. 3; Matt. xiii. 43; Rom. viii. 18). What kind of glory? *Like Him* (John xvii. 22—24; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Phil. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2).

Shall we have it? How can we!—so unfit—think of our evil thoughts, words, acts—how unlike Christ! Yet we may—why? *Because of that very DEATH*, which Peter could not understand, of which Moses and Elijah talked. Because He died, we can 'lay our sins on Jesus.' Because He died, the Spirit comes to make us holy.

Every day think, 'He laid aside His glory that I might share it—then how can I sin against Him?'

NOTES.

1. On the connection of the passage with the verse immediately preceding, see last Lesson, Note 6. That the Transfiguration was *one* fulfilment of Christ's words in that verse is evidenced by (among other things) Peter's words in his 2nd Ep. (i. 16)—'the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

2. Matthew and Mark say 'after six days'; Luke says 'about an eight days after.' These are simply two modes of reckoning, one inclusive, the other exclusive.

3. The tradition that the Transfiguration took place on Mount Tabor has no intrinsic authority, and is probably wrong. Tabor was at that time occupied with a fortified city. The fact that Christ was near Caesarea Philippi a week before (Matt. xvi. 13) suggests that one of the spurs or peaks of Mount Hermon was the scene of His glory, and in this all modern travellers concur. Hermon is the one really 'high mountain' of Palestine (10,000 feet), and the only snow-capped one—which gives point to Mark's simile, 'white as snow' (this reading is, however, doubtful). Our Lord's words, too, in Matt. xvii. 20 (spoken after the descent next day), 'Ye should say unto *this mountain*,' are doubly impressive if Hermon is referred to. Dr. Tristram gives a glowing account of the view from the top of Hermon (*Laud of Israel*, p. 609).

4. That the Transfiguration took place at night may be fairly inferred from Luke's statement (ver. 37) that they came down 'the next day.' Observe, too, the sleepiness of the Apostles; and that night was often our Lord's time for prayer.

5. The appearance of Moses and Elijah sug-

gests many profound questions which cannot be answered, owing to our ignorance of the unseen world. It is remarkable that both had ended their lives mysteriously: Elijah (like Enoch) having been 'translated,' so that he already possessed His glorified body; while some have conjectured, from Moses' appearance at the same time, and from the difficult passage in Jude (ver. 9), that his body had also been raised again and glorified.

6. Words needing explanation:—*'Transfigured'* (Matt. and Mark) is literally 'metamorphosed'; the word is rendered 'changed' in 2 Cor. iii. 18. Christ was 'in the form ($\mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta$, *morphee*) of God,' and took the 'form ($\mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta$) of a servant.' Now He is 'metamorph-osed.'

'Decease' is literally 'exit' or 'departure' ($\xi\zeta\omicron\delta\omicron\varsigma$, *exodos*, whence the Book of *Exodus*).

'Tabernacles,' i.e., tents or booths.

'Fuller.' The fuller's trade consisted in cleansing linen garments, and, by means of what was called 'fuller's earth,' giving them a peculiar whiteness. The trade is alluded to in 2 Kings xviii. 17; Isa. vii. 3; Mal. iii. 2.

'Wist not,' i.e., 'knew not.' To 'wis' was an old English verb, whence comes 'wit,' 'wise,' &c.

It is very remarkable that in the passage in which St. Peter refers to the Transfiguration (2 Pet. i. 13—18), he uses two of the peculiar words of this passage. He speaks of his own 'decease' ($\xi\zeta\omicron\delta\omicron\varsigma$), and of putting off his 'tabernacle.'

7. The 'bright cloud' seems to have been like the Shechinah of the O. T., the symbol of God's presence (Exod. xiv. 19, xl. 34; 1 Kings viii. 10;

and other passages). It is curious that the word 'Shechinah' expresses the idea of *dwelling*, so that the 'bright cloud overshadowing them' was a suitable answer to Peter's suggestion that he should provide 'tabernacles.'

8. We cannot doubt that the Transfiguration had a design beyond that of encouraging the three Apostles. The visit of the glorified law-giver and prophet to the earth, and their conversation with Jesus on His coming death, could not be solely for that purpose. It is easy to conceive the interest with which the departed saints of the O. T. must have looked to that atonement of the Son of God in virtue of which they had entered into rest—for though an event yet future, it was as good as past in the sure counsels of God, so that the Lamb is spoken of as 'slain from the foundation of the world.' And the interview would doubtless be animating to the human spirit of Jesus, in the prospect of His coming sufferings. The Father's audible Voice, also, as it had encouraged Him at His consecration to His ministry, so now again speaks when He is about shortly to enter on the last phase of His humiliation.

9. Why were the Apostles forbidden to tell

what they had seen and heard until after the Resurrection? Trench answers, 'The mystery of Christ's sonship should not be revealed to the world till it was attested beyond all doubt, till He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. i. 4). It could only be a matter of dispute and profane discussion till then.' Their perplexity respecting the 'rising from the dead' arose, not from the general doctrine of a bodily resurrection being unfamiliar to them (comp. John xi. 24; Acts xxiii. 6-8), but from their inability to grasp the idea of Christ's death.

10. 'Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?' They had just seen Elias; was *that* his coming? if not, when should he come? In His answer, Christ refers them to the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy in the Baptist, and adds the assurance that, as *that* prediction had been fulfilled, so should the predictions of those very sufferings of His which they could not believe. His words, as recorded by Matthew, compared with Mal. iv., seem clearly, however, to point also to another personal coming of Elijah before the Second Advent, of which the Baptist's mission at the First Advent was a type.

END OF PART I.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

ON THE

LIFE OF OUR LORD.

PART II.

Lesson LIII.—The Demoniac Boy.

‘Why could not we cast him out?’

Read—Mark ix. 14—29; (*comp.* Matt. xvii. 14—21; Luke ix. 37—42); Learn—Mark ix. 23, 24; Acts iii. 16. (*Hymns*, 50, 126, 137, 148, 166, 264, 343, 345.)

TO THE TEACHER.



THE fact that the demoniac in this narrative was a young person, enables us to give the subject an unusually direct application to our scholars—an application which ought to be peculiarly effective. It cannot be doubted that the great enemy is ready to assail the soul of a child at the earliest moment of its being susceptible of either good or bad spiritual influences. Moreover, most teachers have met with the *hard cases*—cases of ungovernable temper, or incorrigible wilfulness, or seemingly incurable deceitfulness—cases concerning which we instinctively feel the truth of our Lord's words, ‘This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.’ It will be well, as is suggested in the Sketch, to be exceedingly plain in teaching this Lesson. Let the class feel, for once at all events, that their attendance at Sunday-school is nothing less than a being ‘brought unto the disciples’ to be delivered from the influence of their ‘ghostly enemy.’ Such a thought, if once caught by them, cannot but be solemnising. It need scarcely be added that teachers who habitually disregard the higher aspects of their work, and regard it as but a light thing, will be unable to act on this suggestion.

Two cautions are necessary, however. (1) All children are not alike. All must not be included under the same sweeping description. And, while not flattering any, while not concealing the active hostility of Satan against *each one*, a common-sense distinction must be drawn, and the application avowedly directed specially against the ‘hard cases.’ (2) It must be clearly stated that the work of the teacher really consists simply in obeying Christ's command, ‘Bring him unto Me’; that all power and grace are in Him alone.

The heads of the Sketch may perhaps appear fanciful, but their design is to bring into prominence Christ's words (in St Matthew) in answer to the question, ‘Why could not we cast him out?’ His answer is a very important part of the subject, but if it should be found too difficult for younger classes, the teacher has only to omit division II. of the Sketch, and he will have an equally complete and much simpler lesson.

Much light will be thrown upon the more difficult parts of the Lesson by a reference to some preceding Lessons, viz., *on faith*—XXI., XXVIII., XXXII., and XLVIII.; and, *on demoniacal possession*,—XXIV. and XLIII.

Several thoughts in this Lesson are derived from a sermon on the subject, by the Rev. S. Thornton, which appeared in the *Church Sunday School Magazine* for May, 1870, p. 206.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Have you ever been stopped short in something you wished to do, by some great difficulty you could not get over? [*Illust. took up slate—thought 'soon do lesson'—but found the sum very hard—got stuck fast.*] In Bible, these difficulties called mountains, (Isa. xl. 4; Zech. iv. 7; Mark xi. 23; Luke iii. 5; 1 Cor. xiii. 2). Mountains great obstacles to travellers, armies, &c.,—hard work getting over them.

To-day see how, while Christ and the three Apostles away on the 'high mountain' [*last Lesson*], a great 'mountain' of difficulty came in the other nine Apostles' way.

I. THE MOUNTAIN OF DIFFICULTY.

What had Jesus given the Apostles power to do? Mark vi. 7. Did they succeed in casting out devils? Mark vi. 13. So now a poor father comes to them to cast one out of his son, ver. 18. See what a bad case it is: we have read of other demoniacs, but this seems worst of all. The poor child not able to speak plain ('dumb,' ver. 17, yet 'crieth out,' Luke ix. 39)—deaf, ver. 25—sometimes terrible fits, ver. 18—sometimes in peril of life, ver. 22—like a madman, Matt. xvii. 15. Think of the home—no other children (Luke ix. 38)—how sad for father and mother!

Here is a hard case for the Apostles!—a mountain of difficulty.

But something else makes the 'mountain' worse. When any one came to Jesus for a miracle, what did Jesus say he must have? see Matt. viii. 13; ix. 28, 29; xv. 28; Mark ii. 5, v. 34, 36, x. 52; John xi. 40; comp. Matt. xiii. 58; Acts xiv. 9. But the despairing father has scarcely any faith—comes to the disciples like drowning man clenching at straw—fears it is hopeless; see ver. 24. So here is another difficulty.

Now see the result: '*they could not.*' Think of their dismay, shame, fear—Thomas looking at Philip, Matthew at Jude—the scribes scoffing at them and their Master, ver. 14—the people excited—and in the midst the weeping father with his afflicted child.

What a sight for Jesus and the three as they came down from the Mount after all that glory [*last Lesson*!—truly it would not have done to have stayed in Peter's 'tabernacles.'

II. WHY THE DISCIPLES COULD NOT REMOVE THE 'MOUNTAIN.'

How was it they failed? They could not make it out themselves—so asked Jesus afterwards. See His reply, ver. 28, 29; Matt. xvii. 19—21.

1. *Their faith was too weak.* Their faith—their trust or confidence. What should they have trusted in? Not in any power Jesus gave them, but in Jesus Himself. When saw the child, should have thought like this: 'Our Master came down from heaven to deliver people from the devil—He could do this—He would do this—He

wants us to do it now—He promised to give us power'; then they would have found they could. Why? because their power not their own, but that of One who could do all things. But just then their feelings different—(a) had been cast down about the 'cross' [*Lesson LI.*].—(b) Jesus absent, and they like soldiers without general—(c) their three leaders absent too—(d) and this such a very hard case. So, unbelief; and so, failure.

2. *They had not tried to make their faith stronger.* How could they? see ver. 29. (a) *Prayer.* Should have prayed then as they did afterwards (Luke xvii. 5), 'Increase our faith.' (b) *Fasting.* Had been caring too much for their own pleasure and comfort—not 'enduring hardness' (2 Tim. ii. 3), like 'good soldiers'—afraid of the 'cross'—how could they then expect to conquer? How did St. Paul overcome his great 'mountains'? see 1 Cor. ix. 27; comp. Acts xiii. 3, xiv. 23.

III. HOW THE 'MOUNTAIN' WAS REMOVED.

In the midst of the confusion—there is Jesus! To Him all run. Who answers His question? Not the scribes—too much annoyed at His coming; not the disciples—too much ashamed; not the people—too much startled; who? ver. 17. See His sad exclamation, ver. 19 (comp. Matt.): 'faithless—who were so? [*above*]; 'perverse'—(i.e., wilful, going 'own way,' Isa. liii. 6)—were not the wavering people and mocking scribes so? 'How long with you?' (comp. John xiv. 9)—ought they not to have known and trusted Him by this time? 'How long suffer you?—had He not borne with them (Isa. lxiii. 9; Heb. xii. 3) enough? 'Bring him to Me'—the great and only remedy.

Does Jesus cast out the devil instantly? Why not? Does He not pity the poor child writhing there on the ground? Ah, but He pities still more the 'faithless and perverse' hearts—must give them a lesson; thinks too of all who shall read of this in after ages, of us—all need to know how Satan to be conquered. See what He does.

(a) The father must tell *all about it*, that he may be reminded how sad the case is, that all may see how hard it is. (So with sin—God wants *all* confessed, not for His information, but that the sinner may feel his sinfulness.)

(b) Then all must know *what* is the thing really wanted. '*If Thou canst,*' says the father—he is not sure, like the leper (Mark i. 40). Ah, that won't do—of course Jesus can, but that's not enough—Jesus could cast out all the devils in the land, yet He does not. See what He says, '*If thou canst*'—'It depends, not on My power, but on thy faith' [*see texts above*].—'you come to Me believing that I am God's Messiah from heaven, full of love and power, then I

can heal the boy.' See the weeping father's cry—'I do believe, and yet'—he feels that he only half trusts in Jesus—but he prays Jesus to 'help his unbelief'—does not that show he really believes?

Do you think Jesus answered that prayer? Then He did two miracles—Satan cast out of father's heart and of child's body. But is all right yet?—see, the child senseless on the ground. Yes, the voice of Jesus has dismissed the spirit, and now His hand lifts up the boy and restores him to his father.

A CHILD POSSESSED OF THE DEVIL! Are there such now?

Ah, too many! In Africa and China? Yes, and in England too—many who were given to Christ in baptism, marked as His own, ought not to be Satan's, yet are in his power. Who are they? see John viii. 44; Eph. ii. 2; 1 John iii. 8. Any of you, when you sin, are in Satan's power. Sometimes a

hard case, a 'mountain' of difficulty. We teachers want to deliver you—but are not some very rebellious?—well, those are the bad cases.

What to be done? Jesus says, 'Bring them to Me.' So we do, when we pray for you. So we do when we tell you of His love, and try and win you to Him. Not one heart can we touch by any power of our own; if we are able to interest you, to be kind and patient, to draw you from sin, to bring you to God, it is all because of two things:—(a) That Christ is willing and able to save you. (b) That we look to Him and trust only in Him.

But one great difference between that poor demoniac boy and you. He could not help it—you are responsible. True, Satan is stronger than you, but then Christ invites you to be free, died that you might be free—now it rests with you—which master will you choose?

NOTES.

1. The connection of this narrative with the preceding one is very instructive. From the glory of the Mount—from communion with the Father and with glorified saints—Christ and the three Apostles descend to a scene typical of the miseries of humanity. No contrast could be greater. The scene is an illustration of the twofold aspect of the Christian life, devotion apart from the world, and work in the world.

The statement of ver. 15, that the people, on seeing Jesus, were 'greatly amazed,' is commonly explained by the supposition that some traces of His recent glory yet remained about Him, like the shining of Moses' face (Exod. xxxiv. 29). But His injunction to the three Apostles, not to mention what they had seen, seems inconsistent with this idea, and the people may have been merely awe-struck by his sudden appearance in the scene of excitement.

2. 'O faithless and perverse generation!' Expositors differ as to who were thus addressed by Christ—the disciples, the scribes, or the people generally. Probably He referred to the whole 'generation' of Jews, and the rebuke would apply to the different classes then present just in proportion as they shared in the common 'faithlessness' and 'perversity.' Parallel expressions occur in Moses' song, Deut. xxxii. 5, 20.

3. 'This kind.' That some evil spirits are more

malicious than others, we learn from Matt. xii. 45; and perhaps Eph. vi. 12 may refer to different 'kinds' or orders of them. On 'prayer and fasting' Trench says, 'The faith which will be effectual must be a faith exercised in prayer—that has not relaxed itself by an habitual compliance with the demands of the lower nature, but has often girt itself up to an austerer rule, to rigour and self-denial.'

4. By 'this mountain,' our Lord did not of course mean the moral 'mountain' of demoniacal influence and human unbelief, though He would teach that the faith that could overcome these must be such a faith as could literally remove mountains. But no arbitrary working of prodigies is referred to. The faith He speaks of is an absolute confidence in God, and its very nature is to do nothing contrary to His will. If it were His will, for the fulfilment of His purposes, that even Mount Hermon [see last Lesson, Note 3] should be removed, then faith could do even that, just as Moses' faith enabled him to divide the Red Sea.

5. 'Pineth away.' The word so rendered probably means 'becomes rigid' (lit., 'dries up').

6. 'Help Thou mine unbelief' is usually regarded as a prayer for more faith. But it is more probably a prayer for succour notwithstanding felt unbelief.

LESSON LIV.—The Feast of Tabernacles.—I.

'He was in the world, and the world knew Him not.'

Read—John vii. (parts); Learn—Jer. ii. 13; Rev. xxii. 17. (Hymns, 94, 110, 112, 144, 145, 249, 343.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It would be practically impossible to give Sunday-school lessons on the conversations between Christ and the Jews recorded in John vii, and viii., in such a way as to explain the course of the arguments verse by verse. And yet these chapters ought by no means to be omitted in a historical series of Lessons like the present. The plan has therefore been

adopted, in this and the following Lesson, of fastening on the two great sayings of Christ which were (as is usually considered) suggested by the ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles, and basing the application on the imagery underlying those sayings; weaving in as many of the main points of the dialogue as can fairly be subordinated to these central topics, and also throwing into prominence the impressive idea (expressed in the 'motto' above) of the true King and Saviour in the midst of a perturbed, perplexed, excitable multitude, who could not and would not recognise Him.

It is hoped that these two chapters, which might at first sight seem somewhat dry and unpromising, will, treated on this plan, be found to make unusually interesting lessons. The teacher must strive to picture to himself the scenes of the Feast with a vividness sufficient to enable him to describe them to his class something in the manner of an eyewitness. The particulars given below, though necessarily meagre, will probably be sufficient for this purpose; but fuller and more picturesque accounts will be found in Smith's *Dictionary* and *Student's Old Testament History*, in Hanna's *Close of the Ministry*, in Macduff's *Memories of Olivet*, and in Mrs. Charles's *Victory of the Vanquished*.

In the following Sketch, the explanation of the 'living water,' and the application of the lesson, are crowded into a corner by the necessary details of the external scenes; but if the teacher will refer to Lesson XIX., he will there find the whole subject more fully treated.

It may be well to remind the teacher to be specially careful in using the word 'Christ' in this and other lessons. Children are apt to regard it as a proper name—as merely (so to speak) *the surname of Jesus*; and expressions such as those in this chapter, 'When Christ cometh,' 'Shall Christ come out of Galilee,' &c., puzzle them. 'Christ,' or 'the Christ,' was the *official title* of One for whom the Jews looked. 'Jesus' was the *personal name* of a Nazarene carpenter who really was 'the Christ,' though they would not acknowledge it. It is generally best, in order to avoid ambiguity, to use the Hebrew word 'Messiah' rather than the Greek word 'Christ,' when teaching on the Gospel history.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How pleasant a harvest-home is! [*Picture; particularly the thanksgiving-service in church.*] The Jews had something like that: every year, in October, when all the crops, vintage, &c., gathered in. See how God ordained it, Dent. xvi. 13, 15 (comp. Lev. xxiii. 33—43; Numb. xxix. 12—34). Why called the 'Feast of Tabernacles'? Come to Jerusalem, and see.

I. THE FEAST. [*See Note 1.*]

The city looking quite strange, more like a forest than a town. Everywhere green arbours or booths made of branches of trees (palms, sycamores, olives, pines, willows, &c.)—in streets and squares—on roofs of houses—and outside gates, too, for want of room inside. Nobody living at home—everybody in these booths—all the people of the city, and crowds from the country.

What would they be thinking of? of their crops safely got in? yes, but something else—'Once our nation had no crops to get in, no land to farm; and were wanderers in the desert; living in *tabernacles*, tents and booths like these: but God gave them this good land, and He gives us fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness' (see Acts xiv. 17; Ps. lxxv. 9—13). This is why God appointed the feast, and the booths, to make them thankful, Lev. xxiii. 42, 43; Dent. xvi. 15. See how the feast was kept in Nehemiah's days, Neh. viii. 13—17.

The feast now going on (John vii. 2).

Much rejoicing, bright faces, happy meetings, talks as they sit under the booths, many sacrifices to God in the Temple.

But it is not all joy—what did we say lately about crowds? [*Lesson XLIX.*—no doubt in these crowds at the feast many heavy hearts, heavy with sorrow, disappointment, sin. And one great trouble to them all—they are not free—those hated Romans reigning over them—when, oh when, would Messiah, the long-looked-for King, come and deliver them?—ah, that would be joyful indeed. If they had but known that the King was among them!

II. JESUS AT THE FEAST.

There is something the matter—men talking in knots—puzzled looks and words. See ver. 11, 12—who is 'he' of whom they speak? It is a long while since Jesus was at Jerusalem—missed two or three feasts—why? ver. 1. Each time more wonder—'why does He not come?' Why so much interest? Some want to see miracles, others to hear His words, rulers to arrest Him; a few hoping He may after all turn out to be Messiah. But (they think) He is not coming—He came not with the caravans from Galilee. Yet He did come—how? ver. 10.

Suddenly, there He is, openly teaching in the Temple, ver. 14. Some hear Him for the first time—what surprised at? ver. 15. Quite true, He had not been educated like Saul of Tarsus (Acts xxii. 3), but

where was His wise teaching from? ver. 16—and this they might have known if they had cared; if their hearts had been set on pleasing God [see Note 4], would have known God's Son when He came, ver. 17 (comp. John i. 47, 49).

The people perplexed still more. Some (of Jerusalem), who know the rulers' designs, amazed at His boldness, ver. 25, and to see His enemies quietly listening to Him, ver. 26—'could it be that the scribes had found out that He was Messiah?' Others (perhaps from country parts) not in the secret, can't make out why He charges them with their plots, ver. 20. Ah, but they are going to take Him now, ver. 30—no—how strange! What was the real reason they did not touch Him? ver. 30.

III. WHAT JESUS OFFERED.

Each morning during the seven days, a joyous ceremony. Down in the deep valley below the Temple, the Pool of Siloam. Priests filled golden pitcher with water there—bore it in procession, followed by crowds, up to the altar in the Temple court—poured it into silver basin (and wine into another)—basin with holes—pipe carried water down through rock under Temple to brook Kedron flowing in valley. As the water poured out, Levites sang Psalms (cxliii.—cxlviii.), people shouted and waved palm-branches—great rejoicing. See Isa. xli. 3. What would this remind them of? The booths reminded of Israel in the wilderness—*this* of the water God gave them there out of the rock.

But on the eighth day 'great day of feast,' no pouring of water. Now see what Jesus did that day.

He sees the crowd, and knows each heart [see Lesson XLIX.]—has been watching day after day—has seen outward rejoicings—yes, and every sad, unsatisfied, sinful heart too. What would the compassionate Saviour feel? They *might* be happy—happy in spite of earthly troubles—in spite of sin's temptation—in spite of Romans—without such a king as they thought of—if they would come to Him, believe in Him, make Him their friend. See what He says ('crying' out, loudly, earnestly), ver. 37—as if He said, 'You remember how your

fathers thirsted, and God supplied them—ye praise God that ye thirst not so now—yet do ye not thirst really? is there not something ye want that ye have not—*peace in your hearts*? Come to Me—I have water that can quench even *that* thirst.'

What was the 'water' He offered? ver. 39 [see Lesson XLIX.]. Why is the Holy Spirit like water?—revives and refreshes the soul, as water does the body. And something else too—the man who has this 'living water' can give it to others: it will not only be in him, but flow from him, ver. 38 [see Note 2]. Yes, and (Jesus tells them) when He is gone from them, they shall see those 'living waters' flowing from His servants. Did they? see Acts ii.

IV. HOW THE OFFER WAS RECEIVED.

(a) Some impressed, ver. 40, 41—'Yes, this must be He.' And even the officers sent to take Him (ver. 32)—what do they think? ver. 45, 46—so struck that they dare not touch Him. Yet this seems all—we do not read of men joining Him with all their hearts.

(b) Some sceptical—why? ver. 41, 42. But they might have cleared up the difficulty if they had taken the trouble.

(c) Some contemptuous—ver. 47—52,—'This Galilean! what does it matter what *he* says? Let the ignorant crowd go after him—we know better.'

Now, *why this result*? Because they *did not care*. Like people with no water, yet scarcely feeling thirst. They *did* need a Saviour from sin, a Friend in trial, a Guide in perplexity, but thought not of it. Had no wish to do God's will, and so could not understand His message (ver 17). And so their true King among them unheeded—'in the world, and the world knew Him not.'

IS THAT GRACIOUS OFFER FOR US?

Yes, see 2nd text for rep.—'whosoever will.'

Which of us is thirsty? Thirsty for pleasure or money, yes; but thirsty for the Holy Spirit? Yet if we have Him not, what then? Rom. viii. 9. But if thirsty, then—see Isa. xli. 3, Matt. v. 6.

Christ 'stands and cries' (see ver. 37) to us—'Ho! every one' (Isa. lv. 1). Let Him not hold out His arms to us in vain!

NOTES.

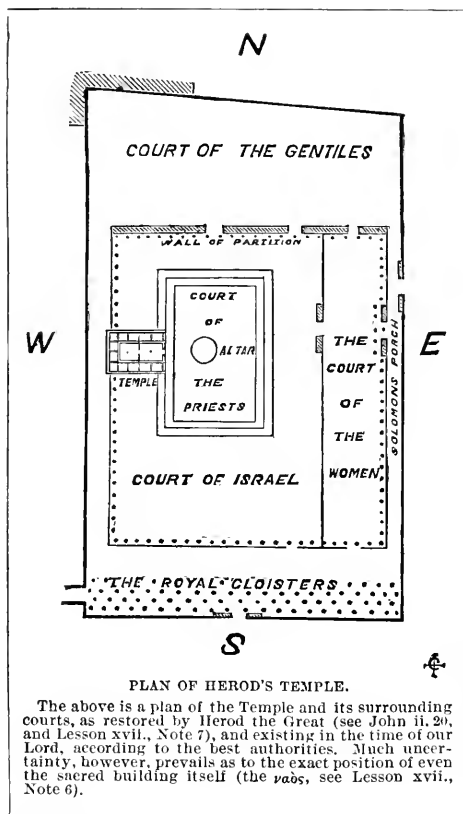
1. The Feast of Tabernacles, the third of the three great yearly feasts among the Jews, fell in the month Tisri, and lasted eight days, from the 15th to the 22nd of that month. Supposing the year of the feast named in John vii. to be A.D. 29, the week would, in that year, be from the 11th to the 18th of October.

The three great feasts all had reference to the fruits of the soil, and thus were suitably appointed for an agricultural people. This third one is called, in Exod. xxiii. 16, 'the feast of ingathering,' and was, in one of its aspects, a thanksgiving for the produce of the year; the corn, wine, oil, &c., having then all been gathered in. In another aspect, it was a commemoration

of the life in the wilderness, and a thanksgiving for the settlement in permanent habitations; hence the command to dwell in booths (or 'tabernacles') during the week the feast lasted. The Talmud gives minute directions for the construction of the booths.

The burnt offerings appointed for this feast were very numerous, and the order in which the bullocks (seventy in number) were to be sacrificed very curious; see Num. xxix. 12—38.

Two remarkable ceremonies were added to the observances at the feast in later times:—(1) The daily drawing of the water from the Pool of Siloam, and pouring of it out again upon the altar, as briefly described in the Sketch. (2) The



lighting of eight great lamps (supported on two lofty stands, four on each) in the court of the women; see next Lesson. But these ceremonies were (almost certainly) not observed on the eighth day of the feast, which was regarded as an extra day; whereas it was (probably) on that day that Christ used those words which seem to have referred to them, John vii. 37, viii. 12. But, as Alford suggests, it was the *absence* of the ceremonies on the eighth day which gave so much point to His words.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the most joyous of all the Jewish anniversaries. It is called, in the Talmud, 'The Festival,' by way of pre-eminence. And the proverb was current, 'He who has never seen the rejoicing at the pouring out of the water of Siloam, has never seen rejoicing in his life.'

2. In the remarkable passage, ver. 37-39, on which so large a part of the Sketch is based, three difficulties need explanation:—

(a) What do the words, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,' mean? The term 'belly' is simply used as a figurative expression for the inner man, the spirit; just as we habitually

use the physical term 'heart' in the same way. It occurs often in Scripture; compare, e.g., Prov. xx. 27 with Heb. iv. 12. In His conversation with the Samaritan woman, Christ said that the 'living water' given to a man would be 'in him a well of water springing up,' &c. Here He describes the same 'living water' as flowing forth from the man, and thus figuratively sets forth the spiritual truth that they who take the blessings He offers will, in their turn, become blessings to others.

(b) 'As the Scripture hath said'—to what passage does this refer? In Ezek. xlvi. there is a highly figurative prophecy of water flowing from under the threshold of the Temple, which shall give life to all that it touches. In Joel iii. 18, we read of a fountain coming forth from the house of the Lord; and in Zech. xiv. 8, of living waters going out from Jerusalem. This imagery strikingly corresponds with the ceremony alluded to above, which suggested Christ's words; and it seems likely, that as these predictions pointed to the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Church, He applied them to the result of the same outpouring on the individual soul. Isa. lviii. 11—'Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not'—is still more closely parallel.

(c) Why does St. John remark that 'the Holy Ghost was not yet given'? The words should be 'was not yet'—'given' not being in the original; and they simply mean that the dispensation of the Spirit 'was not yet.'

3. The different classes of people in this chapter should be carefully distinguished. We have 'the Jews,' i.e. the ruling party of priests and Pharisees; ver. 11—'The Jews sought Him'; ver. 13—'No man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews.' 'The people,' in ver. 12, 20, 31, 32, 40, 43, should be 'the multitude,' inclusive of the Galileans and others who had come up for the feast, and who were not aware of the plots against the life of Jesus. In ver. 25 we have 'them of Jerusalem' distinctively named, and these did know of the plots. The whole chapter is rendered much more intelligible and interesting if these distinctions are observed.

4. 'If any man will do His will,' &c., ver. 17—rather, 'if any man is willing to,' or 'has a mind to.'

5. Ver. 27 and 42 appear to contradict each other, but do not in reality. The Jews knew that Messiah should be born at Bethlehem (see Matt. ii. 5) and of David's line, but they expected His appearance to be sudden and mysterious, and His immediate parentage to be unknown; perhaps inferring this from Isa. liii. 8. They regarded Jesus as a Galilean, and as the son of Joseph, being unaware of both the mystery and the place of His birth.

Lesson LV.—The Feast of Tabernacles.—II.

'The Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.'

Read—John viii. (parts) ; Learn—John iii. 19 ; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. (Hymns, 39, 43, 151, 230, 283, 285, 307, 308.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The method adopted for constructing a practicable Sunday-school lesson on this chapter is explained in the remarks prefixed to the preceding Lesson. Very possibly, the teachers of senior scholars may think it right to take our Lord's colloquy with the Jewish authorities more in detail ; but if so, they will still find it more useful and more interesting to follow the Sketch as a groundwork, omitting the introductory part and including more matter in Section II., than to follow the controversy verse by verse—which latter would require much more time than any class has at its disposal.

In using illustrations such as those suggested at the beginning of the Sketch, they should be made as *real* as possible by relating or supposing actual instances. Thus, in the case of the one marked (a), a particular person and place should be named—*e.g.*, 'Have you ever been to London, Johnny?' 'No, sir.' 'Well, if you were to go there, and arrived late at night, how much would you know about it?' So, again, ideas which are, in printed notes, necessarily expressed in *abstract* form for the sake of brevity, should be thrown into the *concrete* shape in actual teaching: thus, 'So Darkness stands for three things, ignorance, sin, misery,' would be, 'So if a man is very ignorant, what does the Bible say of him?—That he is in darkness. And if he is very sinful, what,' &c.

Very little 'application' is needed in Lessons of this kind, which depend on illustrations. The illustrations, like Christ's parables, almost embody the application themselves; and a passage like that before us is in itself so solemn, that two or three words of personal home-thrust are all that is required at the end.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Who likes to be in the dark? Light is such a pleasant thing. How eagerly do sailors, travellers, sleepless invalids, long for sunrise! see Eccl. xi. 7; Acts xxvii. 29. Think of three things about light and darkness:—

(a) If go in the dark to town [or street, or room] where not been before, what know about it? So 'to be in the dark' means 'not to know.'

(b) Some people *do* like darkness—who? Those who want not to be seen—thieves, &c.—boys in mischief. So 'a dark deed' is a bad deed.

(c) How exhilarating is bright light—even gas—sunshine above all! Darkness makes sad. So we say, when misfortune coming, 'all looks dark.'

So 'darkness' stands for these three things:—*ignorance*, see Rom. i. 21; Eph. iv. 18; 1 John ii. 11; *sin*, see Rom. xiii. 12; Eph. v. 11; *misery*, see Matt. xxv. 30.

In heathen lands, how much 'darkness'!—ignorance, sin, misery. Before Christ came, all the world dark, except Jews, and their light dim. Then what did God promise? Isa. lx. 1—3; Mal. iv. 2. And when Christ had come—when Gospel preached—when ignorant taught, sinners made holy, miserable made happy,—see what Paul,

Peter, and John could say, 2 Cor. iv. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9; 1 John ii. 8.

But the darkness was not, is not yet, all put away—why not? see John i. 4—'the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not,' *i.e.*, received it not; light no use, just as sunshine no use to blind man, or man in dark cell, or man in fog. To-day see how it was so at Jerusalem.

I. THE LIGHT SHINING IN DARKNESS.

Last Sunday we saw how the water of Siloam was poured on the altar with rejoicing, and what Jesus said on the eighth day, when this not done. Another joyous ceremony during the feast: In that part of the Temple where all the people came, two lofty lamp-stands, each with four lamps. Each evening, people assembled with blazing torches, and the eight lamps lighted amid great shoutings, illuminating temple and city, and making dark Olivet over there across the valley look darker. In the morning they had thought of the tent-life in the wilderness—now of the pillar of fire shining on the camp and guiding the march. But the feast now over—no more illumination; now see what Jesus says, ver. 12 [see Note 2].

'I am the Light of the world.' As if He

would say, 'Those lights you lit during the feast could do nothing to make you really happy, to take away sin, to light you on the way to heaven—but there is a Light that can do that—I am that Light—and not like those lamps, shining only a little way—but, like the sun, the 'Light of the world.' 'He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness'—'shall not walk in ignorance, sin, misery; just as the Israelites, trusting in the pillar of fire and following it, did not lose their way, so if any of you will believe in Me, and come and follow Me, you shall know the right way to be happy and to please God.'

But who is this that says such things? A Galilean peasant standing up in the Temple before priests and Pharisees, and calling himself 'the Light of the world'! But that same day He says other things just as strange. Ver. 23—'Ye are from beneath, I am from above'—what a daring saying! and (unless He was, as we know, the Son of God) how arrogant! Ver. 46—'Which of you convinceth Me of sin?'—who could say that but 'the Holy One of God'? see 1 John i. 8. Ver. 29—'I do always those things that please Him'—not only no sin, but actually pleasing God at every word and act! Ver. 58—'Before Abraham was, I am'—what mean by that? [see Note 5]—not that He was born before Abraham, but that before Abraham was born, He was—what? The I AM—the Eternal God who has no past or future, but is always 'I AM,' see Exod. iii. 14; Ps. xc. 2; Heb. xiii. 8. Now we see why He could utter those wondrous sayings. How thankful we should be that we know why, that we are not in darkness about it!

II. THE DARKNESS COMPREHENDING IT NOT.

That is, men not believing that Jesus was the True Light, the Son of God, and so their hearts not enlightened by Him; just as a blind man sees not the sunshine.

Now why was it? why did 'the darkness not comprehend the Light'? why did the Jews not understand or believe in Jesus? In this chapter see two great reasons:—

(1) They 'loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil' (1st text

for rep.). If they had felt their sinfulness, and desired to be cleansed and made holy, how they would have welcomed Jesus! see Luke vii. 36—50. But see what sins Jesus charges them with: ver. 55—*lying*; ver. 37, 40—*murder*. Even when some so struck as to be half won to Him—how is it that they draw back, do not 'continue in His word and be His disciples indeed'? see ver. 30—39: He promises them freedom from sin, and they are offended! So they reject Him because they don't want Him to make them free; and what does He say will become of them? ver. 24.

(2) *The devil had 'blinded their minds'* (2nd text for rep.). They thought themselves children of Abraham naturally, children of God spiritually, ver. 39, 41; what does Jesus tell them? [see Note 3]—they were 'not worthy to be called the sons' of Abraham or of God—why? ver. 39, 40, 42. Who was it that put murder and lying into their hearts? who was it whose ways they loved [see Note 4], whom they imitated?—he must be their father—his children they were worthy to be. Who was it? ver. 44. And their rejection of the 'True Light'—that was Satan's work too: he made them blind, and they could not see the sunshine. But was it not then their own fault? Ah, yes, for what might they have done? Jas. iv. 7; 1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

See the end of it, ver. 59. That greatest of His sayings, that He is God, the 'I AM,' they cannot stand. See the grave scribes and sacred priests taking up stones to stone Him! But, though they were to murder Him one day, the time not yet come (ver. 20), and He escapes.

ON US ALSO THE TRUE LIGHT SHINES.

More brightly than on the Jews—how much more we know of Christ than they could know then!—about His death, resurrection, &c., and what He can do for us.

Are we choosing to remain in the dark? If so, it is Satan and our sins that rule over us. But it is only because we know not how happy the sunshine is. What is this sunshine? It is God 'making His face to shine upon us,' i.e., making us know and feel His love and care. 'Lord! lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.'

NOTES.

1. It is probable that ver. 12 of this chapter should follow on after chap. vii. 52. The last verse of chap. vii., and the first eleven verses of chap. viii., do not, in the opinion of the great majority of the best critics, belong to St. John's Gospel at all. The passage is not found in the oldest MSS. (the 'Cambridge' alone excepted), nor in the Syriac versions of the New Testament; nor is it referred to by the early fathers who comment on the Gospel. Moreover, there are, even in so small a space, several words and idioms which occur nowhere else in St. John's writings; and the general style is quite different from his. At the same time, it bears the unmistakable impress of truth, and is, without doubt, an authentic record of actual facts, though its authorship is uncertain. Some of the MSS.

which contain it place it at the end of Luke xxi., and it would certainly come in there not unnaturally.

There is, therefore, no sufficient warrant for the idea (based on the words 'early in the morning' in ver. 2), that in calling Himself 'the Light of the world,' Christ referred to the then rising sun. It is more likely that the discourses of chap. viii. (or at least ver. 12—20) should be placed on the same day as chap. vii. 37—44, the eighth day of the feast.

2. On the Feast of Tabernacles and its attendant customs, see last Lesson, Note 1. The view taken in the Sketch above, that the expression 'Light of the world' was used by our Lord in reference to the ceremony of lighting the lamps,

is confirmed by the statement of ver. 20, that He was 'in the treasury,' which was at the north end of the 'Court of the Women,' in which the great lamp-stands were placed. This 'Court of the Women' was a large open court on the east side of the inner and more sacred portion of the Temple (the *raos*). It was so called, not as being exclusively for women, but because it was the court beyond which they were not permitted to go. It was, in fact, the chief place of public course. See Plan of the Temple at p. 146.

3. In ver. 37, 39, our Lord seems to make a distinction between the 'seed' and the 'children' of Abraham. The Jews said they were 'Abraham's seed.' He would remind them that this did not of itself give them the position of 'children,' inasmuch as Ishmael was Abraham's 'seed,' yet he and his mother Hagar were cast out; compare St. Paul's allegory in Gal. iv. To this ver. 35 probably alludes—The servant (or bondman) abideth not in the house for ever.' If they would be *free children*, they must come to Him who was emphatically 'the Son,' and of whom Isaac was a type.

And if they might owe their being to a father without being in the full sense his 'children,' so also they might virtually be 'children' of one to whom they did *not* owe their being. In calling

them children of the devil, Christ uses the common Hebraism familiar to us by the terms 'children of this world,' 'children of the kingdom,' &c. Augustine says, 'Whence are these Jews sons of the devil? By imitation, not by birth.'

4. '*The lusts of your father ye will do,*' literally *ye desire, like, to do.* Comp. Note 4, last Lesson.

5. '*Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad.*' Two distinct facts are stated here: first, that he 'rejoiced that he should see it' (*ἰδῆναι*), i.e., he rejoiced in the anticipation; 2ndly, that he actually '*saw it,*' i.e., in his glorified state. The latter statement was intended to imply that Abraham was *not dead*, as the Jews said (ver. 32), but (in his disembodied state) *alive*.

By 'My day' is meant Christ's first advent. After the Ascension the expression is used of the second advent (1 Cor. i. 8; Phil. ii. 16). In Luke xvii. 22, 26, both advents are thus designated.

In the words, 'before Abraham was, I am,' the same verb, 'to be,' is used in English. But in the Greek the verbs are different, and the more literal rendering would be, 'Before Abraham became (or, was made, or, was born), I am.' The distinction is very significant, and clearly implies the *pre-existence* of the Eternal Son of God—'*not made, nor created, but begotten.*'

Lesson LVI.—The Man Born Blind.

'One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.'

Read—John ix.; Learn—Eph. v. 8; Rom. x. 10. (Hymns, 24, 102, 103, 127, 167, 322, 324, 329.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Unlike the preceding Lesson, this one depends for its value on its application; and the teacher should be careful that the narrative do not take up so much time as to prevent the application from being effective. There need be no difficulty in insuring this, as although the chapter is long, and must be read through (or rather to ver. 38), it is very simple, and only requires a little picturesque paraphrasing.

The great point to aim at in applying the subject is this—To show the decisive and unmistakable character of true conversion. 'One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.' Great pains should be taken to explain what those things are which are only really 'seen' when the eyes of the soul are opened. Our scholars do *know* these things; they have been taught them; but have they ever, as it were, *confronted* them, so that they might say, 'Ah, I see it now?' This is the question to press home; and then the certain result of that 'seeing'—fearless adherence to and confession of Christ. The familiar use of the expressions, 'I can't see it,' 'I see it now,' when anything is being explained (e.g., the way to do a rule of three sum), will sufficiently illustrate the idea of mental and spiritual 'seeing.' Any case of the children having been astonished because some sight (such as a display of fireworks), when seen for the first time, far exceeded their anticipations, would also be a useful illustration. 'You had no idea of it before, had you?' 'No.' 'Well, some of you have no *idea* of [Christ's love—sin's deceitfulness—Christian joy] when you do see it, it will overwhelm you.' It is needless to say *what the teacher must himself be*, if he is to speak thus.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Where is Jesus after that threatened stoning [*last Lesson*]? Watch Him coming out of the Temple gates with the disciples—in hurry and alarm?—no, calmly and quietly—for see! He is stopping to look at a blind

beggar (ver. 1), no doubt sitting there for alms (comp. Acts iii. 2). Ah, He has just been rejected by those who should have known better—they preferred 'darkness' to the 'Light of the world'—but here is a

poor despised beggar—to him He will give light for both body and soul—he shall see the sun in the heavens and the Sun of righteousness too.

But the disciples are thinking of something else, ver. 2 [*see Note 2*]—‘surely, as suffering comes because of sin, there must have been dreadful sin somewhere to cause this—blindness from birth!’ What does Jesus say? ver. 3—true, if no sin in world, then no suffering, but particular sufferings not always because of particular sins—God in His love may send suffering for men’s good (comp. Heb. xii. 5–11)—they will see presently how God uses this man’s calamity for his good.

But will it be safe, when in such peril, to stop there and heal the man? What does Jesus say? ver. 4—He will not ‘leave till to-morrow what can be done to-day.’ [*See Note 1*].

Now see this blind man,—

I. CURED BY CHRIST. [*Read ver. 5–12*].

He has heard what Jesus said—that his blindness to be an opportunity for God’s power to be shown—and who is this that calls Himself the Light of the world? His heart is opening while his eyes yet shut. Then what does he feel upon his eyes? what is he told to do? [*See Note 3*]. Does he hesitate? or object, like Naaman? Here is faith seen by its works (Jas. ii. 18)—we know he believed in the truth and power of Jesus—how?—because we see him *obeying*. Comp. chap. iv. 50 [*see Lesson XXI.*]. See him quickly feeling his way down the steep hill into the valley [*see Note 4*]; see him washing his eyes; and then—! Olivet, the Kedron, the towers, bulwarks, palaces of Zion (see Ps. xlviii. 12, 13), the glittering Temple, the ‘mountains round about Jerusalem’—all seen for the first time; trees, animals, the blue sky above, the faces of his fellow-creatures—all new to him! And see the change in himself—the old blank, dull look gone—his face bright and joyous now—his friends scarcely know him, ver. 8, 9.

II. CONFESSING CHRIST. [*Read ver. 13–27*].

Such an extraordinary case must be looked into. The man is summoned before one of the courts then sitting. What do the Pharisee rulers notice most in his story?—the wondrous power of the Healer?—ah, no—just as it was when the impotent man received strength to walk (chap. v. 12), so now—they hate Jesus, and pick out what they can to attack him about [*see Note 5*]. How would Jesus justify such Sabbath work? Matt. xii. 12. But the judges not all alike, ver. 16—perhaps Nicodemus or Joseph there.

But perhaps, they think, it is all a mistake—‘send for his parents.’ Now, should we not expect that the father and mother would be loud in their praises of Him who had given sight to their son? Are they? why not? ver. 20–22.

Now listen to the man himself. Is he afraid of speaking out? Look at what he says about Jesus: ver. 17—a prophet; ver. 31—one whom God heareth, therefore He cannot be the sinner they take Him for. He knows little about Jesus—no idea who He really is—but determined to be His disciple, even if no one else will (ver. 27, 28). Just consider: here is an ignorant, despised beggar—there are his parents and the great men of the city—surely they ought to know best—why should he set up his ideas against theirs? Yet he does—why? ver. 25—‘*one thing I know*’—no mistake about it—that enough for him.

III. SUFFERING FOR CHRIST. [*Read ver. 28–34*].

Two things he has to bear.

1. *Reviling*, ver. 28—the grave priests and judges scoffing and sneering at Him. But what does Jesus say of those who thus suffer? Matt. v. 11.

2. *Excommunication*, ver. 34 [*see Note 7*]. ‘Cast out,’ i.e., expelled (like incorrigible boy from school)—not allowed to come to worship God in Temple or synagogue. So Jesus said should be done to His disciples, John xvi. 2; but what did He add? xvi. 33; comp. Isa. lxvi. 5.

IV. WORSHIPPING CHRIST. [*Read ver. 35–38*].

Look again at that last text (Isa. lxvi. 5)—what is the promise to those ‘cast out’?—‘*He shall appear unto thee*’; so Jesus finds out His expelled servant. Does the man know Him? He never *saw* Him before (from the Pool had gone home—thence to the court)—but that *Voice*—he knows it well—could he ever forget it? Does he ‘believe in the Son of God’?—knows not who that is, but ready to believe whatever his Healer tells him (ver. 36, ‘*that I might*’). ‘Thou hast *seen* Him’—thy restored eyes have looked on the Son of God—how could they?—it was the Son of God who restored them. And now he sees the Son of God with the eyes of his soul too—underneath that plain peasant’s dress recognises One who may be worshipped—see him prostrate at Jesus’ feet.

HERE IS A PICTURE OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN.

1. *Christ has opened his eyes*—the eyes of his soul. Why necessary? Because he *cannot see* without. See what? (a) How sinful he is. (b) How the holy God hates sin. (c) How he, a sinner, may yet have God’s favour here and hereafter. (d) How happy a thing it is to be God’s child; and much more. And, worst of all, he does not know he is blind (Rev. iii. 17)! Which of us like that? But when Christ opens his eyes, what does he see? Job xlii. 5, 6; Ps. cxix. 18; Eph. i. 17–19. He sees it all now—his sin, God’s love, &c.; and can say, ‘*One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see!*’ Which of us can say that?

2. *He confesses Christ before men.* There is a difference in him—people can see that clearly—they say, ‘Can it be the same man? what can have come to him?’—then what is his answer? see ver. 11—refers them to Jesus—all the praise to Him. And he can do what the beggar could not do—many about him blind too—he can lead them to Christ. Are any of us like this?

3. *He cheerfully suffers for Christ.* Hard words, sneering looks, perhaps malicious acts—yes, they are hard to bear. But what

does he remember? Matt. x. 24, 25; John xv. 18—20; 1 Pet. iv. 13; Heb. xii. 3.

4. *Christ reveals Himself to His adoring eyes*—to the eyes of His faith now, John xiv. 21, 23; Acts xviii. 9, 10, xxiii. 11, xxvii. 23; and what hereafter? Isa. xxxiii. 17; John xvii. 24; 1 John iii. 2. Shall we not worship Him then?

‘O that, with yonder sacred throng,
We at His feet may fall;
Join in the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of All!’

NOTES.

1. Expositors are divided as to whether an interval should be assumed between chaps. viii. and ix., or whether the ‘passing by’ of ix. 1 refers to viii. 59. The balance of argument seems in favour of the latter view, which is adopted in the Sketch. On this view, much significance is given to ver. 4. Jesus might well hurry away from the Temple, where His life was in danger, but He must (as it were, at any risk) stop to give this blind man sight; for ‘the night cometh’—the malice of his enemies would soon put an end to His ‘day’—therefore He ‘must work’ while yet it is day. Short intervals may be assumed after verses 12, 34, and 38; from ver. 39 the narrative is continuous to x. 21.

2. ‘*Who did sin,*’ &c. It was a popular belief among the Jews (and elsewhere, see Acts xxviii. 4) that every special affliction was a punishment for a special sin: a distortion of the great truth of the connection of sin and suffering which made the prosperous self-complacent, and prompted uncharitable judgments of others, and which our Lord elsewhere condemned (Luke xiii. 1—5). Of course Christ does not, in ver. 3, mean to say that neither the man nor his parents had ever sinned, but that no particular sin of theirs had caused the infirmity.

3. We are not told the reason why our Lord sometimes used outward means in His works of healing (comp. Mark vii. 33; viii. 23). In this case we can see that by doing so the man’s faith was tested, as in the similar case of Naaman (2 Kings v.).

4. The Pool of Siloam still exists. It is at the foot of the hill (Ophel) which is the continuation southward of the hill on which the Temple stood,

near the point where the two valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat meet. The water descends to it, through a subterranean passage under Ophel, from the ‘Virgin’s Fount,’ a spring higher up in the valley of Jehoshaphat; and this spring is believed to come from under the Temple. See Robinson, *Bibl. Res.* i. 343, 498; and Dr. Bonar’s article in Smith’s *Dict. Bible*.

The comment of the Evangelist, ‘Which is by interpretation, Sent,’ points to a symbolic meaning in the direction to go to the Pool. Stier and Hengstenberg think that the idea is, ‘Go to the God-sent spring of water (comp. Ps. civ. 10), and let it remind thee of Him who is the Sent of God, and who gives the living water.’ It is noteworthy that, in St. John’s Gospel, the idea of Christ as ‘sent’ from the Father is prominent; see iii. 17, 34, v. 36, 38, vii. 29, viii. 42.

5. On Christ’s miracles on the Sabbath, see Lesson XXXVII., Note 1. The ‘making clay’ would be regarded by the Jews as a ‘servile work,’ and therefore unlawful.

6. ‘*Give God the praise,*’ ver. 24—rather ‘Give glory to God.’ This is not an injunction to thank God rather than Jesus for the cure; for the Pharisees did not admit the fact of the cure at all. It is simply a Jewish form of adjuration to the man to speak the truth, like Joshua’s words to Achan, Josh. vii. 19.

7. ‘*Cast him out,*’ i.e., formally excommunicated him, which involved exclusion from the synagogue for thirty days at least.

8. ‘*We know that God heareth not sinners,*’ i.e., wilful and determined sinners; comp. Ps. lxxvi. 18; Prov. i. 28; Isa. i. 15, lix. 2; Jas. iv. 3.

Lesson LVII.—The Shepherd and the Sheep.

‘*I am the Good Shepherd.*’

Read—John x. 1—21; Learn—Matt. xviii. 11—14. (*Hymns*, 91, 96, 130, 134, 162—165, 341, 344, 374.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It is quite possible to use too many Scripture references in Sunday-school teaching, and narrative lessons in particular should not be over encumbered with them. But it is well sometimes to have a lesson of almost continuous text-finding; and the cases in which this is most suitable are those in which some article of the faith has to be proved, or the attributes of God, or the work of Christ, to be studied. In the subject before us, the work of Christ is explained by the analogy of the shepherd and the sheep; and a larger selection of references than usual will therefore be found interesting and useful. The teacher must

not, however, allow the texts to be merely found and read; he must see that their bearing on the subject is understood by the class, which is very often not the case. Thus, the reference to Matt. xxvi. 53, in sub-section 1 of division II., will not be appreciated without explanation; while a very few words—possibly a simple question and answer—will suffice to explain it. Teachers of non-reading classes can, of course, use only a few texts, and these they must read or repeat themselves. But in their case the illustrative matter, with the simplest application of it, will be ample for an effective lesson.

Care must be taken that the children understand the difference between an English and an Oriental shepherd, *e.g.*, that the latter does not *drive*, but *leads* his flock. Sufficient information on these points is embodied in the Sketch; and see Note 5.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Do you remember, once, when Jesus saw a great multitude, what they looked like? Matt. ix. 36 [see Lesson XXXVIII.]. But who ought to have been shepherds to those sheep? Of course the priests and scribes. See how they treated the people, Matt. xxiii. 4, 13, 14. An instance of this in our last Lesson—how did they treat that poor man? And who found him out after his expulsion from the synagogue?—*He* was more like a shepherd.

So now Jesus will show these Pharisees what they really are [see Note 1].

See how He describes what a true shepherd is, ver. 2—4. How does he get into the fold to fetch the sheep? Then if any one gets over the wall instead, can he be the shepherd? What is he? ver. 1. What does he come for? ver. 10. How do the sheep receive him? ver. 5 [see Note 5].

'Yes,' the Pharisees might say, 'all very true; but what has this to do with us?' They can't make it out, ver. 6; 'surely He does not mean to say we are thieves and robbers.' That depends on what He means by the 'door'; so He tells them more plainly, ver. 7—9.

'I am the Door.' How? The Door is the way in and out of the fold—sheep must go through it for safety, come through it for pasture—shepherd gets at them through it, leads them in and out. Now how does a good teacher or minister do good to his people? *Only through Christ*—getting grace and strength from Him himself—bringing them to Him. Well, the Pharisees—is this what they did? would they ask Jesus how to teach the people? would they bring them to Him? They went *another way*—so were not shepherds, but robbers.

Then Jesus goes on to show how He is the True Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the GOOD SHEPHERD. See how.

I. HOW CHRIST IS LIKE OTHER GOOD SHEPHERDS.

Think a little about an Eastern shepherd. See him walking along mountain path, all the sheep following (ver. 4). Some sheep lag behind—shepherd looks back, sees which they are (for he knows all), calls to them—to each by its *own name* (ver. 3)—they hear the call, know the voice, follow on. Come to difficult path, between high rocks, through thorny bushes—shepherd

makes a way with his crook for sheep to go through (Ps. xxiii. 4). He finds best place to feed, 'green pastures,' 'still waters' (Gen. xxix. 7; Ps. xxiii. 2; Ezek. xxxiv. 13, 14). By-and-bye he sees one missing—where can it be?—must go and find it—toils over mountain-side, searching everywhere—finds poor, starving, frightened sheep—carries it back on his shoulder (Ezek. xxxiv. 12; Luke xv. 4, 8). Then at night back to fold—walking gently not to tire weak ones—lamb borne in his arms (Isa. xl. 11). Fold has stone walls round—in at gate—then shepherd keeps watch (Luke ii. 8)—wild beast may try and get at them (ver. 12; 1 Sam. xvii. 34; Acts xx. 29)—or robbers (ver. 10)—must be ready to drive them away.

Now how is Christ like such a shepherd?

1. *He knows His sheep, and they know Him.* He knows them, 2 Tim. ii. 19; calls each by name, Isa. xliii. 1—the name He has written in His book, Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5, xxi. 27. Does not this show His love for them? [*Illust.*—We take an interest in anything we give a name to, *e.g.*, new invention or discovery.] They know Him, 2 Tim. i. 12; listen to His voice, Ps. lxxxv. 8; Hab. ii. 1; obey it, John xiv. 23.

2. *He leads His sheep, and they follow Him.* Wherever they have to go, He has gone first, Heb. xii. 1—3; John xv. 18. They have only to follow in His steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21; 1 John ii. 6.

3. *He feeds His sheep:* provides all they need (Phil. iv. 19)—for body, Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10; Matt. vi. 32, 33; for soul, John vi. 27, 51; Rom. viii. 32.

4. *He protects His sheep.* From whom? From Satan, Luke xxii. 31, 32; from all evil, Ps. cxxi. 7, 8. See how safe they are, ver. 28, 29; Rom. viii. 35—39.

5. *He seeks the wandering sheep.* What did He come down from heaven for, but 'to seek and to save the lost'? Luke xix. 10; comp. 1 Pet. ii. 25. And when His own servants wander, as they do sometimes, He seeks them and brings them back, Ps. xxiii. 3, cxix. 176.

II. HOW CHRIST IS UNLIKE ALL OTHER SHEPHERDS.

See ver. 11, 15. '*Lays down His life for the sheep.*' A mere hireling, who cares not for the sheep, would not do that, ver. 12, 13; but have not other good shepherds

done it? Yes, have *risqué* their lives, as David did when the lion and bear came (1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35); sometimes have even *lost* them. But suppose robber or wild beast kills shepherd, will the sheep ever have him again? and what becomes of the sheep? are they not stolen and killed too? But with Christ and His sheep it is different:—

1. *He laid down His life of His own accord*, ver. 18; comp. Matt. xxvi. 53; John xviii. 11; Luke xxiii. 46. What shepherd would do that?

2. *He laid down His life that He might take it again*, ver. 17, 18. Jesus was killed—killed by those very ‘thieves and robbers’ He has been talking to, the priests and rulers—and Satan (the ‘wolf’) at the bottom of it. But was He conquered? Heb. ii. 14, xiii. 20. Was He gone from His sheep for ever? When did He ‘take His life again’? Well, but why then did He lay it down at all?

3. *He laid down His life that His sheep might have life*, ver. 10, 28. How is that? See Isa. liii. 6—‘all we gone astray’; ‘like sheep,’ because can’t help ourselves—yet not like sheep, for they know no better—our wandering guilty and ungrateful. What

does our sin deserve? Rom. vi. 23. But Jesus died instead, and when He died, what was done with our sin? look again at Isa. liii. 6; comp. 1 Pet. ii. 24; Heb. ix. 28. And so (Rom. vi. 23 again) ‘the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.’

IS NOT THE GOOD SHEPHERD WORTHY OF OUR LOVE?

And if we love Him for His love to us, what will it lead us to do? See 2 Cor. v. 14, 15—what did His love ‘constrain’ St. Paul to do? To live ‘not to himself’—not selfishly, caring only for his own pleasure and profit—‘but unto Him that died’—*i.e.*, for Him. How do that? (a) Keep His commandments, John xiv. 15—‘obey His voice’ and ‘follow Him,’ as sheep do shepherd. (b) Think of the ‘*other sheep*’ (ver. 16) scattered over the world—help to seek them out and ‘fetch them home to His flock’—thus act as shepherds, copying the Good Shepherd.

But are we His sheep at all? All are not—there are the ‘goats’ too, Matt. xxv. 32, 33. But though goats cannot be changed into sheep, we may be changed. Let us pray, ‘Make us to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.’

NOTES.

1. This passage is obviously a continuation of the discourse to the Pharisees begun in chap. ix. 39–41. Jesus, with reference to the case of the blind man, remarks that one effect of His presence in the world is that, while the ignorant are enlightened, the self-sufficient are hardened (ver. 39). The Pharisees, feeling that He alludes to them, retort indignantly (ver. 40), ‘Are we, the leaders and teachers of Israel, blind also?’ Jesus replies that if they were totally blind, they would not be guilty, but as they profess to see, and have in fact *some* knowledge, they are guilty (ver. 41). Then He goes on to show them what they, the professed teachers, really are,—not ‘shepherds’ of the people, because they ‘enter not by the door,’ but ‘thieves and robbers’ (x. 1–5). They fail to grasp his full meaning (ver. 6), being obviously puzzled by the ‘door’; so He proceeds to explain that He is Himself the ‘door’ (ver. 7)—the ‘door’ both for shepherds and sheep (ver. 9); and all who do not *acknowledge Him* are not true shepherds (ver. 8).

Up to this point, Jesus has not spoken of Himself as the Shepherd. Although the description in ver. 2–4 is of course true emphatically of Himself, this is not its direct application. The shepherd there is the good and faithful scribe or pastor. But in ver. 10, He expands the figure, and describes Himself as the Good Shepherd.

2. The word rendered ‘parable,’ in ver. 6, is not *παραβολή* (*parabolee*), but *προιμίαι* (*paromiai*). The former word is not used by St. John. The latter means rather ‘proverb,’ and is so rendered in chap. xvi. 25. The discourse is certainly not a parable, in the strict sense of the term, but rather an *allegory*, inasmuch as the figure and the thing signified are not kept separate, but mingled together; thus, in the sentence, ‘I lay down My life for the sheep,’ ‘sheep’ is part of the imagery, but ‘I lay down My life’ is not. See Additional Note on the Parables, p. 108.

3. Ver. 8 is very variously explained. Generally it is assumed that Christ is speaking of ‘all professed shepherds who came before Me, the Good Shepherd,’ and then the expression ‘all’ and ‘before Me’ are perplexing. But ‘Me’ must mean ‘*Me the Door*,’ as this figure appears in both ver. 7 and ver. 9. What then is the meaning of ‘all that came before the Door’? ‘Before’ (*πρὸ*) may indicate not only priority *in time*, but priority *in position*. Now going in at the door was submitting to the *rule of entrance* made by the owner, and so acknowledging his *prior* authority. This the thief did not do, but chose his own way *before* the owner’s way, *i.e.*, preferred it, acting as if his right of entrance was *prior* to the owner’s; which is precisely what Christ charges on the Pharisees.

4. In ver. 16 the two words rendered ‘fold’ are not the same; the latter should be ‘flock.’ The Gentiles, who were to be brought in, should not come into the Jewish ‘fold’ or external organisation, though they should be part of God’s one universal ‘flock.’

5. Dr. Thomson (*L. and B.*, p. 201) gives some interesting particulars of shepherd-life in Palestine, with a wood-cut of a sheep-fold—a space enclosed by stone walls, with a single gate, and partly covered over, to afford shelter in the winter. In the *Narrative of the Scottish Mission to the Jews*, it is related that a traveller asserted to a Syrian shepherd his belief that the sheep knew the *dress* and not the *voice* of their master; and, in order to test the point, exchanged dresses with the shepherd, mingled with the flock, and called to them to follow him. But without success; the sheep never moved till the shepherd called, when they ran to him at once, notwithstanding his disguise.

ADDITIONAL NOTE VIII.

ON THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE LAST SIX MONTHS OF OUR LORD'S LIFE

The great diversity of opinion existing among harmonists respecting the order of events in the last six months of our Lord's are, renders it desirable that the system adopted in arranging these Lessons should be briefly explained.

The succession of events down to what has been well called 'the crisis at Capernaum' (John vi.) has been already given, in the Additional Note on the Chronology of the Galilean Ministry (page 59). This crisis occurred about the time of the Passover, two years having then elapsed since the Passover of John ii., at which Christ's public ministry began. On the next six months, viz., from the Passover of John vi. to the Feast of Tabernacles of John vii. (April to October), see Lesson XLVIII., Note 1. Six months now remain to be accounted for, viz., from the Feast of Tabernacles of John vii. to the Passover at which Christ was put to death.

The Four Gospels thus treat this period:—

1. St. Matthew (xix. 1) records a journey from Galilee, 'into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan.' He then proceeds to relate a number of incidents; but there is no further mention of locality until xx. 29, when a departure from Jericho is named; and immediately afterwards (xxi. 1) we come to the public entry into Jerusalem on the first day of the Passover week. Had we only this Gospel, we should imagine that there was but one journey to Jerusalem, and that the last.

2. St. Mark's narrative (x. 1—xi. 1) is exactly parallel with Matthew's, only excepting the omission of a parable.

3. St. Luke's account is considerably longer, and embodies much that is peculiar to his Gospel. The section opens at ix. 51 with the words, 'When the time came that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.' We then have a long series of incidents and discourses, extending through nine chapters, when we come to the same visit to Jericho mentioned by Matthew and Mark, followed, as in their case, by the entry into Jerusalem. Five notices of locality occur in these chapters, viz., that Christ came to a Samaritan village (ix. 52); that He came to the village (not named) where Martha and Mary lived (x. 38); that He 'went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem' (xiii. 22); that He was at a certain time in Herod's dominions (*i.e.*, Galilee or Peræa) (xiii. 31); and that 'as He went to Jerusalem, He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee' (xvii. 11). The whole narrative might well belong to the one journey which Matthew and Mark seem to record.

4. St. John's account is altogether dif-

ferent. He alone mentions the visit to the Feast of Tabernacles (vii.—x. 21). He then relates (x. 22) that Christ was again at Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication, two months later (in December), but does not say what occurred in the interval; that, to avoid persecution, He retired into Peræa (x. 40); that thence He came back to Bethany to heal Lazarus (xi.), and afterwards went to Ephraim (probably 12 miles N.E. of Jerusalem), where He 'continued' (xi. 54), apparently in retirement. Then follows the arrival at Bethany (xii. 1) just before the entry into Jerusalem.

The main problem, therefore, is this:—Between which sections of St. John's narrative are the journeyings recorded by the other three Evangelists to be inserted?

Let us take Luke ix. 51 (quoted above), which is the most important passage, and see how the journey there named will work in with St. John's statements.

This journey is evidently one of great importance. The words which introduce it are peculiarly solemn. It is Christ's final departure from Galilee, and, as He leaves the scene of His most active ministry, He pronounces woes on the cities of the Lake, which had so blindly rejected Him (x. 13). It is marked by special publicity: He sends messengers before Him at the very first stage (ix. 52), and afterwards commissions the Seventy to proclaim His approach in 'every city and place whither He Himself will come' (x. 1). This last feature shows the journey to be a long one, in fact an extended circuit. The goal is Jerusalem, where He is to be 'received up' (ix. 51).

In which of St. John's intervals are we to place this journey? (a) It cannot be identical with that to the Feast of Tabernacles, which was rapid, and 'as it were in secret' (John vii. 8—10). (b) It cannot be placed between John xi. and xii., unless a return to Galilee from Ephraim is assumed; and St. John's account (especially the word 'continued,' xi. 54) will scarcely admit of this, or of a long circuit; besides which the incident in Martha's house (Luke x. 38—42) must have occurred before the raising of Lazarus. (c) Nor will the connection of John x. and xi. admit of its being placed between the escape into Peræa and the visit to Bethany. (d) There is only one alternative, viz., to place it between the Feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication, *i.e.*, between ver. 21 and 22 of John x.; and as an interval of two months *must* separate these two verses, that period may well have been so occupied.

Turn now to Matthew and Mark. Where shall we place the journey into Peræa recorded by them? The following considera-

tions will show that it was *the same* as that of Luke ix. 51:—(a) It was from Galilee; and (as already shown) John's narrative admits of no other journey from Galilee except that to the Feast of Tabernacles, which is out of the question. (b) It followed immediately on 'the finishing of the sayings' of Matt. xviii. (comp. Mark ix.), which were spoken at Capernaum (Mark ix. 33); and some of these sayings are related by Luke just before the departure on the great journey (ix. 46—50). (This last point of connection also proves that Matt. xviii. and the parallel passages must be placed *after* and not before the Feast of Tabernacles.) It may be said that the journeys cannot be identical because that of Luke ix. was into Samaria; but on this point see below.

Another difficulty has now to be surmounted. It has already been observed that Matt. xix., xx., and Mark x., seem to describe *one* journey, ending with the final entry into Jerusalem; but there must be a break somewhere, to allow of the insertion of John x. 22—xi. 54. This break is clearly at Matt. xx. 17 and Mark x. 32, where a new start is almost implied. But these verses are parallel with Luke xviii. 31, which, though not so clear in itself, therefore marks a break in the third Gospel.

It remains to determine the relative position of the incidents and discourses of Luke x. 25—xviii. 30. Two remarks made in the Additional Note on the Chronology of the Galilean Ministry may here be repeated, viz., (1) That the Gospels are not registers of dates, but rather like modern *lectures* on the life of some great man, which often designedly group incidents together without reference to the strict order

of time; (2) That this remark applies particularly to St. Luke's Gospel.

Nowhere is it more important to bear these considerations in mind than in the study of the section before us. The difficulties of arrangement are greatly reduced if we once perceive that St. Luke, after a vivid description of the *start* upon the 'great journey' (as already pointed out), goes on to relate various circumstances that occurred during its progress, without professing to give anything of the nature of a diary (which would be far less effective for his purpose),—including also, it may be, incidents which actually occurred long before, because they illustrate some particular phase of Christ's character or work. Thus, the sojourn in Martha's house (x. 38—42) must have been at the *end* of the journey, Bethany being close to Jerusalem. The section, xi. 14—36 (perhaps more), certainly belongs to the Galilean ministry, being parallel with Matt. xii. and Mark iii. The message to Herod (xiii. 31—35) seems to imply that the *final* arrival at Jerusalem was then at hand, and, if so, must be placed *after* the Feast of Dedication. And the journey of xvii. 11, which (on the theory of Luke's strict chronological order) is a standing difficulty, is seen most naturally to be actually the same as that of ix. 51—56, the locality exactly corresponding (see below), and the conversation immediately preceding (xvii. 1—10) being in fact the continuation of that which is begun, but not finished, in ix. 46—50, as will be seen at once by comparing the two passages with Matt. xviii. and Mark ix.

We are now in a position to arrange the various narratives in definite order:—

I. The tour in Northern Palestine which followed the crisis at Capernaum (see *Lesson XLVIII.*, Note 1) is followed by a time of privacy in Galilee (Matt. xvii. 22; Mark ix. 30), whence Jesus goes up, also in privacy, to the Feast of Tabernacles.

II. The Feast of Tabernacles, John vii.—x. 21. [*Lessons LIV.—LVII.*]

III. After this Feast, Jesus is again in Galilee, Matt. xviii.; Mark ix. 33—50; Luke ix. 46—50, xvii. 1—10. See above. [*Lessons LVIII., LIX.*]

IV. The time has now come for the final departure from Galilee, Luke ix. 51. Jesus starts southward by way of Samaria, but is repulsed at the first Samaritan village, and returns to another village within the boundaries of Galilee* (ix. 52—56). He then proceeds by another route altogether, viz., eastward, along the frontier of Galilee and Samaria, down into the Jordan valley, healing the ten lepers on the way† (xvii. 11—19). Before then actually leaving Galilee Jesus stays to collect, commission, and send out the seventy disciples (x. 1—16), who are to go before Him and announce His approach‡. He then crosses the Jordan into Perea, coming, after a circuit of uncertain extent, to the confines of Judæa§ (Matt. xix. 1, Mark x. 1). During this circuit, various incidents occur, narrated in Matt. xix.—xx. 16; Mark x. 1—31; and, with others, in Luke xi.—xviii. [*Lessons LX.—LXVII.*]

* The Greek of ver. 56 probably implies that the 'other' (ἕτερον not ἄλλο) village was not a Samaritan one.

† The expression, 'through the midst of Samaria and Galilee,' cannot describe a journey southward, for why then is Samaria put before Galilee? But 'through the midst' (διὰ μέσου) probably means 'between,' 'along the frontiers of'; a view confirmed by the fact that a Samaritan leper was in company with Jewish lepers.

‡ Perhaps this last circuit, the importance of which is shown by the mission of the Seventy, would have included Samaria and Judæa as well as Perea, had not Christ been repulsed by the Samaritans and afterwards driven from Judæa (John x. 40).

§ Matthew says 'he came to' the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan'; Mark, 'unto the coasts of Judæa and [the true reading, not 'by'] the farther side of Jordan. This expression seems to describe an arrival at the frontier of Judæa, i.e., at the Jordan near Jericho, only on its eastern bank.

V. Although the full time for His final arrival at Jerusalem is not yet come, He will go there to the Feast of the Dedication* (for 'how often' would He have gathered her children together). He crosses the Jordan, ascends by the steep Jericho road (Luke x. 17—37) and stays at Bethany (ver. 38—42) during the Feast.† [Lessons LXXVIII., LXXIX.]

* The great journey of Luke ix. 51 could not be to the Feast of the Dedication, quite an inferior festival. It was to Jerusalem 'to be received up.' But this would not preclude a prior temporary visit to the capital before the circuit was finished.

† The locality of the parable of the Good Samaritan, coupled with the fact that the arrival at Bethany immediately follows its delivery, suggests that it was spoken on the very road going up from Jericho to Jerusalem.

VI. Feast of the Dedication (John x. 22—39). His life is attempted. [Lesson LXX.]

VII. Compelled to leave Jerusalem, He retires 'again' (John x. 40) into Peræa. Here, too, He is threatened (Luke xiii. 31—35). [Lesson LXX.]

VIII. He visits Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead (John xi.). [Lesson LXXVI.]

IX. He seeks a fresh place of retirement at Ephraim (John xi. 54), where He 'continues' for a time.

X. The 'time' has now fully arrived, and the great last circuit which began when, in Galilee, He 'steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,' and which has been interrupted by the opposition of His enemies—is now to be resumed and carried to its consummation. He starts from Ephraim, solemnly again announcing His now fast approaching death (Matt. xx. 17; Mark x. 32; Luke xviii. 31). At Jericho He joins the great Galilean caravan going up to the Passover, and ascends with it to Bethany, where He arrives six days before the Feast (Matt. xx. 29—xxi. 1; Mark x. 46—xi. 1; Luke xviii. 35—xix. 29; John xii. 1). [Lessons LXXII.—LXXIV.]

The general conception to be formed of the period is, therefore, something like this:—Jesus will make a final appeal to the nation by means of a general circuit, which shall include those parts of the country as yet unvisited by Him. He knows what the end will be. His face is towards Jerusalem: He is going there to die; but before this comes, His kingdom shall be proclaimed more generally and more publicly than it has yet been. Galilee will not be included in the circuit, having already for so long a time enjoyed the privilege of His ministry. He enters Samaria first, but the Samaritans refuse to receive Him. He crosses the Jordan into Peræa, and there, despite opposition from the Pharisees, His miracles and discourses are, on the whole, acceptable. He proceeds to Judæa, but is twice compelled, by persecution, to seek refuge elsewhere, first again in Peræa, and

then at Ephraim. At length the Passover approaches which is to witness the end. He emerges from retirement, and boldly resumes the royal progress which has three times been interrupted. The enthusiasm of the Galilean pilgrims revives, and they escort the 'Son of David' into the city with shouts and Messianic hymns. Then comes the final rejection.

It has been impossible, in this brief Note, to review the various chronological arrangements of other writers; and many arguments, both in favour of the one adopted, and in reply to objections, have been necessarily omitted. The scheme here presented is the result of careful research and comparison of different views, and if a large number of rival schemes have not been noticed, it is not because the writer is ignorant of them.

Lesson LVIII.—Some Mistakes Corrected.

'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'

Read—Matt. xviii. 1—14; Mark ix. 30—48; Learn—Isa. lv. 8, 9; Matt. xviii. 1—3.
(Hymns, 113, 131, 133, 160, 176, 177, 353, 361, 365.)

TO THE TEACHER.

No formal application will be found in the following Sketch, because the whole subject is so practical that every part conveys its own application: and there can be no better closing topic than that suggested—the *motive* urged by our Lord in Matt. xviii. 10—14.

Every teacher knows how prone children are to the very faults rebuked by our Lord in the discourse before us—ambition (it may be in little things), envy, quarrelling, intolerance, &c.; and all will desire that this Lesson should do something to correct them. It will be best not to point the teachings of the passage *directly* at the scholars. Let them see the faults *in the disciples* first, as David was made to see his sin first in the rich man of Nathan's parable. Then the 'Thou art the man' will come with greater force.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Who does not like to be 'greatest,' first among others, the leader, the chosen one? [*Illust.*—*At the head of class; captain of side in a game, &c.*] Often read in history of men fighting and plotting to be greatest. Whom would you expect *not* to have this feeling? The followers of Christ? Ah! they have it sometimes—see it to-day.

I. WISHING TO BE GREAT.

The disciples are beginning to think the 'kingdom' will soon be set up [*see Note 1*]. Now then, 'Who shall be greatest?'—this question uppermost in their minds—talk of it as they walk along, Mark ix. 34. Do they discuss it merely out of curiosity? No—'disputed'—each wants to be first—perhaps the nine jealous of the three who had been alone with Jesus on the mount and seen something they could not tell the others (ver. 9)—perhaps James and John jealous of Peter because of what Jesus said to him (Matt. xvi. 18).

But on one thing they are agreed: they, the Twelve, shall have honour and authority above all others—and why should they not use their authority now? So they will; and a chance soon comes. Here is a man actually doing what they had failed to do (Mark ix. 18)—casting out devils in their Master's name—'who is he?—not one of our company—what right has he to do it?' What do they do? ver. 38—no doubt angrily and proudly.

They reach home—the eye of Jesus on them (like Elisha's on Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 25; comp. Luke xxii. 61)—hear His searching question, ver. 33—see them silent and ashamed, ver. 34 (comp. Matt. xxii. 12; Rom. iii. 19), as He tells them what shall come on the ambitious and envious, ver. 35. But now they have recovered themselves—the old thoughts come back—'After all, who is to be greatest?'—would like to know—ask Jesus, Matt. xviii. 1 [*see Note 2*].

Jesus sees all their mistaken ideas—how different their thoughts from God's (*1st text for rep.*)—will make it clear to them.

II. THE TRUE WAY TO BE GREAT.

A little child in the house. Jesus calls it—does it obey? He takes it up—is it afraid? Humble, submissive, docile, trustful—a pretty picture—a parable acted instead of spoken. See how Jesus applies it, ver. 3. Great in the 'kingdom'!—are they sure they are fit to be in it at all? Would their being apostles be enough?—we know *one* who had no part in it. Before they can enter, must be 'changed' [*see Note 3*]—from what? from ambition, jealousy, pride, unkindness, &c. And what to be? Just what that little child is—thinking little of itself—content to be thought little of—wishing no great honours—quietly doing as bid—trusting in those older and wiser. Peter and James and the rest must be like *that*, and the

lowliest shall be the great ones—not be raised up *high* as reward for being lowly—always to remain lowly—for being lowly is being 'great in the kingdom.' Comp. Ps. cxxxviii. 6; Prov. iii. 34; Isa. lvii. 15. And if lowly, no envy—do not the lowly 'esteem others better than themselves'? Phil. ii. 3; Eph. iv. 2; Rom. xii. 10.

III. HOW TO SHEW WE ARE GREAT.

(1) How had the disciples been shewing off their authority? [*above*].

But now John begins to be uneasy, for see what Jesus has just said, Mark ix. 37. Uneasy?—no wonder—if a little insignificant child should be cared for, ought not all weak and inferior disciples to be cared for? and had they treated that man rightly? John asks, ver. 38. How does Jesus reply? ver. 39—41 (comp. Numb. xi. 29; Phil. i. 18). *Why* should the man be treated as a brother? Because 'on our side' [*see Note 4*]. How know that?—(a) he was trying to do good; (b) he was doing it believing in Jesus. Even much smaller good deeds than his, if done for Christ, should be rewarded, ver. 41. True, he held back from joining the disciples; but why? they knew not, and were not to assume that his reason was a bad one; suppose he were a 'little one,' weak in faith—then he the very person to be 'received.'

(2) But this not all. They had 'left undone what they ought to have done' (*i.e.*, treating the man as a brother)—had they not also 'done what they ought not to have done'?—had they not actually injured him? How? [*Illust.*—*Little child learning to walk: you don't help it—that's bad; but what is worse? Putting a great stone in way, for it to fall over*]. Had they not put something in his way?—their pride and churlishness—might it not make him say, 'Are these the disciples of the new prophet? then I will have nothing to do with them or Him'? See how Jesus rebukes them, Mark ix. 42—'offend,' *i.e.*, put a stumbling-block in the way—what is better than doing *that*?—better to have millstone round own neck in the sea [*see Note 6*] than to put stumbling-stone in another's path—better be drowned than cause another to sin. Remember Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiv. 16.

(3) But is it *easy* thus to treat others rightly—to 'receive' them as brethren—not to 'offend' them? No, the easy thing is to be envious, proud, unkind—to fall into sin and make others to sin. What then? Be watchful and resolute—fight against sin in our hearts, on our tongues, &c.—not struggle a little and then give way, but struggle till we conquer. Is this hard and painful? well, Jesus knows it—what does He call it? Mark ix. 43, 45, 47. Being 'like the little child' is no child's play—must be *manly*, 'quit you like men' (1 Cor. xvi. 13). But see the solemn reason

why it is 'better' to struggle on, even if it be like cutting off a hand or plucking out an eye, ver. 44, 46, 48 [see Note 7]—terrible words! yet it is the loving Saviour who speaks them.

So, three ways of shewing we are 'great':—

(1) Being kind and gentle to those we think inferior—not lording it over them; Rom. xii. 16.

(2) Taking care not to 'offend' them, not to make them sin, Rom. xiv. 13, 21.

(3) Conquering, not countries and armies (like Alexander 'the Great'), but our own sins, Prov. xvi. 32.

Now what mistakes has Jesus corrected?

(a) That to be 'great in the kingdom' is to have a high place, plenty of authority, &c. It is not what we *have*, but what we *are*; not *where* we are, but *what* we are.

(b) That to be above or before others is worth struggling for. It makes us *small*, not *great*.

(c) That we shew how great we are by

'standing on our rights,' and 'keeping others in their place.'

(d) That we have only ourselves to think of in what we say and do. Our sin may ruin another's soul.

(e) That it is easy to be Christ's disciple. And one other mistake (*next lesson*).

But see one thing more to-day,—

A MOTIVE FOR TRYING TO BE GREAT IN CHRIST'S WAY.

See Matt. xviii. 10—14. Why think so much of the young, the weak, the 'little ones'? See who does think of them: the angels nearest God are *their* angels [see Note 8], to watch over them, ver. 10 (comp. Ps. xxxiv. 7, xci. 11; Heb. i. 14); the Son came from heaven on purpose to save them, ver. 11—13; the Father—what is His will concerning them? ver. 14. Ah! and are we not all alike in this? Where should *we* be but for the Father's 'good will,' the Son's 'seeking and saving,' the angels' care? How can we despise or offend *any one*, when we think of *that*?

NOTES.

1. The dispute among the Apostles doubtless arose from their expectation that the temporal kingdom they looked for would soon be set up. Christ had spoken of 'building His Church' and 'coming in His kingdom' (Matt. xvi. 18, 28), and although He announced His approaching death at the same time (ver. 21), they, though unable to reconcile such apparently conflicting statements, never doubted that all would issue in His visible earthly glory. Since then they had been with Him at Jerusalem (see Add. Note on the Chronology, p. 154), where He had spoken out with greater publicity and boldness than ever before; in fact we do not read of any public preaching at His two former visits (those of John ii. and v.). They might well, therefore, expect that He would shortly proclaim Himself King.

2. Matt. xviii., Mark ix. 23—50, and Luke ix. 46—50 are evidently (and xvii. 1—10, probably) parallel passages; but it is not easy to arrange them in exact order. Probably, Christ's question to the Twelve (Mark) preceded their question to Him (Matt.). Matt. xviii. 1 may well come in after Mark ix. 25, as the next verses in both Gospels are parallel. In the Greek of Matt. xviii. 1, there is a conjunction (*ἀρα*) which is not expressed in our version; and the Apostles' question really is, 'Who, then, is greatest?'—obviously referring to something that had gone before. They might feel that they had done wrong to *dispute*, and yet think it no harm to *inquire*. John's reference to their forbidding the man to cast out devils (Mark and Luke) would then come in after Matt. xviii. 5; and the rest of Mark ix. is a fuller account of the sayings of Matt. xviii. 6—9.

3. The Greek word rendered 'converted,' in ver. 2, is not the one usually so rendered. The latter is a compound word (*επιστρέφω*) derived from the former (*στρέφω*), which simply means 'turned,' and is so translated in Matt. xvi. 23, and John xx. 16.

4. 'He that is not against us is on our part.' This saying of our Lord's is often contrasted with that

in Matt. xii. 30; Luke xi. 23—'He that is not with Me is against Me,' as if they were inconsistent. But, (1) the circumstances under which they were respectively spoken should be borne in mind: both had reference to the casting out of devils, but in the one case a man is doing so in the name of Jesus; in the other, men are blaspheming concerning the similar works of Jesus Himself. (2) In the one case Christ speaks of 'us' (or, as some MSS. read, 'you,' which is still more significant); in the other, of 'Me.' A man might be 'with Him' in spirit, though he joined not the disciples' company; of which Nicodemus is a conspicuous example. 'On our part' (Mark) and 'for us' (Luke) are identical in the Greek.

The two sayings are strikingly expounded in two essays on the 'Intolerance' and 'Tolerance of the Gospel,' in Vinet's *Christian Philosophy*.

5. On 'offend,' see Lesson LI., Note 4.

6. 'A millstone round the neck was a Greek and a Roman punishment, though not a Jewish one. The Jews under Antiochus, and the Christians under the emperors, suffered death in this way.'

7. 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' A quotation from Isa. lxvi. 24. This refers to the two modes of disposing of dead bodies, by burial and by burning. The worm dies when it has nothing left to feed on; the fire is quenched when all is consumed. If the worm 'dies not,' and the fire 'is not quenched,' it is because the *object still exists*. Could any figure represent perpetual suffering more solemnly?

8. 'Their angels.' The explanation adopted in the Sketch is that of the best writers. The word 'angel' is never used in Scripture of a glorified human spirit. Stier says, 'Here stands Jacob's ladder before our eyes: first the *little ones*; then the *angels*; then the *Son of Man* (ver. 11); and then above Him the Father Himself and His good pleasure (ver. 14).'

Lesson LIX.—The Rule and Pattern of Forgiveness.

'Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'

Read—Matt. xviii. 15—35; Learn—Eph. iv. 31, 32; Matt. vi. 14, 15. (*Hymns*, 8, 90, 95, 161, 177, 354, 355, 365.)

TO THE TEACHER.

On few subjects is it more easy to talk vaguely than on that now before us; yet there are few on which it is less easy to speak with real effect. The duty of forgiving 'those that trespass against us' is one which is quietly acknowledged as a matter of course, but which never seems to be binding in a particular case. 'The case is an exceptional one,' we mentally urge upon our consciences; 'the rule cannot apply to it.' And children are quite as liable to the illusion as adults. Every teacher knows that revenge is sweet to a boy: 'I'll pay him out' is almost the normal expression of his feelings towards some comrade.

Now in all cases of duties which are peculiarly unpleasant to our human nature, what is wanted, to induce us to fulfil them, is an *adequate motive*; and, to exercise a forgiving and forbearing spirit, no motive can be imagined stronger than that embodied in the 'motto' above and enforced by the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. Let the teacher's special aim, therefore, be to impress this motive on the minds of the scholars. Let the Lesson be an expansion of St. John's words, 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.'

It is scarcely necessary to say that many of the thoughts in the Sketch are derived from Archbishop Trench's exposition.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

In learning arithmetic, two things given us: *rules and examples*. To-day we have a rule, and an example or pattern—to teach us what? *How to forgive*.

I. THE RULE OF FORGIVENESS.

Jesus has been talking to the Apostles about 'offences' [*last Lesson*—whose offences? *theirs against others*—what to do with them? try and let there be none at all. Now He talks about *others' offences against them*—what to do with these.

You have been injured by some one; what do you do? What usually done? Is it not this—tell everybody how badly you have been treated? Now why is this? is it not to have a kind of revenge, by showing how bad he is? And why this? because angry feeling in heart. Perhaps you say, 'Oh, I forgive him, of course'—but is it forgiving to complain and make mischief?

Now what sort of forgiveness does Jesus speak of? ver. 35—'*from your heart*.' Then are you just to let it alone? No—[*read ver. 15—20*]. Why 'go to him alone'? Because you *care for him*—don't want him to sin—feel that by his wrongdoing he has hurt his own soul more than you—will try and win him back by speaking gently to him. That is 'forgiving from the heart'—that is obeying Christ's command in Matt. v. 44. And if he does repent, how happy for you! see Prov. xi. 30; Dan. xii. 3; Jas. v. 19, 20.

But supposing he 'will not hear thee,' what then? tell others? yes, but *in his presence*, ver. 16—let them hear both sides.

And suppose *nothing* moves him—then what? ver. 17—his sin must not be passed over, but how is he to be treated? with ill-tempered looks, harsh words, unkind acts? see what St. Paul told his converts to do, Gal. vi. 1; 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. Jesus really says so too, ver. 20—for how could He be 'in the midst' where hatred and revenge are? And if the offender is prayed for, what hope of winning him? ver. 19. Let us then pray, 'That it may please Thee to bless our enemies,' &c., 'and to turn their hearts' (Litany). [*See Note 1.*]

But suppose the offender repents, and then offends again? Peter thinks of this, ver. 21—well, he has been taught [*see Note 2*] to forgive three times—but surely Jesus will say more—perhaps seven. So He does (Luke xvii. 4), but see ver. 22—does He mean 490 times? why, if you have 'forgiven and forgotten,' how count up? if you can remember the offences to count them, that shews you have never 'forgiven from the heart' once. Jesus means, *no limit at all*.

Two rules, then:—(a) From the heart, *caring more for the offender than for oneself*; (b) From the heart, *never tiring of forgiving him*.

Do these seem very hard rules to keep? So thought the Apostles, for see what they asked when they heard them, Luke xvii. 5. Let us pray the same prayer.

II. THE PATTERN OF FORGIVENESS.

To shew this, Jesus tells a parable. [*Read ver. 23—34.*] When we are offended, very angry, think 'we can't forgive

this—really too bad,' then must remember that we too have a Creditor—One whom we have offended.

What does the parable tell us about Him and our debt to Him?

(a) *There is a time of reckoning.* The day of judgment? yes, Matt. xxv. 19; Rom. xiv. 12. But it may come before that. Sometimes God comes and tells us of our sins, makes us count them up, and think about them. It was such a time of reckoning for David, when Nathan went to him (2 Sam. xii.); for the Ninevites, when Jonah preached to them (Jon. iii.). It is the Holy Spirit's work, John xvi. 8, 9. Is it kind of God to do it? If not done, the sinner goes on making his debt heavier, 'treasuring up wrath' (Rom. ii. 5). So, however *young* we are, the sooner the reckoning comes the better.

(b) *Then we shall feel how great our debt is.* Do others offend us very much? see how the parable puts others' offences against us alongside ours against God—'300 pence,' '10,000 talents' [see Note 3]—one 600,000 times as great as the other. It is so, whether we know it or not; but one day we shall know it—how feel then? see Ps. xl. 12. What do? what did the servant do? ver. 26—'will pay thee all'—so thinks the sinner, but how hopeless!—if could do 'all that is commanded' henceforth, this only our duty (Luke xvii. 10), and what can we set against *the old score*? No, we can never pay our debt to God.

(c) *But God is willing to forgive freely.* What made the king remit that great debt? ver. 27—'compassion.' So God, Exod. xxxiv. 6; 2 Chron. xxx. 9; Neh. ix. 17; Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 15. And how did the king forgive? by halves? taking 'ten shillings in the pound,' or even 'sixpence in the pound'? see ver. 32—'all that debt.' So God, Isa. xxxviii. 17, xlv. 22; Mic. vii. 18, 19.

(d) *Who they are that will not have God's*

forgiveness? [see Note 5]. See that servant—he has heard the king's gracious promise as he lay prostrate—what next?—'went out'—he forgets the mercy shewn him—here is a poor debtor of his, also a servant of the king, but an inferior one—him he seizes—see the poor man at his feet—will he not recollect how he fell down and spoke like that just now?—will he not think, 'How little this man owes me to what I owed the king!—I can't press him after such a release?' What *does* he do? Now, are not we like this sometimes?—hear God's message (in church or school)—are touched—think, 'how good He is!'—then 'go out'—forget all about it—meet some one who has wronged us—all the angry and revengeful feeling back in a moment. Can God forgive such? If we go before God's judgment seat like that, what must come on us? Pray that He may never address us in the king's words—'O thou wicked servant.'

Now what is the 'pattern of forgiveness' which Jesus gives? See first text for rep.—'Even as God . . . hath forgiven you.'

But there are two things about God which the Parable does not tell us. God has done more than that king, for,—

1. *He has spared us again and again.* Think—how often have we deserved His wrath!—yet He has 'shewn forth all long-suffering' (1 Tim. i. 16); see Ps. lxxviii. 38, ciii. 8—13; Rom. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9.

2. *He has given His Son to bear our sin.* See again first text for rep.—'even as God for Christ's sake hath,' &c. How true are Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 10, 11!

How, then, can we be hard upon others, when God has done all this for us?

We pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them,' &c. Do we really wish God to treat us as we treat others? if He did, how would it be?

NOTES.

1. The wisdom of Christ's injunctions with respect to an erring brother is very remarkable. First, an effort is to be made to keep the matter private—the very thing which is so commonly not done. If this fail, still only one or two are to be informed, with a view to there being sufficient legal testimony in case of need (see Deut. xix. 15; John viii. 17; 2 Cor. xiii. 1; Heb. x. 28). Not till after both efforts have failed is that to be done which is too frequently the first step of the offended party, the giving publicity to the offence; while it is plain that the *spirit* in which all is to be done is not that of resentment or hatred, but that of regretful kindness.

It is probable that in the injunction to tell 'the Church,' our Lord had in view an appeal to church discipline whenever the apostolical organisation should be complete; but the *essence* of the command would allow of an appeal simply to a small Christian circle, for, in ver. 20, the 'church' is plainly defined as 'where two or three are gathered together in My name.'

Ver. 18 gives to the Church generally the

authority already given to Peter in chap. xvi. 19. See Lesson L., Note 6.

2. The Rabbis taught the duty of forgiving three times, grounding the duty on Job. xxxiii. 29; Amos i. 3, ii. 6.

3. In the parable, the 'servants' were evidently satraps, or governors of provinces, accountable for large revenues to the royal treasury. No private debt could amount to so much. Trench compares the sum with the twenty-nine talents used in constructing the Tabernacle, the 120 talents presented by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, the one talent required as tribute from Judah by Pharaoh Necho, &c. These, however, were talents of gold, 10,000 of which would amount to seventy-two millions sterling, or the yearly revenue of Great Britain. But the talents of the parable were probably silver talents; and even then they would amount to £1,875,000. The 'hundred pence' would be about £3.

4. Bondage for debt was permitted among the Jews, see Exod. xxii. 3; 2 Kings iv. 1; Neh.

v. 8; but the hardness of the custom was mitigated by the law of the Jubilee, Lev. xxv. 39, 47, 54. The mention, however, also of imprisonment and torture shows that the parable was based rather on the practices of oriental despotism.

5. The parable must not be pressed to imply that the forgiveness of sins is ever granted

by God and then afterwards withdrawn. It is one of those cases in which the form of the story requires certain incidents not designed to have a spiritual meaning. Rather should we take it thus:—God has, as it were, *proclaimed an amnesty* to all who repent and believe in His Son; and a forgiving spirit is one of the *tests* of the genuineness of repentance and faith.

Lesson LX.—The Final Departure from Galilee.

‘He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.’

Read—Luke ix. 51—62; *Learn*—Heb. xii. 1, 2; Luke ix. 62. (*Hymns*, 42, 43, 96, 127, 132, 170, 171, 173, 311, 329, 340, 354.)

TO THE TEACHER.

We have now arrived at an epoch of great importance in the life of Christ (on which see Additional Note on the Chronology at page 154). As much stress as possible should be laid upon this epoch; and, from this time forward, our blessed Lord should be constantly represented as *with His face towards Jerusalem*—not, of course, literally, but in solemn thought and holy purpose. In the present Lesson, particularly, it is important to concentrate attention on the Lord Himself; and even if no ‘application’ whatever were to be given, the teacher might well feel that, after all, the simple exhibition of the ‘Leader and Perfecter of Faith’ (the literal meaning of the words in the first text for repetition), in His wondrous love and self-sacrifice, is the most effective possible teaching. The incidents, however, which St. Luke connects with the start on this last great journey, are peculiarly appropriate to the general subject, as shewing the contrast between the Master and the disciples—which seems to be Luke’s object in the arrangement of the narrative. Still, the first half of the following Sketch is of much greater consequence than the second, although it has to do with only a single verse.

The incident of the Ten Lepers, in Luke xvii., probably also occurred just at this time (see the same Additional Note), and is alluded to in passing in the Sketch. It was impossible to include in the course a separate lesson on this miracle; and much of its special instruction was given in Lesson XXVII.

The illustrations in the Sketch are not designed as *adequately* representing the feelings and spirit of Christ. Their use, however, is legitimate in the same way as are the common Scripture expressions about God’s ‘eye’ or ‘arm,’ the Lord ‘repenting,’ ‘smelling a sweet savour,’ &c. But they need to be handled with some care.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

When any one leaves the place he has lived in for years, how does he feel? [*Illustr.*—*Boy leaving village to begin life in London; or, emigrants just starting.*] The Lord Jesus was ‘in all things like His brethren’ (Heb. ii. 17), and we have now come to a time when He must have had those feelings.

Jesus is leaving Galilee—leaving it to die. How long had He been there? Think of the two periods: many years as poor carpenter in quiet village home; then (after some months’ absence), nearly two years ‘going about doing good’ [*see Lesson XXIV*]. Surely it was sad, with His tender heart, to turn from those long familiar scenes and faces. But, a special cause for sadness—some had believed in Him and loved Him, but what of the people generally? (See a few verses further on, x. 13—15.)

Those who must leave home like to have

two things:—(a) Bright prospects before them—then can go hopefully. (b) Brave and loving companions to go with them. Now see how it was with Jesus.

I. THINK OF JESUS HIMSELF, AND WHERE HE WAS GOING, *Ver. 51.*

1. *What was before Him?* ‘Jerusalem’—and what there? Going from ignorant country folk to learned priests and scribes, would He be more welcomed? What had happened when He went there before? [*Lessons XVII., XXXIV., LIV., LV.*] We know what was coming: did He know? What had He told the Apostles? See *ver. 22, 44* [*Lesson LI.*].

2. *Knowing this, what did He do?* ‘Stedfastly set His face.’ What is ‘setting the face’? [*Illustr.*—*Your father says he will do so and so; you know he means it by his determined look. Or, you ‘set yourself’ to do that hard sum, and your face shows it.*]

But how hard to 'set the face' to go to pain and suffering! [*Illustr.—Wounded man facing painful amputation.*] Now see Jesus, knowing it all beforehand, going forward 'stedfastly'; as prophesied of Him, Isa. l. 7 ('set my face like a flint,' and see ver. 5, 6). Like St. Paul (Acts xx. 24), 'none of these things move Him.' *Could He avoid them?* Matt. xxvi. 53; John x. 18. *Why will He not?* Think—

3. *What sustained Him?* Three things:—(a) *That it was the Father's will* (see Isa. liii. 10; Rom. viii. 32). This was enough for Jesus, John iv. 34, xvii. 4. (b) *His love for sinners.* This brought Him from heaven, 2 Cor. viii. 9; and will it fail now? No—'loved unto the end,' John xiii. 1. (c) *'The joy set before Him'* (1st. text for rep.): what does St. Luke say?—'when the time came—what time?—'that He should be *received up*' [see Note 1]. He looks *beyond* the cross and the grave—sees the glory to follow: the glory He had before (John xvii. 5), and the new glory as perfect Man (Phil. ii. 9)—yes, and something else—He will not be alone—myriads of saved souls too—*this is His joy.* (See Isa. liii. 11; John xvii. 24; Heb. ii. 10—13; comp. 1 Thess. ii. 19).

Who can see Him 'stedfastly setting His face to go to Jerusalem' without loving Him? Who can turn away from such a Saviour?

II. SEE WHO WERE CALLED TO GO WITH HIM, AND HOW THEY ACTED.

1. *The Apostles.* These of course. But see what they were looking forward to—what they thought and felt, ver. 52—56.

Here is a Samaritan village, just on the border of Galilee [see Note 2]. Two Jews coming in—hear their proclamation—'The King, Messiah, coming: prepare to receive Him!' [see Note 3]. Will the Samaritans be like those of Sychar (John iv. 40), so glad to have Jesus with them? Why not? ver. 53—Messiah! this is no true Messiah, going to Jerusalem to be King instead of to Mount Gerizim; we'll have nothing to do with Him.'

What do the Apostles say to this? They are thinking of their Master, not as the suffering Friend of sinners, but as the great King of the Jews, going to reign at last, and they to share His triumph [see *Lesson LVIII.*];—shall they submit to such insults? Certainly the 'sons of thunder' (Mark iii. 17) will not; whom do they remember and wish to imitate? ver. 54 (see 2 Kings i. 10—14). Just like what John was before, ver. 49 [*Lesson LVIII.*];—how was he rebuked then?—so again now, ver. 55, 56 [see Note 3]. If they are like *that*, proud, fierce, pitiless, how can they be followers of the patient, humble Master? Are they so very resolute, 'setting their faces' to punish their foes?—well, He is resolute too—much more so—but to do what? ver. 56—'to save men,' and that by suffering Himself. See how He showed His forgiving love soon afterwards, chap.

xvii. 16—healed a Samaritan leper. And see what John gave the Samaritans when he knew better, Acts viii. 14—17.

2. *Other disciples.* Here are three men—they believe in Jesus as Messiah—would like to go with Him. Are they more like Him than James and John?

(a) The thoughtless disciple, ver. 57. Oh, yes, he will go—'whithersoever'—ready for anything (like Peter, Luke xxii. 33). For *anything?* What does Jesus remind him of? ver. 58—not riches and honour, but poverty and suffering, to be had by following Jesus. Had He not just been refused a lodging? [*above.*] Ah, what a difference that makes! [*Illustr.—Drop of acid detecting sham gold; water quenching fire.*]

(b) The sad and feeble disciple, ver. 59 [see Note 5]. How can he go, with all these sorrows upon him, all this mourning to go through? See how differently Jesus treats him, ver. 60. [*Illustr.—Two horses: bridle for one, spur for the other.*] Before, Jesus used the bridle; now the spur—'Go thou and preach.'

(c) The half-hearted disciple, ver. 61. What does he want to do? Merely to say farewell at home like Elisha (1 Kings xix. 20)? Ah, no, Jesus knows better—sees the heart wavering—home loved more than God—how then 'fit'? Where must the ploughman's eye be, if he is to plough straight? Besides, he that 'looks back' may 'draw back.' See Gen. xix. 26; Ps. xlv. 10; Luke xiv. 26, xvii. 31, 32; Phil. iii. 13; Heb. x. 38, 39.

How different all these from Jesus! Not one 'stedfastly setting his face' to follow in His steps. Did Jesus, then, in leaving His old home, &c., have like-minded companions? Here was another kind of suffering: *He was alone.*

See then—

EXAMPLES FOR US TO AVOID.

We are called to be Christ's followers—have been baptized promising to be 'His faithful soldiers and servants.'

Are we frightened because all may not be pleasant? or too much wrapped up in troubles to attend to such things? or looking back to old pleasures? [*refer to the three disciples, as above.*] Are we following—trying to 'be religious'—but in a wrong spirit—not penitent, humble, lowly, but proud because we are 'not as other men are,' and so no love for others? [*refer to James and John, as above.*]

AN EXAMPLE FOR US TO FOLLOW.

We have seen what was before Jesus; see what is before us, 2 Tim. iii. 12. But what beyond that? Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 18. How can we be like Him? see 1st. text for rep.—(a) throw aside whatever hinders us; (b) run with patience; (c) always be 'looking unto Jesus.'

And remember what He did was *for our sakes*: shall we not show our love by following Him?

NOTES.

1. 'When the time came that He should be received up'—more literally, 'As the days of His receiving up were being accomplished.' The 'receiving up' is the Ascension; a similar Greek word being used concerning that event in Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 2; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

2. The route of this journey was probably as follows:—Our Lord passed from Galilee into Samaria at the south end of the Plain of Esdracon. Being repulsed from the first village, He returned within the boundary of Galilee; and then, turning eastward, proceeded along the frontier of the two provinces, healing the ten lepers on His way; then, passing Gilboa, He descended into the Jordan valley at Scythopolis (Bethshan), and crossed the river by a bridge which was there into Perea. The reasons for this view are given in the Additional Note on Chronology, page 154.

3. On the Samaritans, and their relations to the Jews, see Lesson XIX, Note 5, and accompanying Additional Note. To 'make ready for Him' probably means more than merely 'find lodging and prepare food'; the Greek word is the same as is used of the Baptist's 'preparing the way of the Lord'; and the two messengers may have had a commission similar to that of the Seventy in the next chapter, the same expression being used—'sent them before His face.' The rejection was, then, not merely of a company of Galileans going to a feast, but of One who claimed to be Messiah. Observe, too, that to prepare Messiah's way was Elijah's work (Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5; Matt. xi. 10, 14, xvii. 10—13; Luke i. 17):

hence, perhaps, the wish of James and John to do as he had done; in connection with which it is worth noting that Mount Carmel (where Elijah called the fire from heaven) was probably *then in sight*.

'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' Either, 'Ye are mistaken as to the spirit which is prompting your words: ye think it is true zeal, when in fact it is pride'; or, 'Ye know not what is the spirit of the dispensation ye belong to; what was right in Elijah under the Old Covenant, would be wrong in you under the new.' The latter seems the most probable meaning. The words, however, are not in the best MSS.

4. Two of the three incidents recorded in ver. 57—62 are mentioned by Matthew (viii. 19—22) as having occurred at an earlier period. It is not easy to decide on which occasion they actually took place, but Luke's order seems preferable.

5. 'Let the dead bury their dead,' i.e., let those who are spiritually dead allow themselves to be engrossed with the concerns of their mortal nature; those who are 'alive unto God' must 'seek first His kingdom.' There is no interference here with relative duties: our Lord doubtless saw that the man was of a gloomy and melancholy disposition, apt to brood over his troubles, and so neglect the call to a life of activity and self-denial. There may be an allusion to the long funeral ceremonies of the Jews.

6. 'Fit for the kingdom of God'—rather 'serviceable,' 'of use,' i.e., as a workman, a preacher.

Lesson LXI.—The Mission of the Seventy.

'Treasure in earthen vessels.'

Read—Luke x. 1—24; Learn—Luke x. 21; 2 Cor. iv. 7. (*Hymns*, 97, 115, 120, 174, 232, 237, 328.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This subject will probably be a new one, even to the most intelligent of our Sunday-schools, and the interest attaching to novelty should be made the most of. An attempt has been made, in the third division of the Sketch, to add to this interest by picturing the Seventy, not as receiving Christ's instructions, but as acting upon them while engaged in their mission. The picture is, of course, an imaginary one; but for each incident supposed there is warrant in our Lord's discourse (every sentence of which must be conceived of as suggested by His own knowledge of what would occur); and the case seems to be one in which the careful and reverent use of the imagination in teaching is legitimate.

The Mission of the Seventy has been more fully described by the writer in an article in the *Church Sunday School Magazine* for September, 1869. The general lesson to be derived from the subject is happily illustrated in the *Recreations of a Country Parson*, in the essay on 'The Practical Service of Imperfect Means.'

The details of the application are necessarily left to the teacher to fill in, as they will differ much according to the sex, age, circumstances, and characters of the scholars. In dwelling on the duty of direct 'missionary work at home,' teachers should be very cautious how they speak about children being 'missionaries' to their parents, lest they foster self-will, conceit, and disregard of the Fifth Commandment. A pious child may bring his parents to Christ, but it will be rather by irreproachable conduct and gentle demeanour than by assuming to teach; and such conduct and demeanour should be re-

presented as one mode of working for Christ. The instructions given to the Seventy mostly concerned these very things, our Lord well knowing that their simplicity, contentedness, forbearance, &c., would have an influence on the popular mind as powerful as that of their message itself. Nevertheless, there *is* such a thing as a child's *active* work for Christ. Every gentle word of instruction, counsel, or warning given to a younger brother or sister, or to a school companion or playmate,—every fearless refusal to join others in sin,—every childish prayer on behalf of another,—every unselfish act, kind word, forgiving look,—every trifle given (if from the child's *own* little money) to the missionary-box,—is in its degree a fulfilling of the command conveyed to us in this Lesson.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

The 2nd text for rep. speaks of 'treasure in earthen vessels.' We put beautiful jewel or ornament in handsome case—what then? two things to look at—jewel and case. But if in common ugly box or in earthen pot, then only the jewel looked at. What does St. Paul mean by 'this treasure'? God's message of salvation—the Gospel—all he had to tell about Christ—the 'unspeakable gift' (2 Cor. ix. 15)—the 'pearl of great price' (Matt. xiii. 46). And he, Paul, an 'earthen vessel'—one unworthy to bring such a treasure to men—why then chosen?—'that the excellency,' &c.—(comp. Ps. cxv. 1).

To-day see some of these 'earthen vessels,' to whom Christ entrusted the great treasure.

I. THE WORK TO BE DONE.

Jesus is starting on a journey—where from? where to? [*last Lesson*]. But He is not going straight to Jerusalem—the 'time' (of death, resurrection, ascension, see ix. 51) not yet—about five months off. And meanwhile Jesus will once more proclaim Himself to the people, and invite them to receive Him as their true Messiah.

Why will He do this? (a) See Matt. ix. 36 [*Lesson XXXVIII*].—'compassion' for the 'sheep having no shepherd'; Luke xiii. 34—He longed to gather them to Him as hen gathers chickens under her wings. (b) But if they *would* reject Him, it must not be because they did not *know*—His call must be a public one (see Acts xxvi. 26—'not done in a corner').

Where will He do this? [*See Note 1*]. Not in Galilee—there they have known Him well a long while—have already rejected Him (ver. 13—15). In Samaria?—but He has just tried there—and what came of it? [*last Lesson*]. In Peræa?—yes, there first (Matt. xix. 1)—then afterwards go on to Judæa.

How will He do this? By a great journey from city to city, from place to place (ver. 1). Not only by healing sick and teaching in synagogues, but by sending men 'before His face' to announce His coming, with the solemn message that 'the kingdom is come nigh' (ver. 1, 9).

II. THE MEN TO DO THE WORK.

The Twelve? no, they not enough—so many places to be sent to all at once. Jesus must choose out others to help—men

who have not been His companions always, quiet people at Capernaum, Cana, &c., who believe in Him and love Him, but have not preached before. But—

What 'earthen vessels' they were to carry such a 'treasure'! how unfit to do such a work, and to have power to work miracles! Think—what little knowledge, many faults. *the Twelve* had, in spite of being always with Jesus—what must these Seventy have been!

But they had three qualifications. (a) *They were true disciples*, see ver. 20—we know not *one* of their names, but where were their names? (b) *God had taught them*, see ver. 21—the truth about Jesus, which priests and scribes knew not, God had revealed even to these 'babes' (comp. Matt. xvi. 17). (c) *They were willing to go*. Others hesitated, see ix. 57—62 [*last Lesson*]; these were ready.

III. HOW THEY WENT ABOUT THE WORK.

In ver. 2—12 are the directions Jesus gave them. Let us imagine we go with two of them, and watch what they do.

They start on their journey. Feeling what? ver. 2—how great the harvest—how few labourers—glad Jesus sent *them*—hope and pray for more. But anxious too—Jesus has told of dangers, ver. 3—wolves (bitter foes) in the way—they only lambs. Yet they can trust in God—He will take care of them—yes, and to Him they look for provision also, for what have they got? ver. 4—no money, no stores, no spare clothes [*see Note 2*].

They are on the road, hastening on, stopping for nothing. Here is a man coming the other way—will they go through all the usual long ceremonies [*see Note 2*]?—see ver. 4 (comp. 2 Kings iv. 29)—no time to halt—on they go.

They enter a town. Like Jonah, begin to preach—what? ver. 9—'kingdom nigh to you, for the King coming after us.' See crowds round, wondering, questioning. Then a great marvel—here are blind and lame—in full faith on their Master's promise (ver. 9) they touch the darkened eyes and crippled limbs—well in a moment! More than this, 'even the devils' cast out in the name of Jesus, ver. 17. Do the grateful people believe the message, and prepare for the King? Their hearts too

hard—care not for a Saviour, or offended because He comes from Galilee—think as we have seen so many others (see John i. 46, vi. 41, 42, 60, 66, vii. 41, 48, viii. 52; Luke iv. 22, 28). Then what do the messengers do? ver. 11—treat them as Jews treated heathens [see Note 2]—leave them with a last warning ('nevertheless,' &c.). What does Jesus say shall be the fate of such rejecters of His servants? ver. 12; and why? ver. 17.

They go on to another city—preaching and healing again—here received—people willing to have the King. How do the messengers act? Kindly, ver. 5; patiently, ver. 6; contentedly, ver. 7.

Think of seventy men going about thus—what a stir must have been made!—everybody talking of it—all knowing that Jesus of Nazareth claims to be Messiah—all may take His part if they will.

IV. THE RETURN FROM THE WORK.

The Seventy have done their work—now they come to their Master [see Note 3]. See the rejoicing—theirs—His.

Their joy, ver. 17. At what? at readiness of people to receive Jesus? at sinners repenting (comp. Luke xv. 10)? No, but at their own triumph over the devils. Was this a cause for joy? yes—a sign of Satan's fall from his power, ver. 18 [see Note 3]. But if they must think of themselves instead of their Master or the people, should rejoice more for something else—what? ver. 20—why? more blessed to be Christ's people than to have miraculous power

(comp. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3)—some might even cast out devils and yet not be His servants (Matt. vii. 22, 23)—like Judas. So we see how imperfect the Seventy were—then how kind of Jesus to employ them!

His joy, ver. 21—the only time we read of Jesus rejoicing. At what? at the power of His name (ver. 17) to do marvels? No, but at the Father's goodness in making His salvation known to the poor and ignorant—to 'babes' [see Note 5]. Think, then—when a Sunday-school child is taught God's word—when it listens, believes, loves—that gives joy to Christ!

Is it strange that Christ entrusted the 'treasure' to such 'earthen vessels,' that He employed such weak and ignorant men? Well, but it shows one thing, that—

CHRIST CALLS ON THE VERY WEAKEST OF HIS SERVANTS TO DO SOMETHING FOR HIM.

Are you too young, too ignorant, too poor, too feeble? But He does not want you to do great things—only something. But there must be three qualifications—the very same the Seventy had:—

(a) Must be true disciples, really caring for Christ.

(b) Must be taught of God what to do and how to do it. But is not God willing to teach 'babes'? ver. 21; and see His promise, Jas. i. 5.

(c) Must be willing—then God pleased with the smallest service, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

Remember Naaman's little maid (2 Kings v.); and God's words to Jeremiah (i. 6—9).

NOTES.

1. Although the mission of the Seventy is recorded only by St. Luke, its great importance is manifest to the careful reader of the Gospels. The simple fact that so many messengers were sent forth simultaneously is most significant of the design of our Lord's last great journey, viz., to make a final appeal to the Jewish nation as a whole; and the number of places visited by them—thirty-five at least (as they went in pairs), and probably more (as the contingency of any pair going to more than one town is contemplated in Christ's instructions)—shews that the effect upon the people must have been very great (comp. Luke xii. 1, xiv. 25, xix. 3, 11, 37, xxiii. 5). On the locality of their mission, and on the purpose of this great circuit generally, see Additional Note on the Chronology at page 154.

Our Lord, probably, followed the Seventy into Peræa, going from place to place where they had preceded him; and their return to Him, doubtless at some fixed rendezvous, would not be till some time had elapsed, although St. Luke records it in immediate connection with their mission.

2. The 'purses' were the ends of the girdle, and 'no purse' means 'no money in it,' comp. Matt. x. 9. 'Scrip,' rather, 'wallet' for provisions. 'Nor shoes': they were to wear sandals (Mark vi. 9), and not carry a second pair. 'Salute no man': the salutations of travellers in the East are very elaborate and tedious; Jesus here enjoins not discourtesy, but single-mindedness.

'Son of peace,' one who reciprocates your good will; the expression is like 'children of light,' 'of this world,' &c. 'It shall turn to you again,' i.e., be as though unspoken. 'The labourer is worthy of his hire'—a sentence remarkable as being the only one in the Gospels quoted as Scripture in the Epistles (1 Tim. v. 18). 'Eren the very dust,' &c., referring to the custom of shaking off the dust of Gentile lands as unclean when stepping on to Jewish soil again after a journey. It would be like saying, 'We treat you as Gentiles'; comp. Acts xiii. 51, xviii. 6.

3. The meaning of ver. 18, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,' is much disputed. 'Heaven' does not always mean the abode of God, but sometimes stands figuratively for exaltation and power, as in ver. 15, where Capernaum is said to be 'exalted to heaven.' The words, therefore, do not necessarily refer to the original fall of Satan from his 'first estate' (Jude 6); and as the Greek is rather 'I was beholding Satan falling,' it seems more likely that Christ meant to say, when the Seventy joyfully related their triumph over the devils, 'Yes, and I, watching your success, saw in it a proof and pledge of the destruction of Satan's power, which is even now beginning, and shall surely be completed' (comp. John xii. 31). See Trench's very conclusive argument in *Studies in the Gospels*, p. 227. The next verse confirms this view, as the promise, though fulfilled literally in some cases (Mark xvi. 18; Acts xxviii. 5), certainly has a wider figurative sense; 'serpents and

scorpions' being the types of evil in the animal world, as 'thorns and thistles' in the vegetable world (Gen. iii. 18).

4. '*Names written in heaven.*' A figure drawn from a census or register. Comp. Exod. xxxii. 32, 33; Ps. lxi. 28; Dan. xii. 1; Phil. iv. 3; Heb. xii. 23; Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xxi. 27.

5. The word used to describe the 'rejoicing' of Jesus is very strong, and might be rendered 'exulted.' In Matt. v. 12 ('Rejoice and be exceeding glad') 'exceeding glad' is the same word. The cause of this joy is often misunderstood: 'that thou hast hid,' &c., requires a '*though*' to be understood before it, just as in

Rom. vi. 17—'God be thanked that (*though*) ye were the servants of sin,' &c.

6. The words of Christ in ver. 13—15, 21, 22, appear in Matt. xi., and those in ver. 23, 24, in Matt. xiii., in altogether different connections. Now, in the case of *incidents* differently recorded by two evangelists, we have no right to force a harmony by assuming that what appears to be the same event occurred twice. But this rule does not apply to our Lord's *words*. These may well have been repeated, with or without variation, on different but similar occasions; and there is no reason to doubt that the solemn sayings here referred to were such repetitions.

Lesson LXII.—The Chief Pharisee's Feast.

'Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'

Read—Luke xiv. 1—24; Learn—Isa. lv. 1, 2; Rev. xix. 9. (*Hymns*, 144, 146, 223, 225, 227, 348, 361.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The paraphrase form of writing, which has been adopted in portions of the following Sketch in order to make the meaning of our Lord's sayings clear, gives an apparently disproportionate length to those portions. In actual teaching the third head will be found to occupy the most time, and being the most important part—in fact, the pith of the Lesson—it ought to do so. With junior classes, indeed, much of the second head may be omitted, the lesson to them being almost exclusively on the Parable of the Great Supper; but even then the foregoing *incidents* must be noticed, in order to show the *contrast* indicated in the third head and expressed in the above '*motto.*' Our Lord's counsels in vers. 8—14, are, however, important, as showing that these and similar sayings were uttered as *parables*, and are not to be understood only in their superficial literal sense; see Sketch. But if they are taken, they may be fairly applied to the little selfishnesses of children, such as choosing the best seats in school, by the fire at home, &c.; sharing any little treasure they may have to divide with the *influential* among their companions, not with the feebler, &c. &c.

The incident of the cure of the man with the dropsy need not be dwelt upon in this Lesson. The teachings to be derived from it have been taken in Lesson XXXVII.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Jesus is now in Perrea, the old country of Gilead. Here Jacob wrestled, Israel conquered Sihon, Jephthah and Joab fought with Ammon, David took refuge from Absalom, Elijah was born, Ahab died. The Seventy have gone before Him [*last Lesson*—proclaiming what? Now see the result. As in Galilee in the early days of His ministry, so here: multitudes thronging Him, Matt. xix. 2; Luke xiv. 25—perhaps xi. 29, xii. 1 [*see Note 1*]; publicans eagerly flocking to the 'friend of sinners,' xv. 1; Pharisees inviting Him to their houses, xiv. 1.

To-day go with Jesus to one of these Pharisee entertainments.

I. JESUS AT THE FEAST.

Who gives the feast? ver. 1—no doubt a great and rich man—fine house (many grand ruins still to be seen at cities in Perrea)—many servants, &c. This a great feast—many guests, rich people, lawyers, Pharisees, &c. (vers. 7, 12)—see them

coming in—the host receiving them, &c. [*picture—see Lesson XXXVII.*] What are the guests thinking of? ver. 7—all trying to get best places [*see Note 2*—what vanity, envy, discontent, in their hearts!

But there is one guest there who is a stranger, specially invited—who? How do the rest feel towards Him? ver. 1—He is different from them—He cares not for all their ceremonies (see Mark vii. 2—8)—perhaps He will do something they think strange or wrong—so they 'watch Him.' Besides, what day is it? ver. 1—'let us see if this fellow will keep the Sabbath.' Were *they* keeping it?—after all their hard Sabbath rules for the poor people, to give such feasts, causing work and trouble? And their feelings—envy of one another, malice towards Him! How does He show them the true Sabbath-keeping? ver. 2—6. [*See Lesson XXXVII.*]

But now see—If they watched Him in malice, He '*marked*' them (ver. 7) in sorrow and just anger.

II. WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT MEN'S FEASTS.

A word to the guests, ver. 8—11. He 'marked' that seeking after best places—how does He show its foolishness? But then, suppose one of them, next time he went to a feast, were to say, 'I'll sit in low place—then I shall get taken up higher,' would that be what Jesus wished? Why, that really just as selfish. No—see ver. 7—all this is a 'parable'—something meant by it which you don't see at first. What? ver. 11—'he that exalteth himself, in any way, what of him? And who to be exalted? he that 'humbles himself' because he feels unworthy (comp. Ps. li. 17, cxxxviii. 6; Prov. iii. 34; Isa. lviii. 15; Jas. iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5). To see the greatest example of this, comp. Isa. xiv. 12—15 with Phil. ii. 5—11. Now, what were all these Pharisees doing? were they not thinking themselves worthy of God's favour, and despising others? Luke xviii. 9—14; was it not this that was making them reject Jesus? So His 'parable' means, 'You who seek the best seats have the same spirit in other and greater things—take care—a like result will follow.'

A word to the host, ver. 12—14. What does He mean? rich people not to invite their own friends at all? No—this an illustration too (something like Matt. v. 39, 40)—Jesus is thinking *why* these feasts given, in hope of 'a recompense' (ver. 12)—from whom? *from men*—they cared for that more than for God's recompense—and this in other things too, see Matt. vi. 1—6, xxiii. 5—7; John v. 44, xii. 43. How get God's recompense? ver. 13, 14. Only in this way? no, for all can't do so; Jesus means everything that is unselfish, kind, thoughtful of others; see Phil. ii. 3, 4.

III. WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT GOD'S FEAST.

He has spoken of a great reward hereafter, ver. 14. A guest (ver. 15) thinks of the great Feast the Jews looked forward to when Messiah should come [comp. Lesson XXVIII.]—'ah! how happy they would all be then!' [see Note 3]. But, suppose he should not be there—he never thinks of that. So Jesus answers by a parable [read ver. 16—24], telling of THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOD'S FEAST AND THEIR FEASTS.

1. Different as regards those invited.

The Pharisees thought themselves sure of good places in God's kingdom. Well, Jesus would say, 'You are invited—you have accepted (profess to be God's servants)—but all now ready—God's messengers (the Baptist, Jesus Himself) now calling you—and you won't come.' How different from their own feasts—every one so pleased to be asked, so ready to go, so eager for good seats! and now, when the

Seventy have been proclaiming 'the kingdom nigh' [last Lesson], when the King Himself among them—cold looks, scornful words, 'excuses' 'with one consent.' But what then? ver. 24—'that heavenly Feast you think so blessed, not one of you shall taste of it' [see Note 5]; and whose fault this? But who should be the 'blessed' ones? the very people they despised. How would that be? Because of another difference between God's Feast and their feasts,—

2. Different as regards Him who invites.

When they made a feast, whom did they invite, and why? ver. 12 [above]. But God—(a) whom does He invite? see parable—'poor, maimed,' &c.—those who can make Him no return—who are they? the publicans and sinners (see Mark ii. 17)—yes, and room for more than them—the despised Gentiles too from the 'highways and hedges' (outside the city), see Matt. viii. 11. Do you say these not invited till the intended guests refused?—ah, but *all*, even those first asked, destitute in God's sight (Rev. iii. 17)—*none* can make Him any return (1 Chron. xxix. 14; Luke xvii. 10). (b) Why does God ask such? Just from pity—He gets nothing by it, but He loves us, Rom. viii. 8; Eph. ii. 4, 5. So it is a free invitation, and to all, Isa. lv. 1, 2; Rev. xxii. 17.

HERE IS AN INVITATION FOR US TOO—
'Come, for all things are now ready.'

What are we invited to? *To be in Christ's company.* He will come and 'sup with us' now (Rev. iii. 20)—take us to 'sup with Him' hereafter (2nd text for rep.)—what meant? To be quite happy (Ps. lxxiii. 25), to have all we want (Phil. iv. 19), and to have it for nothing (1st text for rep.). Even on earth, the happiest people are those who have come to Christ—and who but they will be happy afterwards?

Are we making excuses? Some make the very same those men in the parable did. (a) You have not 'bought a piece of ground'; but have you not got *something you want to enjoy*, and won't leave it to obey Christ's call? (b) You have not to try how your ten new oxen will work, but have you not so much to do, school lessons, shop-work, home duties, that you have no time to think of Christ's invitation? (c) You are not like the newly-married man, but are you saying, 'I like this or that companion so much that I can't give him up for Christ'? Well, what will come of such excuses? We may (like the man in ver. 15) sing, 'Oh, that will be joyful,' but 'None of those shall taste of My supper.' When the heavenly feast begins, 'shut out.'

Think of Christ calling you, with outstretched arms, and say,

'O Lamb of God! I come.'

NOTES.

1. Although this portion of St. Luke's Gospel has scarcely any notices of locality, there is good reason for believing that most of the incidents,

&c., took place in Peræa. The course of Christ's ministry there, as we should expect in a district previously unvisited by Him, seems to have been

similar to that of His early ministry in Galilee, with the significant addition of a *tone* in His discourses appropriate to the approaching close of His life. Space will not allow of this being illustrated here in detail, but it is strikingly shown in Hanna's *Close of the Ministry*, pp. 177—225. See also Additional Note on Chronology, page 154.

Whether Luke xi. 29—xii. 1 can be adduced as illustrating the effect of the Peræan ministry is doubtful. Luke xi. 14—28 is certainly out of its right place, evidently belonging to a much earlier period (see Lesson XXXIX.); and some think that the rest of the section to the end of chap. xii. should go with it, the connection being apparently close. But the end of chap. xi., and all chap. xii., are in *tone* far more suitable to the later period.

2. The word rendered 'room,' in ver. 7—10, should be 'place.' The reference is simply to the best seats, *i.e.*, the middle place on each couch.

3. On the guest's remark in ver. 15, Stier says:—'His words, however piously they sound, contain a threefold latent impropriety:—First, his sensual conception of the resurrection. . . . then the confident assurance of his pretensions to it as a Pharisee. . . . finally, his indolent, contented remission of the matter into distant futurity.'

He sits complacently at his kinsman's feast, and prattles about the heavenly table.' But 'the point is to come *now*, and not with spurious devotion to talk of future blessedness.'

4. The parable of the Great Supper must be carefully distinguished from that of the Marriage Supper in Matt. xxii. The latter is more complex in structure, and severer in tone.

The custom of sending a servant to call the already invited guests still exists in the Lebanon. Dr. Thomson was himself so summoned (*Lanc' and the Book*, p. 124).

The three 'excuses' represent the influence of property, business, and family ties. The distinction between the first two is, that the one man has *got*, the other is *getting*. Observe that the engagements pleaded are not sinful; the parable shews the danger of being engrossed even in lawful things.

5. Ver. 24 appears to be, not the conclusion of the parable, but Christ's application of it in His own person. In the parable, the host addresses *one* servant, and the verbs are singular; in ver. 24, the 'you' is plural, meaning those sitting by. The sudden transition, and the expression, 'My supper,' must have been very startling.

Lesson LXIII.—The Parable of the Prodigal Son.

'There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.'

Read—Luke xv.; Learn—Luke xv. 20, 21; Micah vii. 18, 19. (*Hymns*, 8, 141, 142, 145, 146, 147, 343.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In accordance with the historical method adopted throughout these Lessons, by which the teachings of our Lord are regarded in the light of the incidents and circumstances which led to them, the parables of the chapter before us are treated in the Sketch as primarily Christ's reply to the Pharisee murmurs. At the same time, the story of the Prodigal Son stands so entirely alone in its irresistible tenderness, that the earnest teacher feels constrained to cast aside mere questions of historical interpretation, and teach it in its simple and direct application to his scholars. This is accordingly done in division II.; and in order that the very important, though too often neglected, episode of the 'elder son' may not be left out, it is put, *first*, in division I., where its reference to the Pharisees comes in most suitably; by which means the father's tenderness to the returning prodigal is made to come, with all its impressiveness, at the close of the Lesson. The other two parables are necessarily only alluded to in passing; and the subject of the 'lost sheep' has already come before us in Lessons XXXVIII. and LVII.

The following Sketch could not well be made shorter; but to teach the whole of it will be impracticable. Many teachers will prefer to take division II. only, and it is impossible to blame them; yet there should be *some* reference to the earlier portion—with elder scholars, at all events.

In applying the account of the Prodigal's misery and penitence, care must be taken not to assume the necessity in children of profound and overwhelming conviction of sin. Rather the application should be one of *warning* concerning the suffering that will surely follow sin if persisted in, while the present lesson would be,—'True, you may not be like the Prodigal; yet you have wandered a *little*; even for your *little* sins you need to repent,' &c.

Of the many books on this great parable, Mr. Bullock's *Way Home*, and the late Mr. Mackenzie's *Wanderer and his Return Home*, may be recommended. On the 'hunger of the soul' there is a most powerful sermon in Bushnell's *New Life*. On the relief obtained to the conscience by full confession to God, there are some excellent illustrations in Abbott's *Young Christian*, chap. 1.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

When Jesus was in Galilee, we saw how He visited Pharisees and publicans, and how former objected because He went to latter; Luke v. 29, 30, vii. 34. [Lessons XXXI., XXXVI.] Now just the same in Perea: He eats with the Pharisees [*last Lesson*]; and, despite their complaints, with publicans too, ver. 1, 2. Now, these 'publicans and sinners' really bad people: why then came they to Him? why went He to them? [*Illustr.—When bad boy and good boy much together, either bad boy is drawing good boy away, or good boy winning bad boy back.*]

See how Jesus replied to the Pharisee objections. [*Read ver. 1—10.*] Had the publicans gone astray?—so had the missing sheep; yet the shepherd went after it—why? it was his property, so worth recovering. The piece of silver too—should it be given up without 'diligent search'?—And should not Messiah, the Shepherd of Israel, to whom *all belonged*, righteous and wicked, seek His own? And when the sheep or the coin found, what would the news cause? Joy?—so with the sinner—these very publicans and bad people—no joy when they brought back? Yes—but where? While Pharisees murmuring, angels rejoicing!

Is not this enough? Yet Jesus has a greater lesson yet for them—will show them a picture of themselves and of those neglected outcasts which they shall not forget—the *Parable of the Prodigal Son*. [*Read it.*]

I. THE ELDER SON—a *Picture of the self-righteous*.

Evening—coming home from work—unusual sounds in the house—rejoicings. *Of course* he is sure something good has happened—will join with bright, eager face? No—gloomily, 'What is it?' 'His brother! that worthless fellow—joy for his return!' See him turning away in surly hatred. Then the father comes out—angrily?—sternly rebuking the murmurer?—ordering him in? No—'entreated him.' Look at the son's answer:—(a) Boasts of his own goodness. Well, suppose it were so, what merit in that? only did his duty. (b) Complains of not being recompensed. Why, his brother's share disposed of long ago, so all the property his now (ver. 31)—what more can he want? (c) Will not call the wanderer his 'brother'—see ver. 30 ('*thy son*'). Is this such perfect conduct? [*See Note 8.*]

Would the Pharisees see the likeness? (a) Did they not boast of their own goodness? Luke xviii. 11. (b) Yet how were they now shewing it? Here is Jesus letting wicked people come to Him, telling them of God's love, encouraging them to come back to God. They object. But *who are these people? Their own brethren.* Don't they like to call them so?—so much the worse—it shews their selfish pride. If

their boastings were true, they would rejoice like the angels, like Jesus Himself (Luke x. 21).

Are you ever like the Pharisees—like the Elder Son? Is it a pleasure to you to see God's servants (e.g., your teacher) doing all they can for some bad boy? Do you like to see a bad boy coming home to God? Did you never feel pleased when a good boy fell into sin?

II. THE YOUNGER SON—a *picture of the wandering and returning sinner*.

1. *The Wanderer*. Happy home—kind father—every comfort—why discontented? What made him ask for his 'portion'? *Wanted his own way—to do as he liked.* How many boys and girls is this like! We must all say, 'We have turned every one to his own way' (Isa. liii. 6); 'have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts' (*Gen. Conf.*). *Our own way*—the root of all sin and all misery. Nothing so hard as to give up our own will: have you ever given it up cheerfully? If any one *might* have had 'own will,' surely it was Jesus; yet what did He say? Luke xxii. 42. Sometimes we *want* our own way, but don't *take* it at once—a little ashamed; so this younger son—went not away at once. But '*not many days after*'; and so with us.

Then where did he go? ver. 13; so the wilful boy gets away as 'far' from God as he can—gives up prayer, Bible, church, school, &c.; see Job. xxi. 14. And what then? happy? of course—think of the Prodigal enjoying himself—everything he wanted he could have—perhaps thought, 'Who cares for those dull folks at home and their strict ways?'—perhaps laughed when thought of elder brother going on in old quiet life. Which of us tempted to be like that?

2. *The Wanderer's Misery*. 'Spent all': sinful pleasure can't last for ever. Then—home again? ah, no, see ver. 15—'joined himself': all the *pleasure* of sin gone—then go on sinning because can't break off the habit—a *slave* to sin (John viii. 34; 2 Pet. ii. 19); so often with wicked (e.g., drunkard). And then?—'*perishing with hunger*.' What meant? Have you ever, after doing wrong, felt *utterly miserable*? If not, a great pity—sin to you must be pleasant. But you *will* feel it one day *much worse*—torture of conscience: it always comes sooner or later (see Prov. xiv. 13; Eccl. xi. 9; Jer. ii. 19). What like? *gnawings of hunger*—it is really *longing for something—getting nothing*. Longing for what? For peace, happiness, satisfaction, comfort. Pleasure like sweets—nice to eat, but can't live on them—want *bread*—the '*bread of life*' (John vi. 35; Isa. lv. 1, 2).

3. *The Wanderer's Return*. '*Came to himself*'—like sleeper waking. The first step to being happy, to feel how miserable

he is—why? because then try and escape misery. If you only *felt* sin as it really is, would try and escape it. See what some have felt, Ps. xxxviii. 3, 4, xl. 12; Ezra ix. 6; Luke xviii. 13. Then what else does he feel? The cause of his misery—wandering from home—how happy he *might* have been! and now 'no more worthy to be' a son. Then a good resolution—'I will arise,' &c.—'and will say unto him,' &c.—no concealment, no excuses. And is it *only* a resolve?—how many good things we *intend* to do which are never done! No, he rises and goes at once.

Here are *the four parts of true repentance*:—conviction ('came to himself'); contrition ('no more worthy'); confession ('will say unto him'); conversion ('arose and came').

4. *The Wanderer's Restoration.* What a reception! undeserved and unexpected. How free is God's love! and how little we know of it! 'A great way off'—as if father watching and longing for him: so God, 'more ready to hear than we to pray'; and think how Jesus yearned over Jerusalem, even though they 'would not' come

to Him (Luke xiii. 34). See what the Prodigal has come back to:—(a) *Forgiveness* ('kissed him'); (b) *Restored privilege*: robe, ring, shoes—were they for the 'hired servant'?—no, he is to be 'child' still [see Note 7]; (c) *Joy* ('fatted calf,' 'music,' &c.). So the returning sinner:—forgiveness, Isa. lv. 7; Micah vii. 18, 19; Eph. i. 7; 1 John i. 9;—restored privilege, Rom. viii. 15—17; 2 Cor. vi. 18; Gal. iv. 5, 6; 1 John iii. 1, 2;—joy, Rom. v. 1, 2; 1 Pet. i. 8.

Are any of us in the 'far country'?

Perhaps have not gone very far from God: yet not like *one of the family*—have gone 'own way.' Think now!—ought not *each one* to come to God and say, 'Father, I have sinned'? Is there not something to be confessed, repented of, turned from? Well,—

The Father is stretching out His arms to us, waiting to forgive, to smile, to bless. Only come, just as you are (did the Prodigal wait till he was better off, better dressed?)—and you will be happy, as he was.

NOTES.

1. 'Then drew near,' &c. Rather, 'Now there were drawing near.' The meaning is, that at this period publicans and sinners were continually coming to Christ.

2. The first two of the three parables of this chapter regard the recovery of the sinner on the *Divine side*: the sheep and the coin can do nothing of themselves. The third regards it on the *human side*: the prodigal 'comes to himself' and returns to his father. In the first two God seeks the lost; in the third the lost seeks God.

Almost all expositors consider that the shepherd represents Christ going to seek and save the lost; the woman the Holy Spirit (working through the Church, lighting the 'candle of the Lord,' and searching the sinner out); and the father of the two sons God the Father, graciously receiving the returning penitent. It can scarcely be supposed that Christ designed the parables to convey this threefold comparison directly; yet the analogy is too striking to be wholly unfounded.

3. In the two sons there is certainly no direct reference to the Jews and Gentiles; though an application to this effect can be drawn, just because the relation of the Jews to the Gentiles illustrates the truth which the parable conveys. The elder son stands for the Pharisees, the younger for the 'publicans and sinners,' as the whole context shows. The Pharisees are also the 'ninety and nine just persons' of ver. 7; but neither in this expression, nor in the father's words in ver. 31, 'Son, thou art ever with me,' does our Lord mean to endorse their self-righteous boasts: He only argues with them on their own ground, and, in fact, in the churlish and unloving elder son, He draws a sufficiently severe portrait of them.

4. 'The portion of goods, i.e., a third: the first-born taking two-thirds, see Deut. xxi. 17.

5. 'Riotous living.' The word (*ἀσωτως, asōtōs*) rendered 'riotous' is rather 'prodigal,' in the literal meaning of the term (*not saving*). In Eph. v. 18 the cognate noun is rendered 'excess'; in Tit. i. 6 and 1 Pet. iv. 4, 'riot.' From this word is derived the familiar title 'Prodigal Son,' which does not itself occur in the parable.

6. 'Husks.' The Greek word means the fruit of the kharub-tree, in shape like a bean-pod. See description and woodcut in the *Land and the Book*, p. 21. It is still used to feed swine.

7. Much ingenuity has been exercised in finding exact spiritual meanings for the 'robe,' the 'ring,' the 'shoes,' and the 'fatted calf.' Probably the first three are designed only to express with vividness the idea of complete restoration to sonship—he is not to be a 'hired servant.' A ring in the East is the token of honour and confidence (Gen. xli. 42; Esth. iii. 10); and shoes were not worn by slaves. In the 'fatted calf' there can be no reference to Christ's sacrifice: it is simply, like the 'music and dancing,' significant of a general rejoicing. The 'kiss' is a token of reconciliation, Gen. xxxiii. 4; 2 Sam. xiv. 33.

8. Several graphic touches in the picture of the elder son may be noticed. His asking 'what it meant' shows a readiness to complain. 'With my friends'—here is the very spirit of independence which had marked his brother, as if his friends were distinct from his father's. 'This thy son'—not 'my brother.' His description of the prodigal's life, correct as it doubtless was, was derived only from his ill-natured suspicions, not from his actual knowledge. 'Was come'—not 'returned': he speaks as of a *stranger*.

Stier relates that Daniel Krummacher, being once asked who, in his view, was the 'elder son,' replied laconically, 'Myself!' and then confessed how, on the previous day, he had felt offended because a very ill-conditioned person had been enriched with a remarkable visitation of grace.

Lesson LXIV.—Concerning This World and the Next.

'Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.'

Read—Luke xvi. (parts); Learn—1 Tim. vi. 17—19; 1 John ii. 15—17. (Hymns 11, 63, 83, 187, 189, 195, 196, 307, 327, 346.)

TO THE TEACHER.

As it was found impracticable to include, in this Course, Lessons on all even of the more important Parables, the attempt has been made, in this and other cases, to combine the teachings of two or more. Both the two now before us are intrinsically worthy of separate and full study; but in the Sketch they are simply regarded as illustrations of the general subject of the Lesson, which is started in the introductory paragraph. It will be seen, however, that the practical instruction designed can be founded on *either* Parable by itself, and it is therefore open to the teacher to choose one of them, and omit the other. But they so strikingly supplement one another, that the combination of them as in the Sketch will probably be more interesting to intelligent classes. And even with younger children, what does the plan suggested involve more than *the telling of two anecdotes* illustrative in different ways of the same truth? Let not the unworthy idea be indulged in that all stories are attractive *except* Scripture stories.

The concluding portion of the dialogue between the rich man and Abraham, and other important points in both Parables, are necessarily omitted.

It is a common habit among preachers and teachers so to appeal to their hearers as virtually to make *escape from hell* the chief object of religion, rather than the service of Christ and the glory of God. The Sketch must not be understood to give any countenance to this error, which has been earnestly avoided throughout these Lessons.

Nor must it be supposed that the teachings of the Lesson on the relation of this world to the next involve the idea that we can *earn* salvation by charity and other good works. What the Sketch suggests is abundantly fortified by Scripture texts, and we have no right to ignore one part of Scripture for fear of diminishing the force of another part. It is well, however, to be cautious in our language. The concluding sentences are expressly designed to throw the mind back upon Christ as the only source of merit.

Another caution is needed. Let no child be suffered to go away without the correction of that too common fancy among the poor, viz., that a better world is in store for them *because they are poor*.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What does a boy go to school for? to learn? what's the good of that? Suppose no schooling—is he ready to go out into life? So school-time is a preparation for what comes afterwards. That's just what all our life on earth is—a *preparation for what comes afterwards*. And death—we call it the *end of life*—really it is the *beginning*, because next life so much higher and greater; just as leaving school is called 'beginning life.' Does not a boy's 'getting on' often depend on how he used school-time?—*our* next life depends *entirely* on how we use this. [*Another Illust.—What farmer reaps depends on what he sows; see Gal. vi. 7, 8.*]

To-day see what Jesus taught about this preparation,

I. A PARABLE SHOWING HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT WORLD, ver. 1—8.

Steward (like Eliezer, Gen. xv. 2, xxiv. 2; or Joseph in Potiphar's house, xxxix. 4)—called upon to give in his accounts [*illust.—boy in office having to account for money entrusted to him*—knows they are all wrong—has been careless and wasteful—will surely 'lose his place'—and then! too

idle to work—too proud to beg—ruin. Must make friends in time—so make sure of a home. How? Has sold goods for his master—not yet paid for—will get the receipts altered—let the debtors off part of their debts—so they grateful to him, by-and-bye befriend him [*see Note 2 b*].

Was this right? No; unfaithful before, still more now—defrauding his master. Yet even when found out, his master cannot help admiring, ver. 8—why? so clever and prudent.

But what does Jesus mean by it? Ver. 8—'children of this world wiser,' &c.—how? There *are* things in which we may imitate them—imitate even this steward—what?

1. *The steward prepared for the future.* He thought of it; which of us really *thinks* of the life to come? He made sure about it; even if we do think, don't we say, 'Oh, it's all right,' and leave it to chance? He lost no time; how many (like Felix, Acts xxiv. 26) keep putting it off? What would the school-boy [*see above*] do if he put off learning till the day of his leaving school? Think of what we sing every Sunday, 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice.'

2. *He did so by using the money entrusted to him so as to make friends.* True, he did this by a device that cheated his master; but cannot we do the same thing in another way? Let us see. We, too, are stewards—of what? of all we have. It is *not our own*, but 'another's' (ver. 12), *i.e.*, God's [see Note 2 *f*]. Our money, everything we have in this world, entrusted to us by God. On what we do with it all—whether use it rightly or not—depends our happiness in the life to come [as school-boy's books, &c., or farmer's seed: see above].

How use it?

(a) *As the steward did*—'making friends' with it, ver. 9 [see Note 2 *e*]—how? Spend it on others, do good with it (comp. Luke xii. 33). What then? When we stand before Christ's judgment seat, to 'give in our account' (Matt. xxv. 19; Rom. xiv. 12), those very people whom we have helped and been kind to will 'receive us into everlasting habitations,' testifying of our love to them as a *proof* that we are Christ's own servants.

(b) *As the steward did not*—faithfully. He 'made friends' by cheating his master; but when we use God's property in doing good, it is like *restoring it to Him*, see Prov. xix. 17; Matt. x. 42. xxv. 40; so such use is *faithful*. And if faithful in these little every-day things, God will give us much more in the world to come (ver. 10—12); see Matt. xxv. 21; Luke xii. 42—44.

II. A PARABLE SHOWING WHAT COMES OF NOT SO PREPARING, ver. 19—31.

1. *The rich man in this world.* He, too, a steward—much entrusted to him—how did he use it? We do not read that he was wicked—was it wrong to be rich, to 'fare sumptuously,' &c.?—in Scripture many good rich men—'Father Abraham' himself rich. But he 'left undone what he ought to have done'—how?

(a) He never thought of the life to come. Just lived on, enjoying himself, no doubt respectable and respected—heard God's Word in the synagogues (see ver. 29), but never took it to heart. Exactly like many whom we call 'good boys and girls,' quiet, regular, &c., but '*forgetting God*'—and what comes of that? Ps. ix. 17.

(b) He did not 'make friends' with his money. Did he not? surely he gave grand feasts, &c. Ah, but what had Jesus said about that? xiv. 12—14 [Lesson LXII.].

Let us see. At his gate lies poor beggar, helpless, diseased, hungry. He knows him well—sees him as he goes in and out—knows his name too (ver. 24)—what does he do for him? Anything for the 'sores'?—the dogs left to soften them; anything for the hunger? oh yes, plenty of 'crumbs' [see Note 3 *b*]. That all? If he had remembered that his property was God's, and that using it for the poor was giving back to God {*texts above*}, what would he have done? Matt. xxv. 35, 36. But he 'wastes his Master's goods' (see ver. 1) on himself (comp. Zech. vii. 6; Phil. iii. 19).

We are not rich; but we have some things God has given us. How are we using them? all for ourselves? or, ever so little (see 2 Cor. viii. 12, ix. 7) in helping others?

2. *The rich man in the next world.* 'Lifting up his eyes in torments'! And what does he see?—ah, that familiar face, once wan and piteous, now bright with peace and glory [see Note 3 *d*]—he recognises it in an instant.

But how came Lazarus there? because he was poor? no—cannot a poor man be an impenitent rebel against God? But in his poverty he *made God his help* (his name means this; therefore, no doubt, Jesus gave it)—was one of the 'poor in spirit,' Matt. v. 3, 'rich in faith,' Jas. ii. 5.

See the lost one's request, ver. 24 [see Note 3 *f*]—to be delivered? no—only to have one moment's relief. And why not? see the reply:—(1) *Unreasonable*—he had had his due—he *chose* what he would have, self-indulgence—'his good things'—his 'reward' (Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16). He *sowed*—what right to complain of the harvest? (2) *Impossible*—he *had* time on earth to prepare—now too late, for 'a great gulf fixed.'

Is this very terrible? But *Who says it*? The tender Saviour who died to save us from it. Is He not *kind* to warn us?

How escape a like fate? Come to that Saviour—be His altogether—He will 'prepare a place for you' (John xiv. 2) of a very different kind. Then 'your affections set on things above, not on things on the earth'—how keep back anything from His service?—

'Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!'

NOTES.

1. In chap. xv. Christ was addressing the Pharisees. Chap. xvi. opens with, 'And He said unto His disciples.' For them therefore the parable of the Unjust Steward was chiefly meant; and as it would scarcely be applicable to the Twelve, the 'disciples' referred to seem to be those 'publicans and sinners' whose adhesion to Him (chap. xv.) has been described. We are not told that these publicans 'left all' as Matthew had done; they were not called to do so; and therefore Christ specially instructs them con-

cerning the use of money. The Pharisees, however, who, though professedly 'serving God,' 'served Mammon' in their hearts (ver. 13, 14), feel themselves condemned by what He is saying, and 'deride Him.' (It is curious that this word 'deride' means properly, in the Greek, *turning up the nose*.) Upon which, Christ, after some remarks (ver. 15—18), the connection of which it is unnecessary here to explain, proceeds to give them the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the drift of which is shown above.

2. THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD is a difficult one, and has been the subject of countless interpretations. The usual explanation is adopted in the Sketch, but some additional remarks may be made:—

(a) The 'steward' was the manager of the estates—the agent or bailiff.

(b) It is usually assumed that the 'debtors' were purchasers of produce, and had given 'bills' or 'acceptances' for the value; the alteration of which was a plain fraud on the owner of the farm (though the debtors were not necessarily parties to this, as they might suppose the steward's large powers enabled him to do it). This view is taken in the Sketch, as having most authority in its favour. But it may have been that the debtors had to *pay rent in kind*, and that the steward had exacted quantities higher than he accounted for, keeping the difference himself; which is exactly what the *publicans* habitually did (see *Lesson XXXI., Note 1*). In this case, the steward merely submitted to a loss himself, and made the 'bills' agree with the accounts he rendered to his master. Christ's application would then point specially to the restoration of what had been wrongfully exacted—which is just what was afterwards done by Zacchæus (Luke xix. 8).

(c) The 'measure' of oil is the 'bath' (Isa. v. 10; Ezek. xlv. 10–14), which was for liquids what the ephah was for solids: the tenth part of an homer, and equal to nearly 9 gallons. The 'measure' of wheat is the 'cor' or homer, and equal to 14 bushels. The quantities in the parable are therefore large ones.

(d) In ver. 8, the '*lord*' is plainly the steward's lord, not Jesus. '*Wisely*,' '*wise*,' should be '*prudently*,' '*more prudent*.' There is a wisdom of a low kind, *astuteness*, comp. Matt. x. 16—'Be ye wise as serpents.' '*In their generation*,' rather, '*towards*,' i.e., '*in their dealings with*.'

(e) Ver. 9—'And I say unto you': here begins Christ's application. '*Make to yourselves*'—not '*a friend of mammon*,' i.e., '*mammon your friend*'—but '*friends out of (ἐκ) mammon*,' i.e., with it, by the use of it. On the rest of the verse see Sketch.

(f) Ver. 12—'*another man's*': rather, '*another's*,' i.e., God's. Earthly possessions are here regarded

as merely ours *in trust*; heavenly possessions as *our own*, because inalienable.

3. THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

(a) '*Purple and fine linen*'—the Tyrian purple, which was very costly, the dye being only obtainable in minute quantities from certain fish; and, probably, the fine linen of Upper Egypt.

(b) '*Desiring to be fed with the crumbs*': probably *they were* given to him occasionally. The licking of the dogs is not mentioned as aggravating the beggar's misery; but as showing that they were his only friends; the dog's tongue would assuage the smart of his sores.

(c) '*Lazarus*,' a form of Eleazar, which means 'God is my help.' Probably by this name Christ intended to indicate his character.

(d) The parable speaks of the unseen world in the language and with the imagery current among the Jews at the time; but, as Alford well remarks, 'He, whose essence is Truth, could not have assumed as existing anything which does not exist.' Accordingly, while the Jewish expression '*Abraham's bosom*' is used, although it is only a figure, the *state which it represents*, viz., rest in bliss, is implied to be a true state.

(e) '*Hell*'—rather '*Hades*,' the place of departed spirits until the resurrection, and to be carefully distinguished from '*Gehenna*,' the place of final punishment. Both words are unfortunately rendered '*hell*' in our version. In Matt. xvi. 18; Acts ii. 27, 31; Rev. i. 18, vi. 8, xx. 13, 14, the word is Hades; and so in the original of our Creeds. In Matt. v. 22, 29, 30, x. 28, xxiii. 15, 33; Mark ix. 43, 45, 47, the word is Gehenna. The parable implies that the wicked suffer '*torments*' in the pre-resurrection state. Hades is not the abode of the wicked only. There are two parts of Hades, one being called here '*Abraham's bosom*,' and elsewhere '*paradise*,'—which is divided from the other part by the '*great gulf*.'

(f) '*Father Abraham*.' The rich man appeals to that relationship on which the Jews relied to give them a place in the Kingdom (Matt. iii. 9).

(g) It is worth noting that a *Lazarus*, and also a Greater than Lazarus, did '*go from the dead*' to warn the Jews; and they were *not* 'persuaded.'

Lesson LXV.—Two Parables on Prayer.

'*Lord, teach us to pray.*'

Read—Luke xviii. 1–14; Learn—Ps. xxxiv. 15, 18; Prov. xxviii. 13. (*Hymns*, 8, 142, 145, 150, 180–188, 275.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Every teacher is familiar with the parrot-like answer so often given to such questions as 'How are you to get to heaven?' or 'to be saved?'—viz. '*Pray*'; an answer more common (if anything) than the equally parrot-like replies, '*Be good*,' and '*Believe*.' How important, then, that children should be carefully taught what prayer really is! The most prevalent ideas on the subject are those referred to at the beginning of the Sketch—ideas which, it is to be feared, are not confined to the young; and nothing could be better calculated to correct them than the two parables now before us, if taught with that end in view. It is of course well to inculcate *habits* of prayer; to explain the various kinds of prayer—or rather of worship—thanksgiving, confession, adoration, intercession, petition; to speak of the times, places, methods, &c. of prayer; but the object of the

present Lesson is, without touching these topics, merely to shew once for all what the essential idea of prayer really is, *viz.*, *asking for what is wanted*, and therefore asking perseveringly and humbly—and if this be successfully done, a great point will be gained. An effort, however, should be made to shew how much we do need what the widow and the publican needed.

The other important teachings of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican are noticed in the Sketch for the sake of completeness, but, as on other occasions, the teacher will do wisely if, omitting these, he confines himself to the *one thing*.

For several thoughts in the following Sketch the writer is indebted to a useful little book, *The Parables Illustrated*, by T. B. Bishop.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Why do most boys and girls 'say their prayers'? There are three common reasons—and all wrong ones.

(a) Because 'they've got to do it.' *A duty*. So it is, but this not the true reason for praying. [*Illust.—Poor man begging for bread—does he ask because it's a duty that's got to be done?*]

(b) Because God will be pleased with them, and so they will get to heaven. *A merit*. Well, God will be pleased—praying children will go to heaven—but not because it is so good of them to pray. So this not the true reason. [*Poor man again—does he beg just because it will please kind folk to hear him?*]

(c) Because it does them good; they feel happier after it. *A privilege*. So it is; yet even this not the reason. [*Does the poor man beg because he feels the better for begging?*]

What, then, is the true reason for praying? [*Why does the poor man beg?*] There are things which we want, and which God can give us. PRAYING IS ASKING FOR THESE THINGS.

See to-day two parables by which Christ showed *how* they who want such things should ask God for them.

I. THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.

A poor woman, alone in the world, no husband to protect her—oppressed by some 'adversary'—has been wronged (perhaps defrauded of her little property)—what shall she do? What would such an one do in England?—go to magistrate or judge, knowing he is sure to be *fair*—so have all put right. But in the East, judges often unfair—don't care about doing justice—sometimes decide for whoever can give them most money. See God's commands about this, Deut. i. 16, 17, xvi. 18, 19. See what Samuel could say, 1 Sam. xii. 3; and what his sons did, 1 Sam. viii. 3,—and others, Eccl. iv. 1, v. 8; Isa. x. 1, 2; Amos v. 12; Mic. ii. 2; Acts xxiv. 26. The judge in the widow's city—what kind of judge? ver. 2, 6—'Why should he trouble himself about *her*?' And perhaps the 'adversary' had bribed him, or might have been his friend.

How did the widow get redress from such a judge? Just by giving him no peace. At last he gave way—why? from kindness? or because she was in the right?

no, but lest he should be 'worried to death' [*see Note 2*].

Have we the same reason for praying that the widow had? We have an 'adversary' (1 Pet. v. 8), always trying to injure us in body and soul; and, like the widow, we are too weak to resist him of ourselves. And we are taught a prayer like hers, 'Deliver us from evil' (or the evil one); comp. Ps. xxxv. 22, 23, lxxiv. 10, 11.

Have we the same difficulty in getting what we need that she had? Ah, no. We can go to the Judge—but what a Judge! Gen. xviii. 25; Deut. xxxii. 4. 'More ready to hear than we are to pray'; who calls us to come and tell Him all, Ps. l. 15; Matt. xi. 28; 1 Pet. v. 7. If the unjust judge did justice at last, 'shall not God do justice to His own chosen people?'

Then how confidently we may pray on! Is not this the very reason why Jesus gave the parable? ver. 1—'not to faint,' *i. e.* not to give way, either to the fierce 'adversary,' or because weary of praying in vain. 'Always to pray,' *i. e.*, to go on till the help comes (Rom. xii. 12; Eph. vi. 18; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 17)—like the Phœnician woman [*Lesson XLVIII.*].—like Jacob wrestling (Gen. xxxii. 26; Hos. xii. 4). But, you ask, Why does God let us go on? why such delay? Now can it be because He cares not? Why then? He loves to send a swift answer (Isa. lxxv. 24; Dan ix. 20), but He waits because it is *good for us*, though we puzzled for a time [*illust.—little child puzzled at father's refusal or delay to do as asked*]. See cases where blessing not given immediately, Matt. xiv. 25 (*fourth watch*), xv. 23; John xi. 6.

II. THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

Anything alike in these two? Yes—both going 'to pray.' But see the difference.

Look at the two men. One—walking proudly up the Temple steps, taking his stand in a conspicuous place, people making way for him as a holy Rabbi; on forehead and left elbow two little boxes tied, inside them the *phylacteries*, strips of parchment with texts on them (see Exod. xiii. 16; Deut. vi. 8; Matt. xxiii. 5); long robe with wide borders (Mark xii. 38; Numb. xv. 38); all these signs of being very strict. The other—one of 'those wicked publicans' [*Lesson XXXI.*].—'no

wonder he keeps a-far off with downcast eyes, and smites his breast—so the people might think.

But listen to the two men.

THE PHARISEE. He begins well—'God, I thank thee'; yet even in his thanksgiving see three great errors:—

(a) He compares himself with other men—'not as other men,' or even as this publican.' A dangerous plan (2 Cor. x. 12), saying 'I'm not so bad as so-and-so'—what has that to do with it?

(b) He trusts to what he is *not*—'not' an extortioner, &c. Another dangerous plan: the question is, what we *are*. [*Illustr.*—*Do you tell the doctor of all the diseases you have not got?*]

(c) He boasts of his good deeds [see Note 4]; comp. Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16. A dangerous plan again, for what does St. James say? Jas. ii. 10; comp. Luke xvii. 10.

But after all, is it a prayer at all?—what does he *ask for*?

THE PUBLICAN. Like the Pharisee in one thing—feels himself 'not as other men are'—'the sinner' [see Note 5], comp. 1 Tim. i. 15. So he was, no doubt; perhaps all that the Pharisee was *not* ('extortioner,' &c.). But this the very reason why he prayed—*wanted something*—mercy.

Did he get what he wanted? ver. 14. See him 'going down to his house'—not lifted up—still lowly—yet at peace [*illustr.*—*Bunyan's 'Christian' with his burden*

off]. Why did he get what he wanted? Because he came in the right way, with the broken and contrite heart (1st text for rep.; Ps. li. 17; Isa. lxvi. 2). But why was he '*justified*'—*i. e.*, not only forgiven but *acquitted*? Because his sin laid on Christ, so *not imputed* to him (Ps. xxxii. 2). He did not understand this as we do; but perhaps he looked at the smoke of the sacrificed lamb going up from the altar, and knew that God had promised to accept that when offered for sinners [see Note 5].

Now why was it that the widow and the publican prayed? *They wanted something, and they asked for it.* And the Pharisee—asked nothing—why?—did not he want anything? yes, but he felt not his need. *So, to pray is to ask God for what we want.*

Then, how to ask?

(a) Like the widow, perseveringly.

(b) Like the publican, humbly.

But one thing wanted first. We must feel our need. Only *think*: think what God is, what we are; then shall surely feel how much we need forgiveness, like the publican, and succour, like the widow. And first of all, ask for the Holy Spirit, who will show us our need, and teach us what to pray for, Rom. viii. 26.

Even the youngest shall be answered,—

'God Almighty heareth ever,
When His little children pray:
He is faint and weary never,
And He turneth none away.'

NOTES.

1. Unjust judges are sadly common in Eastern countries, where their power is almost unlimited, and the law often uncertain. The widow's method of obtaining redress, by mere importunity, is also quite Oriental. The peasants of Persia, according to Chardin (quoted in Burder's *Oriental Illustrations*), will, in case of any unjust exaction, assemble before the ruler's house, or follow him in the streets, howling and throwing dust into the air until they obtain their demands.

2. Some noticeable expressions occur in the first parable. 'Not to faint,' rather, 'not to succumb' to opposition and difficulty. 'Avenge me,' rather, 'Exact justice.' 'Came unto him': the tense (imperfect) implies that she *kept coming*. 'She weary me': a very remarkable word, signifying a severe blow struck below the eyes. It is the word used by St. Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 27—'keep under my body.' It is used hyperbolically, and is much the same as if an Englishman were to say, 'till she worry me to death.'

3. The words, 'When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?' connect this parable with the discourse in the preceding chapter. They do not mean, as commonly interpreted, that there will be but few believers when Christ comes—however true this may be. Referring to the weary trials which His people will have to undergo. He tells them by the parable that they must go on in patience (comp. Jas. v. 8) praying to the end, and not succumb, for the Judge will surely hear them; *nevertheless*, in spite of such encouragement, they will lose

heart, and when He comes they will not be manifesting '*the faith*' (literal) which would make them ceaseless in prayer. The prediction is of the imperfection of believers, not of their paucity.

4. On tithes, see Gen. xiv. 20, xxviii. 22; Lev. xxvii. 30; Numb. xviii. 24; Deut. xiv. 22; 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 6; Neh. x. 37. The Pharisees, in their scrupulous fulfilment of this law, tithed even the smallest productions of their land, the 'mint, anise, and cummin,' Matt. xxiii. 23. 'O! all that I possess'—rather, '*acquire*'; he tithed his *gains*. 'I fast twice in the week': the Law only enjoined one fast in the year, viz., the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 29), but the stricter Jews kept fast every Monday and Thursday.

5. The word 'be merciful,' in the publican's prayer, is a remarkable one. It is connected with the words rendered 'propitiation' in Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 2, iv. 10, and 'reconciliation' in Heb. ii. 17. It seems to imply that our Lord would represent the publican as knowing that he could only obtain mercy *through sacrifice*—the great atoning Sacrifice foreshadowed by the daily sacrifices in the Temple, one of which we may imagine being offered before the publican's eyes, *i. e.* if he went at the usual 'hour of prayer.' 'Justified,' too, is the term so prominent in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. 'A sinner' should be '*the sinner*.'

The expression 'went down to his house justified,' certainly implies the *consciousness* of pardon and acceptance; comp. Rom. v. 1.

Lesson LXVI.—The Little Children and the Young Ruler.

‘What lack I yet?’

Read—Mark x. 13—27; (*comp.* Matt. xix. 13—26; Luke xviii. 15—27); *Learn*—Matt. vi. 19—21, 24; Phil. iii. 7—9. (*Hymns*, 49, 50, 123—129, 130—135, 151, 196, 324—331.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The incident of Christ blessing little children has always been regarded by the Church as furnishing a strong, though indirect, argument for Infant Baptism. It is impossible to suppose that those of whom He has said, ‘Of such is the kingdom of God,’ may not be members of the visible Church on earth; and since, on that occasion, there was both the ‘bringing’ and the ‘blessing,’ we are surely justified in believing that the ‘bringing’ to Him of equally young infants now, in the ordinance of His own appointment, will be followed by the ‘blessing’ on His part. Apart from all controversies, this is a matter for simple faith. It will be well, therefore, in this Lesson, to follow the suggestion of the Sketch, and allude to the Baptism of Infants as ‘most agreeable with the institution of Christ,’ and therefore ‘in any wise to be retained in the Church’ (Art. XXVII.). Only let all *polemical* language be avoided.

In actual teaching, the proportionate prominence of the two incidents included in this Lesson will depend upon the age of the class, and the application will vary accordingly.

Readers of Bishop Butler’s *Analogy*, will observe that the closing words of the Sketch are suggested by the 5th chapter of that great work. Profound as are Butler’s arguments generally, there are few writers the study of whom would be more profitable to Sunday-school teachers, or supply more practical hints for their lessons. Those who possess the volume of the *Church Sunday School Magazine* for 1865 (now out of print) will find in it some papers on the subject by the writer of these Lessons.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

We have often talked of Messiah’s ‘kingdom.’ What did the Jews expect it to be like? where to be set up? who to be in it? But who did Jesus say should belong to His kingdom? See John iii. 3 [*Lesson XLIII.*]; Matt. v. 3 [*Lesson XXV.*]; Matt. xviii. 3 [*Lesson LVIII.*].

To-day see a little more about this. Look at ver. 14, 15, and ver. 23—25.

I. HOW TO ENTER THE KINGDOM.

The people of Peræa much struck by the ministry of Jesus among them. He has healed sick (Matt. xix. 2), taught multitudes (Luke xiv. 25), received publicans (Luke xv. 1, 2), been kind to all. The mothers think, ‘Why should not this great and good prophet bless our little ones too?’ See them thronging round, leading and carrying their children. What do the disciples think? ‘Our Master quite busy enough teaching grown people—can’t trouble Him with these; besides, such babies [*see Note 1*] can’t understand—when get older may come to Him.’

What does Jesus say? ver. 14, 15. Too young! why these the true subjects of the ‘kingdom.’ Come when older! on the contrary, if older people want to be in the ‘kingdom,’ they must become like these little ones. So,—

(a) *To enter the Kingdom must become as little child.* Why? Little child feels itself helpless and ignorant, is docile, submissive, trustful. Just what all Christ’s servants

must be (see Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2; 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2). [*Comp. Lesson LVIII.*].

(b) *Therefore the easiest time to enter the Kingdom is in childhood.* Why? Because then most childlike—not so much to be altered—change not so hard. [*Illust.*—*Can bend young tree, make it grow as we like; not so with grown tree.*] So Jesus calls youngest to Him. What! even those that can’t understand? Yes; mother can tend and care for infant’s body—cannot Jesus for its soul? So we bring them to Him? how? by praying for them? yes, but above all by bringing them to Baptism, thus giving them to Him (as Hannah gave Samuel). Will He refuse to bless them? Did He refuse to bless those Peræan infants? So we ‘doubt not, but earnestly believe’ that He ‘favourably receives them’ and ‘embraces them in the arms of His mercy’ (*Bapt. Service*).

II. A GREAT HINDRANCE TO ENTERING THE KINGDOM.

See ver. 23—Money! How strange! a poor man thinks, how can he serve Christ with all his struggles, troubles, hard work—if only he were better off, why then—! Yet Jesus says it would be *harder* to ‘enter the Kingdom’ then. But of whom is He speaking? of the rich only? What then mean the disciples’ words, ‘Who then can be saved?’—*they* think it applies to everybody—why? because everybody does, more or less, ‘trust in riches’ (ver. 24), care for

money, believe money the thing they most want if to be comfortable, try harder to get it than any thing else. Are not poor people like that? well, no wonder; yet it is a tremendous mistake; every shilling we get makes us care more about it, and so tempts us to think less of Christ.

But if so, then rich people have the sorest temptations (see Matt. xii. 22; Luke xii. 19-21; 1 Tim. vi. 9). See, now, how one was hindered by his money from entering the Kingdom.

1. *The young ruler coming to Christ.*

Think of him: he would be called a singularly happy man:—(a) well off; (b) respected, too—a 'ruler' though yet young; (c) not like many rich young men (e.g., the Prodigal) wasting his money in sin—has been upright and blameless all his life, ver. 20 (comp. Phil. iii. 6). Yet, *not* happy, feels something wanting—there is a life to come—is he ready for *that*? what shall he do to make sure of it?

He will ask Jesus. What! ask the despised Galilean! he, an honoured and upright ruler! Truly, this shews how little he is like his proud colleagues. Even Nicodemus—how did he come? but this man runs after Jesus as He is starting to resume His journey, and kneels before Him in the face of all.

2. *The young ruler going away from Christ.*

Going away satisfied? look—gloomy and sorrowful, ver. 22 [see Note 5]. How is that? has not Jesus received him? see ver. 21—Jesus full of love for him, knew his amiable character, would gladly shew him how to get eternal life—but—the great hindrance in the way—love of money.

How was money a hindrance to him? see what Jesus said, ver. 21. Why must he part with his property?—others had not—God had had rich servants, Abraham, David, &c. Yes, but *their* money did not prevent their keeping God's commandments—*his* did. How? does he not say he kept all? ver. 20. But suppose he kept those Jesus mentioned, the 'duty to neighbour' (he could not *really*—he knew not how much they meant)—yet even then, what of the *others*, the 'duty to God'? Did he love God with all his heart, soul, mind, strength (clap. xii. 30)? ah, he may have

loved God a little, but his money more—was trying to serve both, which (1st text for rep.) *can't* be done. So Jesus' command a *test*—just as God tested Abraham by the command to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham stood the test—whom must he have loved most? But the ruler can't part with his money—which does he love most?

In another way, too, the money a hindrance. If he was only to give all to the poor, he might think it worth while to do that to buy eternal life, for he might get rich again afterwards—but what else must he do? '*Follow Christ*': give up position, confess himself a sinner, join the despised Nazarene—in fact, 'enter the Kingdom as a little child' [above], himself nothing, Jesus everything. He thinks of the hard and self-denying life of a disciple—of all the enjoyments (which his money can buy) he must give up—and he *can't* do it. Contrast St. Paul (2nd text for rep.).

IS THERE ANYTHING KEEPING US FROM CHRIST?

He is willing to receive, bless, make happy, every one—young man getting on in life or youngest infant. Why should any of us 'go away'? Some do not even 'go away sorrowful'—are delighted to get away as far as they can, like the Prodigal. But some, like this ruler, are just hesitating—feel it would be a 'sorrowful' thing to go away—would *like* to be Christ's disciples—know that is the way to be happy—but something keeps them back. [Illustr.—Great bird in Zoological Gardens—see it spreading wings—rising into the air—suddenly pulled back—chained to its perch.] What is the 'chain' by which you are tied and bound?

A great reason for coming now: it is *easiest* in childhood [see above, I. b]. Every day you grow older, *harder* to come to Christ, more painful to give up worldly things. You *wish* to come—yes, but wishes get weaker and weaker—the sound of Christ's voice is less and less heard—why? you get *used* to it [illustr.—clock striking, or railway whistle, disturbs not sleeper after a while].

What is the promise? Prov. viii. 17—Those that seek Me *early* shall find Me.'

NOTES.

1. That some of the children brought to Christ were of the tenderest age is clear from the word used by St. Luke, which signifies infants or sucklings.

2. The narrative of the young ruler is one of those in which three Gospels remarkably supplement each other. St. Matthew alone mentions that he was a young man, and that he asked 'what good thing' he should do; Christ's expressions, 'If thou wilt enter into life,' &c., and, 'If thou wilt be perfect'; and that among the commandments Jesus enumerated, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' St. Mark alone mentions the ruler's 'running and kneeling';

that Jesus 'loved him'; the expression, 'take up the cross'; the commandment, 'Defraud not'; the explanatory declaration about those that 'trust in riches'; and that the ruler was 'sad' (see Note 5). He also three times describes Christ as *looking* (ver. 21, 23, 27), which adds much to the vividness of his account. St. Luke alone states that the young man was a ruler.

3. 'Why callest thou Me good?' &c. This was, of course, not meant to deny the perfect goodness of Christ. It was not the object of Jesus to speak of His own Godhead. He leaves that alone, and seeks merely to raise the young man's idea of goodness, and thus lead him to

see that to do a 'good thing' is not so easy as he thinks. This is rendered still clearer if we adopt the reading of the best MSS., that in Matthew (not Mark or Luke), Christ's question is, 'Why askest thou Me concerning good?'

Alford well remarks that this passage, so far from favouring Socinian errors about Christ, is a most pointed rebuke of them. Christ refused to be regarded as what they think Him—a good man. Stier thus neatly puts the dilemma:—'Either, There is none good but God: Christ is good: therefore Christ is God. Or, There is none good but God: Christ is not God: therefore Christ is not good.'

4. 'If thou wilt enter into life'—'if thou wilt be perfect' (Matt.); rather, 'if thou desirest to be.'

Christ does not even apparently imply that the ruler *could* 'enter into life' by keeping the commandments, or *could* be perfect.

5. The word rendered 'sad,' in Mark x. 22, is nowhere else so used in the N. T. It signifies gloomy dejection. It is rendered 'lowering' in Matt. xvi. 3, where it is spoken of the sky.

6. 'Through the eye of a needle.' It is said that the lower side-archway at an Eastern city-gate, used by foot-passengers, was commonly so designated; and some think this is the reference here. But more probably the term is used literally. The same saying occurs in the Talmud about an elephant, and was evidently a familiar way of speaking of an impossibility.

Lesson LXVII.—Peter's Question.

'What shall we have therefore?'

Read—Matt. xix. 27—30; xx. 1—16; Learn—Luke xvii. 10; Rom. vi. 23. (*Hymns*, 63, 139, 158, 170, 174, 222, 225, 327, 328, 330, 400.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It must be clearly understood that, in the following Sketch, the difficult parable now before us is regarded as having no reference to the question of personal salvation, but only to *Christian work and its reward*; see Note 3. Salvation is in no sense whatever a reward; it is the free gift of God for Christ's sake. But the idea of reward for good works—done, not to get saved, but because saved—is prominent in the New Testament; though this reward itself also is purely of grace. If this principle of interpretation be followed, the parable will be found comparatively easy.

The subject of *degrees of reward* is omitted in this Lesson, as it will come in more suitably with the Parable of the Talents.

The following illustration, taken from the useful little book before alluded to, Bishop's *Parables Illustrated*, may be found of service in explaining the fairness of the householder's conduct:—

'Mamma,' said Charlie Evans: 'wasn't it very unfair of the householder to pay all the labourers just the same, when some worked all day, and some only worked an hour? I think he must have been a very unjust man.'

'Do you remember, Charlie, my buying a dozen oranges for sixpence at the greengrocer's last week? and, you know, yesterday I bought three, just the same size, from that poor woman who came to the door, and I gave her sixpence too; don't you think that was very unjust to the greengrocer?'

'O, no, mamma; I thought you were very generous to the poor woman.'

'Now suppose, Charlie, the greengrocer were to hear of it, and complain that I had wronged him; why I should say just what the householder did to the labourers who grumbled at the penny: 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?' Wouldn't that be quite right?'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

The young ruler sadly moving away [*re-capitulate*—Jesus and the Apostles looking after him. What would Jesus feel? see Luke xix. 41, 42. But the Apostles—what they thinking of?—'How much better we are than that man! we gave up all to follow Jesus.' So they had; but was it right to think so much of it? What did Jesus give up for them—for us all? 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 5—9.

1. *Peter's Question*, ver. 27.

'What shall we have?' Like workman or servant agreeing with master—wants to know 'what wages'—wants to make a bargain with Jesus—'our services worth so

much—what rate of pay?' Ah! Peter is making two mistakes:—

(a) Did Jesus *need* his help? could He not have done without him? was it not Peter who was privileged by being called to work? [*Illust.*—*Like apprentice—is he paid? no, himself pays premium.*]

(b) Was his work any merit at all? see 1st text for rep.—even if his work *perfect* (and was it?), only his duty. [*Illust.*—*Little girl helping mother—does she ask to be paid? why not?*] Besides, what about gratitude? what had Jesus done for him? [*Illust.*—*A man saves you from fire or drowning—you are asked to do some small thing for him—do you ask, 'What pay?'*]

2. *The Answer*, ver. 28, 29.

Yet Jesus will pay—and what a payment! A 'regeneration' ('new-born time') coming—'all things new' (Isa. lxxv. 17; Rev. xxi. 5)—Peter and his comrades shall have a reward then, honour and power [see *Note 1*]. And not they only (comp. 2 Tim. iv. 8)—every one who gives up anything for Christ's sake shall be rewarded. At what rate? an exact, fair price? ah, no—'a hundred fold.' [Illustr.—*Like seed, which you part with to put in ground, springs up and pays you back abundantly.*]

When? (a) In this life: there will be trials (see Mark), but God will make up for all. What did St. Paul say? he gave up everything—'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' &c. (2 Cor. vi. 10). (b) In the life to come—who can tell what the reward will be then? 1 Cor. ii. 9.

'I know not, oh, I know not,
What joys await us there;
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare!'

3. *The Caution*, ver. 30.

'But'—there is a 'but'—something to beware of. 'Many that are first shall be last.' Who are 'the first'? The earliest and chief workers. Not all to be 'last,' but 'many'—who?—Those who work in a *wrong spirit*. God looks not at *how much* is done, but at *why* it is done: if done as a merit, or 'for pay,' He thinks little of it; if done simply from love to Him, without thinking of reward, He thinks much of it. Think of the poor widow and the rich givers (Luke xxi. 1-4)—she gave 'more than they all'—there 'the last was first.' And think of Judas, one of Christ's 'first' workers, 'last'—nay, not in at all! So Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magnus, the Pharisee with his fasts and tithes (Luke xviii. 11, 12) the 'many' in Matt. vii. 22, 23.

So Peter must beware—he may not lose all, like these; but if he thinks of the 'wages' instead of Christ's love, his work spoiled, his reward less, and what he will have no pleasure to him.

And now Jesus gives them a story to illustrate all this.

4. *The Parable*. [See *Note 3*.]

Hiring.—Vintage-time—all the hill-sides covered with vines—all the vines loaded with ripe grapes. Extra labourers wanted [illustr.—*as at harvest and hop-picking with us*—men know that—see the village market-place alive early in the morning with knots of men waiting to be hired [see *Note 5*]]—here comes a vine-grower—bargain soon struck—wages agreed on—off go the men. Again and again the vine-grower comes back—more men wanted—fine weather—good vintage—get it in quickly. Even at 5 P.M. seeking more men—will take them on even now—but *no bargain*—these glad to be hired—will 'leave it to the master.'

Working.—Look into the vineyard. All

working like bees—some gathering grapes, others carrying them in baskets (Jer. vi. 9) to wine-press, others there treading out juice—noise and shouting (Isa. xvi. 10; Jer. xxv. 30). Hard toil under fierce sun and parching wind [see *Note 7*] for so many hours. What are the hired labourers thinking of? care for their master? pleased to work for him? no—what is he to them?—it's only the pay they think of—by-and-bye will take it sullenly, and go wearily home. But these men just come in as sun sinking behind western hills—quite different—don't know what pay they are to have—know they deserve very little—content to leave it—know the master is generous.

Paying.—Sunset at last—work done—pay-time now (Lev. xix. 13; Dent. xxiv. 15.)

(a) The men last hired—how much for them? The master is rich and kind—can't bear that they should go home with scarcely anything for their families—knows they were *willing* to work, only not hired—will make them a present—a whole day's wages. Fancy their bright faces and grateful words!

(b) The men first hired—how much for them? Full pay, nothing short, the exact sum agreed on—the master a just man. Why then these black looks and bitter words? are they wronged? no—have got precisely what expected. Dissatisfied, not with the pay to *them*, but with the present to the *others*—nothing but envy. See the master's words, 'May I not do as I like with my own money?' Suppose those others had not been hired at all might he not give them what he pleased out of his own pocket? [See *illustr. in preface, above.*]

Now what did the parable say to Peter? It shewed him how the *first* might become the *last*. If he went on thinking 'what he should get' by being the apostle of Jesus, would become selfish, envious, discontented, grumbling (like the elder son, Luke xv. 28-30)—even heaven could be no enjoyment to such an one—or rather, how could such an one be in heaven at all? see 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

We have talked about Peter: what about ourselves?

I. CHRIST CALLS US TO WORK FOR HIM.

His 'harvest plenteous'—'labourers few.' Plenty of work for all [see *preface to Lesson LXXI.*]. Have you but little time? so had the 'last' in the parable, yet they went. Some put off serving Christ till 'eleventh hour,' thinking that time enough to get heaven—to get the 'pay'—care nothing for the Master—but which labourers is that like? Besides, if you wait till then, will you be able to say, 'No man hath hired us'—when He is calling *now*. If those '11th hour men' had *refused all day to work*, would they have been taken

on then? Stand not, then, 'all the day idle': let each do *something* for Christ; it may be very little—not a thing to be talked about—but He 'knows our works' (Rev. ii. 2, 9, 13, 19, iii. 8), and if it is done out of love to Him, (as St. Paul worked, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15), He will smile on it and say, 'She (or he) hath done what she could' (Mark xiv. 8).

II. CHRIST WILL GIVE US AN ABUNDANT REWARD.

Not because we deserve it. Think how little we do—the most diligent of us; how badly we do it—the best of us! Even what we *do* is really done by His grace (1 Cor. xv. 10). And think what we *ought* to do—

'Think—ah, think—how much we owe Him!
Oh, how He loves!'

But because of His free grace. Not wages, but a *gift* (2nd text for rep.; see Ps. lxii. 12). So that those who receive it will be astonished at having so much, and feel how undeserved it is; like Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 10). See what Christ's servants will say, Matt. xxv. 37. And, though not to work for reward, *may* look forward to it, Luke vi. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 58; Heb. vi. 10;—*as Christ Himself did*, Heb. xii. 2.

Shall we have the reward? we *are* among the 'many called'—shall we be among the 'few chosen'? Pray the Collect for 25th S. aft. Trin.—'Stir up, &c. . . . 'that we, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded.'

NOTES.

1. '*In the regeneration*,' &c. The word rendered 'regeneration' means literally 'a beginning again.' In this place it seems to have the same general significance as 'kingdom of heaven'—*the new state of things* under the Gospel dispensation, existing imperfectly since Pentecost, but only to arrive at a perfect consummation at the establishment of the 'new heavens and new earth.' The promise to the Apostles, that they should 'sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,' probably refers, therefore, partly to their office as rulers of the Church after the Ascension, and partly to some great dignity in store for them hereafter, the nature of which is not clearly revealed; comp. Luke xxii. 29, 30; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; Rev. ii. 26.

2. *Ver. 29.* The parallel passage in St. Mark gives the promise more fully, particularising the *returns* to be made to him who forsakes family, &c.; stating that there is a reward in this life as well as in the next; and adding the important words, 'with persecutions.' The promise was often literally fulfilled in the early Church, and is so still in the cases, *e.g.*, of Hindoo Mission-converts and of converted Jews everywhere. With us, of course, what is forsaken is less.

3. The parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard is generally regarded as the most difficult of all our Lord's parables; and the rival interpretations are very numerous, which may be found in detail in Trench. The difficulties, however, mostly arise from the attempt to attach a spiritual meaning to each point in the story, as, *e.g.*, the several gangs of men, the different periods of hiring, and, above all, the *hire* itself. Alford, and many other writers, take the 'penny' to mean eternal life; while Stier and Wordsworth, considering this impossible, because the murmurers *got it*, make it stand for earthly blessings; and Trench and Lange find an explanation midway between these two. But it seems more likely that this is one of the parables which are intended to convey a single important lesson, and the accessories of which are simply introduced to give vividness to the story.

Probably the parable has no concern whatever with a man's personal salvation, but applies solely to the one subject of the *rewards to be given for work done for Christ*, affirming that these are purely of grace. The question, there-

fore, whether such servants as are represented by the murmuring labourers can be saved, does not arise at all. The Apostles are only cautioned against indulging, *while at work*, in the selfish and self-righteous spirit which the labourers manifested at *pay-time*.

4. The expression, 'Many be called, but few chosen'—(though elsewhere it refers to the matter of personal salvation)—here applies only to *fitness for work*. It is probably derived from the way in which Romans were selected to serve in the army. The men assembled by tribes and families, and the recruits were chosen according to their capacity to pass certain *tests* of strength, courage, &c.; only a small proportion of the candidates being ultimately accepted—'many called, but few chosen.' Compare God's method of selecting Gideon's 'three hundred,' Judg. vii. And so in 1 Cor. ix. 27, where being a 'cast-away' means losing, *not personal salvation*, but the *special reward of a preacher*.

5. Morier, a traveller in Persia (quoted by Trench), relates that he saw every morning, in the market-place of Hamadan, a band of peasants, with spades, waiting to be hired. Finding some standing still unoccupied late in the day, he put to them the very question, 'Why stand ye here all the day idle?' and the reply was in the very words, 'Because no man hath hired us.'

6. The 'penny' is the Roman silver *denarius*, nominally worth about $\frac{7}{16}$ d. of our money, but really much more, owing to the altered value of money. It was the daily pay of a soldier in our Lord's time. An English penny was a labourer's day's wages in the reign of Edward III.

7. The word in ver. 12 rendered 'heat' is the name of the dry, sultry, east wind; and is used in the Septuagint version of Ezek. xix. 12. 'Good man of the house,' in ver. 11, is the same word as 'householder' in ver. 1. 'Friend,' in ver. 13, should rather be 'comrade'; it does not imply friendship, and is the word used to the man without the wedding-garment (Matt. xxii. 12), and to Judas in the garden (xxvi. 50). 'An evil eye,' ver. 15, means envy and ill-will; comp. Deut. xv. 9, xxviii. 54, 56; 1 Sam. xviii. 9; Prov. xxviii. 22; Mark vii. 22.

Lesson LXVIII.—The Lawyer's Two Questions.

'What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Who is my neighbour?'

Read—Luke x. 25—37; Learn—Rom. xiii. 10; Luke vi. 31, 33, 35. (*Hymns*, 63, 90, 95, 109, 159—161, 172, 176, 177, 353—355, 364—367.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Teachers of junior classes will find it desirable to shorten considerably, or even to omit, the first two divisions of this Lesson—interesting as their topics are; as the Parable and its teachings must not be allowed to suffer through want of time. In particular, the two leading thoughts in the concluding paragraphs of the Sketch should be fully dwelt upon, viz. (1) That our natural selfishness can only be overcome by what Dr. Chalmers (in his Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans) beautifully calls 'the expulsive power of a new affection'; (2) That love for our neighbour must embrace all men because they are men, partakers of the manhood which Christ took into union with the Godhead, and therefore, in a sense, His brethren (Matt. xxv. 40) and ours; that it must be what has been finely termed 'the enthusiasm of humanity'—a phrase which has been objected to by some, but which seems to be only an ethical rendering of the familiar expression, 'the love of souls.'

The miserable condition of the helpless sufferer in the Parable may just now be effectively illustrated from the accounts of the wounded left on the battle-fields of France.

Teachers should notice the example given them by our Lord, in this narrative, of the art of 'applying' a lesson to the hearers. He tells his story, and then, instead of pronouncing a solemn application, He suggests a friendly but pointed question to the lawyer—'*Which, now, thinkest thou?*' &c. How keenly must the latter have felt the force of the answer he was himself constrained to give! and how powerfully must have fallen upon him the pithy rejoinder, 'Go, and do thou likewise!'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How fond boys are of asking questions! like to have some one to go to for information—father, uncle, &c. [*illust. for senior class—Hugh Miller's two uncles*].—some one who seems to know everything. But do they not sometimes put questions to worry or annoy? [*illust.—pestering a new boy at school*]. Sometimes merely inquisitive; sometimes with good object.

Have you noticed how constantly the Lord Jesus was questioned?—*e.g.*, the young ruler's question, Peter's question [*last two lessons*]. Sometimes persecuted with puzzling and irritating questions, see Luke xi. 53, 54. In a future lesson shall see how wise and patient He was in answering [*Lesson LXXVII.*]. To-day look at two questions.

I. THE FIRST QUESTION—'*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*'

The very question the young ruler asked! Yet how differently! *he* asked sincerely, anxious to know the way for himself; but this lawyer—why? ver. 25, 'tempting Him' [see Note 2]—asks merely to see what Jesus will say—perhaps perplex Him, get hasty or wrong answer.

See Christ's answer, ver. 26—a question—two questions: the lawyer 'tempted,' tested, Him—now He tests the lawyer. 'You, a lawyer, not ignorant, teacher of others, ought to know' (comp. John iii. 10; Rom. ii. 21). And not only 'what in law?'—but 'how readest thou?'—'do you read

just because you have to do it? or merely for the people's good, and not seeing what it says to yourself?' If Christ asked us this question, how answer?

And the lawyer *does* know—gives very best answer (Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18; comp. Matt. xxii. 37—40)—all 'duty to God and our neighbour' (see Catechism) in it. But what does Jesus say? 'Right?' yes, but *knowing* is not enough—must '*this do.*' Jesus wants him to *try*—then find out he can't—learn his sinfulness (Rom. iii. 20, vii. 7)—trust no longer in self—ready to take eternal life as God's gift to pardoned sinner. [*illust.—Vain boy says, 'Oh, I know my lesson'; master sees he does not, yet replies, 'Then say it'—to show him his ignorance.*]

II. THE SECOND QUESTION—'*Who is my neighbour?*'

Christ's word, like an arrow (comp. Heb. iv. 12), has gone straight to his heart. 'This do—am I doing it? I love my family and my countrymen—can there be more neighbours—how be sure what God means by neighbour?' Yet he asks, hoping the answer of Jesus will shew he is keeping the law—wants to 'justify himself'—yet uneasy conscience [*illust.—father just come home—child trying to look very good, perhaps saying 'I've not been naughty'—this often a sign of uneasy conscience.*]

Jesus does with him as with Peter [*last Lesson*].—tells parable.

III. THE PARABLE.

A wild, gloomy, road among the mountains. Very steep—Jerusalem high up in the hill country. Jericho down in the deep Jordan valley [see *Lesson XXIII.*]. Dangerous—robbers hiding among the rocks (as they do to this day). [See *Note 3.*] A man journeying alone—suddenly attacked, robbed, wounded, left to die. See him lying helpless—how anxiously longing for some one to come by!

Footsteps afar off—who coming? A priest [see *Note 4.*]—how fortunate!—God's minister sure to help—knows the law about rescuing lost animals (Deut. xxii. 1—4)—how much more a man! What does he do? Cruel, do you think? No doubt the priest would (like lawyer, ver. 29) have 'justified himself.' 'Dangerous place—I might be robbed too—or charged with the robbery; besides, the man beyond cure, and what could I do alone?' Would these be good reasons? Think of the great law [above]—love neighbour as self—how would priest have liked to be left lying there himself? would he have thought these excuses good then?

Footsteps again—a kinder man this time?—ah, more hard-hearted—'looked on him,' and yet went away—excuse for him too. Think of poor sufferer's despair!

A third comer—how different! See him tenderly dressing wounds, lifting the poor torn body on to his ass (content to walk himself), conveying to shelter, caring for wants, paying for supplies [picture out]. Might he not have pleaded priest's excuses? Did he think of danger, trouble, delay? How was it? did he recognise in the sufferer a friend or relative? any special reason for helping him? Rather a special reason for *not* helping him—one of his nation's bitter foes—with whom usually 'no dealings' (John iv. 9). [See *Lesson XIX., Note 5, and Additional Note 1, at page 49.*] But he thought not of that; enough for him that *some* one was suffering. [Illustr.—Child in Edinburgh nearly run over—picked up by woman. Bystander asked, 'Is it your child?' 'My child! no, but it's *SOMEbody's* child!']

IV. THE APPLICATION.

Does Jesus give it Himself? He makes the lawyer find it out. But mark the question: not, 'Which treated poor man as neighbour, and so kept the command?'—but 'Which acted as neighbour to him?' Why this? Lawyer had asked, 'Who my neighbour?' Jesus puts it the other way, 'You are the neighbour—how would you

like others to treat you? do likewise.' But see what the lawyer says—not 'the Samaritan'—he *can't* name the hated people—perhaps thinks Jesus might as well have told about a Jew's goodness [see *Note 5.*]. Ah, but it was just those feelings that showed the lawyer kept not the law; Jesus puts His finger on the exact spot where the disease is—as He did with young ruler's love of money [Lesson LXVI].

We should all like to deserve the praise Jesus gave the Good Samaritan.

Why do we not? We love, not others as selves, but selves much better than others. Each thinks of *self* first. Think—is it not so in school, home, workshop, playground? Even if do kind thing, how often for sake of self, to get return, or gain credit!

What do we need? To remember the law, and try and do duty? Ah, sure to fail. That won't do. Must get rid of self-love. How? Some other love must come into heart and push it out. [Illustr.—Room full of foul air—how get rid of it?—let in fresh air. Or, 'empty' bottle is really full of air; pour water in, and air pushed out.] When boy or girl really unselfish, why? Because full of love for parent, companion, &c.—no room for self. But to be like Samaritan, must have love for everybody (see 2nd text for rep.); then only (1st text for rep.) can really keep law. See 1 Cor. x. 21, 33, xiii. 5; Gal. v. 14; Phil. ii. 4; 1 John iii. 14; Jas. ii. 8.

How get this love? Think of God's love to us, John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; Eph. iv. 32; 1 John iv. 10,—and see St. John's next verse—'if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.' Think of Jesus' love—the true 'Good Samaritan' [see *Note 8.*], who 'had compassion' on us when He saw us robbed by Satan, dying of sin; came to 'bind up our wounds' and 'take care of us' (see Isa. lxi. 1).

Then, how feel towards others? Think that God created them, Christ died for them (comp. Rom. xiv. 15)—therefore 'brethren,' 'neighbours'—doing good to any of them is doing good to Christ, Matt. xxv. 40. Or rather, love them without thinking at all [illustr.—sun gives light and warmth to all who come in its way, by its very nature, because full of light and warmth]. Love is like sunshine—does not keep to self—does not choose where it will go—goes out to all naturally. And then true love will act, 1 John iii. 18. No shirking opportunities of doing good, like priest and Levite; joyfully seize them all. And see the reward, Matt. xxv. 34—36.

NOTES.

1. The difference between 'lawyers' and 'scribes' is supposed to be that the former was simply an appellation indicating learning and knowledge of the law, and the latter the official title of a distinct order of teachers (Smith's *Dict. of Bible*). Just as, with us, all 'learned men' are not in office as 'professors.'

2. 'Tempting Him.' The word 'tempt' simply means 'try by experiment.' The motive might be good or bad. Thus, God 'tempted' Abraham, although St. James (i. 13) says, 'Neither tempteth He any man.' It seems probable that the lawyer 'tempted' Christ from motives of curiosity, if not of malice.

3. On the road from Jerusalem to Jericho (18 miles) there is a descent of 3,000 feet in 12 miles. No wonder it is called 'going down' (comp. Josh. xvi. 1). It has been a dangerous road from time immemorial. St. Jerome, who lived in Palestine, says it was called the 'bloody way' on account of the murders committed there, and that in his time there was a Roman fort and garrison to protect travellers. See also Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. 6, 1. A Turkish guard still accompanies the tourists 'going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.' Accounts of actual journeys by this route will be found in Thomson's *Land and the Book*, p. 613; Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 196; Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 416; Hanna's *Close of the Ministry*, p. 232; and Macleod's 'Eastward,' in *Good Words* for Sept. 1865 (see below).

'Thieves' should be 'robbers,' or 'banditti.' Our translation is not always correct in this matter. The distinction in Greek is as plain as in English. In Matt. xxiv. 43 and John xii. 6, 'thief' is right; but in Matt. xxi. 13, xxiv. 43, and Luke xxiii. 39-43, it should be 'robber.' It means a *highwayman*, not a *pickpocket*.

The 'inn' in this case is not the mere walled enclosure so common in the East (see Lesson V. Note 4), but a public house of entertainment. The word occurs nowhere else in the N. T. An old 'khan' still exists on what appears, from the peculiar position, to have been the exact site of the 'inn.' See H. Dixon's *Holy Land*, p. 347.

The fact that immediately after this parable occurs the arrival of Christ at Bethany (ver. 38) suggests the probability that the conversation with the lawyer may have taken place while they were actually on this road, going up to Jerusalem: Bethany being situated just at the top

4. As Jericho was a city of the priests, the priest and Levite are naturally represented as returning from 'executing their offices in the order of their course' (Luke i. 8) at the Temple.

'By chance.' The Greek word means a 'falling in together,' i.e., of one event with another; as does also the original (Latin) of our word 'coincidence'—which would be an exact rendering.

5. It is difficult to convey to an English reader the full and startling significance of our Lord's selection of a Samaritan as the good character in His parable. National antipathy (as at present between French and Prussians) is not strong enough to illustrate the case of the Jews and Samaritans. To it must be added the bitterest feelings of antagonistic religious parties.

6. 'Oil and wine.' Both Oriental and Greek physicians recommended the use of wine and oil for wounds, the former to cleanse them, the latter to assuage their smart.

7. 'Two pence,' i.e., two days' wages. See Lesson LXVII, Note 6.

8. Much ingenuity has been exercised in tracing, in all the details of this parable, analogies to the work of Christ in redemption. The ass, the oil and wine, the inn, the two pence, are all made out to be symbolic; which it is surely impossible to suppose that our Lord Himself designed. His parable was intended simply to illustrate the expansiveness of true love. We may indeed apply the general outline of the Samaritan's benevolent deed to Christ's work; but to find curious parallels in the drapery of the story is to trifle with Scripture.

ADDITIONAL NOTE IX.

'GOING DOWN FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICO.'

(From Dr. Norman Macleod's 'Eastward'.)

The descent from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea is a half greater than that from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean. In round numbers it is twice thirteen hundred feet from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean, three times thirteen hundred from Jerusalem to the surface of the Dead Sea, and four times thirteen hundred to the bottom of the Dead Sea. We had therefore to descend about four thousand feet.

The part of the descent immediately below Bethany is the steepest. There is a path here of loose stones and smooth rock, which rapidly plunges into the head of the long valley. I here deemed it safe and prudent, both for man and beast, to dismount and lead my horse. It must have been up this steep our Saviour toiled, on His momentous journey from Jericho to Bethany. And to the summit of this ascent, or possibly from it, gazing along the windings of the glen, must Martha and Mary have turned their longing and expectant gaze for the coming of the Saviour to heal their brother Lazarus.

On reaching the bottom of this rapid descent, and passing a well and the ruins of an old khan, our road ran right along

the bottom of the valley. It was a bare, bleak, dry, limestone bit of scenery, but not tamer or more uninteresting than many places which I have traversed even in Scotland. But after a few miles, when we got entangled among broken uplands and deep gorges, lonely, wild, and dreary in the extreme, things began to have a wilderness and Dead Sea look. We rested near an old khan now in ruins. Was this the 'inu' alluded to by the Saviour, to which the good Samaritan is represented as bringing the suffering stranger? It may have been some well known spot like this, the parable gaining, to those who heard it, more vividness and reality by a local allusion.

Soon after passing the old khan, we entered a narrow path full of interest. Immediately below us, to the left, was a deep gorge that cut its way through rocky precipices, between which, five hundred feet down, a fresh full mountain stream rushed along to the plain of the Jordan. This was the Wady Kelt, and in all probability the brook Cherith where Elijah was supported during the famine. And here as confirming the conjecture, we

noticed many ravens, and heard their hoarse croak echoing from the wild precipices.

On and down we went, winding through this arid waste, until at last we saw the plain of Jericho stretching below us, dotted with verdure produced by the mountain springs, and stretching, a grey flat with patches of wood here and there, until its bare shore-like surface was fringed, ten miles off, by the line of vegetation shading the unseen and deep bed of the Jordan. Beyond the Jordan rose the grand ridge

of Moab, and to the right appeared the northern bay of the Dead Sea. Down, down we crept, always thinking we would in a few minutes reach the lowest level, but always finding a lower still. But every lane has a turning, and so had ours; and right glad were we when it turned to the left, as the shades of evening were drawing over us, and we saw our white tents, pitched where those of many a thankful and wearied traveller had been pitched before, under the Quarantania, and near the Ain-es-Sultân, or Fountain of Elisha.

Lesson LXIX.—The Home at Bethany.

'One thing is needful.'

Read—Luke x. 38—42; *Learn*—Luke x. 41, 42; John xiv. 23. (*Hymns*, 95, 110, 174, 178, 261, 285, 346, 349, 355.)

TO THE TEACHER.

After the last seven Lessons, which have had so little connection with the historical aspects of our Lord's life, it becomes important to remind ourselves and our classes at what stage of His ministry we have arrived. Accordingly, the subject of this Lesson not being a large one, the first part of the Sketch is devoted to such an account of Christ's stay at Bethany as may accomplish that object, as well as add to the interest of the narrative itself. And any of the historical and topographical particulars which the teacher may give, will be found very useful to refer back to in subsequent Lessons.

The chief thing to bear in mind in expounding this passage is that Martha and Mary were *both* true disciples, and not (as is too often represented) types respectively of the world and the Church. In Martha we see the portrait of many excellent Christian people, who are so wrapped up in (it may be) most useful religious or philanthropic work that the inner life of the soul is almost wholly neglected. We teachers know well what the danger is: none need the warning more. But Martha is a type also of many Sunday-scholars. Here is a boy who is never absent, learns everything that is set him, eagerly runs errands, &c., for the teacher, takes charge of books, practises for the choir, is always ready to be useful, and perhaps (unlike Martha) does *not* get cross. Now such a boy is very apt to think *all this is religion*; and the teacher should strive to bring to-day's Lesson home to any of his scholars who may answer to this description.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

You remember the steep and dangerous road down from Jerusalem to Jericho, where the traveller in the parable was robbed [*last Lesson*]. Up that road Jesus has to go to get to Jerusalem from Perea, where He has been [*see Lesson LXII.*] for some time. See Him toiling up those weary twelve miles of rocky path. At the top, a village (*see ver. 38*) perched up in a nook in the mountains—Bethany. Here a resting-place for Him—a home and friends.

I. JESUS AT BETHANY.

Why has He come up here so near Jerusalem? Remember the 'great journey'—how He left Galilee to come to Jerusalem to die [*Lesson LX.*]—but, first, long circuit where people had not yet seen Him, particularly Perea—the Seventy going first to announce the coming King. [*Lesson LXI.*] But it is not the time yet for His death—not till Passover in April—now December [*see Note 1*]. Why then is He here?

Look at Luke xiii. 34. Jerusalem ever in His thoughts—He yearns for the ancient sacred city—oh, if the people would but believe in Him, their King and Saviour! He cannot wait for the end—must go up again meanwhile, warn them once more, call them to Him 'as hen gathers chickens.' He will brave insult, risk stoning.

And now a good opportunity—Feast of Dedication, John x. 22 [*next Lesson, Note 1*]. Many Jews present to keep feast.

All day Jesus teaches in Temple—'reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long-suffering' (2 Tim. iv. 2). Then see Him at evening—leaving city by gate on east side—down into valley of Jehoshaphat—over brook Kedron—past Gethsemane (often turning into the dark olive grove to pray, John xviii. 1, 2)—up Mount Olivet—down the other side to Bethany; *see* Matt. xxi. 17; Mark xi. 11, 19; Luke xxi. 37. The very way David took when he

fled from Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 14, 23, 30, 32, xvi. 1, 13. How well Jesus must have known every step of that daily walk!

At Bethany a family who loved Jesus—whom Jesus loved, John xi. 5. Martha head of household [see Note 4]—sister and brother younger. Not poor—very likely chief friends in village—many friends among rulers and Pharisees [see Note 4]—but are they proud and unbelieving, like those friends? see John xi. 27—what do they think of Jesus? How happy for them to have Him there night after night and hear His gracious words! and what a rest for Him after the ‘contradiction of sinners’ (Heb. xii. 3; see Luke xi, 53, 54) all day!

II. THE TWO SISTERS. Ver. 38—42.

Mary. Why ‘sitting at Jesus’ feet’? Learners always did when being taught, see Acts xxii. 3; comp. Deut. xxxiii. 3; Luke ii. 46. And Mary not content with hearing a little—a ‘short lesson’; kept sitting there [see Note 5]—such a treat!—could listen to Him for hours (comp. Luke iv. 22, v. 1, xix. 48, xxiv. 32; John i. 39).

Martha. Where is she? Oh, so busy—likes to hear Jesus too, but how can she stay now?—supper to be got ready, servants to be looked after—she must have plenty, and all very nice, for so honoured a guest—must bustle about, think of everything—is quite distracted [see Note 5]. Presently, rushes in to chief room—hear her complaint—does it not seem a just one? yet what does Jesus say?

Why was Martha blamed?

Because she went about household duties, instead of sitting by Jesus? Surely she was not wrong to work; and Jesus does not say so. But two reasons:—

(1) ‘*Many things*’—did Jesus need such a feast, so much preparation?—would be content with a very simple meal—better if she had given *less* time to that, and thought more of His teaching; she meant well—did it out of love to Him—but mistook his real wishes. [*Illust.*—*Missionary visiting heathen court—would he like king to take so much trouble in entertaining him with feasts, displays, &c., that no time for him to preach?*] Comp. Ps. l. 8—15; Mic. vi. 6—8.

(2) ‘*Careful and troubled*.’ But is not carefulness good? Not this kind [see Note 5]—it means being overworked and cross. Did she not shew she was cross—making out she was so thoughtful, her sister so thoughtless—even (‘carest Thou not?’) murmuring against Jesus?—clearly she lost her temper—was ‘put out.’ Could she not have gone quietly about her duties (see 1 Thess. iv. 11; comp. Prov. xvii. 1), feeling happy, not only at serving the Master, but at saving Mary her share of work? Was not Jesus even then giving her an example, by His daily conflicts with the Jews, of (Rom. xv. 3) ‘pleasing not Himself’? see in Phil. ii., how ver. 5—8 follow on ver. 1—4.

Why was Mary praised?

For being idle? why, does not God call on His servants to work? see 1 Cor. xv. 58—‘always abounding in the work of the Lord.’ Are they not to be like soldiers, sowers, reapers, fishermen, builders, &c. &c.? And what will the Judge praise the righteous for at the great day? Matt. xxv. 31—36; comp. Rom. xvi. 6, 12.

No; but Mary felt there must be something else *first*—must *receive* from Jesus before could *give* to Him. Would listening to Jesus make her idle? would He *wish* her always to sit there? see Luke viii. 35, 38. And would not being with Him make her so love Him as to ‘constrain’ her to work for Him? But *how?* with complaints, as though it were a burden? or brightly and happily, never thinking of self at all? see Rom. xii. 11—‘not slothful in business,’ yet ‘fervent in spirit.’

So every way it was the ‘good part’—a better ‘portion’ than the best ‘portion’ of earthly food [see Note 5]. While Martha worrying about a good supper-table, Mary feeding on the ‘bread of life.’ See Matt. vi. 34; John vi. 27. Martha’s best services might cease (*e.g.*, through sickness), but Mary should never lose her ‘better part.’

ONE THING NEEDFUL—*A word to Busy Boys and Girls.*

Pleasant to see you busy and industrious—in school, at home, at work. We know Satan’s ‘mischief for idle hands to do.’ But Satan tempts busy ones too—tempts them to get worried—then to get cross and selfish; yes, and tempts them to be *too busy to think of Christ*. You may be busy about very good things—even about Christian work—and yet forget the ‘one thing.’ What is that? To love, trust in, grow like, Christ; and this impossible without time to ‘sit at His feet,’ *i.e.* hear His words, think about Him, pray to Him.

Was not David a busy man—his work most important, governing, judging, arranging tabernacle worship, &c.? Yet He reckoned ‘one thing’ above everything else, so great that all else little [*illust.*—*like tall church spire seen alone above whole village*]—what was it? Ps. xxvii. 4; comp. lxxiii. 25. And St. Paul—think of all his labours—yet said ‘This one thing I do’—what? preaching? not at all—but knowing more of Christ and growing more like Him, see Phil. iii. 10—13.

ONE THING NEEDFUL—*A word to Quiet Boys and Girls.*

You are not bustling, like Martha, but quiet, thoughtful, retiring. Ah, that’s very easy; but are, you like Mary, ‘sitting at Jesus’ feet,’ caring for Him and His Word? Have you ‘received Him,’ like those two sisters, at all? He knocks at the door (Rev. iii. 20)—have you opened it? Do you want Him to keep His promise in 2nd text for rep.? You have felt in your heart *the call*—have you listened?

NOTES.

1. That this visit occurred at the time of the Feast of the Dedication in December, mentioned in John x. 22, is thus proved:—It could not have coincided with Christ's previous visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Tabernacles, because the 'great journey' had not then begun; while it must obviously be placed before the death and raising of Lazarus; and there is no other alternative. See Additional Note VIII., page 154. That Note will also further explain the *episodical* character of the visit to the Dedication feast. The great journey was not yet completed; the 'hour' of final arrival at Jerusalem was not yet come; but Jesus 'went up' to afford the rulers one more opportunity, before the last, of receiving Him.

2. On the Feast of the Dedication, see next Lesson, Note 1.

3. The 'certain village' of ver. 38 is undoubtedly Bethany. It is about two miles from Jerusalem, on the further (eastern) side of Olivet, in a most retired spot. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho passes through it, and the steep descent (see last Lesson, Note 3) begins immediately below it. Far away down below can be seen the deep hollow of the Jordan valley, with the Dead Sea to the right, and the 'long wall' of the mountains of Moab bounding the view on the other side at some twenty-five miles distance. Bethany means either 'house of dates' or 'of the poor.' It is now a miserable hamlet. Its modern name, El Lazarich, commemorates the great event of John xi. Descriptions of the locality will be found in Hepworth Dixon, *Holy Land*, p. 334; Porter, *Great Cities*, &c., p. 164; Stanley, *S. and P.*, p. 188; Robinson, *l.*, p. 432.

4. That the family 'whom Jesus loved' were in what we should call a good position in life, seems clear from (a) their possession of a tomb of the kind described in John xi.; (b) their many friends among 'the Jews' (John xi. 19), i.e. (in the language of the fourth Gospel) the rulers and priestly party; (c) the 'very costly' ointment owned by Mary (John xii. 3). Martha seems to have been the eldest, as the house was hers (Luke x. 38). In Matt. xxvi. 6 and Mark xiv. 3 (comp. with John xii. 2), the same dwelling, apparently, is called the house of Simon the Leper, who is supposed to have been the father of the three or the husband of Martha, and either dead or (as a leper) necessarily separated from them.

5. '*Sat at Jesus' feet*,' literally 'kept sitting' (imperfect).

'*Cumbered*,' lit. 'distracted'; not knowing which way to turn. The Greek of 'without distraction,' in 1 Cor. vii. 35, is the exact negative of the word used here.

'*Careful*' is not strong enough for the Greek, which means rather 'full of anxious thought.' So also in Matt. vi. 34—'Take no anxious thought'; and Phil. iv. 6—'Be anxiously careful for nothing.' It is not reasonable carefulness that is condemned, but that worry which bespeaks a want of quiet trust in God. 'Troubled' is rather, 'bustled'; Christ speaks of inward worry and outward bustle.

'*Good part*,' lit. a *portion* of food. The same Greek word occurs in the Septuagint version of Gen. xliii. 34—'Benjamin's mess.' Christ evidently employs it with reference to Martha's anxiety in the preparation of dainty 'portions.' Comp. Ps. xvi. 5; Lam. iii. 24.

Lesson LXX.—Christ's Conduct in Danger.

'His hour was not yet come.'

Read—John x. 22—xi. 16; Luke xiii. 31—35; Learn—John vii. 30; Ps. xvi. 8, xxxi. 15. (Hymns, 111, 118, 132, 187, 190—194, 197—200, 213, 368, 370—374, 379, 380.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The passages before us in this Lesson must not be expounded in detail, but, being combined for the purpose of teaching one subject, must all be specially treated so as to throw light upon it. That subject—the Divine order of the life of Christ—profound as it is, may yet, it is believed, prove unusually interesting if taught on the plan suggested below; the Lesson being perhaps more *novel* in structure than any other of the Course.

In this case the application is not essential to the completeness of the Lesson. If the day's teaching should only have the effect indicated in the isolated paragraph beginning 'How wondrous,' it will accomplish much. Yet the relation of the subject to the scholars' own lives is not only most important, but is easily made interesting to them, because it applies to their temporal concerns and secular occupations; and if the illustrations suggested are skilfully managed, they are very likely to be *remembered*, because the incidents of daily life and the oft-experienced uncertainty of the future will act as reminders. That of the 'rowers,' in particular, may be made to *tell* upon many a boy's mind. Should the teacher wish to dwell more fully upon the 'times and seasons' both of Christ's life and of our own, he can illustrate them by the regular hours of a work-shop or factory, the 'time-table' at the day-school, the train or omnibus 'timed' to reach successive stations at certain exact minutes, &c.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Suppose you have a long walk before you, from — to — [*name actual places*]. Some one says, 'Make haste—very late.' You look at sun, still high in heavens, or at clock—'Oh, plenty of time—three hours yet—I need not hurry—can walk quietly and steadily on.' Another says, 'But you may lose your way.' 'O no—I might in the dark—but find it easily by daylight.' So you go without fear, or anxiety, or hurry, and arrive all right.

Now look at John xi. 9—Jesus uses this very illustration. He had such a walk to take—a path to follow—a work to do—the journey of His life. See to-day how calm and confident He was—no fear, no anxiety, no hurry. See this on three occasions—and see *why*.

I. JESUS AVOIDING DANGER. (John x. 22—42.)

At Jerusalem—Feast of Dedication—not so grand as Feast of Tabernacles—still, crowds and rejoicings. But bad weather—heavy winter rains—Jesus comes in from Bethany [*see last Lesson*], and walks, not in open court, but under beautiful colonnade. [*See Note 1 a.*] Rulers and scribes surround Him, eagerly asking—what? ver. 24. When He was with them two months ago, what did they do? viii. 59. But since then He has been journeying about, the Seventy proclaiming Him as Messiah [*see Lesson LXI.*]—no doubt this heard of at Jerusalem—people's minds excited [*see Note 1 b.*] 'Tell us plainly'—does He? They have no right to ask (ver. 25), yet He does tell—what plainer than ver. 28 (His power), and ver. 30 (His Godhead)? And then—are they satisfied? ver. 31—stones again!

Is He frightened? Was He so before? viii. 59, ix. 1—4 [*see Lesson LVI.*]. And now, how calmly He reasons with them, ver. 32!

Then see ver. 39. Jews again enraged—must seize Him, stop Him somehow. Does He, because not afraid, quietly let Himself be taken? No; as at Nazareth (Luke iv. 29—31), *He flees*.

Now why this? Why so calm in danger, and yet fleeing from danger? See John ii. 4, vii. 6, 8, 30, viii. 20, xii. 23, xiii. 1, xvii. 1. For each thing He did, a fixed 'time,' an appointed 'hour.' Jesus not like a man idling away time, just doing what he likes—had a work to do—came to do Father's will; see Ps. xl. 8; John iv. 34, v. 30, vi. 38, xvii. 4. And His path of duty, the Father's will, as *clear as sunlight* [*see illustration above*]. So everything He should do being clear before Him, how be alarmed or hurried? And He would do everything at right time—not before, not after; thus, when 'the hour' of His arrest came, was ready for it (Matt. xxvi. 45, 46), but would not be taken before—*therefore* avoided the danger in Solomon's Porch.

II. JESUS UNMOVED BY DANGER. (Luke xiii. 31—35.)

Escaping from Jerusalem, whither does He go? Back again, down the steep road [*last Lesson*] into Jordan valley, across into Peræa; see John x. 40. How different there! 'many believing,' ver. 42; why? ver. 41.

Who king here? [*Lessons XXI., XLII.*] Once before, in Galilee, Herod had 'heard of Jesus,' Matt. xiv. 1; and now, in his Peræan dominions, men have been going about proclaiming the coming King—enough to trouble the guilty monarch! But, with the murdered Baptist's face haunting him, dare he kill Jesus? no, but thinks he may frighten Him with threats—so get Him out of the country. Pharisees ready to convey threats—perhaps think He will shew fear—so be less thought of; ver. 31 [*see Note 2 b.*].

Look at the Lord's reply, ver. 32, 33; He sees through crafty Herod—what does He call Him? He is advised to journey on out of Peræa—well, He will journey on [*see Note 2 d.*]—but ever taking God's path, choosing God's time, doing God's work—not one plan to be altered—to-day's casting out of devils, to-morrow's cures, next week's and next month's allotted task, all to go on, spite of Herod and all the world. [*See Note 2 c.*]

Yes, and His death too [*see Note 2 c.*]—(a) Its *character* fixed: not to be the spoiling of His work, but the perfecting of it; to be the crown of His life [*illustr.—like top pinnacle to building—like finishing stroke to picture*]. (b) Its *time* fixed: the 'third day'—not really in three days, but at appointed hour, not before or after; Herod can't hasten it. (c) Its *place* fixed: not here in Peræa, under Herod, but at Jerusalem, the city of those very deceitful Pharisees who profess to seek His safety—*they*, and not Herod, will 'kill Him.'

So, is He nervous and alarmed about Himself? ah, He *does* look forward with anxious grief, but for whom? ver. 34—not for Himself, but for those who shall be His murderers—He *would* have saved them, but they 'would not'!

III. JESUS READY TO MEET DANGER. (John xi. 1—16.)

A messenger comes to Jesus in Peræa: whence? what to say? ver. 1, 3. How would He feel at the news? would His knowing that Lazarus should be raised again prevent his being sad? see ver. 5, 33, 35—He feels for the sisters' anguish, and for all the pain sin has brought into the world. Yet does He go hastily to Bethany? ver. 6—again, nothing before right time—this waiting is part of God's plan, ver. 15.

But the two days over now—will go. Any reason for not going? ver. 8—disciples think of the stoning. And then Jesus gives them our illustration [*above—recapitulate*]:

His 'twelfth hour' not come yet—why should He fear that His journey (His life and work) should be cut off? He walks in daylight, i.e., He sees where He is going, how far, how long—knows that He will 'finish His work' [see texts above] at right time—none can interfere—how then fear the Jews, any more than Herod?

How wondrous! If any one might rightly go 'his own way'—act 'on spur of moment'—surely He might. Even if He had, would never have gone wrong. Yet even He condescends to have all His life marked out; and, like any of us, to find peace, security, strength, not in His own wisdom, but in God's providence! Why? see John xvii. 19—*for our sakes* 'sanctified' Himself, i.e., set Himself apart for this service. We know many reasons for loving Him—here is another—have we ever thought of this?

CAN WE IMITATE THE LORD JESUS—in His quiet confidence—in His fearless following of the right path?

(a) *There is for us, too, a path marked out.* God has planned every turn in it—everything that will happen to us—when and where joy and success, trouble, sickness, death, will come upon us. No such thing as 'chance' or 'luck.' See Ps. xxxi. 15; Prov. xvi. 33, xx. 24; Acts xvii. 26.

(b) *But we cannot see it, as Jesus could.* In this unlike Him. Are you certain what you will do to-morrow? do you know what news will reach you? &c. &c. [illustrate]. See Prov. xxvii. 1; Jas. iv. 13—15. How then be calm and confident like Jesus?

(c) *Yet we may have guidance.* Our journey not by night; it is day-time. God willing to give us light—not to tell us what going to happen, but what to do hour by hour, Ps. xxv. 8, 9, xxxvii. 23; cxix. 9, 105; Prov. iii. 5, 6; Isa. xxx. 21. If refuse God's light, like trying to find our way with eyes shut. [Another illust.—*Rowers in boat—can see behind, not in front—can mark the course they have come, not where going. How go right? Steersman guides—they leave it to him—all they do is to go on with their own work.*]

(d) *Then ask for God's guidance, and trust in it.* Pray Ps. v. 8, xxv. 4, xxvii. 11, cxix. 27, cxliii. 8. When He tells what to do (by Bible, conscience, teacher), follow strictly. Then what cause for fear, hurry, anxiety? Your 'heart fixed, trusting in the Lord' (Ps. cxii. 7); comp. Ps. xvi. 8, lvii. 7; Isa. xxvi. 3; Matt. vi. 25—34; Rom. viii. 28; 1 Pet. v. 7.

'Oh for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!'

NOTES.

1. ON JOHN x. 22, 42:—

(a) The Feast of the Dedication was instituted to commemorate the cleansing of the Temple (B.C. 164) after its pollution by Antiochus Epiphanes (B.C. 167), and the defeat of the latter by Judas Maccabæus. See 1 Macc. iv. 52—59; 2 Macc. x. 6, 7. It was celebrated in much the same way as the Feast of Tabernacles (see Lesson LIV.), though with much less splendour. It began on the 25th of Chisleu (about Dec. 15), the ninth Jewish month (Zech. vii. 1). This was often a period of heavy rains (see Ezra x. 9, 13), which may account for Christ walking under the shelter of Solomon's Porch—a lofty and splendid arcade on the east side of the Temple (see Plan on page 146), named also in Acts iii. 11, v. 12, and described in Josephus, *Antiq.* viii. 3, 9, 11, xx. 9; *Bell. Jud.* v. 6.

(b) 'Make us to doubt,' ver. 24—*lit.* 'lift up our soul.' Many writers explain this as meaning 'hold our minds in suspense.' Hengstenberg, however, apparently with more reason, makes 'lift up' equivalent to '*excite*,' illustrating the point from both Greek classical authors and the corresponding Hebrew phrase in the O. T. That 'excitement' better describes the state of Jewish feeling than 'suspense,' is obvious from the whole passage.

(c) The argument in ver. 34—36 may be thus paraphrased:—'In your Scriptures (Ps. lxxxii.) it is written, concerning rulers and judges, *I said, Ye are Gods.* If those to whom the word of God came could rightly be called gods, as His authorised representatives, much more He whom the Father hath set apart and sent down from heaven into the world.' The 2nd Psalm refers to Exod. xxi. 6, xxii. 8, 9, where the Hebrew word rendered

'judges' is *elohim* (gods); and to Exod. xxii. 28, where the same word, although this time rendered 'gods,' evidently also refers to judges. In this argument Christ does not directly assert His Divinity (which would only enrage them more), but shows the unreasonableness of their complaints. Still His words are very significant of the truth, for the expression 'the word of God came' is a common one concerning human prophets, but never used of Jesus; while the phrase 'sent into the world' is never applied to any one but Jesus. In how low a sense the word *elohim* was applied to judges is clear from the next verse of Ps. lxxxii.

2. ON LUKE xiii. 31—35:—

(a) On the arrangement of the section of St. Luke's Gospel of which this is a part, see Additional Note VIII., page 154. Trench's excellent chapter on the passage in his *Studies in the Gospels*, is called 'The Pharisees seeking to seize our Lord from Galilee'; but all the evidence points to Peræa as the locality. Both districts were under Herod's rule.

(b) The source and purpose of the 'message from Herod' has been much disputed. Many expositors (e.g., Stier and Trench) think that it was a pure invention of the Pharisees, and that Christ, speaking ironically, meant *them* by the designation 'fox.' Alford, Elliott, and Hanna think that the 'fox' must refer to Herod, and that though he did not mean to kill Jesus, he did send the message to frighten Him away: the Pharisees being nothing loth to test His courage by conveying it to Him. This latter view is adopted in the Sketch. To the objection that Jesus would not call the reigning sovereign a

fox, it may be replied that we cannot judge of the expression as used in that age and country; and we know He called the Jewish rulers 'vipers.'

(c) The meaning of the 'three days' is also much contested. Many German writers, with Alford and Ellicott, consider three literal days to be meant; while Stier and Trench regard them as typical or proverbial, denoting the settled order of Christ's movements as successive steps in a Divine scheme. The question partly depends on the meaning attached to the expression, 'I shall be perfected.' It must surely be, not (as some say) a mere intimation that Christ's work in Peræa would be finished three days hence, but an allusion to His death (see Heb. ii. 10, v. 9, and many parallel passages); in which case the explanation of the whole passage, embodied in the Sketch, is clear and solemn.

On the questions named above in (b) and (c), expositors are almost all ranged in two parties, represented (say) by Alford and Trench respectively. But Canon Walsham How, in the excellent S. P. C. K. Commentary, is on the 'Alford side' in (b), and on the 'Trench side' in (c); as also is the Sketch above.

(d) It is noteworthy that 'depart' in ver. 31, 'go' in ver. 32, and 'walk' in ver. 33, are all translations of the same Greek word. In the latter case the idea is, 'I must go on,' i.e., in my appointed path. The same word occurs in Luke i. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 10, iii. 3; Jude 16.

(e) Christ's words in ver. 35, 'Ye shall not see Me,' &c., are commonly thought to imply that He was not again at Jerusalem before His triumphal entry; and with this the chronology of these Lessons agrees. Many, however, think that the words are prophetic of what is yet future. Certainly the Hosannas on Olivet were, at most, a very partial fulfilment of so solemn a statement.

3. ON JOHN xi. 1-16:—

(a) Ver. 9 has been sufficiently explained in the Sketch. The meaning of ver. 10 may be best seen in Dr. Hanna's paraphrase of it:—'What is true of Me is true of every one who walks in God's own light—the light that the guiding Spirit gives him—kindled within his soul to direct him through all his earthly work. If any man walk in that light he cannot stumble; but if he walk in the night, go where he is not called, do what he is not bidden, then he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. He has turned the day into night, and the doom of the night traveller hangs over him.'

(b) When Jesus spoke of Lazarus 'sleeping,' the disciples thought it a good sign in a sick man—he would 'do well,' i.e., recover; why then should Jesus go and awake him? Death is frequently called 'sleep' in Scripture; see Matt. ix. 24; Acts vii. 60; 1 Thess. iv. 13; &c., &c. Bengel says, 'No one is ever spoken of as dead in the presence of the Prince of Life.'

Lesson LXXI.—The Raising of Lazarus.

'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

Read—John xi. 17-45; Learn—John v. 28, 29; 1 John v. 11, 12. (Hymns, 18, 65, 71, 83, 96, 192, 206, 211-214, 215, 316, 373, 387.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The teachings of this narrative are so manifold and so important, that it is an unusually difficult task to decide what to include in the Lesson, and what to omit. The three leading points of interest are embodied in the three divisions of the Sketch; and it will be observed that any one or two of them can be taken separately—i.e., the teacher can so arrange the passages (omitting or slightly touching on some verses, and laying stress on others) as to make it teach either (1) the gracious design of afflictions, or (2) the sympathy and the power of Christ, or (3) the supreme importance of the Life Eternal. For younger classes, the *second* will be the easiest. The *first* can probably in any case be noticed incidentally as the narrative goes on. But the *third* is certainly the *chief* lesson, and should be taken if possible.

The teacher should be careful to explain that 'Life Eternal' is not heaven, nor the happy state of departed spirits, nor the final state of resurrection-glory, nor all these together; but that it begins *on earth*, when the soul is united to Christ (who is 'the Life') by faith; see the second text for repetition.

On the subject of the future resurrection, the Creeds, the Burial Service, and such hymns as 'Great God! what do I see and hear?' may be usefully referred to.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Have you ever had one whom you loved much, dangerously ill at home? Anxious faces, low voices, doctor's visits—other things almost forgotten for the *one* thing—which of you know all that? And if one of the family or a dear friend a long way off, what done?

A trouble like this at Bethany, in the family we know [*refer to Lesson LXIX.*], see ver. 1. And *they* have a Friend, greatly loved, at a distance—where? x. 40 [*last Lesson*]; what do Martha and Mary do? send *for* Him? no, but (ver. 3) *to* Him, just to *tell*, nothing else. What expect

Him to do? To come? ah, that would be best, but, dangerous for Him to come so near Jerusalem (see ver. 8); and what had He done for the Galilean nobleman and the Phœnician woman? (John iv. 43, 50; Mark vii. 29, 30)—healed sick? yes, and at a distance too; might He not do *that* again?

I. A GREAT BLESSING DELAYED.

(a) Think of the sisters, watching and tending dying brother—longing for messenger's return—quiet Mary silently hoping—busy Martha running to look eagerly down the steep road towards Jericho. But Lazarus worse and worse—no message of comfort yet—no sudden cure by unseen Hand—life ebbs away—last breath—dead!

(b) Are there no comforters? yes—priests and scribes hastening from Jerusalem over Olivet to condole with such a respectable family, ver. 19 [see *Lesson LXXIX. Note 4*—no doubt the hired women too, with their loud wailings (Matt. ix. 23–25; Jer. ix. 17, 18)—a houseful of them—but not *the One*. At last, a man coming up the hill—but only the messenger, alone—not the Master—yet, 'Is He coming?'—'Said not a word about it.'

(c) What is the message? ver. 4. 'Not unto death!'—'Why, he is dead already—what can He mean?' Then perhaps Nain and Capernaum (Luke vii. 15, viii. 55) remembered—'Is Lazarus to be raised like widow's son and ruler's daughter?' *This* hope soon gone—two, three, four days—'too late now, all over.' Why? quick decay of bodies in hot countries (see ver. 39; comp. Luke xxiv. 21.)

Now why all this? Why did Jesus (a) not heal Lazarus, (b) not hasten to Bethany, (c) not send a clear message?

Because He did not feel or care? Impossible, you say. But think—you have had troubles [*name various kinds*—perhaps only small ones—well, God sent them—did you think God cared not?—you never thought about it—no, but did you complain, and think it 'very hard'? Be sure He *does* care—would not send the trials without cause—you *need* them [*illust.—like plant having to be pruned*]. And does He take them away if you ask? Not always. Yet always does best for you; see Ps. cxix. 67, 71, 75; Rom. viii. 28.

Why was it, then? 'For the glory of God, that the Son of Man might be glorified thereby,' ver. 4. How? When Jesus did the miracle, *it was a greater one*. What then? (a) The faith of Martha and Mary would be increased. (b) Many of the Jews believed, ver. 45. (c) Think how many millions, ever since, have read this chapter with faith, hope, joy! (d) When *was* 'the Son of Man glorified'? see John xii. 23, xiii. 31, xvii. 1—when He died and rose again for us; and was it not *this miracle* that brought on His death? see ver. 53.

II. A GREAT BLESSING GIVEN.

What is there in Christ that makes us expect blessings from Him? Love?—not

enough—why? Power?—not enough—why? [See *Lesson XLIX.*, where this is explained and illustrated.] Sympathy and Power—He has both.

1. *Look at Christ's Sympathy.* Suddenly, glad news—'He is come.' First Martha at His side, then Mary at His feet—with the same cry—what they have thought and said so often these four days, ver. 21, 32. And now a great company all weeping around Him—does He not care? ver. 33. Jesus 'groaning!' and not only in grief—holy wrath too [see *Note 4*]—'sin, hateful sin, did all this'—for 'sin entered into the world, and death by sin' (Rom. v. 12). 'Trembling' too, with the effort to check groans and tears while the great work is done [see *Note 4*]. And then—no stopping them—the tears bursting forth, ver. 35. Why? did He not know the joy to come in a few minutes? ah, but He was *like us*—others' sorrows touch us—others' tears draw ours—this is SYMPATHY—and so with Him, Isa. liii. 3, 4; Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15. And remember Heb. xiii. 8—*He is the same now*.

2. *Look at Christ's Power.* They stand before the grave—a cave in the side of the rocky hill [see *Note 6*]. The great stone rolled away—Jesus at the entrance—all crowding around in breathless amazement. He speaks—to whom? First to the Father—aloud, to show the Jews His power from God, not from Satan [see *Note 8*]. Then to the dead man, a loud cry, 'Lazarus!'—and immediately a figure appearing at mouth of cave—no face to be seen—bound up from head to foot (like a mummy). Then to the bystanders—Jesus does nothing needlessly—they can unloose bandages. And what then? does St. John shew us Lazarus in his sisters' arms? No—can only think and tell of Jesus. Let us do the same—think most of that mighty Redeemer—remembering Matt. xxviii. 18, 20—that 'all power' is His, and He is 'with us always'!

III. A GREATER BLESSING PROMISED.

Could there be a greater one? Martha and Mary thought of no other. But Lazarus only brought back into world of sin and sorrow—and for a little time—must die again—suppose he fell sick again the week after? What did Lazarus' restored life want to make it perfect? (a) To last for ever—no more death. (b) To be quite happy—no more sin, sorrow, pain. Now Christ can give a Life which *will* last for ever, which *will* be quite happy—*Life Eternal*. What did He come from heaven for? To bring eternal life into a world of dead and dying (2nd text for rep.; John iii. 15, 16, iv. 14, v. 24, vi. 40, x. 28, xviii. 2; 1 John ii. 25, iv. 9, v. 11, 12; Rom. vi. 23).

How can we get this Greater Blessing?

Look at what Jesus said to Martha, ver. 25, 26 [see *Note 3*]. 'He that believeth in Me'—what is that? Thinking of Him as the Almighty Saviour—therefore *loving* Him, trusting in Him, obeying Him.

Then two things:—

(a) If alive, 'shall never die.' What! do not Christ's servants die? ah, but dying, to them, is not worth calling 'death'—death an enemy (1 Cor. xv. 26)—how afraid people are of it! (Heb. ii. 15)—but is death your enemy if you know and love Christ? Rom. xiv. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 54—57; Phil. i. 23. Is that an enemy which takes you from sin, sorrow, pain for ever? which brings you to the One you care for most?—(but *do you!* that's the point). Death like door opening to let you out [*illust.—school-door*

opening as clock strikes—how boys come bounding out into sunshine and liberty!]

(b) If dead, 'yet shall live'—the spirit even now, the body when raised at last day. So will everybody (1st text for rep.)—yes, immortality for all, but not happiness—and only *this* called 'eternal life.'

Lazarus heard the 'loud voice,' and 'came forth.' *So will you* (1st text for rep.; 1 Cor. xv. 52)—

*The trumpet sounds—the graves restore
The dead which they contained before;
Prepare, my soul, to meet Him,

NOTES.

1. On Bethany, and on the family there, see Lesson LXIX., Notes 3, 4.

2. It is usually reckoned that Lazarus must have died on the day the messenger was sent, after his departure, and was buried the same day according to custom (comp. Acts v. 6, 10). One day is then allowed for the messenger to go to Christ, two for our Lord's delay, and one for His journey to Bethany; thus accounting for the 'four days.' But it is scarcely likely that Jesus went so far (including the long and steep ascent from Jericho) in a single day, especially as He evidently made no haste. It may, however, be fairly assumed that Lazarus was dead before the messenger's return.

3. The brief conversation between Christ and Martha is deeply interesting. She comes to Him with the words which had no doubt been constantly thought and uttered by the two sisters during the four days—'If Thou hadst been here,' &c. (ver. 21). Then (ver. 22) a sudden thought seems to strike her—'Even now,' &c., not that she really looked for the miracle—for though a gleam of His power shoots across her mind, she has no idea that He will work one.

Christ's answer, 'Thy brother shall rise again' (ver. 23) is designedly vague, that she may be led on to the higher truth. And it gives her no comfort; she knows of the future resurrection (ver. 24), but what of that? it is far off, and she wants her brother *now*. She is wholly wrapped up in the blessings of *earthly* intercourse; nothing else seems real and tangible.

Then He shews her what a much greater gift He can bestow than she can either 'ask or think.' She had desired a brief extension of her brother's *life temporal*: He will give to every one that believes in Him the *life eternal* (see Sketch). Nay, they have it already; being united to Him by faith, "because He lives they shall live also." To dead believers He is the Resurrection; to living believers He is the Life.

To make our Lord's words clear, let them be printed thus:—'He that believeth on Me, though he were dead [*lit.* 'have died'], yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.' The '*live*' and '*die*' in italics are to be read in the higher spiritual and eternal sense; the '*were dead*' and '*liveth*,' not in italics, in the ordinary physical sense. In each clause, the first term is physical, the second spiritual. So Hengstenberg, Alford, Trench, &c. Stier and others take it differently.

The question 'Believest thou this?' seems to imply that it was a new revelation to Martha; and her answer (ver. 27) shews that she could

not fully grasp it at once; yet, without cavilling, she falls back on her faith in the personal Jesus. She could not understand Him, but she could trust Him. An excellent example!

4. *Groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.* The Greek word rendered 'groaned' means '*moved with indignation*,' not with sorrow. In Mark xiv. 5, it is translated 'murmured.' 'It was the indignation which the Lord of life felt at all that sin had wrought' (Trench). So Stier and Wordsworth. As the word has also the sense of vehemently forbidding or restraining (as Matt. ix. 30, Mark i. 43—'straitly charged'), Alford and others think it means that Jesus by a great effort checked His rising emotion. '*Was troubled*' is literally 'troubled Himself,' and probably means that He '*shuddered*' with intense feeling.

5. '*Jesus wept.*' Rather, 'shed tears.' It is not the word used in ver. 33 to express the more passionate weeping of the sisters and their friends. The stronger word, however, occurs where Christ weeps over Jerusalem.

6. '*It was a cave.*' Sometimes natural caves were used as family burying-places, as the cave of Machpelah (Gen. xxiii. 9). But the Greek implies that this one was artificially hewn out of the rock (comp. Isa. xxii. 16; Matt. xxvii. 60). Such caves had recesses cut in the sides, in which the bodies were laid. The 'stone' was of course like a door, not like a lid. On Eastern tombs, funeral customs, &c. see *The Land and the Book*, pp. 101—108, and the articles 'Burial' and 'Mourning' in Smith's *Dict. of Bible*.

7. '*Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?*' This seems clearly to refer to the message in ver. 4.

8. Christ's words of thanksgiving to the Father, in ver. 41, were spoken for the people's sake. Why? would it not make them think less of His own power, and imply that He was but a human prophet depending on God? But it was better they should think so, than that they should fail to see that God was with Him. Even if He had not so spoken, they would not have attributed His power to His divinity; rather have charged Him (as before) with being in league with Satan. But the next words prevent misconception: 'Thou hearest Me always'—why? because Father and Son were One. The remainder of the sentence was probably not spoken aloud.

9. '*Let him go,*' i.e., 'crowd not round Him in your curiosity; leave him to his sisters and to his God.'

Lesson LXXII.—The Last Journey—Mistaken Expectations.

'They thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear.'

Read—Mark x. 32—45; (comp. Matt. xx. 17—28; Luke xviii. 31—34); *Learn*—1 Pet. iv. 13; Phil. ii. 3—5. (*Hymns*, 35, 42, 91, 133, 159—161, 171, 224, 321, 353, 355.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In the third division of the Sketch, an attempt has been made to apply to Divine rewards the great principle which Bishop Butler, in the 2nd chapter of the *Analogy*, so forcibly works out in reference to Divine punishments, viz., that they are *not arbitrary*, but the natural fruits of certain conduct. This seems to give an intelligible reason why humiliation should lead to honour, and suffering be the path to glory; and why there should be degrees of heavenly reward. Some have had more training than others, and have consequently a greater capacity for heavenly enjoyment; so that while all are perfectly happy, they who have most holiness—most of that likeness to Christ which is developed by the discipline of suffering—will have the greatest absolute amount of happiness. This has often been thus familiarly illustrated:—You fill a large and a small cup with water; both are perfectly full: yet the larger contains more than the smaller. Yet, let it never be forgotten, all reward is of grace alone. The words of Ps. lxii. 12, embody a deep truth: '*Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for Thou renderest to every man according to His work.*'

In illustrating the way in which the love and respect of others is gained, in the same part of the Lesson, it will be well (as suggested in the Sketch) to mention some self-denying Christian worker known to the children, rather than a public character; otherwise the cases of Miss Nightingale or Miss Marsh might be referred to.

The 'Valley of Humiliation,' in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, through which it was indispensable that every traveller to the Celestial City should pass, illustrates the whole subject of the Lesson.

The teacher should refer back to Lessons LVIII., LX., and LXVII., for further elucidation of various points.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

The great miracle [*last Lesson*] has startled all Jerusalem. No question about it—there, close by, at Bethany, is a living man, a well-known one, who has lain four days in the grave. Some can't resist—'He *must* be Messiah.' But the chief rulers—their hatred and alarm the greater—'We must stop this'—solemn council—see the decree, John xi. 45—53. Jesus has to retire again—whither? ver. 54 [*see Note 1*].

And now 'the time' has come, see ver. 55. The 'great journey'—begun in Galilee—continued in Peræa—interrupted by visit to Dedication Feast, retirement to Jordan, visit to Bethany, concealment here at Ephraim—now to be resumed and completed. [*See Lessons LX., LXI., &c.; and Additional Note, page 154.*] In the Jordan valley, multitudes of Galileans journeying southward to Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus will join them (at or near Jericho)—go up with them. See Luke xviii. 35, 36, xix. 3, 28.

I. JESUS LOOKING FORWARD TO HUMILIATION.

See them on the road:—Jesus going on first, as if eagerly pressing forward, ver. 32; disciples following in wonder and fear (comp. 1 Sam. xiii. 7)—why? see John

xi. 8—dangerous in Judæa before—still more now—'Why *will* our Master go into peril?—He avoided it before—why meet it now? so resolutely too—can He know the rulers' designs?'

Know them! He knows not only what designed, but what will be *done*. See Him taking the Twelve apart from all the rest—what does He tell them? ver. 33, 34; comp. Matt. xx. 18, 19; Luke xviii. 31—33. Told them some of it before—suffering, rejection, death, Mark viii. 31, ix. 31 [*see Lesson LI.*]. But much more now—all particulars—'not to be seized by chief priests, but 'betrayed' to them; not to be suddenly stoned or secretly murdered by them, but publicly 'condemned' and handed to Romans; then what treatment—mocking, spitting, scourging! and a slave's death, to crown all.

Does His knowing everything beforehand lessen the suffering? ah, no—is it not painful to look forward to pain—sometimes worse than the pain itself?

And yet, on He goes, steadfastly (Luke ix. 51), eagerly (xii. 50). Why? (*a*) prophecies to be fulfilled, Luke xviii. 31 (see Ps. xxii.; Isa. i., liii.); (*b*) His Father's will; (*c*) His love for sinners; (*d*) the 'joy set before Him.' [*See Lesson LX.*]

But why tell the Apostles? To assure them He knows what He is about—they need not fear—no *unforeseen* danger can come upon Him.

II. JAMES AND JOHN LOOKING FORWARD TO HONOUR.

Does not the terrible announcement utterly crush the Apostles? Yet see—almost directly after ('*then*,' Matt.)—two of them asking [see Note 2], through their mother Salome (Matt. xxvii. 56, comp. with Mark xv. 40), for special seats of honour in the coming Kingdom!

How is this? (a) They do not in the least understand Jesus, Luke xviii. 34; perhaps imagine He has been speaking in parables (as in John vi. 53), meaning only persecution, over which will triumph (the 'rising again'). (b) For, they think, 'Is He not Messiah? of course—then how can He fail?—He *must* be going to reign.' (c) The gathering crowds excite them; many from Galilee who believe in Jesus (see Luke xix. 37, '*multitude of the disciples*')—this the very time, when so many of His adherents at the capital, to set up His throne. So now the time to ask favours. Did He not promise 'thrones' (Matt. xix. 28) to all the Twelve? why should not John and James get the highest? How selfish! Why they more than others? And yet—

Was there anything good in the request? Yes: did it not show their unshaken faith in Jesus as Messiah, and loyalty to Him as King?

But what was their mistake? They knew not (a) what the honours of Christ's Kingdom were like, (b) how these honours could be got. So (ver. 38—45) He shows them,—

III. HOW TO REACH HONOUR—THROUGH HUMILIATION.

They wanted to sit with Jesus in state, to have honours like His. Now,—

What were Christ's honours? To sit on throne, with crown, robe, sceptre, plenty of servants, &c.? Of course not. But was it to sit on heavenly throne, supreme Ruler over all, with hosts of angels to do His bidding? This He had, but this *not what He cared for most*. See Phil. ii. 9—11: 'highly exalted'—how? 'a name above every name,' all loving and adoring Him, all calling Him Lord and joyfully doing His will. To be *loved*, and *therefore honoured*—this His ambition—this His glory.

How did He get these honours? See preceding verses in Phil. ii.—servitude, humiliation, death. See our chapter, ver. 45—came to 'minister,' *i.e.*, work for others—and to 'give His life a ransom,' to rescue men from sin and hell; and *so won men's love*—the reward He wanted. But it was a painful task—think of all His sufferings on earth—what does He call them here? His '*cup*' (comp. Matt. xxvi. 39; John xviii. 11)—like drinking deep and bitter

draught; His '*baptism*' (comp. Luke xii. 50)—the sufferings surrounded Him like the water when the people dipped in Jordan—He was '*immersed*' in them. [See Note 3.]

So, if we want the same honours, we must seek them in the same way, see Prov. xv. 33; Luke xiv. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 5. How do men get worldly honour and power? what selfishness, ambition, deceit, cruelty, we read of! [Illustr.—*Jehu, Absalom, or Jeroboam; Richard III., or Napoleon I.*] But are such men loved? Does do get a 'name above every name,' but only to be execrated. Those whose names are loved, how gained it? [Illustr.—*Some living Christian who has devoted life to doing good.*] By giving up ease, pleasure, &c., denying self, 'ministering' to others. So says Jesus, ver. 43, 44—this the way to be really 'great.' There may be suffering with it, even like His 'cup' and 'baptism,' but if so, sent to *make us lowly*.—

'Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain:
Who patient bears his cross below,
He follows in His train.'

Now we see how Jesus answered James and John. Like this:—'Honours like *Mine* cannot be given as favours to any one who happens to ask [illustr.—*School prizes; does master give to whom he likes?*]; only given to those for whom prepared, *i.e.*, for those who, like Me, can stoop to suffering and humiliation; *are ye able?*' See their answer, ver. 39—like Peter's bold promise, Luke xxii. 33; but what did they do when the trial came? Mark xiv. 50; and at Calvary John saw 'one on His right hand and another on His left,' but whom, and where? Mark xv. 27. Yet James and John did follow Him afterwards—did have special sufferings (James, first Apostle to die, Acts xii. 2; John, longest life in persecuting world)—and how we love their names now!

You think you could not be so foolish and selfish as James and John. But,—

(a) Even in little things, is not Rom. viii. 26 true? we 'know not what we should pray for as we ought'—such 'ignorance in asking' (*Collect at end of Commun. Service*).

(b) Have you never had a wish to enjoy yourself in the world, and then at last repent, die happy, and go into heaven? Is not this expecting glory without suffering?

(c) Have you not wished even to 'be religious' *now*, feeling it *would* be the best thing, and yet wanted to get off this and that self-denial or persecution? Is not this expecting happiness without trial?

It cannot be; see Acts xiv. 22; Rev. vii. 14. And think what Christ submitted to for our sakes; is not our 1st text for rep. right? ought we not to be like the Apostles afterwards, Acts v. 41, 'rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name'?

NOTES.

1. The site of Ephraim has been identified by Robinson (Ritter and Porter concurring) at Taiyibeh, a village 16 miles N.E. of Jerusalem, and 4 miles E. of Bethel, on the edge of the mountains, overlooking the wild 'wilderness' of rocks running down into the Jordan valley. With this the notices of Josephus and Jerome agree. The place is perhaps mentioned in 2 Sam. xiii. 23; 2 Chron. xiii. 19; but some identify it with Ophrah, Josh. xviii. 23; 1 Sam. xiii. 17.

2. From St. Mark's account it would seem that James and John themselves asked Jesus for the two seats, but in Matthew we find that their request was actually uttered by their mother in their name. That it was really their own desire is clear from Christ's answer.

3. 'Cup' and 'baptism.' The 'cup' is an Old Testament image of a man's lot or portion, whether pleasant (Ps. xvi. 5, xxiii. 5), or bitter (Ps. xi. 6, lxxv. 8; Isa. li. 17). That our Lord's 'cup' was one of suffering is obvious from His use of the word in Gethsemane. *Immersion* in suffering, as in water, is also an Old Testament phrase, see Ps. xviii. 16, xlii. 7, lxix. 2, lxxxviii. 7, cxxiv. 4, 5. (It must be remembered that baptism was originally by immersion.)

The distinction between the two figures seems to be twofold: (1) The 'cup' signifies inward, and the 'baptism' outward suffering, drinking and baptizing being respectively an inward and an outward application of water; (2) the 'cup' signifies suffering voluntarily taken or 'drunk,' and the 'baptism' what is endured at the hands of others.

4. In ver. 40, and in Matt xx. 23, the words 'it shall be given to them' are (as indicated by the italics in our Bibles) not in the original. The passage should read—'is not Mine to give, but (i.e., except) for whom it is prepared.' Christ Himself is the giver, but He will give neither arbitrarily nor capriciously, but only 'to every man according as his work shall be.'

5. Ver. 42. 'They which are accounted to rule, i.e., they who are called rulers; *lit.* who 'seem to rule,' or 'think they rule.' The *real* rulers of men are those who influence and sway their thoughts and acts, which is not always done by the nominal rulers. The point of this will be seen from division III. of the Sketch. 'The Gentiles,' rather 'the nations,' meaning the secular states.

6. 'Minister,' i.e., one who serves or waits upon others; the Greek word is the original of our 'deacon.' 'Servant' is literally 'slave,' and indicates a still lower place.

7. 'To give His life a ransom for many.' No expression could more strongly affirm the vicarious character of Christ's death, the Greek word rendered 'for' (*ἀντί*, *anti*) being particularly significant. The figure of a ransom regards the lost condition of man in the aspect of a judicial imprisonment—not here, a *bondage to sin*, but the *penalty of sin* fixed by God's outraged law. 'Many' is in contrast not with *all*, but with the *one life* given. In 1 Tim. ii. 6 it is distinctly stated that the 'ransom' was 'for all'; comp. 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 John ii. 2.

Lesson LXXIII.—In Jericho—The Blind Man and the Publican.

'He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.'

Read—Luke xviii. 35—43, xix. 1—10; (*comp.* Matt. xx. 29—34; Mark x. 46—52);
Learn—Ps. cxlv. 18, 19; Luke xix. 10. (*Hymns*, 8, 15, 22, 24, 76, 180, 190, 341.)

TO THE TEACHER.

For so simple a Lesson as this, hints are scarcely necessary. It may be observed, however, that the line of thought followed in the Sketch is chosen in order to combine the teachings of both the incidents in the narrative; and, consequently, the points of application usually taken in lessons on 'Blind Bartimæus'—*viz.*, faith, and spiritual blindness and sight—are necessarily omitted.

The subject has a peculiar appropriateness to the 'black sheep' of a class, or to children of exceptional poverty. But the *peculiar unworthiness of Christ's notice* on which the application is based can be deduced from other local or special circumstances, such as (*e.g.*) the obscurity of the neighbourhood (compare Nathanael's allusion to Nazareth), or even from the general consideration of human littleness.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

If the Queen came in royal procession through our neighbourhood, amid great crowds, and a beggar cried after her, would she take any notice? and what would the bystanders do? Would it be unkind to stop the disturbance? Not at all, for how could the Queen attend to everybody? And as she went along, of whom be likely to take notice? of grand people of place

(*e.g.*, mayor, &c.), or of a man up in tree or on lamp-post? If she did stop and listen to beggar, did notice and speak to man in tree, what should we think? think it natural?

Now see difference between the very best earthly sovereign and the Lord Jesus. He is going through Jericho, surrounded by crowds, not His enemies, but mostly ad-

miring Galileans going up to Passover, who are hoping to see their own great prophet (see Matt. xxi. 11) make Himself King at Jerusalem and drive out Romans. [*Refer to last Lesson.*] See whom He listens to, whom He notices.

1. *The Blind Beggar* (xviii. 35—43).

Miserable thing to be blind—miserable thing to be a beggar—but to be both! There he sits, day after day, at gate of Jericho—people going in and out—priests to and from their Temple duty [*Lesson LXVIII., Note 4*—labourers to and from work in fields—travellers to and fro between Peræa or Galilee and Jerusalem, &c., &c.—what care they for him? perhaps throw him a mite now and then—that all.

How does he know when any one passing, to beg? But unusual sounds to-day—tramp of many feet—mingling of many voices—what can it be? Then hear his cry—very different—what does he want? see ver. 41. Why expect that? what does he know about Jesus? we know not, but he calls Him 'Son of David' (see Matt. xxii. 42; John vii. 42)—believes He is Messiah—has no doubt heard in the Scriptures how Messiah should open blind eyes (Isa. xxxv. 5, xlii. 7)—may also have heard that Jesus has opened them.

Why do they tell him to be quiet? 'The King of the Jews going to Jerusalem—can't let Him be worried by beggars' [*comp. illust. of Queen, above*]. Like the disciples and the children (Mark x. 13). But as then [*see Lesson LXVI.*], so now, how different the King's own thoughts from His followers' thoughts! see Isa. lv. 8, 9. A blind beggar as much to Him as a rich ruler—did He not come to live and die for both? See the happy end—the blind eyes opened—the wretched beggar turned into a joyful disciple—one more added to the procession, singing as loud as any.

2. *The grasping Publican* (xix. 1—10).

A man in Jericho, rich and powerful, yet feared and hated. We don't fear and hate tax-collectors, because they can't take more than is fair (and don't wish, either). But, in Jericho, vineyard-labourers for 'a penny a-day,' sowers 'going forth to sow,' shepherds 'leading out' sheep, would pass Zacchæus's fine house, and think how he had got rich by cheating them [*see Note 4*], taking more tax than due 'by false accusation' (ver. 8; Luke iii. 13), and keeping surplus himself.

Zacchæus sees crowd which Bartimæus heard. Why goes with it? why no getting near Jesus? why can't see Him? What is to be done? see the well-known rich man up in a tree [*see Note 5*], like a boy!

The crowd approaches. There, in the midst, is the Nazarene of whom he has heard so much. Suddenly, the eyes of Jesus fixed on him! his name called! he, the outcast publican, chosen to entertain the prophet! What do the people think?

'murmurs'—no wonder—doubtless think, 'Plenty of holy Pharisees—why go to a sinner like him? plenty of patriotic Jews—why go to a traitor who serves the Romans?' Again see how different the thoughts of Jesus—what was in His mind? ver. 10.

But Zacchæus—what are his thoughts, as he springs down into the road, conducts Jesus home, attends to His wants, presides at the repast? We can imagine him—(a) delighted at the honour; (b) then thinking how unworthy he is of it—old exactions and frauds crowding on his memory; (c) then touched and softened by Jesus' condescension; (d) then 'steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, to walk henceforth in God's holy ways' (*Commun. Service*). See him rising from the couch before all, solemnly calling Jesus 'Lord', and vowing a greater restitution of ill-gotten gains than even God's law demanded [*see Note 4*].

Now observe,—

I. HOW CHRIST TREATS THE DESPISED AND UNWORTHY.

He treats them in a way altogether unexpected by themselves and others.

1. *He notices them.* Did Zacchæus expect to be noticed? Did the crowd expect Bartimæus to be noticed? Other instances: crippled woman, Luke xiii. 11; the widow, Mark xii. 43; the infants, Mark x. 14. *So it is now.* Do you think He only notices 'religious folk'? So thought the people of Jericho—were they right? Are you so poor, so young, so ignorant, so looked-down-upon, as to think yourself beneath His notice? Are you so 'bad,' so far gone in self-will and rebellion, that you think you have got away from His notice? Depend upon it, it is you He does notice—knows you *by name*—ever follows you with His watchful eye, marking every thought, word, act. See Ps. cxxxix. 1—12; Prov. v. 21, xv. 3. Does this frighten you? It ought to make you fear to sin. But,—

2. *He looks at them with love and pity.* Another unexpected thing. The people might expect Jesus to rebuke Bartimæus for his annoyance, Zacchæus for his extortion: but how was it? *So, again, it is now.* Think not He eyes you with stern anger. *Some He does so regard—e.g.,* the hypocrites who are 'looked-up-to'; but not those who are looked-down-upon, and who *feel* themselves bad or unworthy. See Luke xv. [*Lesson LXVIII.*] If I ask you, What kind of children does God love? you say 'Good children'; but this only partly true—He loves bad ones too—are not *all* sinful—was it not for sinners Christ died? see Rom. v. 8.

II. HOW THE DESPISED AND UNWORTHY SHOULD TREAT CHRIST.

1. *Not miss opportunities to approach Him.* Bartimæus shouted loudly; Zac-

chæus was not ashamed to mount the tree. Is not Jesus now 'passing by' you? [*Apply this to means of grace, and other 'opportunities.'*] That day salvation came to the house of Zacchæus, ver. 9; 'now is the day of salvation' for you, 2 Cor vi. 2.

2. *Cast away all that keeps from Him.* Bartimæus 'cast away his garment'; Zacchæus cast away his extortions. What

have you to cast away? Rom. xiii. 12; Heb. xii. 1.

3. *Come to Him when He calls.* Did Bartimæus or Zacchæus loiter? And He is calling now, Rev. iii. 20.

Then you shall have what Zacchæus wanted, what Bartimæus obtained, a *sight of Jesus*. 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty', Isa. xxxiii. 17.

NOTES.

1. In the days of our Lord Jericho was an important city, having been embellished by Herod the Great, and being a considerable centre of traffic. On the site and neighbourhood, see Tristram, *Land of Israel*, p. 215; Thomson, *L & B*, p. 614. The incidents in the Old Testament connected with Jericho will be found in Josh ii.—v.; Judg iii. 13; 2 Sam. x. 5; 1 Kings xvi. 34; 2 Kings ii., xxv. 5.

2. The narrative of Blind Bartimæus presents one of the most perplexing of Bible difficulties. St. Matthew records the cure of *two* blind men, St. Mark of *one*, as Christ *entered* Jericho. St. Luke records the cure of *one* as Christ *left* Jericho. The difference in the number, two or one, is easily explained. There must certainly have been two, and the account of Bartimæus only might, for several possible reasons, have reached Mark and Luke. Compare the case of the Gergesene demoniacs; see Lesson XLIII., Note 2.

The difference of locality is more puzzling, and many solutions have been offered. We must assume the accuracy of the statement in Matthew and Mark, that the miracle took place on the *departure* from Jericho; and Luke's inversion of the exact order of events is only what we find elsewhere in his Gospel. If we also accept strictly his expression, 'as he came nigh unto Jericho,' the only reasonable reconciliation which has been suggested is that Bartimæus cried out both when Jesus entered, and when He left, but was not healed till the latter occasion, having perhaps been joined in the meantime by the second blind man; to which Lange further adds, that Christ *may* have entered and left by the same gate, to which there seems no geographical objection. The 'passing through' may merely imply going through the streets to the house of Zacchæus.

These little difficulties, however, are not of the slightest real consequence, and may be left in Scripture purposely to try our faith. They at all events prove the independence of the writers.

3. The 'multitude' that tried to silence Bartimæus, and murmured at the favour shown to Zacchæus, must not be supposed to have consisted of persons hostile to Jesus. Most of them were His adherents in a greater or less degree, and were probably identical with the 'multitude of the disciples' who accompanied Him when He entered Jerusalem on the ass. Their motives will be seen from the sketch.

4. Zacchæus was 'chief of the publicans.' A superior officer would naturally be stationed at Jericho. The revenues of the district from palm-trees and balsam alone were considerable enough to be specially granted by Antony to Cleopatra. On the publicans generally, see Lesson XXXI., Note 1. There is no foundation for the idea that Zacchæus, in his speech, boasts of his charity; the Greek clearly implies that he *had* made gains 'by false accusation.' In his promise of restitution he goes beyond what was (save in some exceptional cases) demanded by the law; see Exod. xxii. 8, 9; Numb. v. 6, 7.

Some have thought that Christ's words in ver 9 imply that Zacchæus was a Gentile, and only a 'son of Abraham' *now by faith*. But it is more reasonable to take the expression as a rebuke to the murmurers: 'Why despise him? he is a son of Abraham like yourselves,—a lost one truly, but I came expressly to seek and to save the lost.' The name also is Hebrew; see Ezra ii. 9; Neh. vii. 14.

5. The 'sycamore-tree' is not the English tree so called, but the 'fig-mulberry,' common in the Jordan valley and the maritime plains of Palestine, but not in the highland districts. Its branches are low and wide-spreading, and therefore inviting to climbers. See an article by Dr. Tristram in the *Church Sunday School Magazine* for February, 1870, p. 63; also the same writer's *Land of Israel*, pp. 34, 217, and *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 397; Thomson's *Land and the Book*, p. 22; or the article in Smith's *Dict. Bible*.

Lesson LXXIV.—The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

'Behold, thy King cometh.'

Read—Luke xix. 29—44; (*comp.* Matt. xxi. 1—11; Mark xi. 1—10; John xii. 1, 9—19);
Learn—Zech ix. 9; Hos. vi. 4. (*Hymns*, 51—53, 87, 89, 97, 98, 196, 238, 256.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The passage before us furnishes an opportunity, which must on no account be missed, of giving our classes such a descriptive picture as may awaken in some of their minds an interest that will last for years. To present this picture, however, it is essential that the teacher should be able to describe the route of the procession, and its several incidents,

almost as if he had been a spectator. No one who has read the famous passage in Dean Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, or the scarcely less graphic accounts in Bishop Ellicott's *Lectures* and Dr. Hanna's *Passion Week*, will have any difficulty in doing so. For the benefit of those who may have no access to these works, it has been attempted, in the Sketch, to reproduce the scene as vividly as the condensed style imposed by the exigencies of space will permit. If the teacher will also carefully compare Note 2, and the accompanying plan, with the narratives in *all the four Gospels*, he will have, it is hoped, sufficient materials for a tolerable picture. Success in the use of them is worth a strenuous effort, not only because of the new interest in Scripture which may be awakened, but also because, just in proportion as the scene is realised by the scholars, will the peculiarly touching application impress them. This application must be as *particular* as possible. Let little individual faults, of thought, word, or deed, which the teacher feels quite sure *have been committed* during the week, be named.

Care must be taken that the Jewish mode of reckoning days and weeks is understood by the scholars, *i.e.*, that their Sabbath was on our Saturday, and therefore our Sunday was their first week-day; and that their day of twenty-four hours was from sunset to sunset. Compare Note 1.

The Supper at Bethany, omitted here in its right place, will be referred to in Lesson LXXXIV., in order to connect it with the treachery of Judas.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

The Passover is now fast approaching. Jerusalem already getting crowded—people from all parts of the country constantly arriving—merchants from distant lands visiting the city of their fathers—many happy meetings; not room for half the multitudes—tents pitched in streets and outside walls; preparations for the feast—thousands of lambs brought in—rooms hired, &c.; Pilate there too, with his soldiers, from Cæsarea; and Herod, with his 'noblemen,' from Peræa.

An inquiry passing from mouth to mouth, John xi. 56—'Will He not come? Who? Why should not Jesus come? (next verse)—*others* looking out for Him—what for? Suddenly, one Sabbath, the rumour—'He is come—Galileans have arrived who came with Him the last stage from Jericho—at His old quarters at Bethany.' At once a movement—'must go to see Him'; and another attraction there (xii. 9), the man who was four days in grave; so many take the pleasant walk over Olivet. But the chief priests more alarmed than ever—'must stop this'—what new plot do they devise? (xii. 10)—how foolish, as well as wicked! if Jesus raised Lazarus once, could He not do so again?

Now Sunday come (not Sabbath, but first working-day of week). To-day see why we call it Palm Sunday.

I. THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

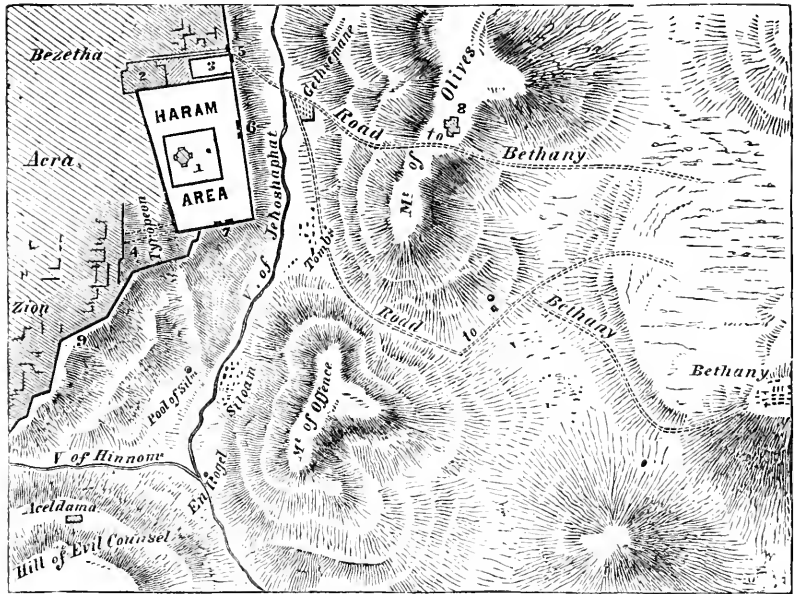
Let us stand on Mount Olivet—not on the top, or the western slope, whence could see Jerusalem—but on eastern side, towards Bethany. Two great companies of people in sight. One coming over hill from the city, what carrying? (John xii. 13)—why? the palm-branch a sign of joy and victory (Lev. xxiii. 40; Rev. vii. 9)—is not the 'King of Israel' coming to His own city? is not the long-looked-for deliverance at hand? The other party coming from

Bethany—Passover pilgrims, who have lodged there—the Twelve too, and Jesus in the midst. Nearer and nearer come the two companies—see the greeting with which the one from Jerusalem hails Jesus as they meet, John xii. 13.

The united multitude now opposite Bethphage [see Note 2]. A halt: Jesus at last will accept kingly honours—He who has so often *walked* long journeys will at last *ride* into the royal city—not on horseback (see Deut. xvii. 16) like the Romans, but as the old rulers and prophets of Israel rode (Judg. v. 10, x. 4, xii. 14; 1 Kings i. 33, xiii. 13). An ass, too, never yet ridden—why? see Deut. xxi. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 7—such animals sacred. But how and where get an ass? Does not Jesus know exactly both where and how? see Mark xi. 2–6. And how saddled? (ver. 7). Any other signs of royalty? (ver. 8)—(comp. 2 Kings ix. 13). [See Note 3.]

And now they catch sight of a corner of the city, the towers of Zion. Instantly reminded of David and his greatness—'Now his kingdom shall be restored' (Mark xi. 10)—'Hosanna to the Son of David!' [See Note 5.] Then the view hidden again behind the hill, until the ridge reached, and in a moment the whole city before them, a glorious spectacle of palaces and battlements rising up from the other side of the deep Kedron valley, with the glittering Temple in the midst (comp. Ps. xlviii. 2, 12, 13; Mark xiii. 1). Louder than ever now the songs of praise (ver. 37), and the Pharisees can bear it no longer—'Suppose He *is* a prophet, why let them say *this* of Him?' See their complaint and His reply, ver. 39, 40—the man that sings not now is harder than a stone.

Down the hill they go—over brook, up again to city-gate, into street. No wonder a stir in Jerusalem—not only the citizens,



PLAN OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, AND THE ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO BETHANY.

This plan has been reduced from the Ordnance Survey Map of Jerusalem, with the exception of Bethany and its neighbourhood, which are not included in that map. The *modern* outline of the city walls is given, as the exact course of the ancient wall is still uncertain. The Temple occupied the platform now called the Haram es-Sherief, or a part of it, but its precise site is not definitely settled.

REFERENCES.

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| 1. Dome of the Rock, or Mosque of Omar. | 5. St. Stephen's Gate. |
| 2. Supposed Site of the Castle of Antonia. | 6. Golden Gate. |
| 3. Birket-Israel (<i>traditional</i> Pool of Bethesda). | 7. Horse Gate. |
| 4. Site of Bridge over the Tyropæon Valley. | 8. Church and Convent of the Ascension. |

who know Him, but all the strangers in distant parts gathering round—'Who is this?' (Matt. xxi. 10). The Pharisees in despair (John xii. 19).

What was all this for?

How different all this from the usual life of Jesus! Before, so quiet, avoiding all show and publicity (see Matt. ix. 30, xii. 15—19, xvi. 20, xvii. 9)—especially being called King (John vi. 15). Why this triumphal procession?

(a) That, by fulfilling before all eyes a well-known prophecy (Zech. ix. 9; see Matt. and John), He might give the Jews one last proof *who He was*. Did they understand? Even the disciples did not (John xii. 16); if they had, would have remembered Zechariah's *next words* (10th verse), and have seen that He was not to be the warrior-king they expected, but 'to bring peace to the Gentiles.'

(b) That, being Himself thus seen and known by all the multitudes now assembled at Jerusalem, all might notice His condemnation and death. Everywhere men

should hear of it, and know about it when the Apostles preached afterwards. 'This thing' should not be 'done in a corner' (Acts xxvi. 26; comp. Luke xxiv. 18).

But in watching the great procession, *we missed one thing*,—

II. THE WEEPING KING.

Just when the whole city came in sight, just when shouts and songs loudest in honour of the King, see what the King Himself is doing, ver. 41—'weeping'!—weeping bitterly [see *Lesson LXXI.*, Note 5]. Why? is He thinking of what shall come upon Him this week—rejection, desertion, mockery, pain, death? He knows all, but it is *not that*—for how has He been regarding that? [*Lesson LXXII.*] What is it, then?

1. *The suffering of Jerusalem.* He looks forward, not four days, but forty years—sees those very 'enemies,' the Romans whom His followers expect Him to drive away, encamped on that same Mount Olivet, surrounding the doomed city, burning it, levelling it—multitudes perishing

by hunger, fire, and sword—the most awful catastrophe in the world's history.

2. *The sin of Jerusalem.* Why all this to come on the chosen city? ver. 44—'knew not the time of her visitation.' What was that? God's visit of mercy. When? *Then*—those three years in which the Son of God had again and again 'visited' her, but in vain. He has fulfilled prophecy, worked miracles, 'spoken as never man spake,' longing to 'gather her children as a hen her chickens'; but she 'would not,' and now—'hid from thine eyes!'

From His seat at God's right hand, Jesus looks down on *this city [or town, or village]*, as He did that day upon Jerusalem.

DOES HE SEE WHAT WILL GRIEVE HIM?

What does grieve Him? Suffering?

1. Our Lord probably arrived at Bethany on Friday evening (see John xii. 1), and spent there His last earthly Sabbath, which would extend from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. Part of the Galilean 'caravan' with which He had come would also halt at Bethany, and part go on to Jerusalem—less than two miles further—the same evening, carrying the news of His arrival. The curious crowds that flocked to see Him and Lazarus would probably go over on Saturday, the distance being but little over the legal 'Sabbath-day's journey' (six furlongs). The 'snapper' in the house of Simon the leper (see *Lesson LXIX.*, Note 4) was probably on Saturday evening. Then on the next day, our Sunday, was the entry.

2. Two paths lead from Bethany to Jerusalem: one over the top of Olivet—the shortest but steepest route; the other—the commonly frequented route—winding round the southern shoulder, taking advantage of the easier ascent to, and descent from, the low ridge between Olivet and the Mount of Offence. See the accompanying plan. The procession would certainly take the latter path. A short distance from Bethany, the road makes a slight turn to avoid a ravine, on the *other side* of which have been found the indications of a former village—no doubt Bethphage, the 'village over against' them to which Christ sent the two disciples. Near this point, at a slight rise in the ground, the southern end of Jerusalem (Zion) can just be seen over the ridge, the rest of the city being still hidden by the shoulder of Olivet. When the ridge is gained, the whole city bursts suddenly on view. The path then descends the hill in a north-westerly direction, passes the (modern) garden of Gethsemane, crosses the Kedron by a little bridge, ascends the acclivity up to the wall, and enters the city by St. Stephen's Gate. Almost every step of the route throws light on the narrative; see Sketch.

When alone, or with the Twelve only, Christ no doubt often took the other path over the top of the Mount; and, apparently, it was by that route that David fled from the capital, see 2 Sam. xv. 14, 23, 30, 32.

3. Only St. Matthew and St. John allude to Zechariah's prophecy; and only Matthew men-

yes, but, much more, what brings suffering—*SIN*. What did He see in *your heart yesterday*? Vanity? selfishness? wilfulness? discontent? What on your tongue? Deceit? unkindness? bad words? These are the things that grieve Jesus. But especially,—

(a) When He sees any neglecting their 'day of visitation.' Yours is *now* (church and school teachings, &c.): how are you using it? Like Zacchæus and Bartimæus? [*see last Lesson*].—or like Israel in the wilderness (Ps. xcv. 8), and Felix (Acts xxiv. 25)?

(b) When He sees any *seeming* to care for Him, who He knows will soon turn away, as so many did who sang and shouted on Olivet. You sing hymns of praise [*quote some*].—do you mean what you say? See how God lamented over Israel of old (2nd text for rep.)—let not *that* be said of you!

NOTES.

tions both the ass and the colt of which the prophecy seems to speak. The words however may be read, 'Upon an ass, *even* upon a colt' (*Wordsworth*).

The Greek phrase translated 'in a place where two ways met' (Mark xi. 4) is variously rendered, but probably means rather the lane or passage round the back of the house. It is noteworthy that this exact spot is only mentioned in Mark's Gospel, which is thought to preserve for us so many of the vivid personal recollections of Peter; and Peter was very likely one of the two disciples sent.

It seems probable that the owner of the asses was a disciple, so that the message, 'The Lord hath need of them,' would elicit instant consent. So also the owner of the house where Christ ate the Passover, to whom the message was in the name of 'the Master' (Mark xiv. 14).

Robinson (*Bibl. Res.* i. 473) mentions that when the people of Bethlehem, during the war between Turkey and Egypt in 1836, sought the protection of the British Consul, they 'spread their garments in the way' of his horses, in order to do him honour.

4. The 'branches of palm-trees' are not, strictly, branches at all, but the enormous leaves, 12 to 16 feet long, which spring from the top of the tall, straight trunk. A few palm-trees are still to be seen in Jerusalem. See an article by Dr. Tristram in the *Church Sunday School Mag.* for Sept. 1870, p. 308; also the same writer's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 378.

5. '*Hosanna*' is the Hebrew of the words, 'Save now, I beseech Thee,' in Ps. cxviii. 25; the next verse of which familiar Messianic psalm also formed part of the disciples' song. The word seems to have become an acclamation as well as a prayer, like our 'God save the Queen.' *In the highest, i.e.*, in heaven: an invocation expressing the desire that their hopes might be fulfilled by God.

6. Christ's prediction of the fate of Jerusalem was exactly fulfilled. The word 'trench' should be rather 'earth-work with palisades' (which however, would imply a trench where the earth was dug up). Such a barricade was thrown up by the Romans all round the city.

Lesson LXXV.—The Fruitless Fig-Tree.

‘O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself.’

Read—Mark xi. 12—26; (comp. Matt. xxi. 12—22); *Learn*—Matt. iii. 8—10, vii. 21.
(*Hymns* 97, 98, 123, 136, 143, 155, 158, 291.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The teachings suggested by the incident of the fruitless fig-tree are given at much greater length in the Sketch than those of the cleansing of the Temple, because the *parable* of the ‘Barren Fig-tree’ has not been taken in the Course, while a Lesson (XVII.) was devoted to the *first* Temple cleansing.

It will be observed that the application in the Sketch, instead of following the narrative as usual, precedes and accompanies it, which, in this instance, seems the simplest and most effective plan. The illustration of the fruit-tree is thus made quite clear first; and its analogies, to the Jewish nation and to the individual soul respectively, work out together throughout the Lesson. If, however, the teacher should prefer to take the history first, giving its incidents in exact order of time, the spiritual analogies must be left to the last; and, in this case, the application suggested by Christ’s conduct in the Temple, which concludes the Sketch,—and which has been chosen to the exclusion of other intrinsically more important points, because it best fits in with what has gone before,—will have to be omitted.

The solemn considerations dwelt on in (a) and (b) in Division II. are but too little recognised, and should be earnestly enforced. They present the corresponding truth to that urged in Lesson LXXII. There we saw that Christ’s *rewards* are not arbitrary; here we see that His *judgments* are not arbitrary.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

If you had an elm or a beech-tree, what would you look out for as spring came round? How pleasant to see the little green shoots, and, by-and-bye, the full, fresh foliage shading us from the sun! But suppose you had a *pear-tree*, what look for besides leaves? If autumn brought no pears on it, what think? and if year after year the same, would exclaim, ‘Useless tree!’

Now, *we* are like fruit-trees. Why? They are made on purpose to bear fruit; *so are we*. What fruit does God look for in us? ‘Good works’—thoughts, words, deeds. See Ps. i. 3; Matt. iii. 8, 10; John xv. 8; Gal. v. 22; Eph. ii. 10, v. 9; Phil. i. 11; Col. i. 10. If no good fruit in us, what sort of trees are we? Useless to God! May make a great show—*look* very well—like a tree in full leaf—but what use such ‘leaves’? We are not like elm-trees, but like fruit-trees, only meant to bear fruit. See what said to people with mere outward show, mere *leaves*, Matt. vii. 20, 21; Jas. i. 22, 27.

See to-day how Jesus gave the Apostles a solemn picture of this.

I. A PICTURE OF WHAT JERUSALEM WAS.

Monday morning—Jesus again on the road from Bethany to Jerusalem; a quiet walk to-day—who only with Him? see ver. 11, 12. In other lessons we have seen the Lord weary, thirsty, asleep, weeping; now we see Him—? ‘In all things’ like us! Where shall He get a little food?

Fig-trees all about—the very place called ‘house of figs’ (*Bethphage*)—and, in East, figs not a mere ‘sweet,’ but regular food (therefore fig-tree important, see Deut. viii. 8; Jer. v. 17, viii. 13; &c.); but no—‘time of figs not yet’—too early. Yet see—one over there before the rest—why think so?—the rest all bare, this one has leaves—and, on fig-tree, fruit comes with or before leaves. [See Note 3.]

Jesus approaches—what does He find? what does He say? why? You don’t think He used His power in anger, because disappointed at not getting figs to eat? *That* like what Satan tempted Him to do, Matt. iv. 3—did Jesus *then* work a miracle because He was hungry?

No, but if men are like fruit-trees, what a picture this tree of Jerusalem, of the Jewish people! Why?

(a) *It made a great show*. Amid all the bare trees around, how conspicuous its leaves! Were not the Jews like that? boasting of their special privileges, thinking God only cared for them, despising other nations, see Rom. ii. 17—20; comp. Acts xi. 3, xxi. 28, xxii. 21, 22. The Pharisee thought himself ‘not as other men’ (Luke xviii. 11); the Jews thought themselves *not as other nations*. And just now in particular—a great show yesterday of welcome to Jesus—just as if fruit coming at last.

(b) *And yet it was fruitless*. Might say, ‘time of fruit not yet’—all the world dead in sin, like the bare trees on Olivet. Why this no excuse? Because of the show, the profession, the ‘leaves.’ God had a right

to expect 'fruit' in *such* a nation. Yet what did He find? Hypocrisy, unbelief, rejection of His Son!

And that the disciples may understand this picture, Jesus shows them another. *This* why Jesus cursed the tree.

II. A PICTURE OF WHAT JERUSALEM WOULD BECOME.

What do they see next morning, as they come the same way? ver. 20—all the leaves gone, just as if winter coming on; like the other trees, then?—no, much worse—not only bare, but dead—not 'time of fruit not yet,' but 'time of fruit' gone for ever! So with Jerusalem—[refer to last Lesson]—'If thou hadst known. . . . but now—!' And it was because Jesus knew the curse must come, that He wept yesterday.

Then see two things about the curse:—

(a) *What it was.* No fearful punishment. Simply to bear no fruit. What would you think of such a curse on you?—never to be good, to do right, any more—would you mind that? some boys seem as if they would like it. But punishment will surely follow. Christ need not send it—*men* will give it. What would be done with that withered tree? see 1st text for rep. (comp. John xv. 6). So Jerusalem: because worthless, unable to resist Romans—then, destruction! And so with a boy: if no good in him at all, soon go to *crime—and then—!*

(b) *How it was inflicted.* Not by whirlwind or lightning. Jesus simply took away what gave the tree life, and left it to itself. What had made the tree grow, given it leaves and the chance of fruit?—earth, air, rain, sun—these obeyed their Lord, stopped the tree's nourishment—then what could it do? So with Jerusalem: think of all God's mercies to the Jews—all their goodness owing to God only—He had only to send no more prophets to them, to stop His messages of grace, to withdraw His special care—and then? See Hos. xiii. 9—'O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself!' So,

too, with us: God need not destroy us—only withdraw all the grace that keeps us from sin and leads us to do right—only 'let us alone' (Hos. iv. 17; comp. Gen. vi. 3; Rev. xxii. 11)—and we go straight to ruin. Pray David's prayer (Ps. li. 11), 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me!'

II. A LAST SIGN GIVEN TO JERUSALEM.

On the Sunday of the entry He did nothing in the city; but did He see nothing? ver. 11, 15. How sadly, how indignantly, must He have noticed that noisy cattle-market again! Then on the Monday, what does He do?

All driven out—the great 'Court of the Gentiles' cleared—now it shall be a 'house of prayer' again—prayer to whom? *To Himself*, its Lord and King: see the blind and the lame crowding in where the cattle and the money-changers were just now, imploring His aid, and not in vain. Children there too, singing the songs they heard on Olivet yesterday. Pharisees also, vexed and angry—why? ashamed of having allowed the 'den of thieves'? ah, they did not mind *that*, but what do they mind?

Thus Jerusalem has a last warning. Jesus has done over again the great deed He did when He first appeared three years ago—the great sign that Messiah had come, Mal. iii. 1—3. [See Lesson XVII.] But what good, if now too late, as Christ's tears and Christ's curse both showed? Too late to save *nation*, but yet time to save *individuals*; and thousands were saved afterwards, see Acts ii. 41, iv. 4, v. 14.

Let us ask the Lord Jesus to do with our hearts as He did with the Temple-courts—to drive out what is bad and sinful, and then, not to leave them empty, but to stay in *them Himself*. Just the opposite of what done with the fig-tree—the *good* taken away, and then 'let alone.' If He dwells in our hearts, makes them His home, 'abides in us,' then we shall be able to bear 'much fruit,' see John xv. 4, 5.

NOTES.

1. It is clear from St. Mark's narrative, which is more detailed than the others, that Christ did not cleanse the Temple on the day of the Entry, but on the following day, i. e., Monday. All other views are untenable in the face of ver. 11.

2. Why was Jesus hungry in the morning? The usual answer is that He had spent the night in prayer on Olivet. Certainly He did so spend some of the nights of this week (see Luke xxi. 37); but apparently not this particular night (see Mark, ver. 11, 12), nor the next (Matt. xxi. 17). Probably He stayed at Martha's house, as on other occasions, but, 'rising up a great while before day' to go out and pray alone (as was His wont in Galilee, see Mark i. 35), He missed the morning meal.

3. On the fig-tree, the 'time of figs,' &c., see Trench (*Miracles*, p. 449), who gives a summary of the many explanations of this passage which have been offered; also Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 350; and Thomson, *L. & B.*, p. 349. It is essential to observe that the fruit of the fig-tree

appears before, or at the same time as, the leaves; and then the point to notice is that this tree was conspicuous 'afar off,' even at or near a place (Bethphage) named from its abundance of fig-trees,—the obvious reason being that, although the season for 'putting forth leaves,' viz., the approach of summer (see Matt. xxiv. 32), had not yet arrived, this particular tree was already in leaf. Jesus then went up to it, 'if therefore' (not 'happily') he might find fruit on it. The fact that there was none, in spite of the show of leaves, proved that the tree was barren; and that Christ so adjudged proves that 'the time of figs was not yet,' for otherwise it might be supposed that a wayside tree was bare because it had been stripped.

4. The cursing of the fig-tree was our Lord's one miracle of judgment—(the destruction of the swine being no miracle in itself, but a permitted incident following a work of mercy); and it is well to observe, in contrast with the countless miracles of love performed by Him

upon men, that this one act of seeming severity was done for man's good to an unconscious tree, and to one which (being 'in the way') was no one's property.

The incident may be regarded as a solemn sequel or appendix to the Parable of the Barren Fig-Tree in Luke xiii. In the parable no intimation was given of the result of the extra year of grace. Here we see, in figure, what the end was in so far as the Jewish nation was concerned.

5. The important words of our Lord in ver. 22—26 are not taken in the Sketch for want of room, and their principal teachings have been already explained in Lesson LIII. (in which similar expressions occur) But it may be observed further that we have here the reason why the power of faith is really unlimited, in the words 'Have faith in God.' Faith does not exercise the believer's own power, but lays hold of Divine power. The prayer of faith 'moves the Hand that moves the world.' The death of Ananias and Sapphira shews how Peter (the very Apostle whose remark elicited Christ's promise) wielded this power to do a far more terrible deed of judgment than the cursing of the tree. Ver. 25, 26,

however, which enjoin a forgiving spirit, and which at first sight seem unconnected with the preceding verses, are most significant, as showing that no revengeful or selfish feeling is compatible with the exercise of this faith.

6. The second cleansing of the Temple must be carefully distinguished from the first, on which see Lesson XVII. The market was held in the Court of the Gentiles (see plan on page 146), which gives force to our Lord's quotation from Isa. lvi. 7—'a house of prayer for all nations.' (Our translation in Mark—'called of all nations,' &c., is incorrect). 'Den of thieves' should be 'den of robbers'; see Lesson LXVIII. Note 3. A similar expostulation occurs in Jer. vii. 11.

7. Psalm viii., from which Christ quoted to vindicate the Hosannas of the children, is referred to as Messianic in three other places in the N. T.—1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22; Heb. ii. 6—9. The difference between 'ordained strength,' in the Psalm, and 'perfected praise,' in the quotation, is more apparent than real. The 'praises' of the children were 'strong,' in this very instance, to rebuke and confound 'the enemy and the avenger.'

Lesson LXXVI.—In the Temple—Parables.

'Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God.'

Read—Matt. xxi. 23—46; xxii. 1—14; (Comp. Mark xi. 27—xii. 12; Luke xx. 1—19);
Learn—2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16; Rom. xi. 22. (Hymns 11, 101, 144, 147, 223, 315, 360.)

TO THE TEACHER.

To take three Parables, besides a Temple scene and a conflict between Christ and the rulers, in one Lesson, will seem to many a thing foolish to attempt, and impossible to do successfully. Yet if the scene in the Temple is regarded as the leading feature, and the three parables as *three connected illustrations or anecdotes* given by our Lord in the course of the conversation, the difficulty is to a great extent removed; and on this plan the Sketch is constructed. Of course the parables cannot be expounded in detail, but merely made clear as *stories*, and their *general* teachings explained. If this plan be adopted, the application to the scholars must be drawn only from the third parable, which has special reference to those who like ourselves, live under the Christian dispensation. In fact, the point to be worked up to will be that suggested by the incident of the man without a wedding garment. But, if time press, the teacher need not give a full account of what is theologically meant by the 'wedding garment.' It will be sufficient to urge this one thought—'Are you fit for God's presence? No one can be fit in himself. Those only are fit who put their trust entirely in Christ, and are made like Him by the Holy Spirit.'

With junior classes, however, it may be well to omit all except the picture of Christ and His assailants, and the *second* parable—the 'Wicked Husbandmen.' In this case the application will be quite different, and will be something like this:—'Think of all God's goodness to you—ought you not to make Him a return?—if you do not, what may He justly do?' The supplicatory portion of the 'General Thanksgiving' embodies this thought in most impressive words.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Jerusalem full of the startling events in the Temple [*last Lesson*]. What must the priests and rulers think?—'This Galilean takes upon Himself to stop what we, the rightful guardians of the Temple, chose to allow.' Those who happened to see it complained, but to-day (Tuesday) a formal

deputation (priests, scribes, elders—*Mark*) shall demand by what right He did it.

In the now quiet courts they find Jesus, teaching as He walks up and down (ver. 23; comp. *Mark*); crowds pressing round and 'hanging on His words' [*lit. transl. of Luke xix. 48*]. See the people making way

for the grave procession—as if afraid of their haughty rulers? perhaps so; but which really fears the other? (ver. 26). Hear the sharp inquiry—insisting on an answer—‘Who gave thee this authority? We did not.’ But as we saw before [*Lesson LXVIII.*], Jesus replies with another question; ver. 25. Why this? what to do with it?—*everything*: did not the Baptist tell another of their deputations who He (Jesus) was? see John i. 19, 26, 34 [*Lesson XIV.*]; then, if the Baptist was God’s messenger, must not His testimony be true? and if so, would not God’s Son have authority over God’s house?

See the priests and scribes silent in confusion and fear—why? (ver. 25, 26). Then, if could not decide about John, how presume to judge Jesus? justly He now refuses to give them an answer.

And now it is His turn—He will rebuke and condemn *them*—or, rather, make them condemn themselves. (Comp. Nathan and David, 2 Sam. xii.) Three parables:—

I. THE TWO SONS.

‘What think ye?’—*they* to be questioned now. [*Read parable.*] Cannot help giving right answer—so easy—but how Jesus turns it on them! ‘The bad and low people you despise—bad as they were, *they* did listen to John, and repented—so ‘did will of the Father’ more than you—for you, who professed to be so good (*‘I go, Sir,’* see Matt. xv. 8, xxiii. 3), rejected him, and that even after you saw what good he did.’ Thus, the very thing they feared the people knowing (their opinion of John), Jesus publicly proclaims. Imagine their dismay!

But Jesus has not done with them yet—‘Hear another parable.’ He has shown them how they have acted *individually*, each in his own heart and life; now will shew them their terrible guilt *as rulers*, as representatives of the nation before God and men.

II. THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

[*Read parable; see Notes 1, 2, 3.*] Here is a History of the Jews; yet not like other histories—Jesus tells *future* as well as *past*.

1. *Their Privileges.* When all the world gone astray, God chose them out, one family, one nation, to be separate—that He might teach and train them, and give them His Word—that they might be an example to the world. [*See Lessons II., III., XXV., XLVIII.*] See what He had done for them (Deut. iv. 32–38; Neh. ix. 7–25; Rom. iii. 1, 2, ix. 4, 5): a good land, good laws, teachers and rulers, victory and protection, &c., &c. Like the husbandmen, had everything ‘*found them*’ (ver. 33—hedge, winepress, tower).

2. *Their Wickedness.* What might God expect? Surely ‘*fruits*’—gratitude, obedience, faithful service. Did He get these fruits? When He sent servant after servant, prophet after prophet, how did they treat them? see 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16;

Neh. ix. 26; Matt. xxiii. 31, 37; Acts vii. 52; Heb. xi. 36–38. What could He do more? (Luke xx. 13; Isa. v. 4). One more trial—His Son should go. And what result? Jesus tells them by the parable what He knows is going to happen—conspiracy (‘*come, let us kill him*’), murder, robbery (‘*seize on inheritance,*’ see John xi. 48).

3. *Their Punishment.* But He will make *them* tell what that shall be, ver. 40, 41—(a) They to be ‘*miserably destroyed*’; (b) The privileges and blessings of God’s Kingdom to go to a new chosen people. Did they perceive how they spoke their own doom? see ver. 45—they saw *He meant them*, but perhaps condemned the husbandmen all the louder [*see Note 4*] for that, to make believe it did not concern them at all! But they shall not so escape: see His own unmistakable words, ver. 43.

They can bear it no longer—dare not seize Jesus on the spot, for fear of people (ver. 46)—go away discomfited (Mark). What, think you, are the disciples and those who favour Jesus thinking about? Perhaps, ‘*Vineyard to go to others—that must be us—we to be the great men in the new Kingdom.*’ Let them not be so sure—Jesus now gives a parable to warn them.

III. THE KING’S MARRIAGE FEAST.

First Section, ver. 2–10. A little more history of the future here, told in another way. ‘The Son’ again—not as the rejected messenger, but as the glorious Prince—not dying, but exalted to His royal throne (see Ps. xlv.; Phil. ii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 22). Then go the heralds to proclaim the feast ready [*see Lesson XXVIII.*]—the Apostles preaching after the Ascension, see Acts ii. 32–40, iii. 19, 26, v. 31. How treated? ver. 6—just like the prophets in the other parable. Again the punishment predicted, ver. 7—‘*burnt up their city*’—how true afterwards! But, just as vineyard given to other husbandmen, so feast thrown open to other guests—all who became Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Second Section, ver. 11–14. Let not every one who took Christ’s side and joined the Church think himself ‘*all right.*’ The King would come in to see the guests (see what Jesus said to the Seven Churches—‘*I know thy works,*’ Rev. ii. 2, 9, 13, 19, iii. 1, 8, 15)—would have none there who just came in, dressed anyway, for what they could get. See one guest trembling and speechless under His searching eye—no excuse [*see Note 7*]—what is his fate? just as terrible as theirs who came not at all.

Here was a solemn warning to the followers and friends of Jesus, who might think themselves so much better than those proud priests and scribes. Did they need the warning?—think of Judas, Ananias, &c.; see 2nd text for rep.

And we need the warning too.

Very easy to blame those wicked Jews—so we ought. Very easy to be glad and

thankful that to us God's free invitation has come, that we know better than to ill-treat His messengers, that a feast of blessings is spread for us—so we ought. But have you the wedding garment? What is it? It means this: to be fit for heaven. How may we be?

(a) By having our sin washed away—how? 1 John i. 7; Rev. vii. 14.

(b) By becoming righteous in God's sight—how? by doing our best? see what good that is, Isa. lxiv. 6—'all our righteousness as filthy rags'—rags unfit for palace, and our best deeds unfit for heaven, because

always imperfect and mixed with sin. How then? Thus: we come to Christ, cling to Him, trust in Him; then God sees us as if clothed in His righteousness, reckons us to be righteous for His sake, Phil. iii. 9.

(c) And then the Holy Spirit comes, gives us new hearts, makes us holy.

This is called 'putting on the Lord Jesus Christ,' Rom. xiii. 14; 'putting on the new man,' Eph. iv. 24.

No excuse if without it—why? Because God, knowing we too poor (*i.e.*, destitute of goodness), Himself provides the 'wedding garment' for all who ask Him.

NOTES.

1. The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen is one of the three parables recorded by both Matthew, Mark, and Luke, (the others being the Sower and the Mustard Seed). It has an obvious reference, which Christ's hearers would well understand, to the parable in Isa. v. 1-7 (comp. Ps. lxxx. 8-16); but the figure is varied by making the husbandmen in fault instead of the vineyard, by which means a closer application is brought home to the official rulers and teachers, and the vineyard supplies a distinct type. *But of what?* Our Lord himself gives the answer, in ver. 43—'The Kingdom of God'; on which see Lesson XXVIII., Note 7. The other 'nation' is not the Gentiles, but those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who should accept Christianity.

2. The *hedge* (or, probably, stone wall, which is much more common in Palestine) was for the protection of the vineyard; the *tower* (called a 'cottage' in Isa. i. 8. xxiv. 20; see Trench, p. 195) for observation; the *vinepress* for treading out the grapes. The expressed juice ran through a grating into a cool receptacle beneath, dug out of the ground or hewn out of the rock. Mark mentions this vat; Matthew the press above. It is unnecessary to seek a symbolic meaning in these particulars: they represent generally the owner's provident care.

3. 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him.' Can it be said that the Jewish rulers put Jesus to death knowing who He was? To this it may be answered. (1) that they were plainly told, and ought to have known; (2) that in all probability the truth did more than once flash upon them, but they resisted more the thought,—and that it was so, these very words may justly be taken as evidence; (3) that the final resolution to kill Him had been taken immediately after His greatest exhibition of Divine power; see John xi. 46-53; which passage also explains the words, 'Let us seize on his inheritance,' for (48th v.) their motive was fear lest they should, through any conflict caused by Jesus, lose their own power.

4. 'He shall miserably destroy those wicked men.' In the Greek, 'miserably' and 'wicked' are connected words, and the order of the sentence is very emphatic; thus, 'The wretches! wretchedly He will destroy them.' It seems clear that the rulers, and not the people, gave this answer. The 'God forbid' of Luke may have been uttered by some of the people (see ver. 9, 16).

5. Christ's allusion to Himself as the 'Stone'

(ver. 42, 44) is omitted in the Sketch, to prevent confusion. The change of figure was necessary to show the victory of the Son notwithstanding His murder by the 'husbandmen.' The quotation is from the Messianic Psalm (xlviii.) so familiar to the people—the very Psalm from which their Hosannas had been taken.

The distinction between 'falling on the Stone' and being crushed by the 'falling Stone' seems to be this:—The Jews *stumbled* at Christ, were 'offended at Him,' in His humiliation (see Lesson LI. Note 4); but for this there was a remedy (in repentance), just as a man who falls on a stone, and is hurt, may be cured. But the falling Stone is Christ coming in judgment, crushing all who are still impenitent. Compare Dan. ii. 34, 35.

6. The parable of the Marriage of the King's Son must be carefully distinguished from that of the Great Supper in Luke xiv. (Lesson LXII.), which, having been delivered before the hostility of the Jewish rulers had become so open and deadly, was of a much milder character than this later one.

The mention of the King's armies destroying the murderers and burning the city connects this parable with that of the Wicked Husbandmen. The two are concerned respectively with Old and New Testament history. In the one, the Son appears as the last of a line of servants or messengers; in the other, as the glorified Prince. In the one, God *demand*s something from men; in the other, He *offers* something to men. In the one, the guilt lies in not fulfilling His requirements; in the other, it lies in not accepting His invitation. In the one we see the Law; in the other, the Gospel. See Trench, p. 214.

The feast is clearly not the same as the marriage-supper of the "Ten Virgins," and of Rev. xix. 9. It is not the final happiness of the redeemed, but the entire Gospel dispensation; see Lesson XXVIII., Note 7. The presence of the unworthy guest—and here the *one* stands for *many*, see ver. 10 ('both bad and good')—of itself proves this.

7. To the question—Why was a poor man blamed for not having a wedding garment, when this might be owing to his ignorance or his poverty? the answer is that the wedding garments were provided by the King, and the man could have had one if he would. Although it is true that this is *not* (as often supposed) a regular Eastern custom, yet it is obviously implied in the parable, and required by the application.

Lesson LXXVII.—In the Temple—Questions.

'How they might entangle Him in His talk.'

Read—Matt. xxii. 15—46; (*comp.* Mark xii. 13—37; Luke xx. 20—44); Learn—Ps. lvi. 5, 6; Luke xxi. 15. (*Hymns*, 94, 116, 159, 161, 179, 206, 223, 351.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In two respects the Lesson before us is a peculiar one.

(1) In scarcely any other Lesson will the methods of treating the subject in senior and junior classes respectively be more utterly different. The 'Questions' put to Christ must certainly not be fully discussed with younger children (unless it be the first one,—which, if the teacher feels himself able to explain it clearly, will prove interesting). With them, the Lesson would consist of a series of pictures of the questioners propounding hard questions to Jesus, and of His wisdom and meekness in reply; the application suggested in the Sketch then following naturally. On the other hand, most elder scholars will be keenly interested in the Questions themselves.

(2) Owing to the variety of topics introduced by the several Questions, many various points of application present themselves in the course of the Lesson; and these may well be briefly taken up as they arise, because there is no great truth, or principle, or duty, to which the successive sections should (as in most Lessons) be made to converge. Thus,

The Christian duty of loyalty to constituted authority, and, in particular, of paying taxes cheerfully and without attempt at evasion;

The uselessness of *mere* loyalty and general good citizenship, rendering to 'Cæsar' what is due, but forgetting the still higher duty to God;

The unfairness of infidel objections to Christianity, which so often seize upon some petty difficulty or far-fetched imaginary case, and ignore the whole mass of positive evidence for the truth;

The spirituality of the life to come (a point of some importance in these days, when religious literature is full of *unduly material* ideas of heaven);

The certainty of the resurrection;

The paramount importance in religion of love, both to God and man;

The superiority of such love to external rites and observances;

The two-fold nature of Christ;—

All these can be fairly taught from the passage, though it is obvious that time will permit of only the briefest reference to them.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

You have often seen a good and quiet boy bullied by bad boys. If the good boy sensible, will take it patiently, not get angry, bravely keep good temper. Then what do the bullies do? Perhaps resort to secret plots against him, take him un-awares, craftily tempt him to say or do something wrong—so be able to accuse or report him. Does not the first text for rep. describe them exactly?

Christ's enemies just like this. Their bullying [*last Lesson*] no use; He repulsed them, and (as always) the crowd took the winning side; so they dare not assail Him openly. What to be done? Get some others to go to Him with hard questions, pretending to be really anxious for His advice—so may 'entangle Him in His talk,' and make Him say something they can report to Pilate. See ver. 15; Mark xii. 13; Luke xx. 19, 20.

I. THE PHARISEES' AND HERODIANS' QUESTION.

See how deceitfully they come to Jesus, ver. 16, 17—'their words smother than

butter, but war in their hearts' (Ps. lv. 21; comp. xxviii. 3, xxxviii. 12, lxii. 4). What might it be thought they had come for?—two parties of them, Pharisees and Herodians—it would look as if they had been disputing—what about? Pharisees always against Romans—'Why should the 'holy nation,' the chosen people, be subject to these Gentile dogs? Why pay taxes to the hated Roman Emperor?' Then the Herodians—they liked Romans no better, but did not want people excited against the taxes, lest a revolt should get rid of Herod as well as Pilate.

So, just as if appealing to Jesus to settle the dispute, they put the question. But do you see the plot? If He said, 'Pay,' then all the people would care no more about Him, think Him as bad as the publicans. If He said, 'Don't pay,' then could take Him to Pilate as a rebel.

But Jesus sees through it—look how He exposes them, ver. 18. Yet they shall have an answer—only must first show what it is they have to pay. A Roman 'penny,' with the Roman emperor's image stamped on it!

[see Note 1]—why, where did they get it? it must have belonged to a Roman once—had they taken it in payment for something (as we say, 'over the counter')? did they refuse it then because of the hated face on it? would they refuse a gift of such pennies? how then object to give—no, not 'give' (as they said)—'render', give it back to 'Cæsar'? They had used his coins—so accepted him as ruler—now must take consequences.

But another duty—'Render to God what is God's'—ah, if the Jews had done that, if had never forsaken God, would not now be subject to Cæsar at all. Let them be God's true servants—this the only way to be really free (see John viii. 31–36)—no matter then who the earthly ruler—were not Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah, able to serve both God and 'Cæsar'?

So say St. Paul and St. Peter to us and all Christians—'Be subject to the higher powers' (Rom. xiii. 1–7)—'Honour the king' (1 Pet. ii. 13–17). When earthly ruler bids us break God's law, *then only* is it right to say as Peter did at another time, Acts v. 29. And, 'what shall we render unto the Lord?' Our own selves (Rom. xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20)—*the 'coins' upon which He has stamped His own image* (Gen. i. 27, ix. 6; 1 Cor. xi. 7; Col. iii. 10).

II. THE SADDUCEES' QUESTION.

Another set of inquirers, ver. 23–28. Sometimes boys ask queer things about Bible, just for sake of asking, or to make a puzzle or raise a laugh. Just so these Sadducees. Who ever heard of such a case?—a woman out-living seven husbands! And, did they really want to know? if they did not believe in souls living after death (see Acts xxiii. 8—'nor spirit'), why inquire what happened after death? Why *did* they ask? just to perplex Jesus, and turn the people from Him—so be able to seize Him.

How does Jesus meet *them*? Will shew publicly how *all* their ideas about a life to come are wrong. See Luke xx.—the souls of the dead *do* live, ver. 38; dead bodies *shall* rise, ver. 37; but the life to come is quite different from this life, ver. 34–36 [*illust.—as much higher as the butterfly's life surpasses that of the grub it was before*—so how can we understand it? 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be' (1 John iii. 2). But how came the Sadducees' error? see ver. 29:—

(a) They knew not the Scriptures. Had they forgotten what God said to Moses? how could God be 'the God of' a dead man?—then Abraham *alive* in Moses' time—how then no life to come? [See Note 4.]

(b) They knew not the power of God. Could not the Creator raise up again the body He had made? Should ask Paul's question, Acts xxvi. 8.

Let us believe, (a) that Scripture is true, (b) that God is almighty; then we can say, 'I believe . . . in the Resurrection of the dead and the Life of the world to come.'

III. THE LAWYER'S QUESTION.

Pharisees not sorry to see their old enemies beaten—some even praise Jesus! (Luke xx. 39); yet what to be done now? At last a *good* man among them [see Note 5] comes forward of his own accord with a fresh question (see Mark). The scribes fond of discussing about God's laws, disputing which greater and which less. What, he thinks, will be the Galilean Rabbi's opinion? Does Jesus give it as he expects? It might seem so—calls one 'first and great,' another 'like unto it,' 'none greater.' But does He say any are 'less' or 'smaller'? why, there are *no others left*—all included in ('hang on') these two. Think—what sin could you commit if you kept these two perfectly?

How does the man take the answer? (see Mark)—it has gone to his heart—he feels how true it is, how much better Jesus' teaching is than that of the scribes—hear his fearless speech before all! Then will he join Jesus altogether, be His disciple, 'humble himself as a little child to enter the kingdom'? He is 'not far' from it—but what use is that? [*illust.—Drowning man 'not far' from land; fire-escape 'not far' from window; but if can't reach—?*] Whether he ever got nearer, we know not.

IV. CHRIST'S QUESTION.

Jesus has repelled all attacks, whether open or secret (see Job v. 12, 13)—now [*like army taking offensive*] His turn to ask a question, ver. 41–46. Just as hard a one; and His enemies, after hearing Him answer theirs, can't answer His. But what a different one! All theirs unprofitable—His, how important! And for us too: 'What think ye of Christ?' do you think of Him as David's Son, a sympathising King, and yet as God's Son, a mighty Saviour?

We have seen how Christ answered questions.

Let us seek wisdom to answer as well. Do we need it? Perplexing questions—annoying questions—malicious questions—they will come. Especially to Christ's servants. How hard to answer rightly, 'with meekness of wisdom' (Jas. iii. 13)! What then? 'Ask of God' (Jas. i. 3–5)—then shall find Christ's promise (2nd text for rep.) fulfilled—shall be ready 'to answer every man' (Col. iv. 6; 1 Pet. iii. 15).

And let us not imitate His questioners. Are we ever tempted to annoy or puzzle some one with a question? Before we ask it, think—'Is it necessary? is it kind?' If not, resolve as David did, Ps. xxxix. 1; and pray David's prayer, Ps. cxli. 3.

NOTES.

1. The Roman coinage was in general circulation in Palestine in our Lord's time, the old Jewish money being used only for sacred pur-

poses, such as paying the Temple dues, &c.; see Lesson XVII., Note 2. The tribute was a poll-tax; see Lesson V., Note 2. The Pharisees' de-

sign in questioning Jesus about the tribute, is clear from the charge they *did* bring against Him only three days after: 'We found this fellow . . . forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar,' Luke xxiii. 2; how falsely, this narrative shows.

2. The Sadducees were a comparatively small, but very influential sect among the Jews. Their chief tenet was their denial of that Oral Law, or 'tradition of the elders,' which the Pharisees regarded as of equal authority with the Written Law of Moses. But they also refused to accept any truth which was not strictly and literally laid down in the Books of Moses; and hence their denial of the resurrection. If their rivals, the Pharisees, believed too much, they believed too little. They believed in God, but regarded Him as a remote and inaccessible Being, who cared not for the affairs of this lower world; they denied the existence of angels or spirits (Acts xxiii. 8); and their manner of living was in accordance with the Epicurean motto, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' No theology could be more contrary to the teaching of Christ. He ever bid men live as in the presence of an all-controlling and all-providing Father, and in continual expectation of a higher life to come. The Sadducees would look on Jesus as a harmless enthusiast beneath their notice, and accordingly they do not come forward as His active enemies until just at the close of His ministry, when they could no longer ignore His increasing influence.

3. The Mosaic law referred to by the Sadducees is found in Deut. xxv. 5, 6. The *first child* by the woman's second marriage was *registered* to her late husband; the object being 'that his name be not put out of Israel.'

4. Our Lord's answer to the Sadducees presents some difficulty at first sight, as His quotation, though decisive as to the life of the disembodied spirit, does not seem to prove a *bodily resurrection*. It may be observed that,—

(a) It is quite evident that, however obscure the reply may appear to us, it was seen, both by the questioners and the bystanders, to be unanswerable. If we do not understand it, *they did*.

(b) As the foundation of the Sadducees' errors was their unbelief in any spiritual existence at all, an argument that went to the root of the matter (as Christ's did, by showing that the patriarchs were still really alive after their bodily death) was in fact more weighty and far-reaching than one directed only at a particular development of their error.

(c) The spirit alone is not the man, any more than the body alone. Both together make *the man*.

Therefore God, in speaking of the patriarchs, had in view their entire and perfect natures; and though it is true their bodies *were* dead, yet in God's sight that death was but a temporary sleep.

(d) The words 'I am the God of' refer to the *covenant* between God and the patriarchs. 'Part of this covenant,' writes Mr. G. Warrington, 'was the possession of the land, which was promised to Abraham and his seed. Yet Abraham did not obtain this promise. The solution of this paradox is to be found in Heb. xi., where it is laid down that Abraham looked for 'a heavenly country,' *i.e.*, he looked to obtain God's promise of 'the land,' not in an earthly but in a heavenly fashion. In other words, *he looked for a resurrection life to come*. This faith of Abraham, in believing the sureness of God's promise when its accomplishment seemed impossible, was exactly what God required of Moses and the Israelites when He spoke the words in question, and it was to such as *had this faith* that the promise should come true. Therefore He proclaimed Himself as the God of Abraham, &c., regarding Abraham not only as still alive, but as *still looking for the realisation in bodily* (albeit heavenly) *life, of His promise about the land.*'

Observe that Jesus said, 'Even Moses showed' (see Luke). There were clearer proofs in other books of the O. T. (see Ps. xvi. 9; Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14; Dan. xii. 2; Hos. xiii. 14); but He chose the Pentateuch, because from it was derived the law which gave point to the question put to Him, and because it was, for the Sadducees, and indeed for all Jews, the ultimate appeal on all doctrinal differences.

5. It seems probable, from the excellent spirit afterwards manifested by the lawyer, that his question was not asked maliciously; and the word 'tempted,' in Matt., does not necessarily imply it, see Lesson LXXVIII., Note 2. But it may be that, though obviously a better man than the rest, he nevertheless shared the general hostility towards Jesus; in which case his frank commendation of our Lord's answer was all the more creditable to him.

His question was a constant bone of contention among the scribes and rabbis, one of those 'strivings about the law' against which St. Paul warns Titus (Tit. iii. 9).

6. Let it be carefully noted that our Lord's question, 'What think ye of Christ?' is not to be read as though it were 'What think ye of *Jesus-of Me?*' It means, 'What think ye of the Messiah whom ye are expecting?' See preface to Lesson LIV.

Lesson LXXVIII.—In the Temple—Denunciations.

'Being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.'

Read—Matt. xxii.; Learn—Luke xvi. 15; Ps. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 8, 9. (Hymns, 19, 60, 105, 108, 109, 141—143, 146, 172, 175, 359.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson, as taken in the Sketch, is quite different from every other in the Course. It is almost entirely taken up with the practical details of life and conduct, and is more like the Lessons on particular sins and duties which we draw from Old Testament

biographies or the Book of Proverbs. As the preceding and succeeding Lessons in this part of the Course have a certain similarity of character, being more or less occupied with the general subject of the rejection of Christ, this one will perhaps prove useful as giving a change of topic for one Sunday.

Each teacher will have to think out for himself the precise way in which to apply the several features of the Pharisees' character to his class, according to the sex, age, circumstances, &c., of the scholars. All that could be done in the Sketch was to give some *specimen* applications under each head.

All Sunday-school lessons on the details of character and conduct should end as the Sketch does, or in some similar way; *i.e.*, the children should be appealed to—(1) to bring their faults and failings to the throne of grace, to be forgiven for Christ's sake; (2) to seek the aid of the Divine Spirit, 'without Whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy.'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Passionate and irritable people—gentle and patient people: how different! Now if passionate man spoke to you, or of you, very severely, you might not mind it—might say, 'It is his way,' &c. But if the severe words came from very gentle person, would feel them keenly—say, 'Must be deserved: *he* would not speak so without cause.'

Then whose severe words must be severest of all? We sing, 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,' and see 2 Cor. x. 1. What must *His* rebukes be! 'The Lamb' was slain to save us from God's just wrath against sin; but how be saved from '*the wrath of the Lamb*'? (Rev. vi. 16; 2nd text for rep.)

To-day see what terrible denunciations even Jesus could utter.

Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees—priests, scribes, elders—all repulsed [*last two Lessons*]. Now they shall know what He thinks of them. The whole multitude, excited by the conflicts they have watched all that long day, shall hear His words (see Luke xx. 45)—His last words to His proud and bitter foes.

See what He calls them: 'Hypocrites' seven times (ver. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29); 'blind guides' twice (ver. 16, 24); 'fools and blind' twice (ver. 17, 19); worst of all (ver. 33), 'serpents' and 'vipers'! Why all this? because they deserved it? Then let us see what He accused them of—perhaps may find some sins mentioned which *we* have done, which would make *us* deserve these same fearful names. Is that possible? Let us think. Here are *Eight Woes* uttered by Christ: see why each was spoken.

1. Ver. 13: *They hindered the 'Kingdom.'* Giving up sin and coming to Christ, is like entering a palace [*comp. parable in Lesson LXXV*]. Did the Pharisees go in when called? Not only refused, but hindered others (see John vii. 46—52, ix. 22, xii. 42).

Some of you are refusing the invitation—won't 'come in.' But is that all? Have you not hindered others, enticing them away, laughing at them, threatening them? Even about church or school, it might be said to some, 'Ye neither go in, nor

suffer them that are entering to go in!' To such Jesus says, '*Woe unto you!*'

2. Ver. 14: *They put on a show of religion for the sake of gain.* Widows, deceived by a Pharisee's long prayers, would trust him with their little money, and be swindled. (Perhaps such a man the widow's 'adversary' in the parable, Luke xviii. 3.)

Have you ever pretended to be very good, in order to be trusted, to win parent's, master's, or teacher's, favour? to get some present or promotion? Have smaller children trusted in you, and you played them some trick? To such Jesus says, '*Woe unto you!*'

3. Ver. 15: *They tried hard to win men, not to God, but to themselves.* But did they not hate and despise Gentiles? yes, but if could get one to join *them*, be circumcised, keep all their tiresome rules, &c., what a triumph for them! For *this* they cared—not to make him God's holy and loving child. Plenty of zeal, but zeal in a bad cause; see Acts. xxii. 3; Rom. x. 2. [*See Note 2.*]

How eager some boys to get others to 'come along with them,' to be in their 'set' or 'party,' even to join their church or school! *This may be good, but how often the feeling merely selfishness, or envy! how rarely is it with a view to bringing them to Christ! Yet if not this, He only says, 'Woe unto you!'*

4. Ver. 16—22: *They misled the people about oaths, &c.* If a man promised, with an oath 'by the gold of the Temple,' to do something, must keep promise; but if the oath 'by the Temple,' need not. How foolish and puzzling! and what temptations to break word! What does Jesus say? ver. 21, 22—every oath alike, the same as 'by God'; and what does He say of *that*? see Matt. v. 33—37; comp. Jas. v. 12.

Is not this exactly a boy's fault?—making subtle distinctions—thinking 'I swear I will' more binding than 'I will'—thinking one kind of swearing wicked, another 'no harm.' In other things, too—'I may say *this*, but not *that*'—a lie shameful, but prevarication or deceitful *act* a thing to boast of. To such Jesus says, '*Woe unto you!*'

5. Ver. 23, 24: *Their religion was a religion of trifles.* When they paid their tithes for God's service (Lev. xxvii. 30), careful to reckon not only corn, oil, fruit, &c., but every little herb. Was it not right to be so particular? yes ('not leave the other undone'), but they gave this to God *instead of greater things*—instead of what? ver. 23. Would be proud and unjust, yet think 'all right' because had paid all those little tithes!

Just like some of us! keep outward rules (*e.g.*, regular attendance at church and school) strictly; even in little things (*e.g.*, saying all the responses, handling Bibles carefully). All very good; but where is the real love of God, and unselfish, gentle life? To how many such must Jesus say; 'Woe unto you!'

6, 7. Ver. 25—28 (two 'woes' very much alike): *Their religion an outside religion.* See some more things they were so strict about, Mark vii. 2—4. So men admired them; they were 'beautiful outwardly'—like what? ver. 27—but what a picture of their hearts! full of everything foul and bad.

This much worse than the last. May be *sincere* about trifles, though mistaken. But pretence and hypocrisy—how hateful! Any of you like this? What is *in your heart*? Would you like any one to see *all* that is there? Not one of us could bear that. Yet God sees, 1 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Kings viii. 39; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Jer. xvii. 10; and David wished Him to see, to search every corner, Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24—but what for? that all might be cleansed, Ps. li. 2, 6, 10. But if you like the sin, and are content to be good outside, then will Jesus say, 'Woe unto you!'

8. Ver. 29, 32: *They revered dead prophets, but persecuted living ones.* Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah—how they honoured those names! but John the Baptist—how did they treat *him*? Jesus Himself—how did they treat *Him*? The Apostles, by-and-bye—how would they treat *them*? ver. 31.

Do you say, I am not like them in *that*, at all events? How do you treat *your mother*? and if you had next week to stand *by her grace*, what would you think of *her then*?

THUS WE SEE WHAT THE THINGS ARE THAT MAKE CHRIST ANGRY: everything false, deceitful, hypocritical. True religion like *good coin*; and all *counterfeits* He hates.

Have we been guilty of any of these things? To think of that kind Face looking at us in sad displeasure! What do? see second text for rep.—'Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.' 'Kiss'—what meant? Come to Him, worship Him, love Him, entreat His mercy [*illust.*—*repentant child seeking mother's kiss*]. And see rest of verse—'Blessed . . . they that trust Him'—why? so full of love. Looking at these denunciations against the Pharisees, you might say (Ps. lxxvii. 9), 'Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?' But see His *last words*, ver. 37—an outburst of pity! comp. Ps. xxx. 5, ciii. 9; Isa. liv. 8; Mic. vii. 18.

How may we avoid these things? See third text for rep.—'in the flesh,' naturally, of ourselves, 'cannot please Him'; yet see the way—'the Spirit dwelling in us.' Can we hope for *that*? to have God the Holy Ghost in our sinful hearts? see Luke xi. 13.

NOTES.

1. On 'phylacteries,' &c., see Lesson LXV.; on 'uppermost rooms' (or 'places'), Lesson LXII., Note 2; and on ver. 8—12, Lesson LXXII.

2. By 'proselytes' must be understood, not such as Cornelius and others, who worshipped the true God while still remaining Gentiles, but those who were circumcised and submitted to the whole Mosaic law and Pharisaic traditions. Such proselytes, if not changed in heart, might still retain their heathen vices and superstitions along with their new ritual observances, and thus be 'twofold children of hell.'

There is an allusion to the proselytising zeal of the Jews in Horace, *Sat.* i. iv. 143; and to their habit of tampering with oaths, in Martial, ix. 94.

3. 'A debtor,' in ver. 16, and 'guilty' in ver. 18, are the same in the Greek; the word meaning strictly 'bound,' *i.e.*, by the oath. 'Sanctifieth the gold'; rather, 'makes it sacred.'

4. 'Mint, anise, and cummin' are small herbs, used in the East both in medicine and cookery. 'Anise' is probably 'dill.'

5. '*Strain at a gnat*,' rather 'strain out.' This is a mere misprint, the word being 'out' in early editions of our English Bible. The Jews carefully strained their wine, lest they should be defiled by swallowing an insect. The gnat was one of the unclean animals (see Lev. xi. 41, 42),

and so was the camel (ver. 4) which our Lord took as the type of the greater sins concerning which the Pharisees had no scruple.

6. '*Whited sepulchres*.' Once a year, on the 15th Adar, the Jewish graves were whitewashed, to render them conspicuous, lest the passer-by should be made unclean (Numb. xix. 16) by touching them unawares.

7. '*From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias*.' This Zacharias is probably Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, who was stoned in the Temple-court in the reign of Joash, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22. His being named by our Lord as the last of the martyrs may be accounted for by the fact that, in the ancient Jewish arrangement of the O. T., the Books of Chronicles came *last*, so that Abel and Zechariah would be the first and last examples in the Scriptures (*Lightfoot*). It is worth noting, too, that in each case there is a call for Divine vengeance: 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me' (Gen. iv. 10); 'Let the Lord look upon it and require it' (2 Chron. xxiv. 22).

Another reason is suggested to the writer by Mr. G. Warington, viz., 'the intrinsic character of the two murders. *Abel's* was the murder of a *brother*, utterly unoffending, and hated only because of his *righteousness*, and his recognition of the way in which God's favour was to be

obtained, in contrast to his brother's passion and will-worship. *Zechariah's* was the murder of a *prophet*, hated for his *faithfulness* and plain-speaking. These two represented the leading features of that murder which the Jews were about to commit, and the complicated guilt which they would thus bring upon their heads.'

That Christ was not imputing to that generation the actual guilt of their fathers, is clear from the fact that their fathers did not kill Abel, much less shed 'all the righteous blood shed upon the earth.' What He meant, no doubt, was that their guilt in killing the Son of Man, the representative and federal head of His Church, was *as great* as that of all other murders of His people put together. All persecutions of

His servants had been persecution of Himself (Acts ix. 4; comp. Matt. xxv. 40, 45), and, conversely, the persecution of Himself involved the persecution of all His members.

But why is *Zechariah* here called the 'son of *Barachias*'? The most probable explanation is that Christ did *not* so call him, there being no such words in the parallel passage in Luke (xi. 51), and that the mistake is due to some early copyist having confounded *Jehoiada's* son with the prophet *Zechariah*, who (*Zech. i. 1*) was 'the son of *Berechiah*.'

s. Ver. 14 is omitted in the oldest MSS., but its contents appear in Mark and Luke, and are therefore included in the Sketch.

Lesson LXXIX.—In the Temple—The Final Rejection.

'To the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.'

Read—John xii. 20—43; Learn—1 Cor. i. 22—24; John xii. 32, 33. (*Hymns* 40, 42, 62, 63, 90, 101, 127, 167, 238, 312.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The last Lesson consisted almost entirely of application; this Lesson only gives the opportunity for a very brief and general one. Then our attention was fixed on the human heart and its wickedness; now on Christ and His redemption. Yet, as has been observed before, the simple exhibition of the Lord Jesus in His self-sacrificing love is the most powerful of applications; and if this is done faithfully, we have a right to expect in our classes a fulfilment of the great prophecy brought before us in this Lesson—'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.'

Senior-class teachers may prefer taking the passage verse by verse to adopting the more artificial method suggested in the Sketch. Further comments on some verses not taken in the Sketch will be found in the Notes. The illustration of a *magnet* can be worked out more fully by teachers who have sufficient knowledge to use it accurately, and who have classes that can appreciate it. The *repelling* as well as the *attracting* influence of the Cross (see 2 Cor. ii. 16) may be illustrated by it.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

We come to-day to a great crisis. What is a *crisis*? A time of decision one way or the other [*illustrate by crisis of a battle, or a game, or a choice for good or evil*—e.g., when, at end of long day on Carmel (1 Kings xviii.), *Elijah* prayed for 'an answer by fire,' while the people watched breathlessly: *that was a 'crisis.'*]

Look at ver. 23, 27—Jesus speaks of an 'hour' having come. that 'hour' to which He has so long looked forward. [*See explanation and references in Lesson LXX.*] Now what kind of 'hour' was it?—of joy or sorrow—success or failure—triumph or disappointment?

CHRIST'S 'HOUR'—WHAT WAS IT?

I. It seemed like an 'Hour' of Triumph.

(a) Think of Jerusalem in that week—preparations for Passover—crowds from all parts—easily excited [*illustr.—like heap of shavings ready to flare up if one spark fall on it*]. Many things talked of, but one great topic—the Nazarene Prophet—who did really raise dead man to life only two miles off—who boldly entered city in procession

—whom so many Galileans think to be *Messiah*, but whom the rulers wish to kill.

(b) Here are some Gentile foreigners, who (like the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 27) have learned to know the true God, and have 'come up to worship at the feast,' ver. 20. How much to startle and annoy them in Jerusalem!—[*illustr. for senior classes—Luther at Rome*—cattle-market in only part of Temple they may enter, luxury of priests, arrogance of Pharisees, Roman troops obliged to keep order even in the 'holy city.' But, they, too, hear of the Nazarene—who dared to drive out those traders—who speaks 'as never man spake'—who is no turbulent, bigoted Jew, but calm, wise, loving:—is not this the very person to guide and teach them, to clear up the perplexities in their minds, and make them wise and good? See the request, ver. 21—'We would see Jesus.'

(c) Now come into the Temple. An admiring multitude round Jesus—have been listening all day to His wondrous words, how He has met every hard question, re-

pulsed every attack, exposed and denounced his enemies' hypocrisy [see *three last Lessons*—how keenly they have watched it all!—how excited they now are!—how ready to hail Him as the long-looked-for King—what a joyous Passover if Messiah has come at last! And now a peal in the heavens, ver. 29—'Is it thunder, or an angel's voice?' Can we not see the crowd on the tip-toe of expectation?

All the city thinking and talking of Him—Greeks seeking Him—Jews ready to crown Him—what a seeming 'hour' of triumph!

II. *But it proved to be an 'Hour' of Rejection and Suffering.*

What was that startling sound that seemed like thunder? ver. 28. Why this Voice? a 'sign' for the people? God's own call to them to receive His Son? Yes, partly (ver. 30); otherwise God need not have spoken audibly. But why the message at all? See ver. 27—Jesus 'troubled'—the Father speaks to comfort Him. Why 'troubled'? does He foresee all the awful sufferings now so near? but so He had before, and then how did He regard them? [See *Lessons LX., LXXII.*] Ah, but remember He has a man's heart, and now He begins to feel the shame and pain of being reckoned as one guilty—the burden of our guilt laid upon Him (Isa. liii. 6) crushes Him down.

How, then, came the Rejection?

(a) Did the Greeks reject Him? We are not told whether they saw Him at all; but if they heard, or were told, His answer (ver. 23—26), how offended they would be! Why? Because He speaks of *Death*—that He is going to die (ver. 24)—that His followers must be ready to die too (ver. 25)—instead of listening to His teachings as to that of a wise philosopher, they must go with Him to suffering and the grave. Certainly they would turn from a Master who spoke like that.

(b) Did the Jews reject Him? How so, if ready to make Him King? But see ver. 32, 33—He tells them plainly what must happen to Him first—'lifted up,' i.e., hung upon a cross [see *Note 4*], put to death by the Romans as a vile slave! Enough to turn them against Him!—'how can He be Messiah? is not Messiah to live and reign for ever?' (ver. 34; see Ps. lxxxix. 36; Isa. ix. 7; Dan. vii. 14). Then see His answer, ver. 35, 36 [see *Lesson LV.*]—let them not expect to have Him with them 'for ever'—only 'a little while'; if they believe not on Him quickly, the 'darkness' of sin and misery on them. It does not take

long to decide, ver. 37—such a King as this won't do for them. Imagine hope turning to disappointment, admiration to rage!—and, three days afterwards, they are crying 'Crucify Him!'

Why then the Rejection? what the cause of offence? see 1st text for rep.—'Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block' (can't 'get over it'), and 'to the Greeks foolishness.'

III. *Yet it was really an 'Hour' of Triumph after all.*

Bitter to Jesus to see the people turning from Him (*this* was part of His suffering); bitter to feel the crushing weight of man's sin; and yet,—

(a) See what he says to Philip and Andrew when they bring the Greeks' request, ver. 23—an 'hour' of glory! How? ver. 24—if you put your seed away in a drawer, will you get a crop from it? what do with it? put it in the ground? but then it will break up and die—ah, but that's the very thing wanted if new corn to spring up (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 36). So with Jesus—if He died not, would 'abide alone'—go back to His glory in heaven, but take none with Him. But He will die—then a harvest of saved souls. So He 'sees His seed' (Isa. liii. 10), and 'for the joy set before Him endures the cross' (Heb. xii. 2).

(b) See what He tells the Jews, ver. 32. He is going to 'draw all men to Him'—when? as He sits on His royal throne? no, but as He hangs on the cross, dying like the meanest slave! The cross should be the magnet to attract men. They would think of the Son of God dying for their sin, and that would melt their hard hearts. 'All men,' too, Greeks as well as Jews—no difference—all guilty (Rom. iii. 9), and salvation for all (Rom. x. 12). Look again at 1st text for rep.—'To them that believe, both Jews and Greeks,' Christ crucified is *not* a stumbling-block, *not* foolishness, but—?

Think of the triumphs of the Cross since then! Wherever the story of Christ crucified is told, men are 'drawn' to Him.

HOW DOES THE CROSS CONCERN US?

Are we 'drawn' to Christ? Do we feel the magnetic power of His love? We like to hear of missionary successes, of the heathen being 'drawn' to their Saviour; but are we, all the while, rejecting Him ourselves?

We think the Jews guilty who rejected Jesus because they could not understand the Cross. We do understand it—if we reject Him, what must our guilt be!

NOTES.

1. Commentators differ as to the particular day on which the incidents of this passage occurred. Greswell and Stier place them on the day of the Entry, Sunday. Canon Norris, in an excellent little book lately published, *A Key to the Four Gospels*, places them on Wednesday. But most writers think that they occurred on Tuesday,

after Christ's long series of conflicts with the rulers.

This chapter appears to describe the falling away from Him of the people, who up to this have been well-disposed towards Him, despite the rulers' antagonism, but who are now offended at His plain announcement of His coming death.

2. Jesus was probably now in the Court of the Women (see Plan on page 146, and Lesson LV., Note 2), in which was the 'treasury'—the thirteen large chests, with openings shaped like trumpets, into which the people 'cast gifts.' Here He saw and commended the widow who 'threw in two mites' (Mark xii. 41-44), and hither would be brought to Him the request of the Greeks, who, not being permitted to come beyond the outer court of the Gentiles, were unable to approach Him. The wall which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the Temple was called the 'Wall of Partition,' to which St. Paul alludes in Eph. ii. 14—'He [Christ] is our peace, who hath made both [*i.e.*, Jews and Gentiles] one, and hath broken down the wall of partition.' This fact enhances the significance of Christ's words on receiving the message; three days more, and His death would put an end to all separation; He was going to die 'that He might reconcile *both* unto God in one body by the cross' (Eph. ii. 16).

Why did the Greeks apply specially to Philip? Perhaps they were from the Gentile cities which had sprung up around the Lake of Galilee (see Additional Note IV., page 58), and had known him there; which would account for the mention here of Bethsaida as his city (ver. 21). It may also be observed that Philip is a Greek name, which may suggest that this Apostle had foreign connections.

3. The voice from heaven was the third in the course of our Lord's ministry. At His Baptism it was (probably) heard only by Himself and the Baptist. At the Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John heard it. Now all the people hear it. It is not likely that even those who thought 'an

angel spake' could distinguish the words; comp. Acts ix. 7, xxii. 9.

The 'trouble' of soul, to calm which the Father's assurance came, was without doubt a foretaste of the 'agony' of Gethsemane. Bengel says, 'The horror of death, and the ardour of obedience, were contending in our Lord.' Hence the exclamation, 'What shall I say?' 'Save me from this hour'—here is the 'horror of death'; 'Father, glorify Thy Name'—here is the 'ardour of obedience.'

4. '*Lifted up from the earth.*' Twice before had Jesus used this phrase, John iii. 14, viii. 28. It was no doubt a current expression specifically applied to crucifixion, just as the word '*hang*,' which does not of itself imply death, has with us come to mean a particular mode of execution. See the next verse—'This He said, signifying what death He should die.'

5. On ver. 29, 40, compare Lesson XL., Note 2. Ver. 41—'These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him'—is a striking proof of Christ's Divinity, as it identifies Him plainly with Jehovah. See Isa. vi. 1-5.

6. It is difficult to say what is the precise relation of ver. 44-50 to the rest of the chapter. Certainly ver. 36 concludes the history, and ver. 37-43 contain the Evangelist's summing up of the situation. Some think, therefore, that the subsequent sayings are fragments of various discourses cited by St. John in illustration of what he has just written. But, against this, there is the expression, in ver. 44, 'Jesus cried,' *i.e.*, 'cried out loudly,' as in John vii. 37 and on the cross. Perhaps the words were a solemn farewell spoken just as He was finally departing from the Temple, as mentioned in ver. 36.

Lesson LXXX.—On Olivet—Concerning the Fall of Jerusalem.

'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.'

Read—Matt. xxiv. (*parts*); (*comp.* Mark. xiii.; Luke xxi.); Learn—Luke xix. 43, 44; Rom. xi. 20, 21. (*Hymns*, 82, 84, 86, 132, 141, 188, 196, 233, 234.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The teacher will have to study with unusual care the two chapters which come before us in this and the three following Lessons, if he is to be really 'furnished' for his teaching, and prepared to answer the questions of intelligent children. For this purpose, not only are the 'Notes' to this Lesson exceptionally full, but two 'Additional Notes' are appended, one on the interpretation of the discourse, the other containing a brief historical sketch of the Fall of Jerusalem. The works there mentioned should be referred to, if accessible. Two admirable chapters in Smith's *Student's New Testament History* will also be found most suggestive; and in the latter part of an instructive and well-written tale called *Helena's Household* (Nelson) is embodied a vivid account of the Siege.

In actual teaching, however (except with senior classes), the more difficult passages may properly be avoided. The teacher's time will be better occupied in relating various particulars of the destruction of the city and the miseries of the people—giving them just as he would give a 'story'—than in vainly endeavouring to explain the chapter verse by verse. No teaching can be more useful than that which displays the exact fulfilment of prophecy; and after so many lessons in which the national rejection of Christ has been the leading topic, it is important to describe the terrible consequences of that rejection. In particular, the Lesson (LXXXV.) on the Fruitless Fig-tree prepared the way for the solemn teachings of the subject before us.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

We left Jesus going out of the Temple for the last time, after His rejection by the mistaken and disappointed people [*recapitulate*]. The Apostles with him—are they downcast?—yet how easily their thoughts turned to other things [*illustr.—like boys' eyes wandering even during most solemn lesson*]—admiring the Temple in its splendour, its white marble and glittering gold—wondering at huge stones in walls and towers—watching the workmen still enlarging and beautifying it [*see Note 2*]; and now pointing all out to their Master. But where are His thoughts? ver. 2—He looks forward forty years, as He did two days ago [*Lesson LXXIV.*], and sees where those great stones will be *then*.

Down into the Kedron valley—up the slope of Olivet—there He sits gazing on Jerusalem—Temple right opposite in all its glory—sun fast sinking behind the city. Disciples troubled at His words—four of them (see Mark) must ask more about it.

1. *The Disciples' Question*, ver. 3. Three things they want to know. (a) 'These things' (the calamities on Jerusalem)—when? (b) That 'coming,' and (c) that 'end of the world,' which He has mentioned (Matt. x. 23, xiii. 40, 49, xvi. 27, 28)—how are they to know when they will be? It is all a puzzle to them; and no wonder—for what have they been expecting? Jesus' triumph in that very Jerusalem—and now He is rejected and the city to be destroyed!—*when shall He reign? now? or not till 'end of world'?*

2. *Christ's Answer*. Extends all through these two chapters. Does He tell what they want to know? Calamities on the Jews (xxiv. 15—21)—His Coming (xxiv. 27, 30, 37, xxv. 13, 19, 31)—the 'end' and Last Judgment (xxiv. 6, 13, 14, 45, xxv. 31—46)—all mentioned plenty of 'signs' too (xxiv. 6, 7, 14, 15, 30, 32). But *no time*—God keeps that to Himself (xxiv. 36; comp. Acts i. 7)—all they can do is to be always on the look-out, always *ready* (xxiv. 42, 44, xxv. 13).

But let us look at some of these prophecies, and see how wondrously they have been fulfilled. To-day take only one of the subjects,—

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

I. THE CALAMITIES TO COME UPON THE JEWS.

(a) *Great Tribulation*, ver. 21, comp. Luke xxi. 23—'great distress, and wrath upon the people'—so great that none like it (comp. Joel ii. 2). The same things spoken by God through Moses, Deut. xxviii. 47—57. As Moses said, and as Christ said, so it came to pass. One cruel and covetous Roman governor after another during several years—every kind of oppression—at last Jews driven mad—rebelled against Romans—Romans besieged Jerusalem—the most dreadful sufferings. When city

attacked, crowded for Passover; then six months to the end. Famine worse and worse—people fighting for scraps of food. Constant tumults within—different parties hating and killing one another. Roman army scaling wall after wall, burning tower after tower, ever getting closer in. Wicked men calling on people to fight on, for *Messiah* would surely come to their aid—*when their true Messiah they had crucified*. [*See Addit. Note XI., page 217.*]

(b) *Slaughter and Captivity*, Luke xxi. 24. And Moses' words again, Deut. xxviii. 64—68. So it was. Many in despair gave themselves up to Romans—by them crucified by hundreds on Olivet, in sight of city. When city taken at last, all sick and aged killed, children sold to be slaves, many sent to different cities of empire to fight with wild beasts at public shows. And for centuries after, Jews persecuted everywhere, even by nations called Christian (*e.g.*, in England, under Henry III.). Even now, are they *liked*?—and still scattered all over world—no country or king of their own.

(c) *Jerusalem 'trodden down of the Gentiles'*, Luke xxi. 24. The Roman general, Titus, wanted to save the beautiful Temple, but soldier set fire to it—all destroyed. Walls beaten down, houses burnt, ground levelled and ploughed up—could not have told a city had been there! Afterwards rebuilt, but ever since in Gentile hands—Romans, Persians, Saracens, Turks—and *is still*.

But will it be for ever? See same verse—'until' certain 'times' are fulfilled—so *not afterwards*. So we hope and believe that one day the Jews will have Jerusalem again! see Ezek. xxxvi. 24—38; Amos ix. 11—15; Zech. xii. 6. But are they still to reject the Lord Jesus? see Rom. xi. 1, 2, 15, 23—31; Zech. xiii. 10; Matt. xxiii. 39. [*See Note 9.*]

II. THE DANGERS AND DELIVERANCE OF THE DISCIPLES.

Jesus mentions three dangers:—

(a) *Persecution*, ver. 9; Luke xxi. 12. This began as soon as Jesus had ascended, see Acts iv. v. vii., viii., xii. And so it went on afterwards, from both Romans and Jews; see 2 Tim. iii. 11, 12, iv. 16, 17 (where St. Paul speaks of his trial before the cruel emperor Nero); Heb. x. 32, 33; 1 Pet. iv. 12—16; Rev. i. 9, ii. 10, 13. We read of their being beheaded, crucified, burnt alive, thrown to the lions.

(b) *Treachery*, ver. 10; Mark xiii. 12; Luke xxi. 16—to be betrayed even by nearest relations and friends! More than one Judas in the Church! This worst of all (see Ps. xli. 9, lv. 12—14); and it did come: many who were threatened by Nero told where other Christians might be found, to escape torture [*see Note 4*].

(c) *Imposture*, ver. 11, 23, 24. These false teachers—how numerous! how dan-

gerous! see Acts xx. 30; 2 Cor. xi. 13—15; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3, vi. 3—5; 2 Pet. ii.; 1 John ii. 18, iv. 1; Jude 4; Rev. ii. 2, 14, 15, 20.

Yet, with these alarming prospects, two encouragements—

(1) *Progress of the Gospel*, ver. 14. See how widely the glad news had spread, only a few years after, Col. i. 6, 23 [see *Addit. Note X.*, page 215]. Think of St. Paul's journeys, Rom. xv. 19—and he only one. And, despite all opposition, the Gospel is spreading still: what are your missionary haltpiece for?

(2) *Safety of the faithful*, ver. 13; Luke xxi. 18—'not a hair perish'!—how so, if some killed?—ah, what mattered death? it was only going to join the dear Master in glory. He means as in Matt. x. 29, 30—nothing happen 'without their Father'—without God's will; and must not *that* be best? But, from the dreadful sufferings of Jerusalem, the Christian Jews were saved. They watched for the *sign* (ver. 15; Luke xxi. 20)—the moment they saw it, they fled in haste, as Jesus told them (ver. 16—18), and escaped. [See *Notes 5, 6.*]

Think of the despised Nazarene, who was to be nailed to a cross like a vile criminal three days after, sitting on Olivet, and *foretelling all these things!* How true, ver. 35—'My words shall not pass away'! Every time you see a Jew, think of Christ's un-failing words.

BUT CHRIST'S UNFAILING WORDS ARE NOT ALL DONE WITH YET.

Take two of them: one about the Jews who were destroyed—the other about the Christians who escaped:—

1. *Ver. 28.* Jerusalem was like a decaying 'carcase'—no life or sweetness—all foul (comp. xxiii. 27). So thither swiftly came God's judgments, like vultures to their prey [see *Note 8*]. But do vultures care *where* the carcase is? No—'where-soever.' Are any of us 'dead in sins,' corrupt in heart, vile in God's sight? Even boys and girls *may* be so. For what was Jerusalem's great sin? *Rejection of Christ.* Are you guilty of that? Then you are in danger of like judgments. Do you say, God is too kind? What does our 2nd text for rep. say?

2. *Ver. 13.* Who *did* escape those calamities? Those who were Christians for a little while, and then gave up? No—'he that shall endure to the end.' Some of you have enrolled yourselves among the 'disciples.' You will meet what they did—persecution, treachery, imposture; some ill-treating you, some plotting against you, some trying to deceive you. But, if you would be 'saved,' must 'endure.' Is it very hard? See what the Lord said to some of those early Christians, Rev. iii. 7—12: 'I have loved thee'—'I will keep thee'—'I come quickly'!

NOTES.

1. To assist in the comparison of the reports of this discourse by the three Evangelists respectively, it may be observed—(a) That Matthew's is the fullest, and should be taken as the basis of study; (b) that Mark adds nothing of importance except the names of the inquiring disciples and the directions in ver. 11; (c) while, in Luke, there are important additions in ver. 11, 15, 18, 19, 20—24, 25, 26, 34—36. Sections of the discourse as given by Matthew occur, in other connections, in Luke xii. and xvii.

2. The Temple was still being enlarged and embellished in Christ's time, and was in fact not finished till within a few years of its destruction; and the disciples (as the Greek implies) pointed out the building *materials* as well as the buildings. Luke also mentions 'gilt': these were golden crowns, shields, and other valuable ornaments, contributed by (among others) the Herods and the Roman emperors. Milman gives a fine description of the grandeur of Herod's Temple, *Hist. of the Jews*, vol. II., p. 29. The prediction that not one stone should be left upon another was literally fulfilled as regards the Temple itself; the huge stones still to be seen in the lower courses of the Haram wall were part of the great wall surrounding the entire range of buildings and courts.

3. The fulfilment of the various 'signs' mentioned by Christ—impostors, wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes—is abundantly witnessed by the historians Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus, &c. For instance, Suetonius speaks of 'continual drought;' (comp. Acts xi.

28); and Seneca alludes to earthquakes in Asia, Achaia, Macedonia, Syria, and Cyprus. The following passages in Josephus may be referred to:—*Antiq.* iii. 16, 3; xx. 5, 1; 7, 6—10; 8, 9; 21, 38; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 12, 1—3; 13, 4; iv. 4, 5. Long lists of such occurrences, culled from these writers, are given by Greswell, Alford, Stier, and other commentators.

Our Lord's mention also of 'fearful sights and great signs' (Luke xxi. 11) gives some credibility to the strange prodigies enumerated by Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* vi. 5, 3) and alluded to by Tacitus. The most striking of these are:—a meteor, shaped like a sword, hanging over the city; a light at night around the Temple; armed hosts and chariots seen in the clouds; mighty voices, as of a multitude, heard in the Temple.

4. Two of Christ's predictions concerning His disciples receive illustration from the pages of Tacitus. '*Hated of all nations for My name's sake*'—'A race of men detested for their crimes.' '*Then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another*'—'At first several were seized, who confessed, and then by their discovery a great multitude of others were convicted.' (Tacit. *Annal.* xv.)

5. '*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place,*' &c. To what the three-used words in Daniel (ix. 27, xl. 31, xli. 11) exactly refer, is much disputed. As Alford says, they are probably pregnant with several fulfillments, some yet future. The particular fulfilment at the Siege of Jerusalem must not be confounded (as it is by many commentators) with the

other and quite different sign mentioned in Luke XXI 20. Our Lord's warning there, 'When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,' doubtless refers to the attack on the city by Cestius Gallus four years before the final siege (see Additional Note XI., p. 217), which, as a matter of fact, was taken by the Christians as a signal for flight. But *here* Christ speaks of an 'abomination in the holy place,' which must mean the Temple; and it cannot refer to the capture of the Temple, because the Christians had escaped before that; nor to the mere presence of the Roman standards in Jerusalem, for they had been there many years. The 'abomination' should rather be something caused by the Jews themselves (comp. 2 Kings xxi. 2-7; Ezek. v. 11, viii. 6-16), which should 'fill up the measure of their fathers,' and so bring 'desolation.'

Now shortly after the repulse of Cestius Gallus the Temple fell into the hands of the Zealots (see Addit. Note XI., p. 217), and various sacrilegious deeds committed by them are recorded by Josephus. It is probable, therefore, that some particularly gross act of desecration during this 'reign of terror' was recognised by the Christians as the fulfilment (for that occasion) of the prophetic words of Daniel.

This is the view of Stier, Alford, and Wordsworth. The latter has a long and very interesting note on the subject.

6. The Christians, warned by the double sign, and, according to the Church historian Eusebius, also by a direct Divine intimation, obeyed the Lord's injunction, and fled to Pella, one of the cities of Decapolis, which continued for fifty years to be the seat of the 'Church of Jerusalem.' And the tradition has always been accepted, that not one of the despised 'sect of the Nazarenes' perished in the siege.

'Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day.' The latter reference is not to the Christian observance of the Lord's Day, as the Jewish Saturday is meant. They were to pray that neither *natural* nor *legal* difficulties might impede their flight. The actual escape was probably in October, a very mild month in Palestine.

7. 'Except those days should be shortened,' &c. Many circumstances combined to secure the *primary* fulfilment of these words (which, no doubt, have also an ulterior meaning). The incomplete state of the fortifications, the paucity of food, the faction fights within the city, &c., shortened the siege; and Titus himself exclaimed, 'God has fought for us; what could human hands or engines do against these towers?'

8. 'Wheresoever the carcase is, there shall the eagles,' &c. Not the Roman 'eagles' or standards, as sometimes explained: the word means 'vultures.' The expression is proverbial: wherever *corruption* is, thither comes *judgment*—whether at Jerusalem or elsewhere.

9. 'Learn a parable of the fig-tree.' If there is an allusion here to the fruitless fig-tree which Christ had cursed, an important prophetic hint is indirectly conveyed. The withered fig-tree shall again 'put forth leaves'; Israel shall yet become fruitful; and then the Coming of Christ will be 'nigh, even at the doors.'

This view is supported by the next verse, 'This generation shall not pass,' &c. If 'generation' be taken in its ordinary sense, then ver. 29-31 must be understood as having a partial fulfilment at the destruction of Jerusalem, which seems hardly possible. See Additional Note X., below. But the word here (and also in Matt. xi. 16, xii. 39, xxiii. 36; Acts ii. 40; and in Phil. ii. 15—where our translation renders it 'nation') probably means a *race*—not that mere *kinship* is implied, but the likeness of character which is stamped upon a family by its progenitors. 'This generation,' *i.e.*, *corrupt and unbelieving Israel*, 'shall not pass.' 'It will not die; it will propagate itself in children and children's children, as a generation ever the same as at present; this generation which rejects Me will so remain until it again cries Hosanna to Me in truth. *The withered fig-tree will stand until it again puts forth shoots*' (Stier). So Alford and Ryle. The continued separate existence of the Jewish people to the present day is a standing proof of the truth of this prophecy.

ADDITIONAL NOTE X.

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF ST. MATTHEW XXIV. AND XXV.

The 24th and 25th chapters of St. Matthew are one discourse, and must be interpreted together. The key to their right understanding is furnished us in the form of the Apostles' question—'When shall these things [*i.e.*, the calamities on Jerusalem] be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?' Of all the three separate things here mentioned they had heard Him speak (see ver. 2; chap. x. 15, 23, xiii. 39, 49, xvi. 28, xxiii. 38); and although they did not understand the relation of one to another, yet their question may well be our guide in studying Christ's reply.

Does our Lord then give a clear answer to these three inquiries?

Certainly He does not reveal to the Apostles the 'times and seasons' at all.

Nor is the prophecy so plain as that they should be able to distinguish in it the separate features of the three events. Just as, in Old Testament prophecy, there are predictions both of Messiah's First Advent in humiliation and of His Second Advent in glory, which those who lived before the first series had been fulfilled were unable to distinguish, so is it in this discourse. 'Future events in time may be compared to distant objects in space. Two ridges of hills, rising the one above the other, are seen in the horizon almost as one, although there may be many miles between them; and it is only when the spectator arrives at the summit of the first ridge, that he is aware of the chasm between it and the second' (Wordsworth). We can now discern the fulfilment of some of our Lord's

predictions in the events preceding and accompanying the destruction of Jerusalem, and can appreciate the length of time elapsing between that catastrophe and the Second Advent; but the relation of the Second Advent to the Last Judgment and 'End of the World' is still so obscure to us that many doubt whether they should be distinguished at all.

And not only are the predicted events mingled in the discourse, but the interpretation is further complicated by the fact that the earlier are types of the later; so that many of the expressions have both a primary sense in connection with the Fall of Jerusalem, and an ultimate sense in connection with Christ's Coming. For instance, the words, 'He that endureth till the end shall be saved,' must mean—(1) that those Jewish Christians who, despite all seductions (ver. 5, 11) and persecutions (ver. 9, 10), should abide steadfast, should be delivered from the national calamities; (2) that those who should endure the greater tribulations of the last days 'unto the end' should 'escape all those things that shall come to pass' (see Luke xxi. 36); while it may be universally applied to mean (3) that every one, in every age, who should endure to *his own* 'end,' i.e., death, should be saved. So again, it is true that, in a certain sense, the Gospel had been 'preached as a witness unto all nations' before the Fall of Jerusalem (see Col. i. 6, 23); yet this, in its full sense, is unquestionably to be one great sign of the Advent to come.

The catastrophe, therefore, which brought the Jewish dispensation to a final close, was, in a sense, a 'Coming of the Son of Man.' He came to save; He was rejected; and then He came to judge. And this Coming when the Jews' 'time of visitation,' or 'day of grace,' was at an end, was a foreshadowing of the greater Coming at the close of the corresponding 'times of the Gentiles' (see Luke xxi. 24). The premonitory signs should be the same—physical, national, and ecclesiastical troubles—persecution of the faithful—extended preaching of the Gospel. It may be that the more immediate signs will prove to be the same. An 'abomination of desolation' (see *Lesson LXXX., Note 5*) may again 'stand in the holy place'; and there is an obvious correspondence between the deliverance of the Christian Jews from the calamity which befell their nation (see *Lesson LXXX., Note 6*) and that 'gathering of the elect from the four winds' which is mentioned in immediate connection with the appearance of Christ in glory (Matt. xxiv. 31; comp. Luke xxi. 36). And as the destruction of the Temple, the cessation of its ritual, and the removal of everything that tended to localise Christianity, were essential to the growth, freedom, and stability of the visible Church, so will the final 'gathering out of the Kingdom all

things that offend, and them that do iniquity' (Matt. xiii. 41)—the final separation of 'wheat' and 'tares'—be essential to the ultimate establishment of the perfected Church of the redeemed.

Bearing in mind the foregoing considerations, we may thus arrange the discourse of these two chapters:—

1. Chap. xxiv. 4—14 describes the general features of the future, first in the Jewish nation (delusions, ver. 5), the Gentile world (troubles of all kinds, ver. 6—8), and the early Church (persecution, treachery, coldness, ver. 9—13, and yet progress, ver. 14); ultimately in the world and in the Church of the latter days.

2. Chap. xxiv. 15—28 refers directly to the destruction of Jerusalem, though not without typical foreshadowings of what is yet future.

3. Chap. xxiv. 29—41 predicts the occurrences of the Second Advent, though, from the very nature of prophecy, such of the statements as are *general* may have received prior partial fulfilments. A comparison of this passage with Luke xxi. 24—27 shows that the 'immediately' of ver. 29 does not mean immediately after the calamities on Jerusalem.

4. Chap. xxiv. 42—51, and chap. xxv. 1—30, contain the application of the subject of the Lord's Advent, in three parables: the first addressed especially to the Apostles, and teachers generally; the second and third, inculcating *watchfulness* and *diligence* respectively, to the whole Church.

5. The concluding passage, chap. xxv. 31—46, describes that final judgment which marks the 'end of the world' inquired about by the disciples. It seems clear that this is the judgment of Rev. xx. 11—15, described as coming at the *end* of that mysterious period which *follows* the Second Advent; and that the 'coming' of Matt. xxv. 31 is quite distinct from that of xxiv. 30. This is, of course, a much disputed point; but, without entering into prophetic controversies, it may be observed, on the chapters now before us, (1) that there is no mention of *judgment* in connection with the 'coming' of the 24th chap., the chief purpose of which is to 'gather the elect from the four winds'; and (2) that the professing Church alone is introduced in the three parables above-mentioned, while in chap. xxv. 32 we find 'all nations' gathered before the King.

Space will not allow of detailed reference to other passages of Scripture, but the following may be studied in connection with the subject:—Mal. iv.; Matt. x. 23, xvi. 27, 28; 1 Thess. iv., v.; 2 Thess. ii.; 2 Tim. iii.; 2 Pet. ii., iii.; Jude; Rev. vi., xvi., xix., xx. The views expressed in this Note are ably expounded and advocated by Stier and Alford *in loco*; and the teacher may also refer to *Hanna's Passion Week*, and to *Smith's Student's N. T. History*, chap. xix.

ADDITIONAL NOTE XI.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

The history of the Jews from our Lord's time may be thus briefly summarised :—

The Crucifixion was in A.D. 30. In A.D. 36 Pilate was deposed. In A.D. 41, by the favour of the Emperor Claudius, the provinces formerly comprising the kingdom of Herod the Great (*see Lesson VIII., Note 5*) were re-united under his grandson Herod Agrippa (the Herod of Acts xii.), under whom Jerusalem was further enlarged and fortified, and the Jews enjoyed considerable prosperity. At his death, in A.D. 44, Judæa again came under direct Roman rule, and nine years later, the oppressions of the successive procurators culminated in the profligacy and tyranny of Felix (Acts xxiv.), who is said by Tacitus to have 'wielded the power of a king in the spirit of a slave,' and to have crucified the Jews by hundreds. His successor Festus was an upright man; but the next governor, Albinus, proved greedy and cruel, and, under Gessius Florus (A.D. 65), who surpassed all his predecessors in rapacity, the Jews at length (A.D. 66) broke out into open rebellion.

Not, however, with patriotic unanimity. Fierce contests ensued in the city between rival factions; treachery, violence, and bloodshed, follow in quick alternation in the pages of Josephus. Ultimately the Zealots, a party of unscrupulous fanatics comprising the scum of the population, who scouted all compromise and were sworn to resist the Romans to the last, overpowered the more moderate party, and reigned paramount—being, however, speedily themselves divided into hostile camps.

Meanwhile Cestius Gallus, the Roman prefect of Syria, attacked the city, but was repulsed, pursued, and completely defeated at Bethshoron. The war continued three years, the Roman army, notwithstanding this check, gradually reducing and devastating the whole country, most of the unhappy inhabitants perishing miserably. At length, in the spring of A.D. 70, Titus appeared before Jerusalem, and the final siege began. The first and second walls, guarding the city on the north, were carried in April. To get any further, however, proved so difficult an undertaking, the defence being quite as furious and as ingenious as the attack, that it was determined to invest the place entirely; and, by the labour of the whole army, a wall or bank of earth was constructed all round the city. In the second week of June the castle of Antonia was taken by surprise, and from June 23rd to July 15th, such desperate struggles continued in the narrow streets that this period of the year has ever since been called by the Jews *yomin de'eka*, 'days of wretchedness.' On the latter day the

Temple was fired by a brand thrown in by a soldier contrary to orders, and was almost wholly destroyed. The Jews still, however, desperately defended the Upper City (Zion), rejecting with scorn the repeated overtures of Titus. The preparations for the final assault occupied some weeks, but at length it was made on (probably) Sept. 11th. The next day the conquerors penetrated the city, and fire and sword completed the utter desolation of Jerusalem.

The miseries endured by the devoted people during and after the siege are indescribable. The most horrible accounts of the effects of famine and the utter demoralisation of the city are given by Josephus, and may also be found in the graphic narratives of Milman (*History of the Jews*, Books xiv.—xvi.) and Merivale (*History of the Romans*, VI., chap. 59). Milman says, 'Every kind feeling, love, respect, natural affection, were extinct through the all-absorbing want. Wives would snatch the last morsel from husbands, children from parents, mothers from children If a house was closed, they supposed that eating was going on, and they burst in and squeezed the crumbs from the mouths and throats of those who were swallowing them. Old men were scourged till they surrendered the food to which their hands clung desperately Children were seized as they hung upon the miserable morsels they had got, whirled round and dashed upon the pavement. . . The most loathsome and disgusting food was sold at an enormous price. They gnawed their belts and shoes. Chopped hay and shoots of trees sold at high prices.' The revolting story of the woman who cooked and ate her own infant is well known, and illustrates the exact fulfilment of Deut. xxviii. 56, 57. Josephus himself says, 'All calamities, from the beginning of time, seem to me to shrink to nothing in comparison with those of the Jews.'

The succeeding half-century is an utter blank in the history of Jerusalem. But in A.D. 132, a desperate attempt was made by the Jews to recover their independence and rebuild the temple of their fathers, under a false Messiah, named Bar-Chocheba, which was not crushed without terrible bloodshed on both sides. Even the ruins left by Titus were then razed to the ground, the soil again ploughed up, and a new Roman city, with a new name and heathen temples, built on the sacred site. The name of Jerusalem was soon revived when Christianity became the dominant religion, and the traditional 'Holy Places' quickly became objects of universal veneration. But the Jews have never again had more than a tolerated existence in what was once the city of David and Solomon.

Lesson LXXXI.—On Olivet—Concerning Christ's Second Coming—I.

'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.'

Read—Matt. xxiv. (*parts*), xxv. 1–13; Learn—Matt. xxv. 6, 13; 2 Pet. iii. 14.
(Hymns 81–86, 105, 109–112, 196, 223, 289, 307, 363.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Each of the two sections of this Lesson would make a good lesson by itself, though, as they fit well together, most teachers will no doubt make an effort to bring in both. In that case, the treatment should be different in the senior and junior classes respectively: in the former, the predicted features of Christ's Coming should be rapidly pointed out in the reading, and quite two-thirds of the time occupied with the parable; while, in the latter, the Coming itself will need more careful explanation, and the parable may be just told as an illustrative story. Is this advice the exact reverse of what many would expect? Then let it be remembered (1) that some of our Lord's parables—certainly this one—are not easy subjects, but among the most difficult that can be taught to younger children; and (2) that the teachings of the 'Ten Virgins' are peculiarly suitable for the eldest classes—for those who have been confirmed or who have been the subjects of distinct religious impressions. The parable is for those who *have begun a life of piety* (see Note 4); though of course the application for others suggested in the closing words of the Sketch always lies in the back-ground.

The expression 'to be religious' is used in the Sketch because it is one always understood by boys and girls who may not quite 'take in' theological language. But of course more definite terms can be used where the scholars are accustomed to them.

Throughout the Lesson, the Second Coming of Christ in person should be chiefly in view, and *not merely death*—only this must not be suffered to detract from the pressing solemnity of the exhortations. The date of the former is as uncertain as that of the latter, and preparation should be for either.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

With what breathless attention must the four Apostles have listened to those words of woe! We know how the predictions were fulfilled [*refer to last Lesson*], but for *them* what wonder, perplexity, dismay! But, as evening is drawing on, the Temple (right in way of sinking sun) casting a great shadow over Olivet, Jesus goes on to speak still more solemnly.

What three things had they asked about? ver. 3. Which did we talk of last Sunday? Now see what He says of the *second* thing—*His Coming*. True, they fancied that the Fall of Jerusalem and His Coming were the same thing, or at least would happen together. But we know He has not come yet—so *has still to come*. See, then, what He tells us about it.

I. CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT.

1. *It will be a Coming with power and glory*, ver. 30; comp. Dan. vii. 13, 14. Every day we say to the *Father*, 'Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.' Now we see that 'such as the Father is, such is the Son' (*Athan. Creed*).

2. *It will be a sudden Coming*. Three illustrations Jesus gives us of this.—Ver. 27, *lightning*—Have you never been startled by the dazzling flash, lighting up in a moment the blackest night? Ver. 43, 44, *a thief*—does he warn you of his coming beforehand? have you ever awoke frightened, fancying 'some one in the house'?

Luke xxi. 35—a *snare*, catching the bird unawares. *As sudden* as the lightning, the thief, the snare, will Christ's Coming be.

3. *It will be unexpected*. A thing may be sudden, and yet expected [*illustr.—listening for clock striking, or gun firing*]. Not so Christ's Coming. What will people be doing? ver. 37–39, just as in days of Flood (comp. case of Sodom, Luke xvii. 28, 29)—yet are these sinful things? no, but it is just the *right* things of everyday life which take up our thoughts and keep us from watching for Christ. But *when* should we watch? [*Illustr.—Children left at home alone—mother to return 'about six'—would perhaps begin to look out at five. But might get into mischief before that. If time quite uncertain, might expect her any moment, so afraid to do wrong.*] Therefore the time not told us, ver. 36 (comp. Acts i. 7)—nor even *about* the time—on purpose that we may watch *always*, ver. 42; Mark xiii. 35.

4. *It will be a time of separation*, ver. 40, 41; Luke xvii. 34, 35. Think of two sisters in one bed: one 'taken,' 'caught up to meet the Lord in the air' (1 Thess. iv. 17); the other 'left'—for what? (2 Thess. i. 7–9). If you the one 'left'—what feel?

II. HOW TO BE READY FOR CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT.

A most beautiful parable told to show us this—*The Ten Virgins*.

[Picture the successive scenes. See Notes 2, 3.] (a) The Virgins going forth, all with lamps burning brightly, all glad and light-hearted. (b) The Virgins sleeping—in perfect confidence—all ready (so they think)—can wake up at any moment. (c) The Virgins awaking, at sudden cry—lamps burning low, some 'going out' [see Note 4]—dismayed faces and anxious voices—no more oil!—must go and buy, in middle of night, and procession at hand! (d) The Virgins separated—*inside and outside*. Inside, bright festival—Outside, piteous but vain cries,—*too late!*

Now see three things in which the Virgins were alike, and three things in which they were different. Thus see what the parable teaches us:—

POINTS OF LIKENESS:—

(a) *All went forth to meet the Bridegroom.* Who is the Bridegroom? see ver. 13; comp. Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 28—30; Eph. v. 25; Rev. xix. 7. Then who must the Virgins be? Good and bad people? But what do bad people care about Christ? do they prepare to meet Him? *all* the Virgins did. Then, if any of you have no religion at all, never desired or tried to be Christ's followers and to be ready for His coming, you are not even like the 'foolish' Virgins, but *worse* than they! This parable only for those who have *come out* from sinful ways, had companions, &c., and sincerely said, 'I at all events will be a Christian' [see Note 4].

(b) *All had burning lamps at first.* What are these? The bright light, shining in the darkness, the one thing that marked out her who carried it as intending to go with the procession. How do we know when boy or girl 'religious'? Cannot see heart—judge by *conduct*, whether humble, gentle, tender-spirited, caring for prayer and Bible, &c. If so, their 'light shines before men' (Matt. v. 16). *All* who are meant by the Virgins are like this.

(c) *All slept.* How could they? Felt *quite secure and ready.* Just what people think if they have ever so little religion. Boy avoids some sins, regular at church and school, good in conduct, quite means to grow up 'religious'—then can sing

hymns about heaven with perfect confidence—he sure to be there. If he asked himself, Shall I? would say, O yes, of course; but *never does* ask himself—takes it for granted. [See Note 6.]

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE:—

(a) *All went not in to the marriage-feast.* Can it be so with such as we have been speaking of? Some who expect to be in heaven *not* there? Is not this a terrible thing? You sing,

'There we all shall sing with joy'—

But will you *all*? all, even, who *seem* right? See Luke xiii. 24—'Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

(b) *Because—all were not ready.* What became of their confidence when the cry woke them?—hurrying hither and thither to get oil when too late! So some, suddenly hearing they must *die*—how eager *then* for comfort!—look to ministers or friends to get them the grace they ought to have got before!—sometimes *too late.*

(c) *And not ready, because—all had not oil enough.* This the one thing that showed whether each 'wise' or 'foolish.' The oil—what? When *anointing* spoken of in Scripture, always the Holy Spirit; see Isa. lxi. 1; Acts x. 38; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; 1 John ii. 20, 27. It is His grace we want. No flames without oil—no holiness, goodness, love, without the Spirit (Rom. viii. 5—9). But something else wanted too: not enough to listen to His voice a little while and 'do many things' (Mark vi. 20), and then get cold and dull, grieve, vex, resist Him (Eph. iv. 30; Isa. lxiii. 10; Acts vii. 51)—'quench' His flame (1 Thess. v. 19)—'receive the grace of God in vain' (2 Cor. vi. 1). There must be oil to last: the Spirit must be always with us. Only by His grace can you

'Let all your lamps be bright,
And trim the golden flame.'

But if those who do seem to be Christ's true servants are in such danger, what of the altogether careless? 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

A blessed thought for all: the 'door' is *not 'shut' yet*—the Bridegroom not come yet—oil can be had—the Spirit promised to all that ask, Luke xi. 13.

NOTES.

1. The prophecies of chap. xxiv. 29—41, are understood by some to have a primary reference to the Fall of Jerusalem. But although the general structure of the chapter, and the analogy of other prophecies, warrants us in believing that there is a mingling of type and antitype throughout, these particular verses seem to apply mainly, if not exclusively, to the Second Advent. See Additional Note X., page 215.

2. The parable of the Ten Virgins is based upon the marriage customs of the East, to which many allusions occur in Scripture. The essence of the marriage ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her home to that of her future husband. The bridegroom proceeded, late in the evening, attended by his

friends or 'groomsmen' (see Judg. xiv. 11; Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 29), to the bride's dwelling, where she awaited him, attired in white robes (see Rev. xix. 8) embroidered with gold (Ps. xlv. 13) and perfumed (Ps. xlv. 8), adorned with jewels (Isa. lxi. 10), and attended by her 'bridesmaids' (Ps. xlv. 14). The whole company then went in procession by torchlight to the bridegroom's house, being joined on the way by parties of invited guests (the Virgins of the parable) all carrying torches or lamps. Allusions to the subsequent festivities are found in Gen. xxix. 22; Judg. xiv. 10—18; Ps. xlv.; Canticles; Matt. xxii. 1—10; John ii. 1—10.

Trench quotes a description of a Hindoo wedding from Ward's *View of the Hindoos*, in which

occurs this striking incident:—'All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession. Some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared; but it was then too late to seek them; and the cavalcade moved forward.'

3. The 'lamps' of the parable are probably not torches, but lamps fixed on the end of a stick. A little instrument was attached, for use in adjusting the wick and so 'trimming' the lamp. A flask of oil would also be carried as a reserve supply.

4. In interpreting this parable, care must be taken not to fall into the very common mistake of making the foolish Virgins represent those who have nothing but an empty profession of religion. All applications contrasting the mere 'lamp'—the mere name of Christian—with the 'oil' of Divine grace, are quite beside the mark. The foolish Virgins did have oil, and enough of it to keep their lamps burning up to the last moment (for the words 'are gone out' are incorrectly translated, and should be 'are going out'). Their one fault was the not being *provident*. Whatever, therefore, be the precise meaning of the 'oil,' 'lamps,' and 'vessels' (see next Note), this one thing is clear, viz., that the foolish Virgins must represent persons who not only appear to be, but for a time are *really*, ready to meet the Bridegroom. Here we touch the borders of an important controversy; but, avoiding this (and to base any doctrine on the imagery of a parable is unsafe), it is surely a matter of *experience* that only too many answer in every respect to the foolish Virgins; such as—perhaps at a season of religious awakening, or at confirmation-time—did actually 'taste of the heavenly gift, the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come'—were sincere in their penitence and prayers and strivings—and yet, simply as a matter of fact, *have* 'drawn back.' Had the Advent, or their own death, occurred *then*, we should not have had the slightest doubt of their being 'ready.' If either occurred *now*, we should be more than doubtful. 'The point of the parable,' says Calvin, 'consists in this, that it is not enough to have been *once* girt and pre-

pared for duty, unless we endure even unto the end.'

5. Much ingenuity has been exercised in discussing the precise meaning of the oil, the lamps, the flames of the lamps, and the vessels. Most of the different views are given by Trench. The simple and sufficient interpretation is that the *light* is spiritual life generally, the *oil* that which kindles and sustains it, viz., the grace of the Holy Spirit (see texts in Sketch). The *lamps* and the *vessels* are only the drapery of the parable.

6. Another much disputed question is, What does the *sleeping* of all the Virgins mean? The early Fathers generally explained it as the sleep of death, and they are followed by Wordsworth and by How (S. P. C. K. *Commentary*). Stier, Lange, Alford, and many others, take it to be the slothfulness of the whole Church. Trench thinks it is simply a vivid way of expressing the confident security of professing Christians—justifiable in the case of some, dangerous in the case of others. This latter interpretation best fits in with the rest of the parable. For the 'arising' and 'trimming of the lamps' is just that awakening (whether on the death-bed, or in imminent danger, or under deep conviction) to a sudden consciousness that the 'Bridegroom' is, or may be, at hand, which is instantly followed by keen searchings of heart as to the soul's readiness to meet Him; while the idea of slothful neglect on the part of the wise Virgins seems precluded by the fact that they were just as ready as if they had stayed awake,—though perhaps it may be said that, but for their sleep, they might have warned the others.

7. The incidents of the appeal to the wise Virgins, and their advice to 'go to them that sell,' must not be closely pressed in the interpretation; but the general lesson is plain—that no one has any surplus store of grace or merit of which others can avail themselves (see Ps. xlix. 7). The folly of that trust in the presence and prayers of a minister or Christian friend—one perhaps who was thought 'righteous overmuch' before—which is so sadly common on death-beds, is shown here most solemnly.

Lesson LXXXII.—On Olivet—Concerning Christ's Second Coming—II.

'Then shall He reward every man according to his works.'

Read—Matt. xxv. 14—30; *Learn*—Matthew xvi. 27; Rev. xxii. 12. (*Hymns* 85, 111, 138, 141, 158, 159, 170, 174, 193, 325, 331, 336.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It has been remarked by a shrewd observer that the characteristic mark of true religion in a child is *tenderness of conscience*—often amounting to scrupulosity. Hence our Lord's special caution against 'offending (*i.e.*, scandalising) one of these little ones.' Hence also the fact that what appears to us an infinitesimal fault in a child has really been done against the clear voice of youthful conscience, and is therefore a serious sin. On this account the subject before us in this Lesson is one singularly adapted to impress the minds of our scholars, because it has to do with the smallest details of every-day life, throwing a halo of sacredness upon every moment of time and every item of property. The teacher, therefore, cannot descend to too minute matters—particularly as respects

opportunities of doing good. Half-an-hour of 'helping mother,' when it involves the throwing aside of a favourite book or plaything, is—if done from the motive brought before us in this Lesson—a 'trading' in Christ's service; and it is the mention of just such little things as this that will stamp the teachings of the parable on the memory. Let it not be thought that a 'legal' view of religion will thus be presented. On the contrary, the child who tries the most innocently to 'please God' will be the first to feel his own sinfulness, and his need both of a Saviour's work and of a Spirit's grace. The law will be his 'schoolmaster to bring him to Christ.'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Two boys drop pennies into missionary-box. One received his penny from mother on purpose to put in—the other *earned* his penny—which one gave *his own*?

Yet do you know the latter's penny was *not* his own? Whose was it, then? see 1 Chron. xxix. 14; 1 Cor. iv. 7. Do you say you *earn* it? Who gave you health, strength, skill, time, to earn it? All these God's gifts. Why, even *ourselves*, bodies, souls, spirits, 'not our own'—God's property—it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves' (Ps. c. 3)—*bought* us too when we were sold to sin and Satan (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). But God's gifts more like *loans*—remain His property. We must give Him an *account* of how we used them. When? At that Second Coming we spoke of last Sunday. The Son of God will come to examine what all of us have done with God's property.

Sitting there on Olivet that April evening, Jesus told the Apostles another parable, about this—THE TALENTS.

I. RECEIVING THE TALENTS.

A man going on a journey—how shall his business be carried on while he is away?—will divide his money among his servants—they to use it, make what profits they can for him, give all back to him on his return [see Note 2]. Now see three things about this:—

1. *The servants were trusted.* How pleased they would be!—'the master puts confidence in us.' Who does not like to be trusted? [Illustr.—*Girl left to 'mind baby' for first time—quite proud.*] But another feeling too—'I must be careful of this' [*girl with baby—how anxiously watchful*]—there is responsibility. Have you felt this about God's gifts?—very gracious of Him to entrust them to us—but forget not *responsibility*.

2. *They received what was valuable*—a 'talent' nearly £200. Have you ever thought what valuable things we all have? *all* of us? yes, all have something. *Money*—this of course useful—how much you can do with it! Have you got very little of it? but perhaps you have other things:—*Health*—how much 'better off' is a healthy boy than a sickly boy? *Time*—some work early and late all the year round, others have many leisure hours—are not these 'worth having'? *Opportunities* of getting and doing good—are they 'worth' nothing? how would you

like to be where *no* churches or schools? *Talents*—why here is the very word! (*we get the word from this parable*)—not heavy bars of gold, but cleverness, skill, memory, understanding—how valuable!

3. *They did not receive equal sums.* Ver. 15, 'according to ability.' [Illustr.—*Two newsboys sent out by employer—to one he will give fifty papers, to another twenty; why? one quicker and more pushing than another, or one at better station than another.*] Is this unfair? But it would be more unfair to give one more than he could manage.

II. USING THE TALENTS.

The master is gone. To work! How use the money? Perhaps one starts off to Egypt or Persia—will buy corn or silk, sell again, make profit—then take the bigger sum, make larger profit with it—so over and over again. But *might lose*, if bad management—so great care, constant thought and toil. Another buys land, farms it, sows crops, &c.—here again hard work. Another, perhaps, not so clever—had less given him—sets up little shop—will do his best. But why such pains? are they working for themselves? is not the bulk of profit for the master? ah, but they are *faithful*—care for his interests as for their own.

But one of them quite different—does nothing at all. Keeps talent safe—but where? Now why this?

(a) He is afraid of the master, ver. 25. Why? see ver. 26—thought him 'hard.' Thought like this, 'I shall work with this money—then master will come and take all my gains, forgetting that I made them and not *he*—perhaps will punish me for not gaining more; better not try at all.'

(b) Perhaps he thought, too, 'It's so little! if he had given me as much as the rest, why then—; but *one* talent! what use that?'

(c) The *real* reason: he was *lazy*, ver. 26. Yes, and 'wicked' too—selfish—no doubt would have worked for himself fast enough.

What are you doing with your 'talents'? Thinking entirely of self? or trying to do good in your way? Should feel—'God gave me this school-time—must make the best of it; this leisure-time—must use it well; this *place* I am going to—must be diligent and faithful; this knowledge and ability to learn—can help others; this money—must not squander it, but spend it carefully, save it self-denyingly, *give* it

too for God's own work; this very *life* of mine—it may not last long—must do *something* for my gracious Master.'

Do you say, like the wicked servant, 'God is so strict—never can please Him—no use trying?' (comp. Job xxi. 15; Mal. i. 13)—it is a *false* idea—shall see presently how generous He is.

Do you say, 'I can do nothing—have so little?' But you have *one* talent, at all events *half* a one! Think of the little Jewish maid (2 Kings v.), the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii.), the widow of Jerusalem (Mark xii. 41—44), the lad with the loaves (John vi. 9—11). See 2 Cor. viii. 12.

III. ACCOUNTING FOR THE TALENTS.

Master come back—all gathered round him to give in account.

1. How eager the faithful servants to tell of their gains! [*Illust.—Boy telling father of first day's work at his 'little place.'*] Any boasting? Rather, gratitude—'thou deliveredst unto me—I owe my success to thy liberality' (Ps. cxv. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 10).

Then see the reply—is it that of a 'hard man'? does he grumble because *more* not made, find fault—'All very good, but you *might* have done better'? How different!—generous 'Well done!'—and reward—perhaps giving the slave his freedom [see Note 3]. Then the second—less praise for him?—no—has done quite as well as the first—how?

2. Now the idle servant—does he come with shame and self-reproach? Not at all,—(a) Quite satisfied with himself—'There thou hast that is thine!'—as if great merit because had not kept it, or

spent it on self, or misused it. But *was* he returning all he had received? what of his wasted time and opportunities? (b) Complaining—as if the master's fault he had done no more—the less dealings with such a 'hard man' the better!

What for him? punishment? but why? he has not stolen or defrauded—not like Steward (Luke xvi.) or Prodigal Son (Luke xv.) or Debtor (Matt. xviii.); but what *might* he have done? [see Note 5]—if afraid to trade, at least could put money in bank—so get interest [*explain*]. So, while his fellow-servants go in and sit down to feast with master, he left in 'outer darkness.'

We too must render an account to God. Rom. xiv. 12; 2 Cor. v. 10. Of what? of everything. [*Illust.—Boy trusted with ten shillings—will it do if he accounts for nine? or for 9s. 11d.?*] Not enough to give God a little Sunday time for learning and worship—all we have is His, and to be used for Him.

Will any of us deserve a reward? Not one. Do you think St. Paul did? What did he think himself? 1 Cor. xv. 10; 1 Tim. i. 15; comp. Luke xvii. 10. Yet he knew he *should* be rewarded, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Why? Because Christ a generous Master—gives 'more than either we desire or deserve.' See texts for rep.; Matt. v. 12, vi. 4, 6, 18, x. 41, 42; Rom. ii. 6, 7; 1 Cor. xv. 58; Gal. vi. 9; 2 John 8.

But are you idle servants? are you His servants at all? Can you say as St. Paul did, 'Whose I am, and whom I serve' (Acts xxvii. 23)? You were baptized to be His 'faithful soldiers and servants'—what are you really?

NOTES.

1. This parable, like the 'Ten Virgins,' is addressed to *disciples*. The master called 'his own servants.' In the former parable we see the importance of spiritual *life*; in this one, of active Christian *work*. There, the danger exposed is inward declension; here, outward indolence. The foolish Virgins erred through a vain *over*-confidence; the slothful servant through an equally vain and sinful *under*-confidence. They thought it too easy a thing to serve the Lord; he thought it too hard (*Trench*). In the 'talents' there is probably a primary reference to the Pentecostal gifts to the early Church, which the Lord gave when He left His disciples; see Eph. iv. 7—12.

2. The slaves of the Greeks and Romans were often men of varied mental attainments or considerable manual skill; and such of them as were clever artisans, efficient doctors, or ready amanuenses, would command high prices. It was no uncommon thing for them to be employed as this parable describes. See Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Art. 'Servus.'

3. The expression 'joy of thy Lord' must refer to that 'joy set before' Christ for which He 'endured the cross' (Heb. xii. 2; comp. Isa. liii. 11)—the joy of having accomplished an undertaking successfully, especially an undertaking for the salvation of souls. On the disciples'

share in this, see Lesson LXXII. There may be an allusion to the custom by which a master gave a slave his freedom by inviting him to sit down to table with him.

'Well done,' is, in the Greek, a single word (Εὖ)—the exclamation common at public games, &c., like 'Bravo.'

4. 'Strawed' probably refers to the operation of winnowing: 'Thou expectest to gather with the rake where thou hast not scattered with the fan.' (*Trench and Wordsworth*.)

'Thou knewest that I was,' &c. Probably ironical: 'Be it so—take it for granted—yet, on thine own shewing,' &c.

5. 'Exchangers,' i.e., bankers, or discounters. 'Usury' simply means interest; but the rates of interest were high in ancient times.

6. 'Unto every one that hath,' &c. This is the rule of nature. Strength is gained by exercise. The unused limb withers, while the soldier's right or sword-arm becomes larger than his left arm. Instances of giving to another the forfeited talent occur in 1 Sam. xv. and Acts i. Comp. Rev. iii. 11.

7. The Parable of the Talents differs in many respects from that of the Pounds. This is addressed to the disciples; that to the multitude. Here the Lord is a plain man; there, a King.

Here we see only the servants; there the hostile 'citizens' also. Here the gifts differ in amount, while the proportionate gains of the faithful servants are equal; there a 'pound' was given to all alike, but the returns were very different.

The lessons therefore are not the same: the 'Talents' illustrates (as Brown and Fausset well put it) *equal fidelity with different degrees of advantage*; the 'Pounds,' *different degrees of improvement of the same opportunities.*

Lesson LXXXIII.—On Olivet—Concerning the Last Judgment.

'We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

Read—Matt. xxv. 31—46; Learn—2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 11. 12. (Hymns 82—86, 191, 143, 162, 172, 176, 204, 228, 355, 364.)

TO THE TEACHER.

No teacher who takes even ordinary pains should fail to make this Lesson both interesting and impressive. Care must, however, be exercised, in explaining the precise relation, to the fate of the righteous and the wicked respectively, of the acts of love and self-denial mentioned by 'the King.' The idea of deserving heaven in virtue of our poor, imperfect goodness, is so engrained in our nature, that this passage will be twisted by the children (perhaps quite unconsciously) to favour that idea, unless the teacher is very clear upon the subject. 'Justified by faith without the works of the law,'—here is the great truth proclaimed in Scripture and embodied in our Eleventh Article. At the same time no passage throws more light, when rightly read, on the expression of St. James, 'justified by works,' than that before us to-day; compare the Twelfth Article. Teachers who mastered the arguments underlying Lessons LXVIII. and LXXII. will have no difficulty with the present Sketch.

Let the concluding thought of the Sketch by no means be omitted. The connection there pointed out between this chapter and the first two verses of the next is so unexpected that it introduces the final application with unusual impressiveness.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

A trial—how it interests us all! [Illust.—Assizes—crowds in court—eagerness for newspaper reports.] The verdict—how anxiously waited for! The sentence—what a hush while it is given! And if we so interested as spectators, how much more if concerned in it ourselves—our property, or character of one dear to us, at stake! But if one of us at the bar—if it depended on the 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty' whether we free or in prison, cleared or disgraced—what a painful interest then! how the one thing in our thoughts—everything else as nothing!

There is a bar of which all must stand, see 1st text for rep. Of this also Jesus spoke that evening on Olivet.

It must be getting late now—perhaps sun gone down, night come on—the Apostles still clustered round Jesus, hanging on all these solemn words [*recapitulate last three Lessons*]. One thing more to tell—their third question (see xxiv. 8) to answer—the Last Judgment at the End of the World to describe. [*Read the passage.*]

I. THE JUDGE.

Who will it be? see John v. 22, 27; Acts x. 42, xvii. 31; Rom. xiv. 10. How will He appear? ver. 31. (a) Think of the manger at Bethlehem, the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, the fishing-boat on the Lake, the cross at Calvary—then think of 'that

same Jesus' (Acts i. 11), sitting 'on the throne of His glory'! (b) Think how He was surrounded on earth by ignorant, sick, sinful people, half-hearted friends, bitter foes—then think of Him in midst of 'holy angels,'—all of them (see Heb. xii. 22; Rev. v. 11) with Him.

Easy to turn from Him now, despise His messages, laugh at His people—but how feel then?—when

'Every eye shall now behold Him
Robed in dreadful majesty'—

see Rev. i. 7. Well may we pray the Collect for Advent Sunday!

II. THE JUDGED.

Who can imagine that multitude! If all in one town together, what a crowd!—here 'all nations.' More than that—we don't reckon the dead at a census—but here, see Rev. xx. 11—13: all generations as well!—the dead alive again—every one with soul and body complete. Does this make it seem less dreadful?—so easy for one to be unnoticed in a crowd? Ah, if 'every eye shall see Him,' His eye will see every one.

Then what will the Judge do? ver. 32, 33. Is it hard for a shepherd to do this? does he make mistakes? Be sure the Great Shepherd will make none. How many divisions? only two? think how many there are now!—rich and poor, old and young,—

sick and healthy, and in these so many degrees; but what matter then in which of all these classes we were? And that great final division cannot be known till then: who could divide *this school* into good and bad with certainty? Christ knows now; but He leaves all mingled for the present—bad may become good (how He longs for this!) now. But then, separated, once and for ever! See parable of Tares and Wheat, and of Net, Matt. xiii. And then we shall see which way each one goes, Mal. iii. 18.

'Oh that I at last may stand
With the sheep at Thy right hand!'

III. THE EVIDENCE.

But why evidence at all? Are they not already 'separated'? Yes, the Judge knows, and His justice cannot err (Gen. xviii. 25); but all must see His justice, hear *why* this one on the right and that one on the left. [*Illust.—Even if magistrate had seen the crime, knew the prisoner guilty, would he give sentence without public trial?*]

What sort of evidence is it?

(a) How do we judge a man's religion? see 1 Sam. xvi. 7—'man looketh on the outward appearance,' the talk, or the manner, or the habits of church-going, &c. Is this a correct way? If it were, the Pharisees would have the highest place in heaven! So these things not the evidence.

(b) How does God judge a man's religion? see again 1 Sam. xvi. 7—'the Lord looketh on the heart.' And in this way is the great separation made. But how could all that multitude see one another's hearts? So this not the evidence.

(c) What then? Why, something that will show what the hearts are like—a test [*illust.—like acid testing gold*]. What, then, is the test? Works, Jas. i. 18; and words too sometimes, Matt. xii. 34—37. All these to be read out before all. Read out! how? see Rev. xx. 12 again—'written in the books.'

(d) But Jesus does not tell of all this—only names one sort of works—because such a sure test. Words and works not *always* a true test, see Matt. vii. 22, 23. See what He does mention, ver. 35, 36, 40, 42, 43, 45. (Comp. Job xxii. 7, xxxi. 19, 20; Isa. lviii. 7; Ezek. xviii. 7; Matt. x. 40—42; 2 Tim. i. 16; Heb. xiii. 3; Jas. i. 27, ii. 11—16.) Now think of a person who *does* do these things, or some of them—feeding the hungry, clothing the destitute, caring for the homeless, visiting the sick and the captive—what would you say of him? 'Unselfish,' thinks not of own comfort and convenience, gives up self for others' good? Like the good Samaritan. Like Christ Himself (Rom. xv. 3; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 4, 5). But to be so, must get love of self out of the heart—bring in love of others—and the way to do so is to think of Christ's love to us [*see this explained and illustrated in Lesson LXVIII.*]. Thus our doing or not doing such things is a sign of what is in our hearts.

But why does He say that kindnesses done to others are done to Him? Because done to His 'brethren.' [*Illust.—If child ill—friend came—nursed it and cured it—would not parents think this a kindness to them?*] His 'brethren'!—how so? The Son of God 'was made in the likeness of man' (Phil. ii. 7)—so united Himself in a sense to the whole brotherhood or family of mankind [*see Note 3*]. Just think, then—we see a man destitute or suffering—half inclined to be kind to him—self says 'No,' conscience says 'Yes'—that man is Christ's representative [*illust.—like a king in disguise*]—our treatment of him reckoned as treatment of Christ! If say, 'This man (however mean or bad—it is 'unto the least of these) is my brother—is immortal like me—Christ lived and died for him as well as for me—for Christ's sake I must deny self and be kind to him'—then the Lord Jesus sees it, and feels it as done to Himself. But if say, 'What is it to me?' (comp. Gen. iv. 9), and turn away—He sees and feels that too. See Prov. xiv. 31, xix. 17; Zech. ii. 8; Acts ix. 4.

Some think themselves all right because (as they say) they 'have done no harm.' But observe, the question is, What *good* have you done?

IV. THE SENTENCE.

To the righteous, ver. 34. A kingdom 'prepared' for them—God had thought of them before any one of them had lived! see Jer. xxxi. 3. What is it like? 1 Cor. ii. 9—inconceivable! To 'inherit' it (comp. Col. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 4)—how this? 'Children of God,' therefore heirs, Rom. viii. 17. No wonder they are called 'blessed'!

To the wicked, ver. 41. 'Everlasting fire'—who can tell what that is?—inconceivable likewise—might say of it too, 'Eye hath not seen,' &c. See what called elsewhere, Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xiii. 40, 42; Mark ix. 43—48; Rom. ii. 8, 9; 2 Thess. i. 9. It also is 'prepared'—but not for *them*—God 'willeth not the death of a sinner' (Ezek. xviii. 32; Luke xiii. 34; 2 Pet. iii. 9)—for whom then? (comp. 2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6).

'Come' and 'Depart'—what different words! Now He says 'Come' to *all* (Isa. i. 18, lv. 1; Matt. xi. 28; Rev. xxii. 17); let us not, as some do (Job xxi. 14), say 'Depart' to Him.

What wondrous things for any one to say! With what speechless awe must the disciples have listened to all this! How they must have felt their Master's real greatness!

Yet see something more wondrous still. After all these royal and mighty sayings, *what are His very next words?* see first two verses of next chapter—'The Son of Man betrayed to be crucified'! That very King and Judge of all, to die, two days hence, on a shameful cross! No doubt the disciples more terrified and dismayed than ever.

But to us what is that sacred death? Do we not know that all our kind and unselfish deeds could not open heaven for us, because all imperfect, sin in all? But for our sin He died—His death our only plea

—and therefore, looking forward to that Last Judgment, we say,

*'Love at His cross I view the day
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
And thus prepare to meet Him!'*

NOTES.

1. This passage is sometimes called, very erroneously, the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. The transition from parabolic to plain language at ver. 31—'When the Son of Man shall come,' &c.—is distinctly marked. The 'sheep and goats' only appear in a single clause as a passing illustration: 'He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth,' &c.

2. Many prophetic writers, and some of the best commentators (*e.g.*, Stier and Alford) regard this Last Judgment as not strictly upon all mankind; that as, according to Rev. xx., it will come after the period (commonly called the Millennium) during which the saints who had a part in the 'first resurrection' will 'reign with Christ on the earth,' it can only be upon mankind *exclusive* of these saints. Others think that our Lord here describes only the judgment on the heathen, all professing Christians being already judged, as shown by the preceding parables. A third class even consider that this judgment is on Christians only. But, although Rev. xx. certainly seems to intimate that the Last Judgment will be quite distinct from, and separated by an unknown period from, the 'Second Advent' (see the Additional Note at page 215), the general tenor of Scripture is, in the opinion of the great majority of Christian writers, in favour of the view that the entire human race will then be judged. The many expressions implying that the saints 'shall not come into judgment' do not militate against this

view. They are analogons to the promise that the believer 'shall never die.' Literally, they will die, and they will be judged; but death to them is but the gate of life, and judgment to them is but their public acquittal and vindication before assembled worlds. This is admirably put by Alford himself, in his little book, *The State of the Blessed Dead*.

3. Some confine the words 'these My brethren' to Christ's own servants. Certainly a special love for His people is an evidence of being one of His people (1 John iii. 14), and will win a special reward (Mark ix. 41); and the title belongs to them in a peculiar sense (Matt. xii. 48–56; 11cb. ii. 10–13). Nevertheless, the words cannot be so limited here; for the question of the righteous clearly shows that they had done those deeds of love without a thought or question of whom they were helping, and simply from the impulses of an all-embracing charity. Imagine the Good Samaritan stopping to ascertain who and what the wounded man was! yet would not Christ's words here be equally applicable to him whatever the sufferer might be in respect of either creed or conduct? The great fact must not be forgotten that the Incarnation brought all the human race into a certain relationship to the Son of God. All are affected by it; *e.g.*, the general resurrection is thus explained: 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' But this relationship only enhances the guilt of those who reject their Redeemer.

Lesson LXXXIV.—The Conspirators.

'They that lay wait for my soul take counsel together.'

Read—John xi. 47–53, xii. 1–11; Luke xxii. 1–6; Learn—Ps. ii. 1–3; 1 Tim. vi. 10.
(Hymns, 57, 58, 95, 142, 154, 160, 244, 359, 375.)

TO THE TEACHER.

By the plan of bringing together the various incidents introduced in this Lesson, the following advantages are gained:—(1) The connection of the several circumstances which led up to the arrest of Christ is more clearly shown; (2) an opportunity is furnished of exhibiting at one view the character and sin of Judas; (3) a break is made between the parables and discourses, which have formed the subjects of the last nine Lessons, and the Last Supper, which comes in the next one,—corresponding to the interval between the Tuesday evening and the Thursday evening of the Passion week; (4) the important and solemn truths concerning the purposes of God and the guilt of man can be introduced at the end, by a reference to Matt. xxvi. 24 and Acts ii. 23 (as is done in the Sketch).

These latter truths are not to be concealed or evaded because they are difficult, for, profound as they are beyond all human fathoming when looked at speculatively, their practical issues are simple enough. And it is well that boys and girls should get accustomed to regard them in their practical aspects before the speculative difficulties occur to their minds—as certainly they will, in the majority of cases, sooner or later. The teacher should not suggest or state the difficulties, or even allude to their existence, but only, by presenting positive truth, silently rear a rampart around the minds of the scholars which shall by-and-by be proof against the assaults of the enemy.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

The next day, Wednesday, and part of Thursday, we know not what Jesus was doing. Very likely spending in solitude His last two days on earth. Let us for to-day, then, leave Him, and see what His enemies are about.

I. THE OPEN ENEMIES.

1. *Their old designs.* We have seen for a long time how the priests and Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus. See John v. 16, 18 [*Lesson XXXIV.*]; Mark iii. 6 [*Lesson XXXVIII.*]; John vii. 1, 25, 32 [*Lesson LII.*]; John viii. 59 [*Lesson LV.*]; John x. 31, 39 [*Lesson LXX.*]. But these all either private plots or sudden bursts of rage. When was His death solemnly decided upon? See,—

2. *Their recent resolution.* See John xi. 47—53. It is after the raising of Lazarus. 'The miracle has startled all Jerusalem—'it must be Messiah!' See the result, John xii. 11. So the Great Council, the 'Sanhedrim' [see *Note 1*], summoned to discuss the matter.

Very likely a long debate—some proposing this, others suggesting that—certainly some protesting against killing Jesus (see John vii. 50, 51; Luke xxiii. 50, 51)—perhaps others, though not caring for Him, shrinking from shedding innocent blood—but then (some might say) 'what a risk we run! people will get rebellious, and what will Romans do?' (ver. 48). At last, who rises? ver. 49. A Sadducee (Acts v. 17)—so would not care much what Jesus taught—if He denounced the Pharisees, so much the better; but even Caiaphas would get alarmed at risk of offending Romans—to them he owed his high-priesthood [see *Note 2*], and the quieter he kept the Jews the longer he might keep his office. What is his advice? ver. 50; like this—'Why all this perplexity? what is the life of one obscure Galilean worth? better kill him, if it will save the whole nation from destruction—must be patriots, think of our country first.'

So the fatal resolution carried, some maliciously rejoicing, some submitting to 'painful necessity.' By-and-bye they did kill Jesus: did it save the nation? why, it brought on them that fearful doom we lately talked of [*Lesson LXXX.*]. And yet Caiaphas was right in a way he never dreamed of, see ver. 51, 52—God used this bad man as he had used Balaam, to utter a great truth—what truth? That Jesus *should die for them*—yes, and for others too (Isa. xlix. 6)—and His death *should* save multitudes from a worse fate than Jerusalem's. How would that be?

3. *Their perplexity this week.* 'From that day forth' (ver. 53) constant plots. Think now what had happened during the first three days: Entry, cleansing of the Temple, &c., &c.—'the world gone after Jesus,' as it seemed (John xii. 19). His enemies are

completely foiled (Luke xix. 47, 48)—their puzzling questions no use (Matt. xxii.)—their wickedness openly denounced (Matt. xxiii.); and now they call another council, Matt. xxvi. 3—5, but still don't know what to do. At last, to their great joy, a way open—see it presently.

II. THE FALSE FRIEND.

There had been many false friends at one time. See John vi. 60, 66 [*Lesson XLVII.*].—but did *all* leave Christ then? who were steadfast? see following verses. Yet even then, among those faithful Twelve, 'a devil'!—(last two verses).

1. *Judas the Apostle.*

How came such a man to join Jesus? No doubt, like the others, thought Jesus the Messiah, expected Him to be King; then would look forward to riches and honour at court. What had Jesus said that would offend him? True, they were all perplexed and alarmed at the idea of the Master's capture and death; but their love still kept them true. But what dismay to *him*, caring only for what he might get through Jesus! Would fancy himself deceived, cherish bitter thoughts.

Why then did he stay with Jesus? (a) Might perhaps think, like James and John [*Lesson LXXII.*].—After all He *may* conquer—these strange words *may* not mean so much—we *may* get our reward before long.' (b) He *was* getting something by staying. Was treasurer to the little company, kept their joint money, bought what they needed; and *what else* did he do with that money? John xii. 6. How often, when they meant some of their scanty funds for the poor (John xiii. 29), did the gift go into his pocket! A clever thief, too—never suspected by his comrades (when Jesus said, 'One of you shall betray me,' no one asked, 'Is it Judas?')—but Who *did* know of his thefts?—surely he must have been startled by Jesus' words sometimes, such as Luke xii. 15, 20, 21, 33, xvi. 11.

2. *Judas the Murrwer.*

See John xii. 1—8. That night before the Entry, all together at supper—where? [see *Lesson LXXIX., Note 4*]. What led Mary to anoint Jesus so? ver. 7—(a) she loved Him more than herself; (b) she thought nothing too good for Him; (c) so she could give up *her best* to honour Him. Judas just the reverse—loved self more than Jesus—what is his complaint? ver. 5; and who else agrees with him? Matt. xxvi. 8, 9. But what does Jesus think of it? Might expect Him to support Judas, for always so thoughtful of the poor (Luke xii. 33, xiv. 13, xviii. 22). No—doubtless Mary *was* kind to the poor—but why not *also* honour Him? The most charitable person keeps much for himself—well, Mary devoted to Jesus what meant, not for the poor, but for herself. But what made *Judas* thus

complain? his great charity? ah, he would like the £10 that ointment would fetch to come to him 'for the poor,' and then—?

3. Judas the Traitor.

That rebuke at Bethany has 'put him out.' Then all the attacks on Jesus during the next three days—what would he think of them? would feel he is on the losing side—his dreams of power and wealth all vanishing—bitter resentment in his heart. Then those last startling words on Olivet (Matt. xxvi. 1, 2)—Jesus to die in two days!—then all hope at an end.

And then—see what happens to him, Luke xxii. 3. Satan, 'walking about seeking whom he may devour' (1 Pet. v. 8), seizes on the selfish, covetous, discontented man. A dark thought—if the Master is to die, why should not something be got out of it?—no doubt the rulers would gladly pay for a chance of taking Jesus without a tumult. *Money*—he can't resist that. How many crimes done for money! how many souls lost through love of it! Remember Achan, Gehazi, Ananias; see 1 Tim. vi. 10. Now we see what it was that gave the rulers such sudden exultation. The bargain quickly struck—Judas to sell his Lord for less than £4!

What a spectacle of wickedness! first hatred and malice, then selfishness, avarice, meanness, treachery. And yet—

GOD OVERRULED ALL THIS WICKEDNESS FOR GOOD.

He always does: remember the histories of Joseph and Esther; see Prov. xix. 21. But how so here? Think—was the death of Jesus a defeat or a victory for Him? did it frustrate God's purposes, or fulfil them? But for that death, what had become of us? So God brought salvation out of all this sin—'turned the curse into a blessing' (Neh. xiii. 2).

But did this make the guilt less? The rulers' guilt? see Acts ii. 23. Judas's guilt? see Matt. xxvi. 24. So always: you may 'e malicious, covetous, treacherous (e.g., you may plot against boy better than yourself)—perhaps you will succeed, perhaps not—God will not let it injure Him or spoil His plans—but it may destroy your own soul.

Do you say, No risk of our being wicked like those men? Yet they too were children once; seemed innocent enough. [See *illust. in preface to Lesson XVIII.*] See Jer. xvii. 9; and pray Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

NOTES.

1. The Sanhedrim (more accurately Sanhedrin) was the supreme judicial and administrative Council among the Jews. It consisted of (probably) seventy-one members, who were of three classes, viz., (1) the *chief priests*, i.e., the heads of the twenty-four 'courses' into which the priests were divided (1 Chron. xxiv.; Luke i. 5); (2) *scribes*, the authorised expounders of the law; (3) *elders*, men of age and influence. The power of the Sanhedrim was at one time very great, though it had been reduced by Herod the Great and the Roman governors. The members are called in the N. T. 'rulers': Nicodemus was one (John iii. 1), and Joseph of Arimathea (Mark xv. 43), and the rich young man (Luke xviii. 18). Further information will be found in Smith's *Dict. of Bible*; the *Student's N. T. Hist.*, p. 54; H. Dixon's *Holy Land*, p. 340.

2. The rightful high-priest at this time was Annas, who had held the office some years before. But the Roman governors appointed and deposed high-priests at pleasure, and four of the sons of Annas, as well as his son-in-law Caiaphas, filled the post in succession. The latter acted for nearly twenty years. Annas evidently retained much influence, as might be expected (see John xviii. 13), and in Acts iv. 6 (comp. Luke iii. 2) he is actually called 'the high-priest,' though probably not so *de facto*.

3. The anointing of our Lord by Mary must be carefully distinguished from that other anointing by the 'woman that was a sinner,' in Luke vii. But, on the use of unguents, the 'alabaster box' &c., see Notes to the Lesson (XXXVI.) on that passage.

The Supper at Bethany is distinctly stated by St. John to have taken place on the evening before the Entry. In Matthew and Mark it is not related until just before the Passion, in immediate connection with Judas's offer to the

Sanhedrim, but without any definite statement as to when it occurred. The fact that Judas was the originator of the complaint against Mary suggests at once the reason why the Supper should be mentioned in this connection; yet it is not Matthew and Mark, but John, who mentions Judas in relating the Supper. The coincidence is remarkable, in whatever way we explain Matthew and Mark's arrangement.

4. Many attempts have been made to mitigate the wickedness of Judas. For example, it has been suggested that, in his impatience to see Jesus assuming the royal dignity, he thought, by betraying Him, to force Him to raise the populace in His defence. The simple reply to this is that no hint of it is found in Scripture. The Evangelists present the meanness of the traitor's character without a redeeming feature; and the utmost that may be conceded is that, having seen his Master elude His enemies on former occasions, he might excuse his treachery to himself by the argument that Jesus *could* do so again if He liked. On the other hand, we cannot conceive that the hope of a paltry bribe was his only actuating motive; and there is the highest probability that his feelings were as indicated in the Sketch.

5. The 'palace' of Caiaphas (Matt. xxvi. 3), where Judas's bargain was made with the chief priests, is said by tradition to have stood on the hill which rises on the further side of the Valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, and which is still called the Hill of Evil Counsel.

6. 'Thirty pieces of silver'—silver shekels, a Hebrew weight from early times. This amount was the price to be paid for a slave killed by an ox (Exod. xxi. 32). See also Zech. xi. 12; and compare the 'twenty pieces of silver' for which Joseph was sold.

Lesson LXXXV.—The Last Supper—I.

'I am among you as he that serveth.'

Read—John xiii.; (*comp.* Matt. xxvi. 17—29; Mark xiv. 12—25; Luke xxii. 7—38);
Learn—John xiii. 1; Matt. xx. 26—28. (*Hymns*, 42, 60, 80, 90, 91, 95, 96, 147, 155, 161,
166, 353, 354.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The four accounts of the Last Supper must be very carefully compared and studied, if the teacher would avoid serious perplexity and confusion when he comes to handle the subject with his class. It is a useful plan, in a case like this, when all Four Gospels have to be referred to, to let three of the places be kept open by three of the best scholars, and the other, *i.e.*, the one which is to be mainly followed, by the rest; and then, when one of the three has to be turned to, to say—'Henry will find the answer to that question in St. Luke,' or, 'William, how does St. Mark relate this?' Obviously, the teacher must know beforehand exactly what each Evangelist does say, and at what precise point such and such a reference is to be made; but if well carried out, the plan is almost sure to interest the class. The teacher who may have to *tell the story* to a non-reading class cannot, of course, adopt this method; but it is, perhaps, all the more necessary for him to have the succession and connection of the incidents clearly before his mental eye.

The difficulties which beset the harmonistic arrangement of the four narratives are briefly treated in Note 1; but any inconvenience which might arise from the principal question—*viz.*, where, in St. John's account, to insert the institution of the Lord's Supper,—is here avoided by the simple expedient of taking that important subject by itself in a second Lesson. And the minor ones also need scarcely arise if, instead of reading the chapter and its parallels straight through, the teacher will be content to follow the course suggested in the Sketch, which groups the incidents according to their practical teaching, without professing to fix their exact order.

Some of the teachings of the passage, which are necessarily omitted, or but briefly alluded to, in these Lessons, will be found more fully treated in Mr. Warrington's Course on the Life of St. Peter, in the *Church Sunday School Magazine* for 1869, in which no less than four Lessons are devoted to the Last Supper. The latter part of this Lesson, about the warning to Peter, can, if time should run short, be omitted, and be taken in the introductory portion of the next Lesson but one (LXXXVII.).

In commencing, as we now do, the history of our Lord's Passion, an earnest effort should be made to impress upon the children an idea of the exceeding solemnity of what they are about to study. If both teachers and scholars approach the subject in the spirit of God's command to Moses, 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,'—we may surely look for a special blessing upon these particular Lessons.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

It is Thursday, the 14th Nisan [*see Addit. Note XII., page 235*—the day on which, when Israel yet slaves in Egypt, God commanded to kill lambs for Passover-feast (Exod. xii. 6). All in Jerusalem busy—Temple crowded with people bringing lambs to be sacrificed—those at home sweeping house to get rid of every scrap of leaven.

Here is a man who has a large room upstairs not wanted—will of course lend it to some pilgrim Jews from distant parts for *their* feast—yes, and here are two visitors who have engaged it. Who are they? how fell in with the man? see Luke xxii. 7—13. Room ready? yes: table, couches, dishes, &c.—water, basin, towel,

for washing feet [*see Note 3*]; but what else must Peter and John prepare?—lamb, unleavened cakes, bitter herbs, wine [*see Note 1, next Lesson*]. Then, in the evening, come Jesus and the other ten.

This the 'Last Supper'—Christ's last meal before His death. See how St. John begins his account, ver. 1—it is '*the hour*' [*see Lesson LXX.*] at last—the '*time*' to which Jesus had looked forward [*Lesson LX.*]—how full, then, His mind of what coming!—and yet, does He forget His disciples? Ignorant, weak, sinful they are—yet, great as He is (ver. 3), glorious as He is to be (ver. 31, 32), He 'loves them unto the end,' ver. 1; *comp.* Rom. viii. 35—39. See His love shining at that supper-table,

perhaps more brightly than ever before. In two ways:—

I. CHRIST'S LOVE SHOWN IN HIS CONDESCENSION.

Jesus takes His place at table. What are the Twelve about? Luke xxii. 21—(disputing even *there*, even *then*—why? no doubt all wanted best seats. What should they have remembered? Luke xiv. 7—11. Another reason:—here is the basin, &c, but which will take the servant's place to wash his comrades' feet? Each too proud and jealous—all now at table, and none washed. But look—Jesus rises: and then—see ver. 4, 5—He, their Lord and Master (ver. 13, 14), 'come from God and going to God' (ver. 3), doing a slave's duty for His own creatures! Here is condescension, *stooping*—could he stoop lower than *this*? [See Note 3.]

Imagine their silent confusion as He goes round. Surely His touch on the feet sends a thrill of shame through each! But one cannot be silent—*Peter's* feet washed by *Peter's* Lord?—'never! never!' [see Note 4.] And yet, a minute later, he is asking to be washed all over, ver. 9—how is this? ah, he sees now what Jesus means—this washing to remind them of a greater washing, the washing of souls from sin—feels he can't have too much of *that* (comp Luke v. 8). But does Jesus mean this? see ver. 10—He says, 'Ye are clean—had cleansed them from sin long ago. Why then a further cleansing needed? Because still got stains of sin every day—just as feet soiled in walking, even after a bath [see Note 5].

Again He is at table. See His question, ver. 12—Can we answer it? Let us try.

Three things taught by this washing:—

1. *That Christ must cleanse us from sin.* If not—? see ver. 8. How does He cleanse us? see Rev. i. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'There is a fountain' (Zech. xiii. 1),—

'And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.'

But must not be content with being once cleansed—do we not sin every day?—then need fresh cleansing every day—so, in Lord's Prayer, pray for daily forgiveness as well as 'daily bread'; see 2 Cor. vii. 1; Tit. iii. 5 ('and renewing'); 1 John i. 7.

2. *What He did in order to cleanse us from sin.* In that supper-room we see a picture of what He did for us all. 'Laid aside His garments'—so for us laid aside His glory, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Did a servant's work—so for us 'took on Him the form of a servant,' Phil. ii. 7. Washed men who were going to betray, deny, desert Him—so, for whom did He live, suffer, die? Rom. v. 8; comp. Luke v. 32. xv. 2, xix. 10. Was not this a greater 'stooping'?

3. *How we should imitate Him*, ver. 13—15; comp. Luke xxii. 25—27. Does He mean that we are to wash each other's feet? yes, if ever necessary. But nothing else? *Anything* that is a kindness to

others, however mean and disagreeable it may seem to us. Do you say, 'I would do anything, but not *this* or *that*'?—then *this* or *that* the very thing you must do if would be like Christ. See Rom. xii. 10; 1 Pet. v. 5.

II. CHRIST'S LOVE SHOWN IN HIS LONG-SUFFERING.

1. *His long-suffering with the traitor.*

The supper goes on. But a strange silence at the table—Jesus 'troubled'—why? ver. 21. Perhaps two feelings:—(a) pain at the traitor's ingratitude, ver. 18 (comp. Ps. xli. 9)—he is no open enemy—then 'could have borne it' (Ps. lv. 12, 13) 'but it was *thou*'; (b) anguish at the traitor's doom, Matt. xxvi. 24 (comp. John xvii. 12). But think—how long has that thief and traitor been with Jesus? what privileges has he had? what tender words of warning and counsel? How wondrous the long-suffering of Christ, to *endure his presence* all the while!

At length—can bear it no longer—'Jesus testified,' *speaks out*, ver. 21. Imagine the shocked faces round the table! Any doubting? ver. 22—but not about the Lord's correctness—no exclaiming 'Impossible!'—ah, they know His '*verily, verily*' too well. And that washing must have humbled them, for what is the anxious question? not 'Is it he?' or 'Is it you?' but—? Surely with broken, trembling voice (see Matt.—'exceeding sorrowful') that dreadful question comes from them, one by one (Mark).

Does Jesus tell the terrible secret? Only to two:—(a) To John, see ver. 23—26. (b) To the traitor himself—why this, when he knew it only too well? but see how, to avoid detection, he puts the humble question like the rest (Matt.); then the whispered reply [see Note 2]—'thou hast said' (Jewish way of saying 'yes')—does the Lord's searching eye arrest him—His tender voice melt him? ah, he has given his heart to *another* master now (ver. 27), and forth he goes from the lighted room into the dark streets (ver. 30)—type of the dark thoughts within him, and of that 'outer darkness' into which (Matt. xxv. 30) goes every 'wicked servant'!

If the traitor's presence such a burden, how will Jesus feel now he is gone? see His relieved spirit bursting forth, ver. 31, 32—the word 'glorified' five times! Why '*now*' glorified? Because Judas' departure the signal that *the cross* is at hand (see John xii. 23, 32).

2. *His long-suffering with Peter and the rest.*

Is there no more ingratitude now Judas is gone? no more of Satan's mischief in that little band? Jesus has more to bear yet. Even since they sat down to supper, what has He had to rebuke? And what will those eleven do this very night? Mark xiv. 50.

Now see how Jesus shows His love for

these weak and faithless ones, Luke xxii. 31—34:—(a) A loving warning: Satan is seeking them [see Note 8]. (b) A loving assurance given to Peter especially because he to fall most—'I have prayed for thee'; and so, 'though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down'—why? see Ps. xxxvii. 24. Do we hear the humble 'Is it I?' again? ver. 33—Peter like himself now, bold and confident—he a deserter! others may, but not he (Matt.)—rather 'prison and death.' Peter die for his Lord? he little thought that was just what his Lord would do next day for him!

What a contrast! On one side, 'the riches of Christ's goodness and forbearance and long-suffering' (Rom. ii. 4; comp. 1 Tim. i. 16)—on the other side, jealousy and discord, slowness of heart, ingratitude, faithlessness, and even dark treachery!

THERE IS THE SAME CONTRAST NOW.

In this class—is there a Peter? is there a Judas? you think you could not have done those dreadful things; but the weakness and failings we have seen to-day [*recapitulate*!—are there these? well, and is there not the enemy still, watchful as ever, 'seeking whom he may devour'?

But Christ is the same too (Heb. xiii. 8), loving, condescending, long-suffering. Come to Him. First, bring to Him the sins of the past,—

'Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!'

Then bring before Him the dangers of present and future, and ask Him who prayed for Peter to plead for you (see Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1).

'On this alone my hope depend,
That Thou wilt plead for me!'

NOTES.

1. The following tabular statement shews the incidents of the Last Supper as arranged by the four Evangelists:—

	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John
1. Preparations for the Supper.....	Ver. 17—20	Ver. 12—17	Ver. 7—11	
2. Strife among the Disciples.....			24	
3. Christ washing the Disciples' feet				Ver. 1—11
4. Discourse thereon.....			25—30	12—29
5. The 'first cup' of wine.....			15—18	
6. Announcement of the Traitor....	21—24	13—21	21—23	21, 22
7. Identification of the Traitor.....	25			23—30
8. Christ's joy at Judas' departure..				31, 32
9. Institution of the Lord's Supper..	26—29	22—25	19—20	
10. First warning to Peter.....			31—33	33—38
11. Second ditto.....	30—35	26—31		

The principal difficulty in harmonising the accounts is to decide where, in John xiii., the institution of the Lord's Supper must be inserted; which involves the further question—Was Judas then present or not? On this point commentators are much divided. Andrews (*Life of Our Lord*, p. 48) mentions a great many well-known names on both sides.

(a) If Judas was present, the institution must be inserted between ver. 20 and 21 of John xiii., which is very awkward, and the order of Matthew and Mark must be disregarded. It is only from the close way in which Luke's 20th and 21st verses seem connected that Judas' presence can be inferred; and Luke's order is obviously not exact in other respects, as his ver. 25—30 unquestionably refer to the washing of the disciples' feet at the beginning of the repast. (The words, 'supper being ended,' in John xiii. 2, are a mistranslation, and should be 'supper being ready,' or 'having come'; the Greek word is the same as is used by Matthew to express 'when the evening was come'.)

(b) On the view adopted in the above table, that Judas had left before the Lord's Supper was instituted, the order of Matthew and Mark can be retained, and the division of John xiii. be made after ver. 32, which is much the least awkward place. This arrangement is further confirmed by a comparison of the narratives with what appears from the Talmud to have been the Paschal ritual at that time. See next Lesson, Note 1.

The second warning to Peter was given on the way to Gethsemane, so that between sections 10

and 11 of the table, come the discourses of John xiv.—xvi., and the prayer of chap. xvii.

2. All ideas of the Last Supper derived from our English usages, or from engravings of Leonardo Da Vinci's famous picture, must be discarded in reading this passage. The 'table' probably consisted of three tables, arranged to form three sides of a square, thus □, the fourth side being always left open for the convenience of the servants in waiting. Couches or ottomans, as high (or nearly so) as the tables, were placed outside them—not within the square. On these the guests reclined, each leaning on his left arm, and with his feet extending diagonally outwards, behind the shoulders of the person next to him. St. John was in this place next to our Lord, so that he could lean his head back upon Jesus' breast to whisper the question about the traitor. It is probable that Judas was next Christ on the other side, i.e., behind Him, as the 'Thou hast said' of Matt. xxvi. 25 cannot have been spoken in the hearing of the rest.

'Dipping the hand in the dish' also alludes to the Oriental custom of each helping himself with his fingers out of one dish. The 'sop,' rather 'morsel' (see margin), was probably a piece of bread dipped in a dish called *charoseth*, made up of figs, nuts, &c., mixed with wine and vinegar, which was then a part of the paschal meal.

3. Frequent washing of the feet is indispensable where only sandals are worn (see Gen. xviii. 4, xix. 2, xxiv. 32). Hengstenberg, whose explanation of the whole scene (in his *Commentary on St. John*, Clark's edition, vol. ii. p. 138) is par-

ticularly good, justly urges that much of the teaching involved in our Lord's condescending act depends upon there having been a real need for the washing. It was not a superfluous service done merely for its symbolism. This being so, the assumption of the Sketch is a natural one, that the householder provided the basin, &c., but, having to keep his own Passover, left the disciples to wait upon themselves; and that this, in part at all events, led to the 'strife' mentioned by St. Luke, to terminate and to rebuke which Jesus Himself undertook the servile office, girded, like the meanest slave, with the necessary towel. The humiliation implied in the act is shown by Abigail's words to David, 1 Sam. xxv. 41; comp. 1 Tim. v. 10, and see Lesson XXXVI., Note 3.

4. 'Dost Thou wash my feet?' The pronouns are both emphatic themselves and emphatically placed; thus, literally, 'Dost Thou, of me, wash the feet?' Christ accepts the implied contrast, and uses it again in His reply, 'What I do, thou knowest not'—as if to say, 'If you acknowledge My superiority, why question what I am pleased to do?' Peter's reply is literally, 'Thou shalt not wash my feet to eternity.'

Most writers observe that Peter here is a type of those persons who, from a false humility, will not accept a spiritual washing provided by free and unmerited grace; and, on the rejoinder of Jesus, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me,' Stier remarks that 'we need threatening to induce us to accept love.'

5. 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' The 'is washed' is a different word in the Greek from that used elsewhere in this chapter. It means 'has bathed,' and alludes to the bath usually taken before going to a feast, which left only the necessity, on arrival at the house, of having the feet washed from the dust or mire of the road. It is connected with the word used in Tit. iii. 5—the washing [literally *bath* or *laver*] of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. This latter passage unquestionably refers to the ancient custom of baptism by immersion, and fully justifies the almost unanimous opinion

of commentators that, to the early Christians, Christ's words would mean, 'He that has bathed,—that has believed in the Son of God, come out from the world, and gone down into the baptismal bath as a sign and seal of the remission of sins by Christ's blood (see Acts ii. 28, 'xxii. 16)—needeth not save to wash his feet, to seek cleansing daily and hourly for the stains of sin received in his necessary contact (*the feet are the members that touch the ground*) with the world.' Luther says, 'The devil allows no Christian to reach heaven with clean feet all the way.' There is an admirable sermon on the subject in Dr. C. J. Vaughan's *Plain Words on Christian Living*, first published in *Good Words* for August, 1864.

6. Melancthon declares that the three greatest marks of pity and compassion are (1) to tolerate the wicked for a season; (2) to abstain from exposing their sins as long as possible; (3) to warn them plainly and gently before leaving them for ever. (Quoted in Kyle's *Expository Thoughts on St. John*). These are strikingly exemplified in Christ's dealings with Judas. The announcement by Jesus of His knowledge of the traitor was *needed*, to show the Apostles that the manner of His arrest was no surprise to Him.

The words in Ps. xli. 9, quoted by our Lord (John xiii. 18) referred originally to Ahithophel, David's counsellor. 'Hath lifted up his heel against Me,' is a figurative allusion to the kicking of a vicious horse.

'That thou doest, do quickly' is a pregnant saying, and is variously interpreted. Probably it means, 'I know thine errand; I am ready.'

7. Christ's words in Luke xxii. 25—30 are almost a repetition of Matt. xx. 25—28, and xix. 28; on which see Lessons LXXII. and LXVII. Ver. 27 connects them with the immediate occasion. The title 'benefactor' was adopted by several Oriental sovereigns; Ptolemy *Euergetes* is the best known example.

8. 'Satan hath desired to have you.' The 'you' is plural, referring to them all. Satan did 'have' the Apostles for a while; for a while only, because of Christ's intercession. 'Converted,' i.e., turned back from thy wandering or backsliding.

Lesson LXXXVI.—The Last Supper—II.

'This do in remembrance of Me.'

Read—Matt. xxvi. 26—29; Mark xiv. 22—25; Luke xxii. 15—20; Learn—1 Cor. xi. 23—26. (Hymns, 60, 99, 104, 144, 146, 246, 332—337, 342.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Great responsibility must be felt by any Lesson-writer in taking up a subject around which have raged the most important controversies in the Christian Church. Every effort has been made to be as *simple* as possible in the Sketch, and to refer at each point to the very words of the Catechism and Communion Service; while the distinctly Protestant explanations in the Notes are purposely given, not in the writer's own words, but in those of Anglican divines free from all possible suspicion of thinking too lightly of the Sacrament. It is hoped that these Notes will help to prepare the teacher's mind for any questions that may arise in the class; but it is very important that, in actual teaching, the minds of our scholars should not be confused with nice polemical distinctions between Roman, Lutheran, Zwinglian, Anglican, or any other class of views. The best preparation against error and difficulty in the future is to be imbued with positive

truth now, and even this rather in its spiritual and practical than in its merely dogmatic aspect.

The teacher of young children may not unnaturally ask, Can I take this Lesson? The writer's reply is, Decidedly you can and ought to take it. Describe in detail what Christ said and did at the Institution of the Supper, and what is done now when it is celebrated. The latter will certainly awaken interest if the account be begun something like this: 'At end of Church Service, when people come out, some stay behind with the clergyman—what for?'—then telling what is on the Table, how the people go up to it, &c. Then the explanations will follow naturally; and if the 'spiritual feeding' is found too difficult, the idea of 'commemoration' will at all events be at once grasped.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

That supper which the Lord Jesus took with His disciples [*last Lesson*], and which He had so much 'desired' to take with them (Luke xxii. 15)—what was it called?

And, that same evening, the same Passover feast in every house in Jerusalem: family gathered together—solemn thanksgiving offered—cup of wine passed round; then one of the children stood up and asked what it all meant, and father explained; then two Psalms chanted—another cup of wine passed round—roasted lamb divided—rest of meal taken; two more cups of wine drunk, and four more Psalms sung. [*See Note I.*] Next day would be offerings in the Temple, and other ceremonies; and for seven days all the bread to be unleavened.

How long had this yearly feast been kept? We met with it when Jesus began His ministry (John ii. 13), and when He was a boy (Luke ii. 41, 42). But it was much older than that. See it in Ezra's time (Ezra vi. 19), in Hezekiah's (2 Chron. xxx.), in Joshua's (Josh. v. 10), even in the wilderness (Numb. ix. 1—5). But where was the first Passover lamb eaten? Exod. xii. 8—11 [*picture the scene*].

Year after year, for centuries, the Passover kept. Why? When child stood up at supper-table and asked why, what would father say? see Exod. xii. 25—27.

I. THE PASSOVER FEAST COMMEMORATED A GREAT DELIVERANCE.

1. *A deliverance from what?* From Egyptian bondage? yes, but something before that—a deliverance from the destroying angel, from God's judgment upon sin.

2. *How was this deliverance effected?* Destroying angel 'passed over' where blood sprinkled—what blood? So the lamb killed to save their lives. And then what done with the lamb? That same lamb, whose blood their safety, also to be their food, to strengthen them for journey.

3. *Why was the deliverance commemorated every year?* Merely to remember God's mercy to the Israelites who happened to be alive at the Exodus? More than this. To that deliverance every Jew owed his home in Canaan, &c. &c.—so could thank God on his own account. And could only continue to be one of God's chosen nation by keeping the feast, for see Numb. ix. 13.

II. THE PASSOVER FEAST POINTED TO A GREATER DELIVERANCE.

1. *A deliverance from what?* From a worse bondage than that of Egypt—the slavery of sin, see John viii. 34; 2 Pet. ii. 19. [*See this explained and illustrated in Lesson XLIII.*] And from a judgment more terrible than came upon the first-born, Rom. ii. 3, 5, 8, 9; Matt. xxv. 41.

2. *How was this greater deliverance to be effected?* Also by the blood of a Lamb, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Rev. v. 8, 9. Who is this Lamb? John i. 29; Col. i. 13, 14; Heb. ix. 12, 14. But is it enough that the Lamb of God was slain for us? Was it enough to kill the lamb in Egypt? No, something else—(1) blood sprinkled, (2) lamb eaten. So with us—Jesus died for all, but (1) each must come to Him and have heart 'sprinkled,' Heb. x. 19, 22; 1 Pet. i. 2; *i. e.*, each must have his own sin put away; (2) must 'feed on' Christ, *i. e.*, believe in Him, think about Him, trust in Him—so gain strength for journey by 'narrow way' to heavenly Canaan. [*See below.*]

3. *How did the yearly feast point to this greater deliverance?* Would show how deliverance from death could only be by death of Another. All might not see this; but when Jesus had died, what could St. Paul call Him? 1 Cor. v. 7.

Now, should not this greater deliverance be commemorated too? At that 'Last Supper' what did Christ do?

III. CHRIST INSTITUTED THE LORD'S SUPPER TO COMMEMORATE THIS GREATER DELIVERANCE.

[*Read passages, Matt., Mark, Luke: repeat 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.*] What were the disciples always to 'do'? To sacrifice a lamb and eat its flesh? No; Jesus going to 'offer up Himself' as 'one sacrifice for sins for ever' (Heb. vii. 27, ix. 26, x. 12)—no more sacrifices after that. [*See Notes 3, 5.*] Only to eat bread and drink wine. Did they 'do' this? see Acts ii. 42, 46, xx. 7; 1 Cor. x. 16, xi. 26. And it has been 'done' ever since—how many millions of times in 1800 years! 'Done' wherever even two or three who love Christ, on board ship, in snows of Greenland and hot sands of Africa, as well as in our great cathedrals. And will be 'done'—how long? 1 Cor. xi. 26—'Till He come!'

Try and understand why Christ insti-

tuted this 'Lord's Supper,' and what we mean by celebrating it. If English boy asks, as Jewish boy did about Passover, 'What mean ye by this service?'—how explain?

IN THE LORD'S SUPPER TWO THINGS DONE. See this in minister's words when giving the bread—(1) 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee;' (2) 'Feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.'

1. *We commemorate Christ's Death for us.* See Catechism: 'Q. Why Sacrament of Lord's S. ordained? Ans. For continual remembrance of sacrifice of death of Christ,' &c. (Comp. Exhort. in Commun. Serv.—'To be by them received in remembrance,' &c.; 'To the end that we should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master,' &c.; and Prayer of Consecr.—'A perpetual memory of that His precious death.')

But could we not remember Christ's death without this? Perhaps so, yet,—

(a) Is mere 'remembering' enough? Would we not wish to 'commemorate' such an event? [*Illust.—A birthday: not only remember the day, but keep it specially. And why put up tombstone 'in memory of' dead friend? could 'remember him' without.*]

(b) The Lord's Supper good even as a reminder. If go to it, can feel, 'Bread and wine has thus been distributed for 1800 years—it began that very night when Jesus was betrayed—He commanded it—*how true it all is!*—He did really die for me.' The Bread reminds of His Body 'given for us,' the Wine of His Blood 'shed for remission of our sins.' But if turn away from it, still a solemn reminder: 'Christ *did* die for you, though you turn from Him.' Thus, to both those who stay and those who depart, the Lord's Supper does 'show the Lord's death,' testify to it—no mistake about it. [*See Note 6.*]

2. *We 'feed upon Him by faith.'* For the

Lord's Supper is a *Sacrament*—so has two parts [*refer to Catechism*]. Bread and wine the 'outward and visible sign,' but what 'the inward part or thing signified'? [*Ans. in Catechism.*] What is this 'feeding'? is it taking the bread in our mouths? no—'feed on Him in thy heart by faith'—what is that? It is to believe so surely what Jesus did for us as to be able to rejoice at sin forgiven, &c., and, thus rejoicing, to be strong to conquer sin and serve Christ. So by this 'feeding' we get 'the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine' (Catech.); see John vi. 53, 56.

Can we not 'feed on Him' at other times? Yes, certainly; but this the great means, as those do find who come to it simply trusting to Christ's own word; 'the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament, for then,' &c. (Exhort. in Com. Service). [*See Note 9.*]

Are you too young to go to the Lord's Supper? Still you can be glad, every time you see the preparations for it in church—why? Because reminded of 'His precious blood-shedding.' And can look forward to the time when you too shall come to His Table.

Are you old enough, yet neglecting the Lord's Supper, or shrinking from it? Think of His dying words, '*Do this*'—can you resist them? Are you 'not fit'? Then not fit for heaven! Does He only invite very good people? what kind of men received the bread and wine *the first time*? what did all of them do that very night? 'Hear what comfortable words' He saith [*quote them*].—are these words for very holy people?

'All things are ready, come;
Come to the supper spread;
Come rich and poor, come old and young,
Come and be richly fed.'

NOTES.

1. The ceremonies of the Paschal Supper were, when fully carried out, very elaborate. The general order can be best understood by grouping them around the *four cups of wine*. The party being assembled, the head of the family gave thanks, using these words, 'Praise be to Thee, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hast created the fruit of the vine'; after which the *first cup* was passed round. A general washing of hands followed, the 'bitter herbs' (Exod. xii. 8) were eaten, and explanations given in reply to a question by one of the younger members. The first part of the 'Hallel' or song of praise, comprising Ps. cxiii. and cxiv., was then sung. Then came the *second cup* of wine, after which the householder dipped a piece of bread with some of the herbs in the *charoseth* (see last Lesson. Note 2), and ate it, saying, 'This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in Egypt.' The meal was then proceeded with and finished, being concluded with the *third cup*, called the 'cup of blessing.' The

singing of the rest of the Hallel, viz., Ps. cxv.—cxviii., followed, and the *fourth cup* concluded the feast.

Several minor observances are omitted in this summary, and sometimes a *fifth cup* of wine was taken, and Ps. cxx.—cxxxvii. (called the Great Hallel) chanted. On the subject generally, see Smith's *N. T. Hist.*, p. 287; Andrews's *Life of Our Lord*, p. 402; Hanna's *Passion Week*, pp. 283, 295; and two articles in the *Sunday Magazine* for May 1866 and Dec. 1867.

It is not likely that all these rites were observed at the Last Supper, but there are traces of one or two of them. Luke xxii. 17 seems to refer to the *first cup* of wine; while the *third cup*, 'after supper,' was probably the one used in the institution of the Eucharist, and its very name, 'cup of blessing,' is applied by St. Paul to the sacramental cup (1 Cor. x. 16). The 'dipping of the sop' (John xii. 26) was doubtless the particular act mentioned above, and if so, it is a strong evidence that Judas had left

the room before the institution of the Sacrament. The 'hymn' sung by our Lord (Matt. xxvi. 30) was very likely the second part of the Hallel.

2. 'I will not drink of the fruit of the vine,' &c. These words were twice spoken: the first time at the beginning of the supper, Luke xxii. 15-18, where they refer to the abrogation of the Passover; the second time after the institution, Matt. xxvi. 29, where most writers take them to point to the mysterious 'marriage supper of the Lamb' (Rev. xix. 9). Doubtless the Lord's Supper, like the Passover, has a prophetic and anticipative as well as a commemorative aspect.

3. 'Took bread, and blessed it, and brake it.' Luke has 'gave thanks' instead of 'blessed,' but the meaning is nearly the same. From the Greek word which means 'giving of thanks' is derived our 'Eucharist.' The blessing 'changed the bread, not in substance, not in quantity, not in quality—but in use, in purpose, in sanctity' (Bp. Harold Browne, *Expos. Articles*, p. 713). Christ's act of breaking the bread had probably some special solemnity, see Luke xxiv. 30, 31, and Lesson XLV., Note 7. From it was derived the peculiar title of the Sacrament in the early Church; 'breaking of bread' (see texts in Sketch). Of its other names, 'the Communion' (with the term 'communicant') is derived from 1 Cor. x. 16, and 'the Lord's Supper' from 1 Cor. xi. 20.

Why did Christ ordain bread to be used in the Lord's Supper, and not a lamb? Canon Walsham How (in the S. P. C. K. *Commentary*) replies, 'Because the types and shadows were to cease when the Real Sacrifice was come. There was to be no more shedding of blood when once His all-prevailing Blood was shed. There must be nothing which might cast a doubt upon the all-sufficiency of that.'

4. 'This is My Body—this is My Blood.' 'If the bread was literally changed into Christ's human body, the disciples were to take and eat it. But that body was standing before them, and gave them what they did eat, and remained with them visible and entire after they had eaten, and afterwards died on the cross' (Wordsworth, *in loco*). 'If it be said that Christ's Body is now a spiritual Body, and that therefore what could not be then can be now, this is to deny that the Apostles at that time partook of the real Sacrament' (How, *in loco*).

On the word 'is,' Bp. Browne says, 'How are we to interpret, The seed is the word, The field is the world, The reapers are the angels, The harvest is the end of the world, I am the door, I am the vine? We cannot here understand a substantial change, but must admit a figure of speech. And so, in truth, we must admit in the Eucharist; for though we not only acknowledge Christ's presence, but rejoice in it, yet we hold not that presence to be in the material bread' (*Expos. Articles*, p. 714). 'Why did He say, In remembrance of Me? Remembrance and bodily presence are scarcely compatible ideas' (*ibid.*, p. 716).

5. 'This do.' The Greek word 'do' is that used in the Septuagint translation of the O. T. for the commands to 'keep' and 'observe' the Mosaic

ordinances. It may therefore be taken in that sense here. But not as meaning to 'offer' a sacrifice, for this would exclude the recipients' part of eating and drinking, whereas in 1 Cor. xi. the 'do' of ver. 24, 25 is clearly equivalent to the 'eat' and 'drink' of ver. 25. (See How, *in loco*.) 'We have no warrant to believe, and we could find no greater comfort in believing, that Christ was to be newly sacrificed every day' (Bp. Browne). See 31st Article. There is, however, a sacrifice in the Eucharist—'Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee.'

6. 'In remembrance of Me.' Literally, 'for the memorial' or 'commemoration of Me.' 'Ἀναμνήσις (*anamnesis*), is not simply remembrance, which may be involuntary, but it is a deliberate inward act of the will (*recordatio*), showing itself by external signs' (Wordsworth, *in loco*). It is 'Do this,' not because ye remember Me, but in order that I may be remembered. St. Paul's expression, 'Show the Lord's death,' is therefore exactly parallel. 'But the Greek word translated, Ye show, can only mean before man. We conclude, therefore, that our Lord is speaking rather of a memorial for man, than of memorial before God' (How, *in loco*).

7. 'My Blood of the new testament'—rather, 'new covenant.' The old covenant of Sinai was ratified by blood, see Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. The new covenant, promised of old by God (Jer. xxxi. 31-34; comp. Heb. viii. 7-13, ix. 14-26, x. 15-18), in virtue of which the law was to be 'written on their hearts,' and their sins to be 'remembered no more,' was also secured and ratified by the blood of Christ, 'shed for the remission of sins.'

Observe that Christ does not say 'Drink it for the remission of sins.' 'It is the shedding, not the partaking, of Christ's blood which is here said to be 'for the remission of sins' (How, *in loco*). 'In the Sacrament, not the forgiveness of sins itself, but the refreshing and confirming assurance of that state of forgiveness, is conveyed' (Alford, *in loco*).

8. 'Drink ye all of it.' A clear and sufficient warrant for the 30th Article.

9. On the relation of the discourse in John vi. to the Lord's Supper, the following words from Lesson XLVII., Note 5, may be repeated:—Christ speaks of a 'feeding'; this 'feeding' is not the partaking of the Lord's Supper, nor is it a spiritual act exclusively connected with such partaking, but can it be doubted that the Lord's Supper is the ordained outward expression of that same spiritual 'feeding'?

On the Sacrament as a means of grace, see Art. 25—'Effectual signs of grace and God's goodwill towards us,' &c.; Art. 28—'Given, taken, and eaten, in the supper'; Catechism—'Verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful'; and Exhortation in Commun. Serv.—'Then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ,' &c. But in all these places, the benefit is limited to the believing recipient, and the 'meat' stated to be 'faith.' See also 29th Art., and the remarkable rubric at the end of the Office for the Communion of the Sick.

ADDITIONAL NOTE XII.

THE DAY OF THE SUPPER AND THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

One of the most difficult chronological questions arising out of the Gospel history is this—Was the Last Supper or the Crucifixion coincident in time with the Passover?

In the discussion of the question, the following are fixed data :—(1) The Crucifixion took place on the day before the weekly Sabbath, *i.e.*, on our Friday. (2) The Paschal feast took place on the evening of the 14th Nisan or Abib (Exod. xii. 6). The question to be decided is—Was the Thursday or the Friday of the Passion week the 14th Nisan? And the difficulty in answering it lies in the fact that the first three Gospels seem to imply one, and that of St. John the other. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke say that the Last Supper, which took place on Thursday, was 'the Passover'; while from several passages in St. John we should gather that the Passover had not yet been kept when Christ was crucified.

The following solutions of the difficulty have been suggested :—

1. That owing to differences of computation, depending on the appearance of the new moon, the Passover was kept on *two* days, on one day by the Galilean and foreign Jews, on the other by those of Jerusalem; and that our Lord followed the usage of the former.

2. That the Jews, by an error in their computation, had fixed the feast a day after the legal time, and that Christ kept it on the correct day.

3. That the Jews purposely put the feast a day late, that it might not be interrupted by their proceedings against Jesus.

4. That the Passover fell on Friday evening, and that our Lord kept it a day earlier, knowing that His death would take place before the right hour.

5. That the Passover fell on Thursday evening, and that the passages in St. John are reconcilable with this.

For No. 1 the evidence is very slight. Nos. 2 and 3 are most improbable. The great division of opinion has always been between No. 4 and No. 5. No. 4 was the view of many of the early fathers, who believed that Christ, as the true Paschal Lamb, suffered at the same hour at which the lambs for the feast were being killed. It has also been advocated by Greswell, Ellicott, Clinton, Stier, Ebrard, and Westcott. In the latter writer's *Introduction to the Gospels* (p. 316) it is most ably defended. No. 5 is the view of Wieseler, Hengstenberg, Lange, Wordsworth, Birks, Plumpton, Robinson, Canon Norris, Bishop Browne, Archbishop Thomson (in *Smith's Dict. Bible*). The arguments for it are well summarised in *Smith's N. T. Hist.* (p. 288); and the whole question is fully treated in

Andrews's *Life of Our Lord* (pp. 367—397), where the same conclusion is come to.

On the whole, No. 5 appears to have most in its favour, and is adopted in these Lessons. The following is a brief *resumé* of the argument :—

I. *Statements of the Synoptists.*

All three Evangelists call the day when Peter and John were sent to prepare the Supper 'the first day of unleavened bread'; Mark adding, 'when they killed the Passover', and Luke 'when the Passover must be killed.' (Matt. xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 7.) There are also our Lord's own words (Matt. xxvi. 2), 'Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is'—not crucified, but—'betrayed to be crucified.' This would seem absolutely decisive that Thursday was the 14th Nisan.

But if so, of course Friday was the 15th Nisan, *i.e.*, the first day of the seven following the Paschal Supper, and therefore what was called a 'feast-sabbath' (Exod. xii. 16; Lev. xxiii. 6, 7); and it is objected that as the 'feast-sabbaths' were kept like the weekly Sabbaths, the trial and execution of Christ could not have taken place upon the 15th Nisan, nor could the spices and ointment have been purchased (Luke xxiii. 56; John xix. 38—40); and therefore that Friday could not have been the 15th Nisan. To all which there is a twofold answer :—(1) That we have in fact no clear evidence that the 'feast-sabbaths' were kept strictly, as they are not alluded to in the N. T., nor by Josephus; (2) That it is impossible to imagine St. Matthew at all events—to say nothing of Mark and Luke—representing events as taking place on the day after the Passover (*i.e.*, the 15th Nisan), which (on this theory) all his readers would know could not have occurred on that day.

II. *Statements of St. John.*

(a) 'Before the feast of the Passover, xiii. 1. It is said this must mean that the Last Supper took place before the feast. But it rather means that, 'before the feast, Jesus showed His enduring love by washing His disciples' feet'—which He actually did before supper. (As already stated in Lesson LXXXV., Note 1, the words of ver. 2, 'supper being ended,' are a mis-translation.)

(b) 'Some of them thought that Jesus said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast,' &c., xiii. 29. This, it is said, implies that the feast had not yet begun. But in fact, it is an evidence the other way. If there were yet twenty-four hours to the Passover, how could Christ's words, 'That thou doest, do quickly,' be so misunderstood?

(c) 'They went not into the judgment-

hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover,' xviii. 28. This was early on the Friday morning: how then, it is asked, could the Passover have been kept on Thursday night? But such ceremonial defilement only lasted for the legal day, *i.e.*, till sunset; how then could they be thinking of a supper on Friday evening after sunset? Some think that they had been interrupted at their Paschal Supper by the proceedings for the arrest and trial of Jesus, and were anxious to go back to it by-and-by. They would thus contravene Dent. xvi. 4: but, to accomplish their designs against Christ, they might risk that. It should be noted that Joseph of Arimathæa did go to Pilate on the Friday without fear of defilement, which would imply that *he* had eaten the Passover, and that therefore it must have been on Thursday evening. Others think that St. John uses the term 'Passover' in the larger sense, including the seven days' observances, as in 2 Chron. xxx. 22, and as he certainly seems to do elsewhere (ii. 13, vi. 4, xi. 55, xii. 12, 20).

(d) 'It was the preparation of the Passover,' xix. 14. This, it is said, implies that the Passover had not yet taken place. But the other Evangelists also call the Friday 'the preparation' (Matt. xxvii. 62; Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 54), obviously meaning that it was the preparation-day for the weekly Sabbath (see especially Mark); and in fact the term had become a

colloquial name for Friday, on account of the preparation rendered necessary by the strict Sabbatical rules. St. John, therefore, means by his expression 'the Friday of the Passover week.'

(e) 'That Sabbath-day was a high day,' xix. 31. Because, it is said, the 'feast-Sabbath' of the 15th Nisan fell on Saturday, so it was a double Sabbath. But probably the weekly Sabbath which fell in the Passover week would in any case be called 'a high day.'

St. John's statements, therefore, appear quite reconcilable with those of the Synoptists. Thursday was the 14th Nisan, Friday the 15th; the Passover fell on Thursday evening, at which time our Lord kept it.

It may be asked, Can we not tell for certain *by the year* how the days of the week and month corresponded? But the computations cannot absolutely be relied upon, and there is a difference of opinion as to the year in which our Lord died. In these Lessons it has been assumed that our Lord was born B.C. 5 or 4 (A.U.C. 749 or 750), and baptized A.D. 27 (A.U.C. 780), see Lesson V., Note I, and Lesson XVII., Note 7; and that His ministry lasted three years; which would bring His death to A.D. 30 (A.U.C. 783). Now in that year, according to Wieseler's elaborate calculations, the 15th Nisan fell on Friday, April 7th; which agrees with the view stated above.

Lesson LXXXVII.—Christ's Parting Words.

'Let not your heart be troubled.'

Read—Parts of John xiv., xv., xvi.; Learn—John xiv. 27, xvi. 33. (*Hymns, 75—77, 81, 94, 215, 222, 226, 257, 285, 291, 382, 383, 386.*)

TO THE TEACHER.

In treating these three chapters of St. John, the plan has been adopted for the present Lesson which has already been followed with the Sermon on the Mount and some other of our Lord's longer discourses, *viz.*, that of selecting certain leading thoughts and grouping them together, rather than commenting on the passage verse by verse. Two of the topics of the discourse, which are of special importance, are treated in the two following Lessons.

As the six divisions of the Sketch, *i.e.*, six of the grounds of encouragement mentioned by Christ, are not so intimately connected as that all must be taken if any are taken, the teacher can select one or more, and thus limit his lesson to a particular passage, should he prefer it. All the divisions can be easily expanded.

No attempt has been made to give detailed explanatory 'Notes' on the discourse. They could hardly be otherwise than voluminous, and for the purpose of this Lesson are unnecessary.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What a sad thing a parting is! Especially if the one going away is the best friend, and those left behind know not what to do without him [*illustr.—mother and children around father's dying bed*].

That night, in that upper room [*refer*

back], the Eleven full of sadness (xvi. 6)—why? (a) Because of what Jesus says *they* will do: one to betray Him, another to deny Him, all to forsake Him [*see Lesson LXXXV.*]; (b) Still more because of what He says *He* will do—go away

from them (xiii. 33). They will be just like *orphans*, xiv. 18 (margin). Think of the silent, downcast company, shocked, bewildered, in despair—*this* the end of all their hopes!

Even Jesus Himself 'troubled' (xiii. 21)—see what He felt an hour or two later, Matt. xxvi. 38; Mark xiv. 33, 34; Luke xxii. 44;—no wonder, with the great load of 'the iniquity of us all' (Isa. liii. 6) coming on Him! And yet, as always, not thinking of Himself, what does He do? All these three chapters occupied with His parting words of comfort to the disciples. What a kind beginning!—'Let not your hearts be troubled.'

How does He comfort them? By showing their fears groundless? Not at all: (a) They will forsake Him, xvi. 32; (b) He is going away, xiv. 2, xvi. 5, 16; (c) More than this—they are to meet hatred, persecution, tribulation, xv. 19, xvi. 2, 33.

Yet six things to comfort them:—

1. *He was going to prepare a home for them*, xiv. 2. Where? What is 'the Father's house'?—Three things Jesus here tells about heaven:—(a) *A home*—'mansions' [see Note 4]—not like inn or hotel, but like home, a place to *stay* in; see 2 Cor. v. 1; Heb. xi. 10; 1 Pet. i. 4; Rev. iii. 12. (b) *Plenty of room*—'many mansions.' (c) Christ is there—'where I am' (ver. 3; comp. xvii. 24; 1 Thess. iv. 17.)

And then, was this 'home' a place they could not get to? What did Thomas think? ver. 5. But there is a way—what is that? ver. 6—what meant? Just as if a 'great gulf' (sin) between us and God—Christ, by dying for sin, *bridged over* that gulf, so the way open; see Heb. x. 19, 20.

2. *He would come back again*, xiv. 3; see xiv. 18, 28, xvi. 16, 22 [see Note 3]. Did He? This was Thursday night; by Sunday night He had gone and come back. But He went away again—how soon? Did He then (as He promised, ver. 3) take them with Him? Has He ever come back since? Then *will* come yet. But the Apostles dead ages ago—how could He say He would fetch them? Sent a messenger—*Death*. How afraid people are of death! but how should Christ's servants feel? [Illustr.—*Family moving*—father goes first to prepare new home—would you not welcome messenger sent to bring you?]

3. *Even while He was away, they should not really be separate from Him*. True, He should be no more seen in the world, xiv. 19—but, like Moses (Heb. xi. 27), they should 'see Him who is invisible.' Comp. 2 Kings vi. 17—there are many things really existing which we can't see; we sing,

'Angel-guards from Thee surround us'—

can't see them, but if *sure* they are there, is it not as good as seeing? So Jesus will 'manifest,' *i.e.*, show Himself—the eye not to see Him, but the heart to be sure He is there. Who will have this great privilege?

see ver. 21. Hard to *understand*, but can be *felt*—even children have felt it. You may all feel it, if will love and obey Christ, *then* know how true it is. [Illustr.—*Any great pleasure or pain—can't realise it, scarcely believe it, from what others say—must feel it for oneself.*]

Separate from Christ! Why, they could not be; so united that—see ver. 19 (last clause). Actually part of His body, like a man's limbs, like branches of a vine (more of this another day).

But how could this spiritual presence be as good as His bodily presence—as seeing the face they loved? It would be *better*: for if He stayed at Jerusalem, then, when they went over the world preaching, He would seem so far off; but, just because invisible, could feel Him always near; see Matt. xxviii. 20.

4. *While He was away, they should be able to communicate with Him*. How this always makes absence less painful! [Illustr.—*letter-writing, telegraph.*] How communicate with Christ? see xiv. 13, 14, xvi. 23, 24—not only liberty to send messages in prayer, but the answer promised too. How quickly? see Isa. lxxv. 24 (comp. Dan. ix. 20—23)—an electric telegraph, indeed, for Christ's people!

5. *When He had gone, He would send Another Comforter*. More about this next time.

6. *The Coming Persecutions no cause for alarm*. On the contrary, when men hated them, a cause for rejoicing—why? see xv. 19—would remind them of their happy lot—not 'of the world,' not enemies of God, but 'chosen out' to be Christ's servants. Besides, see ver. 18 and 20—would only have to bear what He had borne. He had conquered, xvi. 33, so their victory sure, Rom. viii. 35—37; 1 Cor. xv. 57. And when persecution did come, how did they regard it? Acts v. 41, xvi. 22—25; comp. Matt. v. 10—12; 1 Pet. iv. 12—14.

No wonder, with all this, He could say, 'Let not your heart be troubled!' And see His legacy to them, xiv. 27—'Peace I leave with you.' A common greeting and leave-taking in the East, like our 'Farewell' and 'Good-bye,' see 1 Sam. i. 17; Gen. xliii. 23; Luke x. 5; Acts. xvi. 36; Eph. vi. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 16; 1 Pet. v. 14; 3 John 14. So to this day—'Salaam!'—yet how often an empty word! But He gives 'not as the world giveth' (ver. 27 again)—(a) He means what He says, (b) He gives 'that peace which the world cannot give' (2nd Collect, Evening Prayer), 'the peace which passeth all understanding' (Phil. iv. 7).

HERE IS COMFORT FOR THE SORROWFUL. You are not sorrowful, but you *might* have sorrow, *might* be glad of comfort. But—

Would that which made the disciples sad make you sad—Christ's absence? How glad

some boys and girls if they could get rid of Christ, never hear of Him again! You may turn from Him, shut Him out, compel Him to 'let you alone' (Hos. iv. 17); but if so, will one day find out that the worst punishment you can have is—see 2 Thess. i. 9. But, once *know* what it is to have Christ with you, making you really happy—then would dread nothing so much as His absence. [*Illustr.—When sky overcast, we feel dull and gloomy—why? because*

know how gladdening sunshine is; but if a man had always lived down in a mine, to him cloud and sunshine all the same.] Then would feel (as Moses did, Exod. xxxiii. 15, and David, Ps. xvi. 11),

'I need Thy presence every passing hour;'

would pray David's prayer, Ps. li. 11, and would sing, with all your heart,—

'Abide with me from morn to eve,
For without Thee I cannot live.'

NOTES.

1. The concluding words of chap. xiv.—'Arise, let us go hence'—have induced many to think that the discourses of chap. xv. and xvi. were spoken on the way to Gethsemane, and the prayer of chap. xvii. offered in some secluded nook on the city side of the Kedron valley; and Hengstenberg has some rather striking arguments to prove this. But, comparing Matthew and Mark, it seems, on the whole, most likely that the entire discourse and the prayer were uttered in the supper-room before starting. If so, we must suppose that, after giving the word to rise, and perhaps rising, Christ lingered to continue His words of comfort.

2. The analyses of the discourse which have been attempted are generally very artificial. We may, however, divide it into three parts:—(a) Chap. xiv., containing a succession of consolatory assurances and reasons why the hearts of the Apostles should 'not be troubled'; (b) Chap. xv., xvi. 1–4, describing the relation of Christ's servants to Himself (xv. 1–11), to one another (12–17), and to the world (18–xvi. 4);

(c) Chap. xvi. 5–33, 'the final and distinctive *farewell* discourse.'

3. The 'coming again' of which our Lord speaks in chap. xiv. 3, 18, 28, xvi. 16, 22, must not be understood exclusively either of His appearances after His resurrection, or of the gift of the Spirit, or of His second advent. 'It is not one single act. . . but the great summary of all these, the result of which shall be His taking His people to Himself. . . It is begun in His resurrection; carried on in the spiritual life, the making them ready for the place prepared; further advanced when each by death is fetched away to be with Him; fully completed at His coming in glory' (*Alford*). 'The time between the Ascension and the Second Advent is a *little while* in comparison with eternity; and when this *little while* is past, and Christ comes again, we shall feel how short a time it has been' (*St. Augustine*).

4. The Greek word rendered 'mansions' means 'abiding-places'; which, in fact, is the *strict* meaning of the English word 'mansion' itself.

Lesson LXXXVIII.—The Promised Comforter.

'I will send you Another Comforter.'

Read—Parts of John xiv., xv., xvi.; Learn—John xiv. 16, 17, 26. (*Hymns*, 105–112.)

TO THE TEACHER.

On no subject is the religious belief of children so vague and unreal as on the Person and Work of the Holy Ghost. The common habit—not confined, indeed, to children, nor even to the uninstructed among adults—of applying to God the Spirit the neuter pronoun, calling Him "it," is a proof that the ideas concerning Him are indefinite; and even where a correct belief is held, it is too often held *merely* as an article in a theological creed, and the mind fails to realise the *fact* of His being a Personal Being, One to whom we owe all true knowledge of self and of God, every motive and impulse for good, and all strength and peace. Let it, therefore, be the teacher's earnest aim, in this Lesson, to set before his class the Holy Spirit's existence, power, love, willingness to save and sanctify, as an actual reality; and to show that God the Father will give, "to those that ask Him," not a *feeling*, but a *Friend*—One whose living presence shall be felt in the heart.

The need and value of such a Friend can be illustrated readily from both school-life and life in the world. The orphan needs a friend; the boy going out into life needs a friend; the infant first sent to school needs a friend;—friends who will give care, kind words, guidance, advocacy. The following illustration is from Jacob Abbott's *Young Christian*:—

'There is an excellent infant school in Switzerland, in which it is the custom, whenever a new scholar enters, for the teacher to collect the children all together, lead the little stranger into the midst, and say,—

'Here is a little girl come to join our school. She is a stranger, and is afraid. She tells me she

will try and be a good girl; but sometimes she will forget, I am afraid, and will do wrong. Now, which of the older children will be her little friend, and tell her what she ought to do?’

Several voices cry, ‘I will, I will,’ and the teacher selects one of the best of the volunteers, and appoints her to be the friend and protector of the stranger. They are together wherever they go; and thus the trembling stranger is guided and encouraged, and is led on to duty and to strength.’

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What a pleasant thing it is to have a friend to go to! some one to help, advise, comfort, sympathise with us, take our part, &c. [*Illustrate. See preface above.*]

What made the disciples so desolate that night in the upper room? See xvi. 5, 6—they had a Friend, but He was going away, and what would become of them! Last Sunday we saw how the Lord comforted them; but we passed over the chief thing, the promise of Another Comforter, another Friend.

Could any one be such a Friend as Jesus? See xvi. 7—it would be better for them to lose Jesus and have the new Friend! How so? (a) Jesus, *i.e.*, the Man Jesus, the Galilean, whose face they knew so well, could not stay always with them; *this* Friend would—xiv. 16. (b) If Jesus did stay, they might be absent from Him sometimes, and unable to get to Him; *this* Friend would be with them all, *everywhere*. How this? To answer, must ask,—

Who was *this* new Friend? xiv. 26—‘the Holy Ghost.’ Who is that? (a) Not a thing, but a Person; called here, and in xiv. 16, 17, xv. 26, xvi. 7—15, ‘He’ and ‘Him,’ not ‘It’ [*see Note 4*]. (b) Some one equal with the Father and the Son, see Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The Third Person in the Trinity [*quote Creeds and Catechism*]. Now, how could He be everywhere with them, and always with them? Being God, *omnipresent*, Ps. cxxxix. 7; and *eternal*, Heb. ix. 14. [*See Note 5*].

What should He do for the disciples? Think, what did they want?

(a) They were unhappy, full of fear, weak and sinful—needed strength, help, comfort for their hearts.

(b) They were ignorant, ‘slow of heart’ to understand God’s ways and Christ’s work (Luke xxiv. 25)—needed instruction and enlightenment for their minds.

And He did do both for them:—

I. A COMFORTER.

A Paraclete [*the Greek word, see Note 1*]—not help to comfort them, but to help them—how? in what? in their work for Christ, their battle with a sinful and hostile world. How were such weak disciples to go forth in the face of bitter foes, telling them of their sin and danger? In two ways the Holy Ghost would help them:—

1. *By encouraging and strengthening their own hearts.* See how He did so. Acts iv. 8—Peter before the Jewish Council—how different from when he was afraid of the high priest’s servants! Acts vii. 55—the first disciple martyred—how much to terrify him—yet we see him—? Acts xiii. 9—Paul having to overcome a wicked opponent—how

boldly he does it! But *Who* gave Peter, Stephen, Paul, this fearless courage? See in each case, ‘full of the Holy Ghost.’ And see, too, how, in quieter times, the Spirit gave the Church comfort and joy, Acts ix. 31, xiii. 52.

2. *By working on the hearts of others.* See xvi. 8—11 [*see Note 3*]. When the Apostles preached, would tell men (a) of their sin, (b) of the only way to be righteous, (c) of Christ’s certain victory and judgment on His enemies. Why tell these things? Because men *knew them not*. Do people know them now? (a) People think they are ‘not so bad,’ ‘no worse than others,’ ‘not like wicked men’; but God sees in their hearts sins they never think of (Ps. xix. 13; Jer. xvii. 9; Luke xviii. 11; Rev. iii. 17). (b) They think, if they keep from great sins, and go to church sometimes, they are ‘righteous,’ and deserve to be saved; but what does God say? Rom. iii. 10—12, 20. (c) They think they can go on as they like—it will be all right at last; but see Rom. ii. 3. Sin, righteousness, judgment—men mistaken about all three. How should the Apostles be able to convince them? Impossible! But the Almighty Spirit could, and should. See how He did, Acts ii. 37, comp. xxiv. 25.

II. A TEACHER.

Is a teacher worth having? Some children would like to be without one! But when you want to learn a thing, glad of some one to teach you [*illustr.—boys, how to handle tools; girls, how to cook; all, how to play games*]. The Apostles valued Jesus as their Teacher—how often they asked Him to tell them things!—so would be thankful for One to take His place.

How was the Holy Spirit to teach them?

1. *By ‘bringing Christ’s words to their remembrance,’* xiv. 26. They could not make out many of His words at the time, but see how they did remember afterwards, John ii. 22, xii. 16; Acts xi. 16. Like saying, ‘To be sure! I see it now!’ And think of the four Evangelists—how could they have remembered His words to write them down, if the Spirit had not helped them?

2. *By testifying of Christ,’* xv. 26, xvi. 14. Have we not seen again and again that they did not understand *Who* He was, *why* He came, about His death, &c.? When the Spirit came, quite different. Contrast Peter in Matt. xvi. 22, and in Acts ii. 23 (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 24).

3. *By ‘guiding them into all the truth,’* xvi. 13. They would learn, as we do, little by little—the Spirit continually ‘guiding’ them to more knowledge. *E.g.*, the great

mystery that Gentiles to be saved as well as Jews (Eph. iii. 3-6)—contrast Acts xi. 1-3, 19, with xi. 17, 18, xiii. 46.

4. By 'showing them things to come,' xvi. 13. See how He did, Acts xi. 28, xxi. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 1; Rev. i. 1, 10.

What a blessed Gift! But was it only for the Apostles? See Peter's words when he received the Spirit Himself, Acts ii. 38, 39—'Every one of you'—'ye shall receive the gift'—'the promise unto you and to your children!' So,

YOU, TOO, MAY HAVE THIS DIVINE COMFORTER, TEACHER, FRIEND.

Do you need Him? See John iii. 5; Rom. viii. 9; 1 Cor. xii. 3. [*Recapitulate as to the two needs, strengthening for the heart, teaching for the mind.*]

How can we obtain Him? see Luke xi. 13—what an easy and certain way! Then pray David's prayer, Ps. li. 11, 12; also those in the Litany ('Endue us with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit,' &c.), the Com. Serv. ('Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts,' &c.), and the Collects for Sunday aft. Ascension, Whitsun Day, and 19th after Trinity.

'Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With light and comfort from above!'

NOTES.

1. The Greek word rendered 'Comforter' is παράκλητος (*parakletos*.) It is connected with a verb of very large meaning, including the idea of strengthening as well as that of consoling, and is no doubt designed to express the variety and completeness of the Holy Spirit's work. Our English word 'comfort' had originally a similarly comprehensive significance, being connected with 'fortress,' 'fortify,' 'fortitude,' and was used by Wickliffe in Luke xxii. 43 and Acts ix. 19, where our present version has 'strengthen.'

But *parakletos* had also a definite technical meaning, viz., *advocate-at-law*, and it is the very word which, when used of Christ Himself in 1 John ii. 1, is rendered 'Advocate.' We therefore probably get nearest to the force of the term, as applied to the Holy Ghost, if we think of Him as one who will *take the part* ('plead the cause,' as in the Psalms) of Christ's servants in their conflict with sin, the world, and the devil. Thus, in Mark xiii. 11, our Lord says, 'When they shall deliver you up, take no thought what ye shall speak . . . for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.' So St. Paul, referring to his first trial before Nero, says, 'At my first answer no man stood with me. . . . Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me' (2 Tim. iv. 16, 17).

2. 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.' The Holy Spirit had been in the world before, quickening, sanctifying, inspiring the Old Testament saints; but all this work was in anticipation of, and in virtue of, the fore-ordained death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, by which the gift of the Spirit was procured for men (see Ps. lxxviii. 18; Acts ii. 33). Jesus might therefore have added, 'If My going away now had not been fixed from the beginning, the Comforter could not have come to My people of old.' It must also, however, be borne in mind that the Spirit was to be poured out at and after Pentecost, as He had never been given before. The dispensation of the Spirit 'was not yet' (John vii. 39; see Lesson LIV., Note 2).

3. Chap. xvi. 8-11. 'He shall reprove'—rather, 'convince' (as in the margin). The Greek word cannot be exactly rendered in English, as it includes the idea both of convincing to salvation, and of convicting to condemnation. It is translated 'convince' in John viii. 46; 1 Cor. xiv. 24; Jas. ii. 9; Jude 15; 'convict' in John viii. 9; 'reprove' in John iii. 20; Eph. v. 13; 2 Tim. iv. 2; 'rebuke' in Tit. i. 13; Rev. iii. 19.

'Of sin.' The Law (Rom. iii. 20), and Con-

science (Rom. ii. 15), had already been powerful to convince of sin—only, however, as used by the Spirit in dealing with the hearts of men. But the special work of the Spirit, in His Pentecostal effusion, was to convince men of a particular sin, viz., unbelief in Christ—'because (or, in that) they believe not on Me.'

'Of righteousness.' This, like the 'sin' and the 'judgment,' must be *of the world*. But, 'what is the world's righteousness? Not their own, but that of the accepted Man Christ Jesus, standing at the right hand of the Father (seen by us no more, but by that very withdrawal testified to be the Son of God, the righteous One), manifested in the hearts of men by the Spirit to be *their only* righteousness; and thereby that righteousness, which they had of their own before, is demonstrated to be worthless, and as filthy rags. It is His going to the Father by which this righteousness is assured to us.' (*Alford*.)

'Of judgment.' Not the final judgment merely, but that unerring judgment of God which is always correctly estimating and justly dealing with the actions of men. 'By His actions are weighed.' The conviction of this 'judgment' is described in Ps. lviii. 11. One great proof to the world that God *was judging*, was the defeat of the powers of darkness by the resurrection of Christ.

4. The use of the word 'he' (*ἐκεῖνος, ekeinos*) is a clear proof of the *personality* of the Holy Ghost, i.e., that He is not an influence, an attribute, a thing; for it is used not only in connection with 'Comforter,' which is a masculine noun, but also in connection with 'Spirit,' which is a neuter noun in the Greek. Thus, in xvi. 13, the masculine pronoun and neuter noun come close together. 'He, the Spirit' (*ἐκεῖνος τὸ Πνεῦμα, ekeinos to Pneuma*). The numerous other proofs are admirably marshalled in E. H. Bickersteth's *Spirit of Life*, chap. ii.; see also Bp. Browne's *Exposition of the Articles*, on Art. I.

5. The Godhead of the Holy Spirit may be thus proved:—

(a) His attributes are Divine attributes: omniscience, omnipresence, &c.

(b) His acts are Divine acts: creating, inspiring, &c.

(c) He is associated in glory and worship with the Father and the Son.

(d) He is spoken of as God: compare, for example, Acts v. 3, with the following verse, and 1 Cor. iii. 17 with 1 Cor. vi. 19.

The proof passages are given at length in the works named above.

Lesson LXXXIX.—The Vine and the Branches.

'Abide in Me, and I in you.'

Read—John xv. 1—11; Learn—John xv. 4—6; (*Hymns*, 110, 123, 155, 158, 291, 331, 341, 343.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The subject of this Lesson not being a large one, it has been worked out in the Sketch in sufficient detail to render further hints here unnecessary. With regard to the natural features and the cultivation of the vine, the teacher will do well to draw from the scholars what they themselves know, and then build his lesson on what they tell him; but with many town children this will not be practicable.

It must be carefully borne in mind that the 'branches' of the Vine are *the members of Christ's visible Church*. Compare the parables of the 'Tares' and the 'Net'; and see Lesson LXXXI, Note 4.

Are there any teachers zealous enough to read through a whole book in preparation for a single lesson? Those who have access to Mudie's or any similar library might at all events get for their general reading Mr. Hugh Macmillan's recently published work, *The True Vine*, if only for its intrinsic interest and beauty; and certainly their teaching of the passage before us will gain much in vividness from a perusal of that accomplished naturalist's exposition. His analogies, however, are not unfrequently somewhat strained and fanciful.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Why were the disciples so sorrowful that night? How did Jesus comfort them? [*Recapitulate.*] Another thought for their comfort: His going away would not really separate Him from them, because the union so close. Three illustrations of this in Scripture, one each from mineral world, vegetable world, animal world: foundation-stone and building (Eph. ii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 4—6), vine and branches (here), head and body (1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. i. 22, 23, iv. 15, 16; Col. ii. 19). The second Jesus gives here. [*Read passage.*]

'I AM THE TRUE VINE.' Who had been called a vine before? Ps. lxxx. 8—11; Isa. v. 7. But what fruit did Israel bear? Isa. v. 4. So what did God's 'noble vine' become? Jer. ii. 21. And now there is another Vine, the 'true Vine' [*see Note 4*]. The Jews thought, if a man to be fruitful and please God, must belong to them—'apart from' Israel 'could do nothing'; and 'apart from' the Vine, man 'could do nothing'—but *what Vine?* see ver. 5 [*see Note 4*]. Husbandman looking at his vines—how feel at seeing useless, bare, withered grapes? how at seeing another full of life and promise? Who is the 'true' Husbandman? ver. 1. God had found no pleasure in the Jewish vine; did He in *this* Vine? Matt. iii. 17, xii. 18, xvii. 5.

Now think about the branches of a vine, and try and understand the illustration Jesus gives.

1. *What do we expect to find on the branches of a vine?*

Some trees cultivated for their *wood*, some for their *bark*; some plants for their *roots*, some for their *leaves*, some for their *flowers*. But the vine for none of these;

only for its *fruit*. If no fruit, of what use the vine? see Ezek. xv. 1—4.

Then, if Christ's disciples are the branches ('members of Christ,' *Bapt. Serv.*) [*see Preface*], what does the Husbandman (the Father) look for in them? Fruit? what kind? see Gal. v. 22; Eph. v. 9; Phil. i. 11; Col. i. 10; 2 Pet. i. 5—8. We speak of being 'created,' 'redeemed,' 'sanctified' (*Catechism*)—what *object* has God in all this 'cultivation'? Our 'fruitfulness in every good work,' see Eph. ii. 10. Just as fine grapes a credit to the vine-grower, so—see Matt. v. 16. And if fruitless branch useless, what of fruitless men? What *good* is he who only 'seems to be religious'? Jas. i. 26—'this man's religion is vain.'

2. *What produces fruit on the branches of a vine?*

Sap, flowing from the stem. Any other things to do with it? yes, situation of vine (*e.g.* which side of house), particular soil, weather, gardener's care and tending. But what use all this without the *sap* inside? Can't see it, but there it is, ever rising, flowing, finding its way through turns and twists of branches even to furthest twig—and on that furthest twig may come grapes.

What is the '*sap*' in the True Vine? To answer, ask, What is it that makes Christ's people 'fruitful in every good work'? See Gal. v. 22—love, joy, &c., called 'fruit of the Spirit.' It is the Spirit's grace and power in our hearts. Where does this come from? John i. 14, 16. Is it indispensable, like the *sap*? ah yes: other things may help—you in England should bear more fruit than poor heathen child—in better *situation*; but no 'fruit' without that *grace*.

But suppose a branch cut off, and then tied on to the vine again [*i.e.*, of course, not a grafting, but a loose fastening]—will it get the sap? if not, will it bear grapes?

So what does Jesus say to us? ver. 4—‘as the branch,’ &c., ‘no more can ye, except,’ &c.; ver. 5—‘apart from Me ye can’—? And therefore, ‘*Abide in Me.*’ What is that? First, be joined to Him; then keep with Him. ‘*In Him,*’ like Noah in the ark, safe from God’s judgments; like the slayer in the refuge-city, safe from the avenger; what St. Paul thought worth the loss of all things (Phil. iii. 9). What is it that prevents this, that cuts us off from Christ? see Isa. lix. 2.

3. *What is done with the fruitful branches of a vine?*

Watch the gardener—takes knife—cuts away boughs and sprouts from every branch. Might think, why injure vine so? But needed—not so much fruit if branch left to itself—sap used up in producing sprouts and leaves. Cut away what not wanted—then more sap goes to make grapes.

See what our Husbandman does, ver. 2—the very thing! [See Note 5.] Two ways of ‘pruning,’ of training, a Christian:—

(a) *Instruction*, ver. 3—‘through the Word’ (comp. John xvii. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Christ’s words (and all Scripture) teach us both *how* to be holy and *why* to be holy, give the *model* and the *motive*. This why St. Paul says Col. iii. 16; and David, Ps. cxix. 11.

(b) *Discipline*, ver. 2. Trials and troubles are God’s pruning-knives. If we don’t cut

away our sins ourselves (Matt. v. 29, 30). He must do it, however painful. In anger? no, in love (Heb. xii. 6) and faithfulness (Ps. cxix. 75). So, when trial comes, remember what it is for, Ps. cxix. 71; Heb. xii. 10.

For what does God want? ver. 2—‘more fruit.’ Is the vine-grower satisfied with a few grapes? would like grapes such as those of Eshcol (Numb. xiii. 23). God would have us like ‘the beloved Persis,’ who ‘laboured much’ (Rom. xvi. 12). ‘Much fruit’ glorifies God, ver. 8.

4. *What is done with the fruitless branches of a vine?*

What would you do if saw bare, withered, shrivelled branch, with no grapes on it? And a chopped-off vine-branch, what use? Only fit to be burned. Can there be any people like that? any of those ‘who profess and call themselves Christians’? What does Christ say? ver. 6; comp. Matt. iii. 10, xiii. 41, 42. How earnestly ought we to pray, ‘From Thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver us!’ (*Litany.*)

So the great thing is to ‘*abide in Christ.*’ How? see ver. 9, 10. (a) ‘Continue (*i.e.*, abide) in My love’—believe in it, trust always in it, return it. (b) ‘Keep My commandments.’ Then, if ‘abiding in Him,’ how feel in the great day ‘when He shall appear’? see 1 John ii. 28.

Another prayer from the Litany: ‘That it may please Thee to give to all Thy people increase of grace to . . . bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.’

NOTES.

1. Various conjectures have been offered as to the occasion of this allegory. Those who think that Christ left the house after chap. xiv. (see Lesson LXXXVII., Note 1) suppose that it was suggested by the vineyards He might pass on the way to Gethsemane, or by the colossal cluster of grapes, carved in gold, over the Temple door (Jos., *Antiq.*, xv. 11, 3; *B. J.*, v. 5, 4). Those who think that He still tarried in the upper room, imagine that a vine might be creeping in at the window, or that He alluded to the ‘fruit of the vine’ He had just consecrated for the Lord’s Supper. If it were necessary to adopt either of these conjectures (which it is not), the latter would seem the most probable.

2. The ‘Vine and the Branches’ is not strictly a parable, but an allegory. See Additional Note VII., p. 108; also Lesson LVII., Note 1.

3. On the Vine, see Tristram’s *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, pp. 402–413. Mr. Hugh Macmillan, in his *True Vine*, strikingly exhibits the peculiar appropriateness of the vine as a type of Christ. The following are brief extracts:—

‘The Vine, take it all in all, is the most perfect of plants. Some plants possess one part, or one quality, more highly developed; but for the harmonious development of every part and quality—for perfect balance of loveliness and usefulness, none equal the vine. Its stem and

leaves are among the most elegant in shape and hue, its blossoms among the most modest and fragrant, while its fruit is botanically the most perfect; and painters tell us that, to study the perfection of form, colour, light, and shade, united in one object, we must place before us a bunch of grapes. It is perfectly innocent, being one of the few climbing plants that do not injure the object of their support. It has no thorns—no noxious qualities; all its parts are useful’ (p. 32).

‘There are two great, strictly natural orders of plants—the *exogenous* and the *endogenous* The peculiarity of the *exogens* is to produce branches in all its parts; the peculiarity of the *endogens* is to be simple and unbranched in all its parts The vine is an *exogen* Christ is not an *endogen*—a palm, that grows in stately majesty alone in the desert, rearing its branchless trunk, like a Corinthian pillar, graceful but solitary, and drinking in, by means of its beautiful crown of foliage, all the fervid sunshine and the rich dews of heaven for its own selfish individual use. He is an *exogen*—a vine, sending out branches on every side, repeating the general type in numberless miniature copies of its own form and structure, and converting all the influences of heaven and earth into means of nourishment and growth for its whole social economy.’ (*Pp.* 75–77).

4. 'I am the true Vine.' There are two Greek words signifying 'true,' ἀληθής (*alethes*) and ἀληθινός (*alethinós*). The former means 'true,' as opposed to *false*; the latter 'true,' as opposed to shadowy, imperfect, typical. The latter idea was formerly expressed in English by 'very': thus 'Very God of very God,' in the Nicene Creed. When, in John i. 9, Christ is called 'the true Light' (*alethinós*) in contrast with John the Baptist, it does not mean that the latter was a false light, but only an inferior one. See Trench's *Synonyms of the New Test.*, § viii.

The word here is *alethinós*, and Wickliff's Bible has 'I am the verri Vine.' Christ was so in contrast, not only with the Jewish nation (see Sketch), but also with the material plant. He does not say, 'I am like the vine,' but 'I am the

true Vine'; and thus declares that the vine is the actual shadow of His substance' (*Macmillan*).

5. 'Purgeth it'—rather 'pruneth' or 'purifieth.' The word is connected with that rendered 'clean' in the next verse. No plant requires more pruning than the vine (*Tristram*, p. 408; *Macmillan*, p. 193).

'Now ye are clean'—rather, 'Ye are clean already.' The word, and the sense, are the same as in chap. xiii. 10; see Lesson LXXXV., Note 5.

'Abide in Me, and I in you.' The second clause is not a promise, but a command, like the first. 'Take heed that' may be understood.

'Without Me ye can do nothing'—rather 'apart from,' i.e., 'severed from Me.'

'Continue,' in ver. 9, is the same word in the Greek as 'abide.'

Lesson XC.—Christ's Prayer for His People.

'An Advocate with the Father.'

Read—John xvii.; Learn—John xvii. 15, 21, 24. (*Hymns*, 76, 78, 80, 96, 122, 123, 135, 164, 166, 176, 194, 348, 365.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This subject is certainly not one which most teachers will think 'attractive.' But we cannot expect every Lesson to provide us with good opportunities of picturing, or of using many familiar illustrations. And the fact that the present one does not, should be an extra incentive to special thought, and study, and prayer. Every effort must be made, in a Lesson like this, to *open well*; and it is on this account that even so small a matter as the *attitude* of prayer is alluded to in the first paragraph of the Sketch. 'Well begun is half done' is as true of Sunday-school teaching as of other things.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

They have lingered long in the upper room, the eleven, silent and sad, hanging on Jesus' words. The 'hour' (see ver. 1) of separation, of suffering, and yet of glory [see Lessons LXX., LXXXV.] now fast approaching; but first, before they leave the house, *prayer*. We are not told whether they knelt or stood (probably *stood*, see Mark xi. 25; Luke xviii. 11, 13)—but one thing we are told, ver. 1—'Jesus lifted up His eyes' (comp. Ps. cxxiii. 1; Matt. xiv. 19; Mark vii. 34; John xi. 41)—John very old when wrote His Gospel, but could not forget that [see Note 1].

This a wondrous chapter! If you were concealed in Queen's own room, and could overhear princes and princesses talking with her—how keenly listen! Here is the Son of the Great King speaking to His Father—surely His words must be worth studying!

I. FIRST, HE SPEAKS OF HIMSELF.

Of His former glory, ver. 5. 'Before the world was,' 'in the beginning.' What was He then? Before anything created, there could only have been the Creator—so Jesus was God, see John i. 1—3; comp. Ps. xc. 2; Prov. viii. 22—30.

Of His work on earth, ver. 2—4, 6. What was it? To give 'eternal life'? but men could not have it (why?), so He

had to get it for them (how?),—and they would not take it (why?);—who then should receive it? 'as many as Thou hast given Me'—those to whom God sent the Spirit to make them willing to be saved. What had He told those who came to Him? see ver. 6—about God's name—told them He was a *Father* [see Lesson XXVI.] who loved them (see John iii. 16). We have seen, during the last two years, how He did all His work—and now, 'finished.'

Of His glory to come, ver. 5. What is that? the same He had before? yes, and something else too, for He shares it with others (ver. 22), and how could He share His glory as God with others? He is *Man* now as well as God; it is the glory of the Man Jesus He is looking for, Eph. i. 20—22; Phil. ii. 9—11; Heb. ii. 9. [See Lesson LXXXII.]

What must the Apostles have felt as they listened to these wondrous words! He who but just now was girded like a slave, and washing their feet, now speaking of glory He had 'before the world was,' and that to get eternal life they must know, not only the Father, but Him also!

II. THEN HE PRAYS FOR HIS PEOPLE.

1. For their separation from the world, ver. 11—19.

What would be the surest way of sepa-

rating them from the world? Sometimes God does let them die, to save them from evil, see Isa. lvii. 1. Is this what Jesus asks? ver. 15. Why must the Apostles stay in the world? ver. 18—it is to the world they are 'sent' ('missionaries')—what general would send his soldiers home again for fear they should be hurt? Elijah's prayer (1 Kings xix. 4) not a good one. No, they must stay and be persecuted (ver. 14). But they need help specially now—why? ver. 12, 13—the Master going away—hitherto He has kept them safe—only one lost, and why was that? the 'son of perdition'—gave himself up to Satan—no saving him then. But is Satan satisfied?—'desires' all of them, Luke xxii. 31 [see Lesson LXXV., Note 8]; and Jesus sees all the dangers and temptations coming on them by-and-bye—so what does He pray? If God 'keep' us, how safe! John x. 28, 29. What a fortress to trust in! Prov. xviii. 10; Isa. xxvii. 3, 4. Let us all pray (see Ps. xvii. 8)—

'Keep me, oh, keep me, King of Kings,
Beneath Thine own Almighty wings.

But how to be *separate*—'in the world' but not 'of the world'? Think of Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon—had their worldly duties—mixed constantly with wicked men—but were they *like* them? were they not really *separate*? How was it? They knew they were God's servants, and were not ashamed to say so—considered themselves *set apart* for God. Now see Jesus' prayer, ver. 17—'*Sanctify* them', i.e., set them apart. We set apart certain buildings for God's worship, certain days for His special service. Why call Sunday a 'holy' day? because so set apart; but how set it apart? by 'keeping it holy'; and so Jesus says, '*Sanctify* them'—keep them separate by making them holy. See 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

And how to become holy? ver. 17—by God's word. Reading it? More than that, see ver. 9 and 11 of Ps. cxix.

2. *For their Unity together*, ver. 11, 20—23.

What kind of unity? ver. 22—'even as We are One'—Christ wants all His people to be as united as He and the Father. What about quarrels, then? jealousies? slanders? what about even differences of opinion? As long as these last, not united in the way He means. See Rom. xv. 5, 6; 1 Cor. i. 10, iii. 4; Eph. iv. 3—6; Phil. ii. 1—4.

What would be the effect of such unity? ver. 21, 23—the world would believe! Here is the way to bring men to God; nothing they admire so much—*when they see it*—but how seldom that is! They *did* once, Acts iv. 32, and what followed? Acts v. 14. The heathen used to say, 'See how these Christians love one another'—could they say so now?

How can such unity be attained? Only one way, ver. 21—'*one in Us*.' How are the branches of a vine [last Lesson] united? Tied together? what use that? They are *one in the vine*. [Another *illust.*—*spokes of a wheel draw nearer to each other as they draw nearer to the centre.*] So to love one another as Christ desires, must love Him first.

Will there ever be such unity? ver. 22; only to be perfect when—? Here is the third prayer,—

3. *For their Glorification with Him*, ver. 24.

Now think—what are we? so thoughtless, so ungrateful, so sinful—it seems a great thing that Jesus should die to save us from hell—but is that all? see His words, 'with Me where I am'! comp. John xii. 26, xiv. 3; Rev. iii. 21—

'Thou shalt see My glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of My throne shalt be—
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?'

What do you say? *Then*, perfect holiness and perfect unity—why? because *like Him*! Phil. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2.

So we see what kind of people they are who shall share Christ's glory. (a) *Separate* from the world; (b) *United* together and full of love. Is not this just what St. James calls 'pure religion'? Jas. i. 27. Then, if you (a) choose as companions those who love sinful pleasure [*illustrate*], and (b) avoid and dislike those who love Christ,—how can you sing about going to heaven?

But you know how hard it is to be 'separate from sinners'—how hard to be unselfish and loving. If it depended on our *trying*, what chance of the 'glory'? But remember,—

CHRIST INTERCEDES STILL, Rom. viii. 34; 1 John ii. 1; and *therefore* we may be 'saved to the uttermost', Heb. vii. 25.

'O Thou, the contrite sinner's Friend,
Who, loving, lovest to the end!
On this alone my hopes depend,
That Thou wilt plead for me.'

NOTES.

1. This chapter is a remarkable instance, and, indeed, a proof, of direct inspiration. Certainly John did not 'report' it at the time. Did He then remember the substance, and fill in the wording? The marvellous combination of simplicity and sublimity in every verse renders it impossible, as Alford remarks, to 'regard the prayer otherwise than as the very words of our Lord Himself'—dictated to the Evangelist by

the Holy Ghost. The allusion, however, to 'Jesus lifting up His eyes,' is evidently one of those natural reminiscences which inspiration utilises.

2. Ver. 3 is most unwarrantably cited by Socinians as favouring their views, and its words are prominently painted on the notice-board of a leading Unitarian chapel in London.

But, as Alfred says, 'the knowledge of God and a creature could not be eternal life, and the juxtaposition of the two would be inconceivable'; and he adds, 'I do not scruple to use and preach on the verse as a plain proof of the co-equality of the Lord Jesus in the Godhead.'

Note, that to know God is said to be, not the way to eternal life, but 'eternal life' itself. Comp. 2nd Collect at Morning Prayer—'in knowledge of whom standeth (i.e., consisteth) our eternal life.' See Lesson LXXI., Preface, and Note 3.

3. '*I pray not for the world.*' This might be better expressed in English thus, 'I am praying not for the world,' i.e., *not now*. Afterwards He does pray for the world, ver. 21, 23.

4. '*None of them is lost, but the son of perdition.*' This does not mean 'I lost none except Judas,' as if Christ laid the fault of Judas' ruin on Himself. It is literally, 'None of them perished but,' &c. This rendering would retain in the English the connection in the Greek between the words translated 'lost' (*ἀπόλωρο, ἀπόλετο*) and 'perdition' (*ἀπωλείας, ἀπόλειας*). 'Son of perdition' is a Hebraism like 'child of hell,' 'children of this world,' &c., and refers to the *guilt* as well as to the *destiny* of Judas. He 'went to his own place,' Acts i. 25.

5. The word *sanctify*, in ver. 17 and 19, carries the meaning, which unites the two uses, of *consecration to God*. (1) In *them*, this setting apart for Him was a long and gradual process . . . in *them* it was strictly *sanctification*, the *making holy*; but (2) in *Him* it was that pure and entire self-consecration, by His submission

to the Father's holy will . . . which should be at the same time the efficient cause of their sanctification and their Pattern' (Alford).

6. The unity for which Christ prays cannot, primarily, be the unity of external Church organisation. It is the unity of a *common union with Him by faith*, as the analogy of the Vine (see illustration in Sketch) clearly shews. And, as a matter of fact, it is oneness of spirit and mutual love among those who may be separated externally, which *does impress the world*. At the same time, the external unity of the Church is manifestly included in the petition; for although sad experience has taught us that it is in itself no guarantee for true unity, yet true unity cannot be perfected without it; and its absence does hinder the extension of Christianity, as is illustrated by an incident mentioned by Bishop Selwyn at the Wolverhampton Church Congress:—'When I asked one of the most remarkable of the New Zealand chieftains why he refused to be a Christian, he stretched out three fingers, and, pointing to the centre joint, said, "I have come to a point from which I see three roads branching. This is the Church of England, this the Church of Rome, and this the Wesleyans. I am sitting down here doubting which to take." And he sat doubting at that "cross-road" until he died.'

7. '*Father, I will that they also,*' &c. The 'I will' is very strong, and means 'It is My will that,' &c. Stier well calls it a *testamentary word*. But there is no real difference between this petition and the others. All that Christ asks He '*wills,*' and He cannot 'will' anything that is not also the Father's will.

Lesson XCI.—In Gethsemane.

'Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow.'

Read—Matt. xxvi. 30—46; (comp. Mark xiv. 32—42; Luke xxii. 39—46); Learn—Ps. lxxix. 20; Isa. liii. 4, 5. (Hymns, 42, 43, 56, 154, 155, 169, 185, 311, 313, 359.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The great thing to be aimed at in giving this Lesson is exceeding solemnity. If, by reverent language and a subdued tone of voice, the teacher can succeed in conveying to his scholars the impression that the passage introduces us to something that stands almost alone in Scripture in its awful mystery, an important point will be gained. The *hush* which ought if possible to be produced in the class, will not be obtained by the mere exercise of authority: only by solemnity of manner; and this manner, to be effective, must not be *put on*, but be the natural outcome of the feelings which must surely be stirred in the teacher's heart if he has himself earnestly tried to enter into the spirit of the narrative. It may be added that he who, in his ordinary teaching, is the most bright and cheerful, will best succeed, by the very force of the contrast, in communicating his solemnity on this occasion to the children.

Attempts have sometimes been made to give a more definite idea of the Saviour's sufferings by drawing an imaginary picture of the miseries of the lost, multiplying these by the inconceivable number of the sinners who deserve to endure them, and representing Christ's agony as in some sense the equivalent of the aggregate. All such statements are totally unwarranted by Scripture, and, in so far as they appear to bring His Passion more within the limits of our comprehension, absolutely injurious—as detracting from its mysteriousness. Let it be enough to know that upon Him were laid the iniquities of us all, and that because He bore them we may, through faith, be 'accepted in the Beloved.'

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Midnight—the Passover full moon shining clear and bright over Jerusalem—towers and pinnacles standing out white and distinct, but throwing a dark shadow over the deep valley of Jehoshaphat. A party of men coming out of eastern gate, descending steep path, over brook, up slope of Olivet. Who are they? ver. 30; John xviii. 1. Into a garden [see Note 1]; familiar spot—why? John xviii. 2 (comp. Luke xxi. 37)—some secluded nook among its great olive-trees just the place for quiet talk and prayer—perhaps here those great prophecies and parables (Matt. xxiv., xxv.) spoken.

But all the eleven not to be with Jesus now, ver. 36, 37—three chosen to go further aside with Him. When had these three been alone with Him before? Luke viii. 51, ix. 28. Perhaps they think, 'Is there to be another Transfiguration? He prayed just now to be glorified (John xvii. 1)—are we three to see that wondrous glory again?' Look at Him—listen—He is changed—but how? not glory, but gloom—terrible agony in His face, overwhelming sorrow in His voice—they have never seen Him so before. See two things in ver. 38: what He says of Himself—what He asks of them.

I. CHRIST'S HOUR OF AGONY.

See what is said of it: 'exceeding sorrowful'—'very heavy' (i.e., crushed down as with a heavy burden)—'even unto death' (i.e., enough to cause death if it went on)—'sore amazed' (i.e., horrified)—'in an agony.' See descriptions of great suffering of mind, Ps. xxxviii. 8—10, xl. 12, lv. 4, 5, lxxxviii. 3, 6, 7—what could be worse than all this? No sorrow like His—He might in truth use Jeremiah's words, Lam. i. 12. Like a bitter 'cup' to be drunk to the last drop, ver. 39, comp. xx. 22 [see Note 4].

But why all this? When we think of the 'cup' of pain and sorrow Jesus was to drink, we think of the mocking, scourging, cross, &c. Here in the quiet garden, alone with His three Apostles, with nothing yet come upon Him, what is there to account for such agony?

(a) Is it that He knows and fears what is coming? But He knew it before, and then how did He feel and act? [Lessons LX., LXXVII.] Besides, is the Lord Jesus less brave and firm than His servants? see how Stephen met his death, Acts vii. 54—60; and Paul his sufferings, Acts xx. 24, xxi. 13. How then suppose that Christ shrank from pain?

(b) Is it that Satan is sorely attacking Him, tempting Him to give up the great design of saving sinners? No doubt Satan is there, making a last desperate struggle for victory, see John xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 53. But Jesus resisted Him before, in the wilderness: was He then in such agony?

(c) Is it that He feels the shame of being

treated as a sinner? He, so holy and harmless (Heb. vii. 26), 'numbered with transgressors' (Isa. liii. 12), going to suffer as a guilty criminal? This is hard—you might bravely bear persecution for doing right, and yet murmur at being punished for doing wrong when you had not done wrong. Yet even this not enough to explain such overwhelming anguish.

(d) No—more than all this. He is suffering as none ever suffered before or since. See second text for rep.—'wounded for our transgressions,' &c.—for ours? whose? see next verse—'iniquity of us all' (comp. Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21). Here the secret of such suffering—the Lamb of God about to 'take away sin of the world' (John i. 29)—just beginning to feel the awful burden on Him [see Note 2]. Can we understand this? No one can understand any pain never felt; that pain who then can imagine?

'We cannot understand the soe
Thy love was pleased to bear;
O Lamb of God, we only know
That all our hopes are there.'

In His suffering, what does Jesus do? He prays. But how different from that other prayer, John xvii. [last Lesson]—then, 'eyes lifted up to heaven'—now, 'on His face'! then, a confident looking for glory—now, what? But what praying for? To have the 'cup' taken away? only 'if possible'—would rather drink it than fail in His task; only if Father's will—'not My will but Thine be done' (Luke). Was His prayer heard? yes, see Heb. v. 7—but how so? was the cup removed?—ah no, we shall see how He went through all—but, another way of granting petition [illustr.—heavy weight on a stand not strong enough to bear it—can either take off weight or make stand stronger]—comp. 2 Cor. xii. 7—10. See how Jesus was strengthened, Luke xxii. 43 (comp. Matt. iv. 11). Even this a marvel—the Son of God strengthened by His own creature—made indeed (Heb. ii. 9) 'a little lower than the angels'! Next Sunday see the result—not one drop of bitter cup taken away, yet Jesus calm and strong through all.

II. THE APOSTLES' HOUR OF TRIAL.

Of trial—to try them, test them, see what they are like. What are they told to do? Two reasons for watching and praying:—

(a) That Jesus may have comfort and sympathy from those He loves. How is this? He want their sympathy? yes, 'in all things' like us, Heb. ii. 17—do not we like others to 'watch with us'? [Illustr.—great storm at night—is it not a comfort to have some one with you, and awake, even though cannot really help you?] See, He comes back to them in His anguish—are they praying with Him? are they even thinking and speaking tenderly of their dear Master? ver. 40, 43—how disappointing—how He must feel their ingratitude! In their sor-

row *He* had comforted *them*, John xiv. [Lesson LXXXVII.]—yet which was the greater sorrow, theirs or His?

(b) *That they may get strength for themselves.* Why? 'Lest enter into temptation.' What have they been just warned of, even since they left the city? ver. 30, 31. And what an opportunity to prepare, here in this quiet spot, and Jesus setting the example! Why do they not seize it? why not all in earnest prayer? see ver. 33, 35—so confident—*they* forsake their Master! the idea of such a thing! And they *do* mean to be steadfast—Jesus knows that ('the spirit is willing'); but they forget how weak the flesh—yet what a proof of it here! Is their being so tired an excuse? Not at all, but a reason for being more watchful. If 'could not watch one hour' (though how often had they 'toiled all the night' fishing on the Lake!)—if asleep at such a time, how trust themselves when the great trial comes by-and-bye? (See 1 Kings xx. 11; Prov. xxviii. 26; 1 Cor. x. 12; 2 Cor. ii. 11; 1 Pet. v. 8.)

The result of Christ's prayer—strength, calmness; what the result of their sleep a

few minutes afterwards? ver. 56—'*all forsook Him and fled!*'

See here,—

1. *A Picture of what we are.* Which of us can say he is not like those disciples? Have you never fallen into sin when you might have been safe if you had prayed in time? Have you never *sleep* when you should have prayed? Have you never thought, 'I would not do such a thing,' and then done it?

2. *A Model of what we ought to be.* See 1 Pet. ii. 21. Jesus an example—(a) of earnestness in prayer. If He needed it, how much more we! (Ps. l. 15, cxvi. 3, 4, cxx. 1; Jas. v. 13.) (b) Of submission to God's will. Every day we say the very words He said—'Thy will be done'—do we mean them?

How *like* the portrait we are! how *unlike* the model! Yet let us bring our sins and shortcomings to Him. He bore all that agony for our sakes. Surely the willing Sufferer will be a willing Saviour! 'By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat, Good Lord, deliver us!'

NOTES.

1. The modern 'Garden of Gethsemane' is well-known from engravings and photographs. It is at the foot of Olivet, a little to the east of the bridge which crosses the gorge of the Kedron just below St. Stephen's Gate, and at the junction of the two paths to Bethany. See map on page 108. The enclosure contains eight olive-trees, which are reckoned to be 2,000 years old. It is doubtful, however, whether this is the true site of the ancient garden. Most travellers think that so secluded a spot must have been higher up the mount, away from the public thoroughfares. See Robinson's *Bibl. Res.*, i. 235; Stanley, *S. & P.*, p. 415; Barclay, *City of the Great King*, p. 63; Thomson, *L. & B.*, p. 634; Porter, *Giant Cities*, &c., p. 157. St. John alone mentions that it was a garden (or orchard); Luke, that it was at the Mount of Olives; Matthew and Mark, the name, Gethsemane (*i.e.*, oil-press). The word rendered 'brook,' in John xviii. 1, means literally a *runter*-torrent, which is strictly accurate, as the Kedron is dry for nine months in the year.

2. The following passage on Christ's agony is from Archbp. Thomson's essay, 'The Death of Christ,' in *Aids to Faith* (p. 360):—

'The Redeemer here appears harrowed by a misery which many a martyr has been free from, utterly perturbed by a prospect which a Stephen, an Ignatius, a Ridley viewed without dismay. If no more than death is in question, we should expect an example of calm reliance on the present help of God. But we find the unaccountable agony, the bloody sweat, the prayer for deliverance: all fortifying and calming influences seem withdrawn for a time from Him who through His life so constantly enjoyed them. We are astonished that the curse of our race should be suffered to press in all its terrible reality upon the sinless and Divine Son. Yet there is the description of His great struggle. We cannot refuse to see that it relates to One utterly broken down for a time in a wretched-

ness beyond our conception If we believe with the Apostle, that God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, then the terror and the agony become accountable. All the inner horror of sin is revealed to Him. Sin in its nakedness is more horrible than death. And He sees it as it is; the blasphemous self-worship that it is; the revolt against God, the violation of order, the death in life. And all this sin is His, though He is sinless of it The words of the Lord upon the cross are an echo from the garden of agony: *Why hast Thou forsaken Me?* These words express a sense of desertion by God: they can have no other meaning They belong to Him, not as Son of God, but as burdened with the sins of the world. They express perhaps the complete separation which sin makes between man and God. He is the Advocate of all mankind; and their separation from God because of sin extends itself to Him for a season. It appears, then, that the question whether the wrath of God can be said to have fallen upon the Son is no verbal question, but a question of fact. Jesus did suffer all those things which are the evident tokens of wrath against us.'

The whole Essay is an able vindication of the Atonement.

It may be added that the peculiar importance of the agony in Gethsemane is, that there was nothing outward to account for it. It did not, like the similar distress manifested by our Lord's cry on the cross, follow on a long course of ill-treatment, suffering, and shame. It was therefore purely and entirely mental; and there is no conceivable explanation of this other than that it was due to the mysterious burden of a world's sin.

3. *His sweat was as it were great drops of blood.* There is undoubted medical testimony that, in rare cases of extreme mental terror or anguish,

blood has exuded from the skin with the perspiration. Alford cites a case from the *Medical Gazette* of Dec. 1848, in which it occurred to some Norwegian sailors in a fearful storm. The mental excitement of our Lord is strikingly shown by the fact of His perspiring at all in the open air on a cold night (see John xviii. 18). It is noteworthy that the circumstance is only mentioned by Luke the physician.

4. 'Let this cup pass from Me.' The 'cup' is an O. T. image of a man's lot or portion, whether pleasant (Ps. xvi. 5, xxiii. 5), or bitter (Ps. xi. 6, lxxv. 8; Isa. li. 17). Our Lord's 'cup' was obviously one of suffering. See Lesson LXXII.

5. 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' We see here that Christ possessed a human will as perfect Man, distinct from His Divine Will as God. This human will naturally shrank from suffering, but it is here wholly submitted to the will of the Father. There was in the seventh century a heretical sect, called the Monothelites, who held that Christ had only one will, viz., the Divine. This doctrine was condemned by the Sixth General Council, A.D. 680.

6. We find no intimation in Matthew and Mark whether the *eight* Apostles, as well as the *three*, saw anything of Christ's agony, whether they slept, and whether they were exhorted to watch and pray. But Luke does not mention the selection of the three, and his account conveys the impression that all the eleven needed and received the same warning.

7. 'Sleep on now, and take your rest.' Many explanations have been given of these words. Some see in them a kind of sad irony. Others, thinking this unnatural, read them interrogatively (which the Greek will bear), 'Do ye sleep on now?' Ellicott thinks they were spoken 'with a permissive force, and in tones in which merciful reproach was blended with calm resignation.' Stier says, 'so far as regards His need, He can now permit them to sleep on,' and adopts Neander's paraphrase, 'Sleep on still, I will no more awake you to watch with Me; but ye will soon be roused out of your sleep, for behold,' &c. This last is, on the whole, perhaps the best explanation.

Lesson XCII.—Betrayed, Deserted, and Denied.

'All ye shall be offended because of Me this night.'

Read—Luke xxii. 47—62; John xviii. 1—18; (*comp.* Matt. xxvi. 47—58, 69—75; Mark xiv. 43—54, 66—72); *Learn*—John xvi. 32; Luke xxii. 61, 62.

(*Hymns*, 95, 96, 127, 153, 167, 324, 354, 375.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The object of the teacher in this and the next two or three Lessons should be to make the *narrative* as distinct and real to the scholars as possible. For once in the way, 'application' will sink into a secondary place. Let it be considered how great would be the benefit of simply fixing in the children's minds and memories the details of the history of Christ's Passion. Such a foundation once laid, how much may be built upon it hereafter! And it is certain that this can be done, as many who read these lines could testify from the experience of their own childhood. It is surely, therefore, worth while for the teacher to follow the incidents one after the other in thought, until they frame themselves into a series of scenes which he can never forget; so that his descriptions to his class may have a freshness and a vividness such as can never be produced when toiling through a half-prepared lesson.

The narrative of Peter's fall would make an impressive practical lesson by itself, especially for senior classes (see particularly the *steps* of his backsliding, indicated in the Sketch). But in order to do this, it would be necessary to include the account of Christ's arrest in the previous Lesson, which, considering the importance (in a course like this) of His agony in Gethsemane, would not be advisable.

St. Luke's narrative is selected (with part of St. John's) as the passage for reading, because his is the only Gospel in which the betrayal and Peter's denials follow on without interruption.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

What three things did Jesus, on that sad night, tell the Twelve that one or other of them should do to Him? See St. John's Gospel: (a) xiii. 21—one to betray Him; (b) xvi. 32—all to desert Him; (c) xiii. 38—one to deny Him. To-day see how all this came to pass.

I. CHRIST BETRAYED BY JUDAS.

Chief priests at their Passover supper [*see Addit. Note XII., page 235*]—perhaps exult-

ing at the bargain made two days ago (Matt. xxvi. 14—16). Suddenly Judas appears—has just left Jesus—presently He is going to a familiar place on Olive—good opportunity to arrest Him at midnight. They never intended to risk it just then—why not? Matt. xxvi. 5; but can't resist such a chance—only be prompt—call Council together during night—get Pilate's order first thing in morning—and the Nazarene

may be got rid of before people can hear of it.

A large body quickly collected [see Note 1]—well armed—torches, although full moon, to light up dark nooks and groves—stealthily out of city, led by the traitor. But the soldiers don't know Jesus—how make sure of right man? Matt. xxvi. 48.

Into the garden—'now search quickly among the trees, don't let them slip away.' Suddenly—One steps forth into the moonlight right before them, John xviii. 4, 5. How calm He is! all the 'agony' gone—what made the change in Him? [*last Lesson*]. But look! ver. 6—the whole band, proud priests, stern soldiers, guilty Judas, fallen to the ground! like Dagon before the ark (1 Sam. v. 3). Can they now go on, and arrest *Him*? See, they have got up, no doubt ashamed and angry—will Jesus again fell them, so escape? John xviii. 7, 8—He will yield Himself up, only says 'let these go.' Is not this just what He did for us all?—said to God's outraged law, 'I will go in their stead; punish Me, and let them go,' John x. 15; Gal. i. 4.

Is Judas relenting? see him kissing his Master—ah, but what for? Think of those two: (a) *Judas*—what privileges he had had! how Christ had borne with him! now betraying his best Friend—more than Friend, his Saviour and God—and with a kiss, pretending love and respect! surely a worse kiss even than Joab's (2 Sam. xx. 9, 10). (b) *Jesus*—submitting to that kiss! who would not have turned from it in grief and horror? but not He—what had He told His disciples to submit to? Matt. v. 39—but this kiss worse than a blow.

II. CHRIST DESERTED BY THE ELEVEN.

Now turn to the disciples. Can we imagine their feelings? First, terror at the flaring torches and flashing swords—their enemies have them at last! Then, amazement at seeing the leader—the secret out now—*Judas* the traitor! Then, triumph—with one look the Master has beaten back His foes. Then, indignation at that kiss. Then, perplexity—see, He is *letting* them seize Him after all! Then, ashamed of their cowardice, 'shall we fight?' (*Luke*). Then Peter—just like him!—without waiting the answer, striking wildly at the nearest—surely his sword can conquer men who fell down at a look!

But now their hearts fail them entirely—He *means* to be taken! for what does He say? See Matt. xxvi. 53—if He *wished* to resist, could get mightier aid than Peter's sword [see Note 1]. Why not summon the angelic hosts that are only waiting His call? see next verse—must fulfil God's ancient promises (such as Isa. liii. 7, 12); that very 'cup' He shrank from [see *last Lesson*] He is now resolved to drink. And see—to show to all how He *will* go 'as a lamb to the slaughter' (see also John x. 18), a miracle! (*Luke*)—*His last one*—a

work of *mercy* to an enemy (see Matt. v. 44), a work of *power* when He is actually 'held fast'! Can Malchus persist after *two* such things, the *look* and the *touch*? What is the return for that act of mercy? John xviii. 12—the Healer bound with cords like a thief!

Why cannot the disciples be like their Master, calm, submissive, courageous? We saw the reason last time—what was it? He had prayed; they had slept; and now His words are come true—no more care for Him—can only think of themselves—see them flying in all directions.

III. CHRIST DENIED BY PETER.

Two of the deserters soon ashamed of their cowardice—courage to turn back—go after the band now hastening up into the city—follow to the high priest's palace. Which two? how get inside? John xviii. 15, 16.

A large court-yard [see Note 5]—rooms all round opening on to it—on one side the hall in which Jesus is to be tried. Court-yard full of servants and soldiers—will get no sleep to-night—so clustered round fire (*John*)—its flickering flames lighting up their faces. John gone (probably) into corner of hall to watch trial; but Peter, afraid of being noticed, mingling with the throng round the fire—will make himself at home with them—they will think him one of the expedition. Now the third of Christ's words (above) coming true.

1st Denial. A maid, the portress (*John*), looking at Peter (*Luke*)—'Why, I let him in with John just now'—'you belong to the Nazarene.' Peter 'taken aback'—what do? will he boldly say, 'Yes, I know He is Messiah, and I love Him'?—ah no, frightened, no time to think, out come the sad words.

2nd Denial. This won't do, will be discovered—must slip away. In the arched passage leading out to the door (*Matt.*)—trying to get off without being seen—but they have followed him—two or three voices at him now. Will he be faithful, this time? no, has told the lie, must 'stick to it'—but worse (*Matt.*)—an angry oath too.

3rd Denial. They seem satisfied now—let him alone—so he joins the party again. An hour passes by (*Luke*)—trial of Jesus going on—Peter talking at the fire. Presently, his peculiar speech noticed (as we know difference between Londoner and Yorkshireman)—'if a Galilean, no doubt a disciple'; and another recognition more dangerous still, John xviii. 26. Now really alarmed—what does he do?

Suddenly, a sound clear and shrill above the cursing and swearing—what? ver. 60. A dreadful thought shoots through Peter's heart—his eye glances into the hall—what does he see? ver. 61. *That look*—is it an angry one? no, full of tender love—yet how crushing to Peter! What cares he

now for the maids and the soldiers? he has grieved his Master, broken his promise, sinned (he might well think) hopelessly—imagine his bitter tears.

How could he thus fall, he who loved Jesus so dearly, who thought he could die for Him? It was not all at once: see the steps—(a) self-confidence, (b) indolence, (c) bad company, (d) 'ashamed of Jesus'!

Last Sunday we saw one kind of suffering endured by Christ; in next four Lessons shall see other kinds; but have we not seen grievous suffering to-day? His own chosen friends—companions for so long—now what have they done? He is indeed

'left alone'—*alone?* see 1st text for rep.—*Who with Him?*

We cannot leave Him alone *now*; yet do we not grieve Him as the disciples did? Have we always acknowledged Him before others as our Master and Saviour? Have we never been afraid and ashamed? Have we never *intended* to act as Christ's servants, and then been *snares* suddenly into sin? Think of *that look* as upon us—not a look of anger, but of love and pity. He is willing and waiting to forgive, and to make us what He made Peter afterwards—'faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives' end.'

NOTES.

1. The 'multitude' that accompanied Judas to Gethsemane consisted of—(a) some of the chief priests and elders (*Luke*), to direct the proceedings; (b) the 'captains of the Temple' (*Luke*), a Jewish guard under the orders of the Sanhedrim; (c) 'officers' (*John*)—rather 'officials,' also 'from the chief priests'; (d) 'servants' or slaves (*δοῦλοῦ*), of whom Malchus was one; (e) the Roman 'chief captain' and his soldiers, usually stationed at Jerusalem. These last are not clearly mentioned in our English version; but in *John xviii. 3*, the words are literally 'the band, and officials from the chief priests'; and in *ver. 12*, 'the band, and the chief captain, and the officials of the Jews.' The words rendered 'band' and 'captain' are the technical terms signifying the Roman cohort or regiment and its commander, and are the same as in *Acts xxi. 31*—'tidings came unto the chief captain of the band.' The 'staves' mentioned by Matthew and Mark were doubtless taken to arm the servants, &c.

The chief priests would have no difficulty in getting the cohort, as they would represent Jesus as a dangerous character, and riots at the feasts were much feared by the Roman authorities; see *Jos. Antiq.*, xx. 5, 3. Such a display of force might be designed, not only to overawe the disciples, but also to impress Pilate with the importance of the occasion, and prepare him for their demand that Jesus should be immediately put to death.

Our Lord's expression, 'twelve legions of angels,' seems designed to show what a handful even the strong force brought against Him was in comparison with what He could summon to His aid. He could provide a legion each for Himself and the Eleven. The Roman 'legion' was generally 6000 men.

2. Some think that the remarkable incident of Christ's assailants falling to the ground occurred after the kiss of Judas; but the order of events in the Sketch is that adopted by the best writers. Judas may have kissed his Lord, even after He had made Himself known, in order to revive the courage of the soldiers and show them that He would not injure them. On the word 'Friend,' see *Lesson LXVII.*, Note 7.

Stier quotes a striking sentence from Pfenniger on the kiss of Judas:—'Wouldst 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.'

3. '*Suffer ye thus far.*' These words may have been addressed, (a) to the disciples, meaning 'Resist no further'; or (b) to the officers, meaning 'Resent not the hasty zeal of My disciples'; or (c) 'Loose My arm for a moment, that I may heal the wounded man.' The last is certainly preferable, as both the words and the healing are only recorded by St. Luke, and that in the closest connection together. Thus read, the request is a most touching one. What submission does it manifest, when we think that He who could heal the torn ear could as readily have disengaged His own arm!

That the man's name was Malchus, and that it was Peter who struck the blow, are facts only mentioned by St. John. The allusion to Malchus, and to his kinsman in *ver. 26*, illustrates the statement that 'that disciple' (i.e., of course John) 'was known unto the high-priest.'

4. The curious incident of the young man who fled naked from the soldiers who seized him, is only given in Mark's Gospel: whence most expositors have conjectured that the young man was Mark himself, as there seems no reason on the face of the narrative why the circumstance should be mentioned at all.

'Naked,' here and elsewhere, means only without the upper garment.

5. The Greek word rendered 'palace' has a double meaning, being sometimes used for the entire building, and sometimes for the open court-yard in the centre, round which the chief rooms were ranged, and which communicated with the street by a passage, the 'porch' here mentioned. Compare *Lesson XXX.*, Note 3. A somewhat similar ambiguity attaches to our words 'hall' and 'court.' The fire around which the servants and officers clustered was in the open court, and the trial of Jesus was proceeding in one of the large chambers opening on to it, and raised two or three steps above it; which explains the statements that Peter 'was beneath' (Mark), and 'sat without' (Matt.), 'in the palace' or rather court.

6. The apparent discrepancies in the four accounts of Peter's denials are easily explained, if we bear in mind that the three denials were not each a single sentence addressed to one accuser. On each occasion there might well be reiterated charges and reiterated denials.

(a) All four Evangelists agree that the first denial was elicited by a maid, Mark and Luke adding that it occurred by the fire, and John

stating that she was the portress, who recognised Peter as having come in with him (John).

(b) From Matthew and Mark we learn that the second denial took place in the 'porch' (see Note 5). Matthew says 'another maid' accused Peter; Mark, that it was the 'the maid' (not 'a maid,' as in our version), *i.e.*, the same who spoke before; Luke, that it was 'another,' the word being masculine, and Peter replying, 'Man, I am not'; while John combines the three statements by relating that 'they said unto him.'

(c) Matthew, Mark, and Luke agree that the third denial was provoked by the allusions to Peter's provincial dialect, Luke adding that it occurred 'after about an hour.' John here relates a different and no doubt simultaneous incident, the recognition of Peter by a kinsman of Malchus.

St. Mark, who alone relates (xiv. 30) that

Jesus had predicted that the denials should take place before the cock crowed *twice*, alone mentions the first crowing. Probably Peter did not then notice the sound, but the fact that it had fallen on his ear came back to him after the second crowing; and no doubt it is his personal reminiscence which Mark records.

In Luke xxii. 55, 56, the word 'fire' is a rendering for two different Greek words ($\pi\upsilon\rho$, $\phi\acute{o}\varsigma$; *pur*, *phós*). The latter is properly *light*, and is always so translated elsewhere; and it evidently implies that Peter was recognised through the fire-light falling on his face: 'a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the light, and earnestly looked upon him.'

The Galilean provincialism of speech consisted of an inability to pronounce the gutturals properly, and in a habit of using 't' for 's.'

Lesson XCIII.—Before the Council.

'They all condemned Him to be guilty of death.'

Read—Mark xiv. 55—65; Matt. xxvii. 1—5; (*comp.* Matt. xxvi. 57—68; Luke xxii. 63—71; John xviii. 19—24); *Learn*—Acts xiii. 27, 28; Mark xiv. 61, 62.

(*Hymns*, 43, 56, 82, 86, 90, 101, 161, 313.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The 1st text for repetition makes an excellent starting-point for this Lesson. If the scholars have just repeated it, the question about 'the voices of the prophets' will come quite naturally. This plan is often useful, merely as a device to allure an inattentive class on to the Lesson; but in this case it actually introduces an important point which might otherwise be missed, *viz.*, the fulfilment of prophecy in Christ's rejection.

The titles of divisions in the Sketch are not, as they are sometimes, suggestive of any sequence of thought or argument, or of the truths or teachings to be drawn from the passage. They are simply (as it were) *mile-stones* to assist the teacher in marking the successive stages of the narrative; and it will be seen that the four sections of division I. do actually take up the incidents in their order, although the titles do not necessarily imply this. The Lesson should be a straightforward history throughout, leading on the thoughts to the twofold application; but the teacher needs to have a few simple headings in his own mind, otherwise he may spend too much time on one point, and inadvertently omit others.

The remarks made in the preface to the preceding Lesson, on the importance of giving the details of the narrative itself clearly, apply in some degree to this one; but as the incidents before us to-day are fewer, there will be more time to enlarge on their solemn teachings.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Our first text for rep. speaks of something heard by the Jews every Sabbath—? But the prophets all dead long ago—how hear their 'voices'? Read to them in the Scriptures. Who wrote these Scriptures? But who taught Moses, Isaiah, David, what to write? 2 Pet. i. 21—so 'voices of prophets' really God's Voice. Wherever Jews scattered over great Roman Empire, met every Sabbath in synagogue, and heard God's messages. What told by those Scriptures? *A King and Saviour coming* [see Lesson II.]—how well, then, must all the Jews have known that!

And now He *has* come, how received?—'received Him not' (John i. 11)—'would not have Him' (Luke xix. 14)—yet even

in this, were fulfilling God's words without knowing it—'fulfilled them in condemning Him' (1st text for rep. again); see Ps. ii. 1—3, xxii. 6; Isa. liii. See Him to-day face to face with the rulers of the nation—condemned to die by those He came to save.

I. THE TRIAL.

1. *The Judges.* The Sanhedrim—supreme council (like our Parliament)—chief priests, scribes, elders [see Lesson LXXXIV., Note 1]—summoned together at dead of night—the Passover night too! How gladly hear the news, 'We have got Him at last'—how eagerly hasten through dark streets to high-priest's palace! When our Judges come to assizes, what their desire?

to condemn prisoners as fast as possible, because they hate them? Just the contrary—how patient! how ready to hear everything in prisoner's favour! quite glad if found 'not guilty.' So God wishes all judges to be, Deut. xvi. 18. How different these Jews! Only one thought—'He must die, *somehow*.' Even before they come together, see what their great leader Annas does, John xviii. 13, 19 [see *Notes* 1, 2]—questions Jesus privately—tries to get something out of Him to accuse Him of. What success? ver. 20, 21—Jesus has nothing to tell but what they know already—no secret conspirator—always 'spake openly.' So they must call witnesses.

2. *The Witnesses.* What sort of witnesses called? All who know anything of the Prisoner? What evidence might they be given!—those once blind, lame, sick, testifying to His love and power. Would *this* suit these just judges? ah, they take care to call no witnesses for the defence. What sort, then? True evidence against Him? *Not to be had*, ver. 55. Must get *lying* witnesses to swear falsely! (Comp. 1 Kings xxi. 10; Ps. xxxv. 11; Acts vi. 11.) And even then—'*found none*' (Matthew). Plenty of evidence, but all contradictory—and what are they bound to get? Deut. xvii. 6. Only one thing alleged—and that a saying spoken three years ago! [See *Lesson XVII.*, Note 6.]

3. *The Prisoner.* Called on for His defence—what is it? ver. 61—why reply when nothing to reply to? No 'evidence' in the slanders, so not worth noticing; yet how painful! see Prov. xviii. 8; what patience needed to bear them! 1 Pet. ii. 19—23; and see too how patient Jesus had been already before Annas, John xviii. 22, 23—what harder to bear than such a blow! yet He did what harder even than silent submission—*rebuked gently!* But now He will speak out plainly. Ver. 61, 62: Caiaphas enraged at failure to convict Him—rises from the 'bench'—must try and get something out of His own mouth:—On His oath [see *Note* 4], is He 'Christ the Son of God'? Can Jesus be silent now? no—the Jewish rulers shall have one last plain testimony—shall not be able to say, 'We were not told'—'*I AM!*' And it is *true*: for what mere man, at such a moment of peril, would risk life to make a false claim? Something else too: 'Ye shall see'—what? They know Daniel's great prophecy (vii. 9—14)—*He* is that 'Son of Man.' Think of the *change of places*—*He, then* on the judgment-seat—*they, then* at His bar!

4. *The Verdict.* Will they now throw themselves at His feet and accept Him as Messiah? What do they do? 'Guilty'—'death'—why? 'Blasphemy' (see Lev. xxiv. 16)—as before (John x. 33), 'Thou, being a man, makest thyself God.' *Really*, what was it? *He, being God, had made Himself man!* Phil. ii. 6, 7. They are going to kill their Divine King!

II. AFTER THE TRIAL.

1. *In the Court.* All this time Jesus shamefully treated, 'bound' (John xviii. 24) and 'held' (Luke xxii. 63) like a dangerous criminal. But now—! spitting, beating, cruel insults (see Luke particularly). We should not treat the very vilest like that; *they*, creatures insulting their Creator—sinners mocking their Saviour! See Isa. l. 6; Ps. xxii. 6, 7.

2. *In the Council-chamber.* (See Luke xxii. 66—71.) Another fuller meeting of the Sanhedrim at daybreak [see *Note* 1]—Jesus again questioned, that the new comers may hear—once more His public avowal Who He is—the former verdict now confirmed by all. Then an anxious consultation (Mark xv. 1)—what about? Matt. xxvii. 1—*He must die*, but how? *they* cannot do it [see *next Lesson*, Note 5]—only the Roman governor has the power—and how get him to use it? *they* have condemned Jesus for blasphemy, but Pilate won't listen to a charge like that. See their scheme next Sunday.

3. *In the Temple.*

Some of the chief priests now obliged to go to their sacred duties, prepare for morning sacrifices on God's altar. How different their spirit from David's, Ps. xxvi. 6! Suddenly—who is this, breaking into the holy place? Matt. xxvii. 3. Judas sees it all now—through his vile treachery that unjust sentence has come to his Master. Will these priests take back their bribe, and release the innocent? Hear their bitter taunt, ver. 4. But the money—he can't keep it—hates the sight of it (Prov. x. 2)—see him flinging it to them, and going, *where?* To Jesus' feet, with tears of penitence? ah, Satan won't let his victim slip like that. Black despair—suicide. A week ago, one of the twelve most privileged men on earth; *now!*

'From the crafts and assaults of the devil, Good Lord! deliver us.'

Now look at two wondrous scenes:—

1. **LOOK BACK**—at *Jesus standing before His judges.* Why did the Son of God submit to all this? 1 Pet. ii. 21—'suffered for us.' Two objects: To be unto us (a) 'a sacrifice for sins'—(b) 'an example of godly life' (Collect, 2nd Sunday after Easter); (a) 'For us men and for our salvation' (Nicene Creed)—(b) 'That all mankind might follow the example of His great humility' (Collect, Sunday before Easter). How can any (a) 'neglect so great salvation'—(b) be proud or selfish in the face of such a pattern?

2. **LOOK FORWARD**—at *Jesus sitting on His judgment throne.* See Rev. i. 7—'Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him'—His cruel persecutors—those very priests and scribes. Will they call on the mountains to 'fall on them' (Rev. vi. 16) and 'hide them from the wrath of the Lamb'? They well may.

But *we*, who know the story of Christ's love so well, who have read it again to-day — of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall *we* be thought worthy' (Heb. x.

29), if we reject that same Saviour? 'Ye therefore, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also'—what? 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.

NOTES.

1. The Evangelists record *three* separate examinations of Christ by the Jewish rulers, which should be carefully distinguished. John relates an informal preliminary examination before the Sanhedrim had assembled, obviously designed to extract some admission from Him concerning either His followers or His teaching (xviii. 19). Matthew and Mark give accounts of the regular trial itself under the presidency of Caiaphas. Luke records only a meeting of the Sanhedrim 'when it was day,' which appears to correspond, not with the trial, but with the subsequent consultation mentioned also by Matthew and Mark as taking place in the 'morning.' As a trial at night was undoubtedly illegal, it is probable that this second meeting was held at sunrise to confirm the sentence formally and discuss the best way of putting it into execution; and as this was very likely more fully attended (see Mark xv. 1, 'the whole council'), there is nothing improbable in the crucial questions being again put to Jesus, that His 'blasphemy' might be heard by the new comers.

2. It has been much disputed whether the preliminary examination mentioned by John was before Annas or Caiaphas, as his narrative is not clear upon the point. The majority of the best writers consider that Annas was the interrogator. The arguments on both sides are very voluminous, and cannot even be summarised here; but it may be observed that John xviii. 24 should probably (neither the reading nor the meaning is quite certain) be rendered, 'So Annas sent Him,' &c.: which would be almost decisive in favour of Annas. Although Caiaphas was actually then high-priest, the office rightfully belonged to Annas; compare Lesson LXXXIV., Note 2.

The apparent difficulty involved, as to where the denials of Peter took place, is thus explained:—Annas and Caiaphas both occupied 'the high-priest's palace.' The 'sending' of Jesus by the former to the latter was merely a sending from Annas's rooms on one side of the court-yard to the hall in which the trial was to be held on the other. Some think that, between the two examinations, Jesus was waiting in the court-yard itself, and that while He was there the third denial took place and He 'looked upon Peter.'

3. 'This fellow.' 'Fellow' is not expressed in the Greek, but the translation is a good one nevertheless, as the single word for 'this,' *outos* (*outos*), is evidently contemptuous.

4. 'I adjure thee by the living God.' This was the regular legal formula for administering oaths, and was binding on witnesses without their answering. 'Thou hast said' (Matt.) and 'Ye say that I am' (Luke) are merely Jewish forms of affirmation, and are equivalent to 'I am' (Mark).

5. The 'temple' where Judas sought the chief

priests was the *naos* (*naos*), that is, the sanctuary itself (see Lesson XVII., Note 6), into which none but the priests could enter.

The Greek word for 'repented' is not the usual word; and Judas's repentance was of course remorse only. It is 'never too late to repent,' if the repentance be genuine; but it is to be feared that a late repentance, produced by a sense of danger or a fear of death, is seldom genuine. To understand the words 'ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins,' see 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. Cranmer, thrusting into the flames the hand which had signed his recantation, is a good illustration of St. Paul's expression in that passage, 'Yea, what revenge!'

6. The account of the death of Judas in Acts i. differs from St. Matthew's. The two are usually reconciled by the supposition that, in the attempt to hang himself, the traitor fell over the precipitous rocks, and was mangled as described in Peter's speech.

The 'potter's field' was bought by the chief priests with the returned money, but Peter, by a common figure of speech, ascribes the purchase to Judas, meaning that all he got by the 'reward of iniquity' was death on a spot for which the identical money was afterwards given. The name given to the field, *Aeldama*, was a double memorial of the traitor's death in it and of the price of blood paid for it. The spot is still marked by a charnel-house; and it is remarkable that the skulls found there are those of various races, the 'strangers' buried there. See Mr. Bardsley's 'Notes of a Tour in Palestine,' *Church Sunday School Magazine* for Feb. 1870, p. 77; Porter's *Giant Cities*, &c., p. 145; and the article 'Aeldama' in Smith's *Dict. Bible*.

7. The saying of 'Jeremy the prophet,' mentioned by Matthew, is probably that of Zech. xi. 12, 13. The name of Jeremiah may perhaps have been inserted by an early copyist in error. No positive explanation of the difficulty can be given; but in any case no objection to Matthew's inspiration can arise, for even were he not inspired, it is impossible to suppose that an Evangelist so careful in his citation of prophecies could have made such a blunder.

Barnes's note on the application of the passage in Zechariah is worth quoting:—

'Zechariah was treated by the Jews with contempt. He asks them to give him *his price* . . . to show their estimate of his office. If they thought it of value, they were to pay him accordingly; if not, they were to forbear, i.e., to give nothing. To show their contempt of him and his office, they gave him thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave. This God commanded him to give to the potter, or to throw into the pottery—to throw away. So in the time of Jesus. To show their contempt of Him, they valued Him at the price of a slave. This was appropriated to the purchase of a field owned by a potter, worn out and of little or no value' (i.e., because the clay all used).

Lesson XCIV.—Before the Governor.

'I find no fault in this man.'

Read—Passages referred to below : *Learn*—Acts iii. 13, 14 ; 1 Pet. ii. 21—23.
(Hymns 42, 43, 62, 90, 91, 99, 133, 313.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Some apology is perhaps due to the teacher for the great length of the following Sketch and Notes. But it must be borne in mind, (1) that the fulness with which all four Evangelists record the trial is a proof of its importance ; (2) that each one mentions some incidents not referred to by the others ; (3) that unusual care is therefore necessary in weaving the whole into a consistent narrative ; (4) that the narrative, once really understood in the connection of its several parts, is one of extreme interest. The teacher who has the patience to *master* the history for himself, will find it really an easy one to teach ; and if he succeeds in giving his scholars something like an accurate idea of what passed, let him not be distressed because there is little time for comment or application, for he is doing exactly what the Evangelists themselves have done. Only let the suffering Saviour be the central figure throughout ; and let whatever practical teaching is given be drawn (in a course like the present) from His gentleness, as in the Sketch, and not from Pilate's vacillation and injustice.

In reading the Sketch over, in preparation, reference should constantly be made to an open Bible close at hand, or the point of many sentences will be missed. In turning from one Gospel to the other, Note I will be a help.

No one Gospel can be named for the 'reading.' In elder classes, St. John's account will be the best as a basis, because they can enter into Christ's conversations with Pilate. St. Luke is, perhaps, the best to follow if these conversations are not going to be taken.

The writer is considerably indebted to the excellent chapters on the subject in Dr. Hanna's *Last Day of Our Lord's Passion*, as any readers of that book will observe. Hengstenberg's *Commentary on St. John* is also particularly clear in unfolding the significance of the successive incidents ; and Stier displays his usual keen spiritual insight into the meaning of the 'words of the Lord Jesus.'

A hint may be given to any infant-class teachers who may have to take this Lesson. Many would speak of the priests and Pilate merely as 'some wicked people' and 'a bad man.' No doubt it is difficult to give the slightest conception of their relative positions ; but this difficulty is less than that of *vagueness of identification*. It is better that a child should fail to see quite what Pilate was, than not to hear Pilate's name at all.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

In the Creed, one man's name mentioned—? 'Suffered under *Pontius Pilate*.' Who was he? Luke iii. 1 [see Note 2]—appointed by Roman Emperor to govern distant province of Judæa. Difficult task, people troublesome—why? Jews could not bear foreign rulers—always longing for Messiah to come and deliver them (see Acts i. 6). Caesarea the Roman capital, but Pilate obliged to be at Jerusalem with extra soldiers at Passover-time, lest multitudes excited to rebel.

That very Passover night, Pilate has lent some soldiers to the chief priests, for a midnight expedition to arrest (they say) a dangerous man. Who was that? [See Lesson XCII.] Pilate not again disturbed—night gone off quietly. But early in morning, called to come out—an important case wanting instant attention. See what it was, and how he dealt with it.

I. THE GUILTLLESS FALSELY ACCUSED.
John xviii. 28—38 ; Luke xxiii. 1—3 ; Matt. xxvii. 11—14 ; Mark xv. 2—5.

Pilate at once sees something the matter—recognises great Jewish leaders—what can have brought them to him in this haste—on one of their sacred days too? Must have caught the man they spoke of—and he *must* be dangerous! He looks at the prisoner—yes, safely bound—but—*that* face the face of a fierce brigand or rebel leader!—can't be—(John, 29)—'What accusation against *this* man?'

Priests vexed—hoped Pilate would take their word, and sign death-warrant without inquiry (perhaps he had done so before) ; see their cool reply, ver. 30. But the proud Roman not going just to do their bidding ; can be cool too, ver. 31—'Go and judge him yourselves.' But they want His *death*—can't do *that* themselves [see Note 5]—eo

must satisfy this tiresome governor by telling of Jesus' crimes. And can't tell real reason why they hate Him (what was it? John vii. 7), nor even the crime for which they condemned Him [*last Lesson*].—Roman governor won't punish for that. What do they accuse Him of? (Luke, 2)—three things, the second totally false [*see Lesson LXXVII.*], the two others false as they meant them.

But Pilate still more suspicious now—strange that these Jews, who detest the Romans, so anxious to kill a man for 'forbidding to give tribute'!—what can it mean? Not even satisfied when Jesus confesses one 'crime' (Mark, 2)—must examine Him privately. See the conversation between these two alone (John, 33—37). Jesus would not explain before His accusers (Mark, 3—5)—would be no use, only aggravate them—but in pity tells the perplexed governor what sort of King He is [*see Note 8*].

Quite enough for Pilate—cares not to hear any more of such talk (John, 38)—one thing certain, this man, whatever his queer notions, no criminal.

II. THE GUILTY ACQUITTED. Luke xxiii. 4—16; Matt. xxvii. 19.

Who are best judges of a person's character? Surely those who know him best. Sometimes may like him or dislike him too much to be quite fair; but if one who would *gain* by *blaming* him *praises* him, what testimony more valuable? Now who were most intimate with Jesus? Surely Judas knew Him well enough, and willing enough to accuse Him; yet what did *he* say? Matt. xxvii. 4. And so it proved. Not one thing brought against Him at the Jewish trial—Caiaphas obliged to condemn Him for telling them who He was [*last Lesson*]. And now, at the Roman trial, what is Pilate's decision? (Luke, 4).

How enraged the priests now! (Luke, 5). But more testimonies to Jesus' innocence to come yet.

(a) A message to Pilate from his wife (Matt.)—what does she call Jesus? Perhaps she knew Him before; but that dream—Who must have sent it?

(b) Pilate has caught at word 'Galilee'—an easy way of getting rid of this puzzling case—send it to ruler of Galilee [*see Notes 3, 6*]. How vexed the priests must be! Wanted all done quickly and quietly—now delay and march through public streets. And after all, time wasted, labour useless—what does Herod do? (Luke, 8—11)—questions Jesus—mocks the silent, patient Sufferer—but all their 'vehement accusations' in vain—no fault found in Him (see ver. 15)—back again across the city to Pilate. What result now? ver. 13—16, the governor's positive, formal acquittal.

Five testimonies to His innocence! Judas, Sanhedrim (failure to convict), Pilate, Pilate's wife, Herod.

III. THE GUILTY REFERRED TO THE GUILTYLESS. Mark xv. 6—15; Matt. xxvii. 15—26.

Jesus acquitted—why not at once released? Pilate anxious not to offend priests—will try another plan—custom to let go some Jewish prisoner at the Passover, whoever chosen by people—Jesus shall be the one this year. But why expect people to choose *Him*? Perhaps, while accusers and accused away at Herod's, Pilate has inquired who the strange prisoner is; has found out one thing certainly (Mark, 10). Why 'envy'?—clearly Jesus must be *popular*, priests jealous of His influence—then (Pilate thinks) no doubt crowd will choose Him. To make sure, name with Him a robber and murderer (John, 40; Mark, 7) for whom of course they won't ask.

Time going on—the city all alive now—news flying about, 'Jesus arrested!'—crowds round Pilate's palace (see Matt., 17—'gathered together'). Vexation of priests—too late now for secret execution—what they feared (Matt. xxvi. 5) will come—'uproar among the people.' Only one chance—'persuade the multitude' (Matt., 20; Mark, 11). *How* they did it we know not; but when Pilate's question put, 'Barabbas or Jesus?' what the cry? How true Peter's rebuke to the people two months after (1st text for rep.)! Why Barabbas popular? An insurgent *against Romans*—did the very thing Jesus falsely charged with! If Jesus *had* been what they said, had never been brought to Pilate.

Pilate not yet hopeless—sees they like Barabbas, but perhaps they will have *both*—won't mind being generous for once: see Matt., 22. No—a very different demand—'Crucify Him!' Even the hard Roman, cruel and unjust as he is, shocked now—'Crucified I why?' Ah, they cannot answer that '*why*'—yet outcry greater than ever, to send to a slave's death Him whom, five days' ago [*Lesson LXXVII.*], some of them welcomed with shouts as Messiah!

The unhappy governor can resist no longer; but the guilt shall not lie upon himself, and every one of them shall see his determination—how does he show it? (Matt., 24: comp. Deut. xxi. 6, 7)—but *could* he thus escape guilt? what *ought* he to have done?

'*See ye to it*'—just what the priests said an hour or two ago to Judas—now said to *them*. But do they care? See the answer (ver. 25). And the guilt of that murder is on their nation to this day.

So Barabbas set free, and Jesus handed to the soldiers.

IV. THE GUILTY UNJUSTLY PUNISHED. Matt. xxvii. 27—30; Mark xv. 16—19; John xix. 1—16.

A cruel custom among the Romans—criminal scourged before crucifixion. A punishment too terrible to talk about; but *this*, too, the Son of God suffered! **And**

something besides bodily torture—see how the rough soldiers mock this Galilean who calls himself a king! (Matt. and Mark). All just as He had said, Matt. xx. 19. The *third* dreadful time of cruel treatment Jesus has endured this morning! (see Luke xxii. 63, xxiii. 14). [See Note 7.]

Pilate looking on—has seen many scourgings, but was there ever so meek a sufferer as this?—must really try even now to save Him—leads Him out on to the great steps where all can see Him—'Behold the Man! will not this sight touch you? has He not suffered enough already?' There He stands, in agonies of pain, pale and bleeding—what is the cry of the people He has loved so well and done so much for? John, 6—shouts again of 'Crucify Him!' Pilate shrinks back—'Take ye Him then.'

They never expected this—after sentence given, after scourging, the judge to relent now! and at length out comes the real 'crime' of Jesus, ver. 7. Will that satisfy Pilate's scruples? ver. 8, 9—the proud Roman trembling now before the poor Jew—'Can He be some heavenly being?'—'Whence art Thou?' Another short private conversation [see Note 9], and Pilate still more resolved to save Him, ver. 12.

One step more. Pilate was afraid at that saying' about the Son of God; but

now another cause for fear, ver. 12—'Thou art not Caesar's friend'—*more* afraid at 'that saying.' Thinks of these priests accusing him to the Emperor of letting off a rebel king!—all his tenderness gone at that prospect—two more feeble attempts, and then Jesus once more handed to the soldiers.

This was our Saviour!

He was the Guiltless One—proved so despite all the hatred of bitterest foes. See 2nd text for rep.; John viii. 46; 1 John iii. 5. This a thing to rejoice at—why? How could one, with sins of his own to be punished, take the punishment of ours? To suffer for guilty, Jesus must Himself be innocent. He is 'Jesus Christ the righteous,' and therefore our 'Advocate with the Father' (1 John ii. 1). [Illustr.—Whom would a criminal get to intercede for him? a fellow-criminal, or one in favour with the king?]

And the Guiltless One was punished. Unjustly—yes, but of His own accord—why? That the guilty might go free, 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Pet. iii. 18. 'With His stripes we are healed,' Isa. liii. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 24. What wonder and joy Barabbas must have felt—released while another suffered instead! But *he* knew not *who* took his place—we do know—what, then, should we feel? 2 Cor. v. 14; Rev. v. 9.

NOTES.

1. The various incidents of the trial before Pilate, mentioned by the four Evangelists, may be thus arranged:—

First application to Pilate. John (29–32).

Formal accusation. Luke (2). Matthew (11). Mark (2).

First colloquy between Christ and Pilate. John (33–38).

Acquittal. Further charges. Christ's silence. Matthew (12–14). Mark (3–5). Luke (4–5).

Case sent to Herod. Luke (6–12).

Before Pilate again. Formal acquittal. Luke (13–16).

'Jesus or Barabbas?' Message from Pilate's wife. Barabbas chosen. Matthew (15–21). Mark (6–11). Luke (17–19). John (39, 40).

'Crucify Him!' Matthew (22, 23). Mark (12–14). Luke (20–25).

Pilate washes his hands. Matthew (24, 25).

The sentence. Barabbas released. Jesus scourged and mocked. Matthew (26). Mark (15). Luke (24, 25). John (1–3).

Pilate's vain appeal to the Jews' pity. Second colloquy of Christ and Pilate. Further efforts of Pilate. Final result. John (1–16).

The above order is followed in the sketch, except that the message from Pilate's wife is referred to out of its place in order to bring together the testimonies to Christ's innocence.

2. Pontius Pilate was the sixth of the Roman procurators of Judæa; see Lesson XI., Note 1. He held the office ten years, and is described by Josephus and Philo (both Jews, however) as an arbitrary and tyrannical ruler. The Jews' threat to accuse him to the Emperor was no unmeaning one, for he was ultimately recalled to Rome, and banished to Vienne in Gaul, where he died by

his own hand. His wife's name is traditionally stated to have been Claudia Procula. See further, Plumpton's article in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

3. In an interesting article in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for October, 1869, Pilate and his times are 'viewed in the light of Indian experience.' The writer draws a striking parallel between Rome and the Jews on the one hand, and Britain and the Hindoos on the other; the political condition of Judæa in our Lord's time being in many respects similar to some of the semi-independent native states in India. He illustrates the dangers of the Passover concourse by those of the great Hindoo religious festivals, a handful of British troops keeping order at the latter like the Roman 'cohort' at the former; and gives instances of the way in which a simple riot, if unchecked, quickly assumes alarming proportions, thus accounting for the desire of all parties to prevent a tumult 'on the feast day.' Sometimes, he says, referring to Luke xiii. 1, prompt severity may be the truest wisdom in such a case; and such severity might well be called 'firmness' by one side, and 'tyranny' by the other. He 'conjectures with some confidence,' from Indian observation, that the quarrel between Pilate and Herod was 'about jurisdiction'; possibly Pilate's summary measures upon certain subjects of Herod, on that very occasion, may have offended the latter, and the opportunity now given of appeasing the latter by sending to him another Galilean case was eagerly seized.

4. It is uncertain where the trial of Jesus took place. Some think that Pilate occupied the castle (Acts xxi. 34) of Antonia, on the north

side of the Temple, and that Herod was at the splendid palace of his father, Herod the Great, on Mount Zion. Others think that Pilate resided at the palace (as we know from Josephus some of the Roman Governors did), and Herod elsewhere. The 'judgment hall' (John xviii. 28, 33), or 'common hall' (Matt. xxvii. 27), is literally the *Proetorium* (as our version has it in Mark), *i.e.*, the military head-quarters, which does not guide us as to the place, because it would be wherever Pilate was. And the 'pavement' (John xix. 13) was probably a moveable piece of tessellated pavement carried about and put down wherever a judgment was to be delivered, which was always in the open air.

The chief priests, for fear of being defiled by contact with a Gentile house (from which, of course, the heaven would not have been removed for the Passover), remained outside, probably in an open space in front of the building. Pilate came out to them, but took Jesus inside to examine Him. The scourging also took place within, and after it Jesus 'came forth,' and was presented to the people in the purple robe and crown of thorns.

On the reason assigned for the priests' fear of defilement, 'that they might eat the Passover,' see Additional Note XII., page 235.

5. The power of capital punishment had before this been taken away from the Sanhedrim. Hence their application to Pilate; which, as St. John notices (xviii. 32), brought about the fulfilment of Christ's own prediction that He should be 'lifted up' (John iii. 14, viii. 28, xii. 32, 33), *i.e.*, crucified—crucifixion being a Roman and not a Jewish punishment. At a later period, the Sanhedrim, during the interval between the departure of the Roman Governor Festus (the Festus of Acts xxv.) and the arrival of his successor Albinus, put to death St. James the Less (the writer of the Epistle); for which act the then high priest (a son of Annas) was deposed. The stoning of Stephen was not a legal execution, but a murder.

6. The Herod before whom Jesus was taken, was Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea; see concerning him Lessons XXI., XLIV., LXX. It is evident that his conscience, which had troubled him under the preaching and after the murder of John the Baptist, was utterly hardened ere this through his persistence in sin. His desire to see Jesus was obviously the merest curiosity.

7. Scourging, among the Romans, was the regular accompaniment of crucifixion. (*E.g.*, see Josephus, *Antiq.* v. 11, 1; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 14, 9.) A fearful account of the operation is given by Lange (*Comm.* on Matt.). The whips used by the Romans had several lashes of cord or leather, loaded with pieces of metal, which fearfully mangled the flesh. The victim often fainted, sometimes died, under the infliction.

The robe put upon Jesus in mockery is described by Matthew as scarlet, by Mark and John as purple. Perhaps it was a scarlet military cloak, but, being used in imitation of the imperial robe, which from its colour was called simply 'the purple,' might be called a 'purple robe'; just as with us a *white pink* means a white flower of the 'pink' species.

8. Christ's *first colloquy* with Pilate (John xviii. 33–38) may be thus briefly explained:—

The design of Jesus' question, 'Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?' seems to have been to warn Pilate against His accusers. 'Is it likely that any seditious movements would be unknown to you? and if you have no knowledge of My being engaged in any, do you think these charges of the priests worthy of credence?' Pilate replies, in effect, 'Am I a Jew? what do I know or care about their wild notions of a coming king? It is your own people who have brought you to me.' Christ's answer, 'My Kingdom is not of this world,' &c., would convey to Pilate two ideas: 1st, that the claims of Jesus, whatever they might mean, were not such as he need be alarmed about, *i.e.*, not antagonistic to the Roman rule; 2nd, that Jesus in some sense claimed to have a power and dominion greater even than that of Rome. 'My servants' can hardly mean the disciples; rather the 'ministers of His that do His pleasure,' the 'legions of angels' to whom He referred at the time of His arrest (Matt. xxvi. 53). His further reply to Pilate's amazed question, 'A king, then, art thou?' affirms that what He had said was indeed true, because He had come into the world expressly to testify to the truth,—the phrase 'came into the world' itself implying His heavenly origin. This allusion to 'the truth' appealed to the aspirations of the Gentile world (see 1 Cor. i. 22—'The Greeks seek after wisdom'), and would be still more likely to impress Pilate with the greatness of his Prisoner's claims.

Lord Bacon's famous remark—'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate, and he would not wait for an answer'—scarcely accords with the *ave* which the demeanour and language of Christ had exhibited in Pilate (see John xix. 8). There does not seem to have been any 'jesting' or mockery on Pilate's part from first to last, though no doubt the words 'What is truth?' expressed his disbelief in the possibility of solving such speculative questions.

9. On the *second colloquy* between Christ and Pilate (John xix. 8–11), it may be observed that the expression cited by the priests, 'Son of God,' probably carried Pilate back to the old heathen mythology, so far at least as to awaken in his mind the idea, 'Can this strange person really be one of the gods, come down in the likeness of a man?' (comp. Acts xiv. 11); hence his perplexed and half-superstitious question, 'Whence art thou?' But Christ's silence brought back in him his Roman pride: 'To me speakest thou not?' His assertion of his power to release or to crucify reveals the real injustice of the man: if he *had* power to release one of whose innocence he was assured, why did he not do so? Our Lord's answer is singularly impressive: 'Do I know thy power? Yes, I know that against Me thou hast none at all. All thy power is from above (comp. Rom. xiii. 1). But thou dost not know what thou art doing, and therefore, although thou art guilty, thy guilt is less than that of Caiaphas' (comp. Luke xii. 47, 48, xxiii. 34).

The profound impression made by these words on Pilate is seen from St. John's expression, 'From thenceforth he sought to release Him,' as though his repeated previous efforts were as nothing in comparison with his earnestness now,—an earnestness, however, which instantly collapsed before the threat to complain to the Emperor.

10. On the final reply of the Jews, 'We have no king but Caesar,' Hengstenberg well says, 'Their words had a deeper significance than they themselves meant. When they despised Christ their true King, and delivered Him up to death, they ceased in fact to be God's people and kingdom, and sank entirely under the power of the world,

which God used for the execution of His wrath upon them.'

11. In Luke xxiii. 15, 'done unto Him' is a mistranslation. It should be 'done by Him.'

12. On the term 'Preparation,' in John xix. 14, see Additional Note XII., page 235; and on 'the sixth hour,' see next Lesson, Note 4.

Lesson XCV.—The Crucifixion—I.

'Endured the Cross, despising the shame.'

Read—Luke xxiii. 26—43; (*comp.* Matt. xxvii. 32—41; Mark xv. 21—32; John xix. 17—27); *Learn*—Isa. liii. 12; John x. 17, 18. (*Hymns*, 43, 51, 55, 57—63, 101, 250, 312.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The subject of the Crucifixion presents a practical difficulty in teaching, in this respect—that the minor incidents of the Gospel narratives, none of which ought to be omitted, are so numerous, that there is a danger of their distracting the attention which we wish concentrated on the great fact of Christ's atoning death for us. In order to meet this difficulty, the subject has been divided between two Lessons. In the present one, most of the external circumstances of the scene are taken, together with those three of the 'seven words' which referred to *others*; leaving the mysterious darkness, the four 'words' referring to Christ Himself, and His actual death, for separate study. It may be added, that the more vividly the accessories are presented to the scholars' minds in this Lesson, the greater will be the solemnity of the deeper topics to be taken in the next one.

The narrative of the penitent malefactor well deserves a lesson to itself. For the sake of completeness, a paragraph, indicating some points in it worthy of notice, is introduced in the Sketch, but enclosed in brackets because scarcely belonging to the general subject of the Lesson.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

In a former Lesson [LXXXV.] we watched a great procession going in at the gate of Jerusalem [*recapitulate*]—shouting and singing in honour of 'the King of the Jews.' All that we have talked of since occurred in five days. The procession on Sunday; now Friday morning. Another procession coming *out* of the city—that very 'King of the Jews' going to execution amid taunts and insults!

That execution, in remote province of Roman Empire, so little thought of then, *the greatest of all events*—for what did it mean? That 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son'—what for?

To-day and next Sunday think of that solemn first Good Friday.

I. THE WAY TO CALVARY.

Look at that procession. (a) Roman soldiers, with their centurion. (b) Three condemned men carrying wooden crosses—the soldiers see little difference between them—of course must be low slaves or vile criminals, to be sent to such a death [see Note 2]; but think of the *two*—what were they? and the *One*—what was He? (c) A great crowd following, priests exulting at being rid of their enemy, women weeping because the kind Teacher and Healer to die.

The two malefactors can carry their crosses well enough; but Jesus—what has He undergone already?—hour of agony in Gethsemane, pain at disciples' desertion, weary marchings to and fro, scourging, buffeting, thorny crown—what strength can that Body have left? Obligated to get another to help Him—who? not one of *them* will carry the hateful piece of wood—seize a stranger [see Note 5].

What is Jesus thinking of? of His own sufferings? See what He says to the weeping women (Luke, 28—31). Looking forward again, as before (xix. 41—44; xxi. 6, 20—24), to the judgments coming on the nation that has rejected Him, perhaps on those very women and their children. [See Note 6.] If their tears (yes, and *our* tears too) to be of any use, must be, not merely at sight of His sufferings (*such* tears natural enough), but at thought of the *sin* (*our* sins) for which He suffered—then shall come to Him in true repentance and be saved.

II. THE SCENE ON CALVARY.

Look at three groups:—

(1) The soldiers. Watch them—stripping their victims, laying them on the crosses, driving in the cruel nails, lifting up the crosses, standing them into holes made for them. Over each head a tablet with the

crime inscribed on it—what written on the middle one? [see Note 3]. There the sufferers to be left, to linger in agony and die of exhaustion and pain. Is this cruel and horrible? But the soldiers had often done it before—thought nothing of it—just obeyed orders. See them now dividing the clothes of the three—their perquisites—totally ignorant of the awful thing they have done.

(2) The chief priests and people. The priests—what a triumph for them!—three days ago this Nazarene was denouncing their sin in the Temple—now, there He hangs! The people—some of them had taken His side—now wonder how could ever be so foolish as to think *Him* Messiah—fancy Messiah crucified like a slave! See the taunts and insults (Matt., 30—43):—Here is the miracle-worker—why can't he do one for himself? 'Called himself Son of God—the title over his head calls him King of the Jews—if so, let him come down—then'—? [See Note 8].

(3) A third group (John, 25)—how different! Think of their grief that their loved One should end His life like *that*—their horror at His tortures—still more, their bitter disappointment, all hopes crushed. Think of *His mother*—what had old Simcon prophesied of her? Luke ii, 35—is it not fulfilled now?

III. THREE GRACIOUS SAYINGS ON CALVARY. [See Note 9.]

1. *Concerning His murderers* (Luke, 34). At the very moment of torture—the nails tearing His sacred flesh—what does He utter? No cry of pain, no begging for life, no threat of punishment, no calling for help; not even a stern, proud, 'I forgive you.' But what? Just as when He turned to the weeping women, is thinking, not of His own agony, but of their sin—whose?—the soldiers'? Certainly *they* 'knew not what they did.' He prays for them—yes, but for others too; for Pilate; for the Jews—true, they were sinning wilfully, yet knew not *how much*, see Acts iii. 17, xiii. 27; 1 Cor. ii. 8 (comp. 1 Tim. i. 13). For us too—how so?—is not *our sin* part of what He died for? so we have a share in crucifying Him! How often do we sin without thinking—scarcely 'knowing what we do'? Pray God to 'forgive our sins, negligences, and ignorances' (Liturgy).

2. *To the Penitent Malefactor* (Luke, 39—43). [See Note 11.] Of all the insults offered to Jesus, is not this from His fellow-sufferer the most amazing? No wonder the other rebuked him. But did not Christ rebuke him too? Not a word does He utter till a humble, trusting prayer comes to him: *then*, what a wondrous promise!—'exceeding abundantly above all' the thief 'asked or thought' (Eph. iii. 20): *asked* to be (a) remembered, (b) when Jesus came, (c) in His Kingdom (*i.e.*, on earth); *promised* to be (a) taken with Christ, (b) that very day, (c) into Paradise!

[Who could have thought that this man, executed for his crimes, would 'go to heaven'? Why was it? Because, with all his heart, he repented of sin and believed in Jesus. How do we know? 1st, See in what he said (a) conviction of his sin and what it deserved, (b) fear of God in consequence, (c) assurance that Jesus had 'done nothing amiss', and therefore that He *was* what He claimed to be (Son of God, Saviour, &c.), (d) certainty that even this crucified One would come again as a king. 2ndly, Think when and where he said this—when all Christ's own followers scattered in despair—before all those mocking priests and soldiers—*he, alone in the whole world, taking Christ's side!* Do you think, because he went to heaven, a death-bed repentance will save you? It will, *if 'it be like that.* But even then, *when* must you repent to be quite safe? on your death-bed? when will that be?]

3. *To His Mother and John* (John, 25—27). A gift to each: to Mary, a son to protect and care for her; to the beloved disciple, a work to do for his Master. Thus Jesus in His dying anguish has a thought for all.

Now have we not seen two things?—

1. *On Calvary we see Christ's deep humiliation.* Here is the Son of God, who lived in glory before the world was made, who Himself made all things (John i. 1—3), marched out of His own favoured city by His own creatures to be put to death along with two criminals, in a way as ignominious as *hanging* with us—stripped, nailed up, gazed at, insulted, &c., &c. [*recapitulate*]. How awfully true is Phil. ii. 8—'He humbled Himself . . . unto death, even the death of the cross'!

2. *On Calvary we see Christ's real greatness.* In three ways:—

(a) The things done to Him proved Him to be the promised Messiah. See Ps. xxii.:—ver. 6—8, the insults; ver. 13, 17, the staring; ver. 16, the nails; ver. 18, the division of His clothes. See Isa. liii.:—ver. 3, the scorn and rejection; ver. 7, His meek silence; ver. 12, the malefactors with Him, and His intercession.

(b) He submitted to it all voluntarily, see 2nd text for rep.; what for? John x. 11, 15. They told Him to come down from the cross if—? *Suppose He had*, what must have become of us? What prevented Him? Eph. iii. 19.

(c) See His love and power, manifested *even then*. [*Recapitulate*:—] praying for His executioners—tenderly giving His mother a home—promising a place in Paradise to the poor dying robber. Above all, what mighty power must this 'outcast and criminal' have had to draw that robber to Himself at such a time!

If such greatness on the cross, what greatness on His throne! He sits *there* now, a living, loving, almighty Saviour—what more can we want?

NOTES.

1. The position of Calvary is quite uncertain. All we know is that it was outside the walls—necessarily so, because executions were always 'without the gate,' see Num. xv. 35; 1 Kings xxi. 13; Acts vii. 58; Heb. xliii. 12. The traditional site, on which stands the church of the Holy Sepulchre, is inside the modern city; but the course of the ancient wall is doubtful, so that the site may be the true one. The principal authorities are the Rev. G. Williams (*Holy City*) in favour of the traditional view, and Dr. Robinson (*Biblical Researches*) against it. The 'Holy Sepulchre' is in the N.W. part of modern Jerusalem. Some are inclined to place Calvary on the N.E. side, just above the valley of the Kedron; others to the south, on the 'Hill of Evil Counsel.' No satisfactory decision can be come to on the point. Possibly the researches of the Palestine Exploration Fund may hereafter settle the question.

Golgotha was the Hebrew name, which signified the place of a skull. The word in Luke rendered 'Calvary' is simply the word for 'skull' as in the other Gospels. Our translation of it there is derived from the Latin Vulgate, 'calva' meaning a skull in Latin. The name had reference either to the fact of the spot being a place of burial, or, as some think, to the contour of the ground being slightly rounded like a skull. The mediæval expression 'Mount Calvary' is entirely unwarranted.

2. The punishment of crucifixion was considered so infamous and disgraceful that it was never inflicted on Roman citizens (nor was the preparatory scourging, see Acts xvi. 37, xxii. 25—29), but only on slaves, rebels, &c. Crosses varied in shape; that on which our Lord hung was no doubt the 'Latin cross' usually represented; but it was not so tall as commonly imagined—only high enough to raise the body two or three feet from the ground. The victim was usually nailed to the cross while it lay flat on the ground. Other particulars, with references to classical authorities, are given in Smith's *Dict. Bible*, and the *N. T. Hist.*, p. 289. In the underground church of St. Clement at Rome, there is a wall-painting of the Crucifixion, which is probably the oldest representation of it extant. The cross is of the usual 'Latin' shape, but quite short.

3. The 'title' was usually a wooden tablet on which was written the crime of the convict. It was hung round his neck, and thus carried by him to the place of execution.

Pilate, in writing Christ's accusation, took the Jews at their word. They had repudiated any other king but Cæsar; therefore any one claiming to be 'king of the Jews' thereby deserved death as a rebel. But the priests had no idea of entirely abjuring their right to a king of their own: they only refused to have Jesus; hence their objection to Pilate's accusation. His reply, 'What I have written, I have written,' may indicate his grim pleasure at having annoyed them; or that his conscience was ill at ease for what they had induced him to do, and that he would have nothing more to do with them.

If there is one thing which we should expect to find identical in all four Gospels, it is this important public document on the Saviour's

cross. Yet all four give it differently—a clear proof of the independence of the writers, however we explain the circumstance. It is, however, to be observed that there is no necessary contradiction between the Evangelists. If we suppose the full 'title' to have been '*This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*,' each Evangelist gave a portion of the sentence. Or it may be that the inscriptions in the three languages were not absolutely identical; and some think that Mark gives the equivalent of the Latin, John the equivalent of the Hebrew, and either Matthew or Luke (who are alike but for one word) the Greek. These, however, are only possible explanations of the matter.

4. St. Mark says that Christ was crucified at 'the third hour,' i.e., 9 a.m.; St. John that Pilate gave sentence 'about the sixth hour.' Some have imagined that John reckons, not from sunrise as usual, but from midnight, and that he means, not noon, but 6 a.m.; but it is extremely doubtful whether such a reckoning was known in those days. Others think that an error must have crept into the early copies of St. John's Gospel; but there is no evidence of this. Others again (particularly Hengstenberg) lay stress on the fact that the Jewish day was roughly divided into four parts, corresponding to the four 'watches' of the night (Mark xiii. 35), see Matt. xx. 3, 5; and think that the period between 9 a.m. and noon might be spoken of either as 'the third' or as 'about the sixth hour,' much in the same way that from (say) 5 to 6 p.m. might with us be indifferently called 'afternoon' or 'evening.' A careful calculation of the time which would be occupied by the different incidents of our Lord's trial, &c., confirms the idea that the sentence could scarcely have been before 10 a.m., while the crucifixion could scarcely be later than 11 a.m.

5. Simon of Cyrene (a Greek colony on the coast of Libya in North Africa) had doubtless come to Jerusalem for the Passover (comp. Acts ii. 10). Whether he was a believer in Jesus we cannot of course say, but he was the father of two men evidently well known in the Church in after years (Mark xv. 21). If the Rufus who was one of his sons is the same as is named in Rom. xvi. 13, then it would seem that Simon's wife at some time or other acted a mother's part towards St. Paul. See further a very interesting article by Plumtre in the *Sunday Magazine* for Dec. 1867, also reproduced in his *Biblical Studies*.

6. The 'daughters of Jerusalem' who 'bewailed and lamented' Jesus were probably not disciples, but were merely touched by the sufferings of One whom they knew as a kind Teacher and Healer. Christ evidently speaks to them as representing Jerusalem. The expression about calling on the rocks and mountains (comp. Isa. ii. 19; Hos. x. 8; Rev. vi. 16) is hyperbolic; yet it may have had a startling fulfilment for some of those very women and their children, when the Jews literally took refuge in the subterranean passages under the city. The 'green tree' is Christ Himself; the 'dry tree' the Jewish nation: 'If a fruitful tree like Me is thus delivered to destruction, what shall be the fate of those who are barren and useless?' Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.

7. Much has been written on the wine or vinegar offered to Christ. On a careful comparison of the various opinions, it seems probable that there was only one liquid, the common wine of the soldiers (called *posca*), which was weak and sour, like vinegar; that a mixture of this and myrrh, making a stupefying draught, was (according to custom) offered to Jesus to dull the pain, and that *therefore* He would not drink; that 'gall' is a word for any kind of bitter drug, myrrh included, and that Matthew uses it in reference to the prophecy in Ps. lxxix. 21; and that when *unmixed* vinegar was given to Christ afterwards, in consequence of His cry, 'I thirst,' He did take it in fulfilment of the prophecy (see John xix. 28).

8. It is remarkable that the chief priests, in their taunts, used the very words of Ps. xxii. 8, 'He trusted in the Lord,' &c.; thus themselves unconsciously helping to fulfil prophecy. Their words, 'If Thou be the Son of God,' &c., are the very echo of Satan's insinuating temptation in the wilderness.

9. Our Lord uttered 'seven words' on the Cross. The first three had reference to others: a prayer for His enemies, a promise to a repenting sinner, a last word to two whom He loved. The next two describe His own sufferings, first mental ('My God,' &c.), then bodily ('I thirst'). In the last two He triumphantly closes His mission, and renders His Spirit to the Father. Three are recorded only by Luke; three only by John, the other only by Matthew and Mark. Bengel happily says, 'There are seven words in the four Evangelists, all of which not one has recorded. Whence it is plain that these books are, as it were, four voices, which produce sympathy when heard together.'

10. On the word 'woman,' applied by our Lord to His mother, see Lesson XVI., Note 3. The fact that she was committed to John's care seems

a strong evidence for the view that Christ's 'brethren' were not her sons.

11. The two malefactors, or robbers (not strictly 'thieves,' see Lesson LXVIII., Note 3), were very likely men belonging to the band of which Barabbas was captain (see Mark xv. 7). Perhaps Pilate grimly revenged himself on the Jews, for persuading him to condemn Jesus, by crucifying with Him two followers of the popular favourite.

The difference between Luke, who says that 'one' of the malefactors railed on Jesus, and Matthew and Mark, who say that 'they' did so, is variously explained. Some think that both the men joined in the railing at first, and that then one repented; others that Matthew and Mark use the plural in the general way in which we all frequently speak, and that only one repented. The latter seems the most natural suggestion.

'When Thou comest into Thy kingdom,' should be 'in Thy kingdom' (it is the same phrase as in Matt. xvi. 28), *i.e.*, 'when Thou shalt return to reign in glory,' not in heaven, but on earth. The malefactor was the one man in all the world at that moment who believed that Jesus was a king and would hereafter set up His kingdom.

'To-day shalt thou be with Me.' These words are a clear proof (1) of the separate existence of the spirit when the body is dead, (2) that the dead believer is immediately with Christ, (3) that there is no such place of temporary suffering as purgatory, even for such men as this malefactor must have been. 'Paradise' was a Jewish term, signifying, like 'Abraham's bosom,' the happy portion of 'Hades' (see Lesson LXIV., Note 3 *e*). It only occurs again in Scripture in 2 Cor. xii. 4; Rev. ii. 7.

There is solemn truth in the old saying, 'One thief was saved that none might despair; but only one, that none might presume.'

Lesson XCVI.—The Crucifixion—II.

'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.'

Read—Matt. xxvii. 45—51; (*comp.* Mark xv. 33—38; Luke xxiii. 44—46; John xix. 28—30); *Learn*—1 Pet. iii. 18; 2 Cor. v. 21.
(*Hymns*, 42, 57—63, 79, 104, 144, 146, 147, 314.)

TO THE TEACHER.

In the following Sketch, the remaining incidents of the Crucifixion are first taken in order as from the point of view of a spectator, *i.e.*, only as to their external features; and the various explanations necessary are taken together afterwards. By this plan, the following advantages appear to be gained:—(1) The successive incidents are seen in their connection and continuity, and the teacher is enabled to present a vivid and unbroken picture of what occurred; (2) The interest of the class having been aroused and sustained by this unbroken picture, it will be easier to keep it for the explanations; (3) In giving the explanations, the various features of the scene can be drawn from the children by way of recapitulation; (4) The teachings on the meaning of our Lord's death, and its relation to ourselves, will gain in solemnity by being given together instead of in fragments.

The death of Christ can be regarded in so many aspects (as the penalty of imputed sin, as a propitiation of offended justice, as the fulfilment of type and prophecy, as the consummation of obedience and humiliation, as the great proof of God's love, as the crisis of

the conflict with Satan, &c.) and its significance illustrated by so many different scriptural metaphors (as the ransom, the sacrifice, the 'way made open,' &c.), that the fullest lesson upon it must necessarily be defective somewhere. Two or three only of the more important truths are taken in the Sketch, and it is possible that the teacher may have to omit one or two for the sake of clearness. The thoughts suggested by the rent veil are perhaps as easy for children, and as likely to impress their hearts, as any. If any of these truths are really *taught*, i.e., are taken in by the scholars, the very briefest concluding word of direct application will suffice. The best possible help to the effect of the Lesson will be an appropriate closing hymn.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

We must go to Calvary again to-day—see the rest of that great sight—hear the rest of those seven wonderful sayings—try and understand what it all meant.

The Darkness.—[See Note 1.] It is noon—the sun blazing in full strength high up in the clear sky of Palestine. Many terrible scenes has the sun shone upon, but never such a scene as this—the Creator of heaven and earth hanging in torture between two criminals, dying a fearful death amid the jeers and insults of the chief men in His own chosen nation!

Suddenly, a dreadful darkness over all the land, hiding sun and sky—black night at brightest time of the day—for three long hours. When Jesus born, a glorious light shone in the darkness; now that He is dying—? What are we told of this solemn three hours? Not one thing. What can the silent and awe-struck bystanders be thinking of? Are the faithful women trembling with hope—that now Jesus will come down and crush His foes? Are the priests on their knees in terrified remorse? Certainly not *this*, for see ver. 46—19:—During those three hours not a sound from the cross, but now at last a loud and exceeding bitter cry; surely the priests will be touched by that, will pity the Sufferer; no, for the darkness has suddenly fled away—their awe gone too—cruel mockery again! [See Note 2.]

The Last Words.—That cry the *fourth* word from the cross—a cry of grief—His *soul* suffering; now the *fifth* (see John xix. 28)—a cry of burning thirst—His *body* suffering. Any pity now? *one* soldier softened—what does he do?—yet he too joins the mockery (see Mark), as if ashamed of even one kind thought of this 'King of the Jews.' But that is the last of it—two more wondrous sayings (John xix. 30; Luke xxiii. 46)—and all is over. *He is DEAD.*

The Signs.—And at that moment, God again puts forth His hand to startle them. They have had the darkness; now, what? ver. 51—the very ground shaking under their feet—the great solid rocks '*rent*' (torn like thin paper or linen!)—the graves laid open. And something else '*rent*' too: at that very hour the Temple crowded—'time of evening sacrifice'—priests burning incense (see Luke i. 8—10)—the great curtain (the '*veil*,' Exod. xxvi. 33; Heb. ix. 3)

hanging before them, hiding the sacred place where none may go in—that great curtain torn right down from top to bottom in a moment!

Now what did all this mean?

I. WHAT DID THOSE FOUR SAYINGS MEAN?

The Fourth Saying—'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Had the Father really forsaken His beloved Son? Why He loved Him peculiarly at that very time (John x. 17)—the Father '*pleased*' (Isa. liii. 10) 'not to spare His Son' (Rom. viii. 32). But God's face hidden (just as the sun hidden by that darkness, though really shining all the while). Why hidden? why God not smiling on His Son? There is only one thing that shuts off God's smile—what? Hab. i. 13. But Jesus had no sin—why, then, this cloud? See both texts for rep.—it was our sin—the iniquities of us all laid upon Him, and He must suffer the *penalty* (see Isa. lix. 2. lxiv. 7) of *losing God's smile*—the very penalty awaiting all unrepenting sinners. 2 Thess. i. 9. And to Him this must have been terrible anguish—to Him who all His life had never sinned, and therefore never had a cloud between Him and the Father. [Illustr.—If in any place sunshine were continuous, no sunset, no night, how awful a sudden, unknown darkness! Which feels a father's rebuke most, boy who has it often, or boy who has it for first time?] No wonder, then, after three hours' speechless grief, that awful cry burst from Jesus' lips.

The Fifth Saying—'I thirst.' At that other cry to God, the light came back, on the earth, and in Christ's soul. But then, directly *mind* relieved, *bodily* pain felt; comp. Luke iv. 2 [see Lesson XII., Note 7]. [Illustr.—In excitement of battle, soldier feels not wound: but when battle over, then pain.] But why did He speak?—had made no complaint before, despite the cruel nails, &c. See John xix. 28. He knows all is nearly over—but one prophecy (Ps. lxxix. 21) yet unfulfilled—therefore speaks out, 'I thirst.'

The Sixth Saying—'It is Finished!' What finished? (a) All the types and predictions accomplished—the last one just fulfilled. (b) All His sufferings at an end—the '*cup*' [see Lesson XCI.] drunk to the dregs. (c) His great work completed (comp. John xvii. 4)—see how presently.

The Seventh Saying—'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' The agony gone—how calm these words! And see how true our text last Sunday (John x. 18)—He yields up His life, of His own accord, for us. [See Note 4.]

II. WHAT DID THAT DEATH MEAN?

How we all shrink from death!—to think of this body of mine, full of life and health, a cold stiff corpse, put away underground, out of men's sight! *Even this* the Son of God submitted to—the lowest humiliation—'obedient unto death' (Phil. ii. 8). But why should He die? Why does any one die? how came death into the world? Rom. v. 12. But He had no sin. No, but—same thing again—He was reckoned as a sinner for our sakes—so must die. Died as a sacrifice. When a Jew sinned, used to offer a sacrifice—kill bull or goat before God as an atonement—at-one-ment—to make himself at one with God, reconciled to Him. But blood of bulls and goats could not really take away sin: Jesus' blood could—

'A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.'

Jesus a perfect Man—yes, and God too—so fit to be 'one sacrifice for sins for ever.' See John i. 29; Heb. ix. 13, 14, 26, 28, x. 4, 12. *This why the Son of God died.*

III. WHAT DID THAT RENT VAIL MEAN?

Every day people worshipping in the Temple courts, priests officiating in the 'holy place,' but that veil always before them, cutting them off from 'Holy of Holies'—beyond it none could go, except high priest once a-year (Heb. ix. 3–8). Why the veil there at all? As a token that men could not come near God. Why not? See Isa. lix. 2 again. But if sin got rid of, then the way open—all may come back to their Father. How sin got rid of? By Jesus' death; so, at that very moment, to show the way open, *God tore that veil.* See John xiv. 6; Eph. ii. 13, 18; Heb. x. 19–22; 1 Pet. iii. 18. We can now go to God for forgiveness, for grace, for every blessing—yes, and can go to Him in heaven too—and all 'through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

'Tis finished all; the veil is rent;
The welcome sure, the access free;
Now, then, we leave our banishment,
O Father, to return to Thee!

That suffering, that death, that atonement for us all, 1 John ii. 2. Think of any one not saved after this! Yet how many have had the wondrous message again and again, and care nothing about it—turn from it—see the way open, and God standing with outstretched arms to receive them, yet will not come! It is a 'great salvation' (Heb. ii. 3); indeed; but 'how escape if neglect it?'

NOTES.

1. The darkness at the crucifixion was not owing to an eclipse of the sun, as it occurred at the full moon (Passover-time), when an eclipse is impossible. The longest natural obscuration of the sun, too, is but for a few minutes, while this darkness lasted three hours. 'Over all the earth,' in Luke, is the same in the Greek as 'over all the land' in Matt. and Mark. Whether the darkness was total, as at night, or only a thick gloom, it is impossible to say.

2. The period of outward darkness no doubt coincided with that of Christ's mental agony and sense of desertion. The anguish of Gethsemane returned upon Him with augmented power, and lasted during that time, until it culminated in the profoundly mysterious cry in which, for the only recorded time, Jesus speaks to the Father as 'My God,' and not as 'Father.' That this cry was not extorted from Him by bodily exhaustion is clear from the word used, which is strictly 'shouted with a loud voice' (the same word as is used of the multitude 'crying out' before Pilate). Even the excruciating pain of the cross was as nothing in comparison with Christ's mental suffering as the sin-bearer. See the extract from Abp. Thomson's Essay on 'The Death of Christ,' in *Aids to Faith*, given in Lesson XCI., Note 2.

'Eli' is the Chaldee form of the Hebrew name of God; 'Eloï' the Syro-Chaldaic. 'Sabæthani' should be pronounced with the accent on the second syllable: *sabächthani*, not *sabachtháni*. It was impossible for the Jews to mistake Christ's meaning; the words, 'He calleth for Elias,' were a wilful twisting of His expression.

It is difficult to suppose this blasphemous ribaldry to have occurred during those silent

hours of gloom. The darkness was probably dispelled immediately on the Saviour's cry.

3. The 22nd Psalm may be regarded as an inspired prophetic picture of our Lord's sufferings on the cross, and (from ver. 22 to the end) of His anticipations of victory and glory. Stier well says, 'Let this be read; let it be read *entire*, but simply, as by a Christian who, with a mind under the influence of Calvary, would read himself into the soul of Jesus: this will do more than all the commentaries of the learned. The Psalm was no doubt primarily the expression of David's feelings in some season of extreme anguish; but the inspiring Spirit who guided his words caused him to say many things which went far beyond his own experiences, and were only true in the fullest sense of Jesus on the cross. The applicability of every verse to our Lord is powerfully shown in Stevenson's Exposition of the Psalm (entitled *Christ on the Cross*), a book which cannot but leave a deep impression on every thoughtful reader. The chapter on 'I am a worm, and no man,' is one not soon to be forgotten.

4. It is remarkable that the usual word 'died' is not used of Christ in either of the four Gospel narratives. In Matthew it is literally 'yielded up His spirit'; in Mark and Luke, 'breathed His last'; in John, 'delivered up His spirit'; as if to witness, even in the very language employed, to the voluntary character of His death. The word 'ghost' in our version should be carefully explained to children as being the same as 'spirit.' His final committal of His spirit to the Father is, like His cry of agony, in Old Testament words; see Ps. xxxi. 5.

6. It is impossible to suggest any further explanation of what St. Matthew simply narrates as a fact, the resurrection of certain 'bodies of the saints which slept.' It should be observed that though the graves were thrown open by the earthquake which accompanied our Lord's death, the dead saints did not rise till after His resurrection. Perhaps they appeared during the forty days much in the same way that Christ did, *i. e.*, mysteriously and occasionally, and ascended with Him to heaven.

6. Dr. Strond, an eminent and devout Edinburgh physician, has attempted to explain scientifically 'the physical cause of the death of Christ.' This sacred topic is handled in his book with reverence and delicacy, and as his theory has been widely accepted by Christian students, and throws much light on Scripture, a brief summary of the argument based upon his statements may be useful:—

(a) Crucifixion was generally a very lingering death, as no vital part was directly touched; and the victim frequently lived three or four days. Comp. Mark xv. 44—'Pilate marvelled if He were already dead.' The breaking of the legs of those crucified was in fact a merciful hastening of death. How was it, then, that Jesus died so soon?

(b) Usually the victim at length died of sheer exhaustion. But not so Jesus; for at the very moment of death He 'cried with a loud voice.'

(c) St. John records the remarkable fact of blood and water flowing from the Saviour's side when pierced after His death. This, if not

supernatural (which there is no reason to suppose), could only occur, in the manner in which it is described, *if the heart had been ruptured*, and the blood, before death, had in consequence flowed out into the cavity which surrounds the heart. (The medical grounds for this statement cannot be intelligibly given here.)

(d) Christ, then, literally died of a *broken heart*, caused by His overwhelming mental agony. Ps. lxxix. 20 was literally true of Him—'Reproach hath broken my heart'; and Ps. xxii. 14—'My heart is like wax; it is melted.'

(e) Crucifixion was obviously not a death attended with much blood-shedding. Yet Christ's blood-shedding is constantly spoken of in Scripture as the means of our redemption. All the passages have a far greater force if the internal rush of blood above referred to took place. And what a new power does the thought give to the familiar lines,

'Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.'

(f) The broken heart being the result of mental distress, this theory draws our thoughts away from the mere bodily tortures which Christ endured to the mysterious woe that pressed upon Him on account of imputed sin. 'Thou shalt make His *soul* an offering for sin'; 'He poured out His *soul* unto death' (Isa. liii. 10, 12).

A fuller outline of Dr. Strond's theory is given in Dr. Hanna's *Last Day of Our Lord's Passion*.

Lesson XCVII.—The Eve of the Sabbath.

'Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.'

Read—Luke xxiii. 47—56; (*comp.* Matt. xxvii. 54—66; Mark xv. 39—47; John xix. 31—42); *Learn*—Rom. vi. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 24. (*Hymns*, 55, 59, 71, 126, 129, 206, 210—214, 327, 331, 384.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This Lesson affords an incidental opportunity of explaining a sentence in the Creed which is very generally misunderstood, *viz.*, 'He descended into hell.' The word 'hell' is there an unfortunate one, as the Greek word is *Hades*, which means, not the place of final punishment, but the place or state of disembodied spirits—the happy portion of which is the 'Paradise' of the New Testament. See Lesson LXIV., Note 3 (c). The Creed simply states that as our Lord's human body was 'buried' like other bodies, so His human soul, like other souls, passed into the rest of the blessed dead. He did not, in His human nature, go up to the right hand of God until the Ascension (see John xx. 17).

The chief importance of this Lesson lies in its usefulness as an introduction to the next two. The history and teachings of the Resurrection will be most impressive to those who have entered into the circumstances and meaning of the Burial. The point brought forward at the end of the Sketch—the truth taught in the words, 'Buried with Him in baptism'—is, however, an important one in itself.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Once more we must go back to Calvary—think of what happened on that sad Good Friday evening.

I. SEE THE EFFECT OF THE DEATH OF JESUS.

1. *On the Roman Centurion.* He has been at many crucifixions, seen the victims'

tortures, heard their cries (often bitter and blasphemous), watched strength and voice failing as they lingered on. But never anything like this! What has so astonished him here? A man handed to him to be executed instead of Barabbas—what a vile criminal he must be!—yet no word of im-

patience, no cry of pain (what words instead?)—gentle and patient all those dreadful hours—then that awful darkness—then the earthquake—and, more amazing than all, the victim had strength to utter that loud cry even at moment of death. [*See last Lesson, Note 6.*] Even the stern soldier terrified (Matt.)—‘What can it all mean? Surely we have killed an innocent man (Luke)—he must have been really what they called him in mockery, the Son of God!’ (Mark). We know He was indeed; and what triumphs did He win—even on the cross—two convinced even then of His greatness—and those two a thief and a Roman soldier!

2. *On the bystanders.* What kind of people would go and see an execution? [*Illust.—as in England, till recently.*] People with tender hearts? What had these bystanders been doing? (Matt., 39). Yet now every jeer stopped, every tongue still—see them slowly coming back to the city—what doing? (Luke, 48; comp. xviii. 13). A dreadful thought in their minds—‘What have we done?’

3. *On the chief priests.* Are they softened? ought not *they*, the guiltiest of all, to have uneasy consciences? See what they are thinking about (John 31)—must mind the law (Deut. xxi. 23) is not broken; but which of the *ten great laws* have they been breaking? They never think of *that*. But who does? see Ps. x. 14; Isa. i. 14. 15. Think of them the next day—the Sabbath—fancy their triumph—their enemy got rid of at last! And yet—an uneasy thought—suppose they have not heard the last of Him—He did raise Lazarus, *could* He perhaps raise Himself?—they have heard something of ‘the third day’—even if no miracle, might not His followers steal His body, and so give further trouble? Ah, their crime has brought them no peace (sin never does); afraid of the dead Jesus! What do they do? Matt., 62—66. [*See Notes 1, 6.*]

4. *On Joseph and Nicodemus.* [*See Note 3.*] When Elijah gave up all for lost, thinking the whole nation had deserted God, what did God tell him? 1 Kings xix. 18. So, might think all against Jesus now, except a few trembling Galileans, and they had run away. But see Matt., 57—60; Mark. 42—46; Luke, 50—53; John, 38—42. Who are these two men? Both rich; both members of the Great Council; but what else? disciples? Have never joined the little company—why? afraid (John, 38; comp. xii. 42); had nothing to do with condemning Jesus, but could not come out and declare that they, rich and honoured, believed in the despised Nazarene. Yet now that He has died like a malefactor, rejected with scorn by all the people, forsaken by His own followers, their love can keep in no longer; bold Peter has denied Him before servants; timid Joseph goes ‘boldly’ to the governor. One brings fine linen, the

other costly spices—see them tenderly lifting the sacred Body down, wrapping it round, bearing it to Joseph’s newly-cut tomb, quickly and quietly laying it there, rolling the heavy stone door into its place [*see Note 4*]—home again, how thankful to have done something for Him they secretly loved!

5. *On the disciples.* All dispersed—none there except John (35) and the faithful Galilean women [*see Note 5*]. They could not leave the cross even when all gone—stayed watching—saw the soldiers come back—what for? (John, 31, 34)—the two mangled bodies taken away—but *His* left—pierced and torn, but no bone broken (why not?)—then the two strangers coming to take it—the burial in that handsome tomb—the great stone. Dark now, getting late, all silent and still. What do the women do? Luke, 55, 56. What does this preparing of more spices show? That they thought of Jesus as ‘dead and gone’—all over now—He has been just a kind man to whom God gave great power—nothing more. But what a disappointment! all their hopes of His being the Messiah come to nought; see Luke xxiv. 17—21. Very likely we might see most of the disciples among crowds next day in Temple—going there from habit—but what heavy hearts! what crushed hopes! what utter perplexity! what bitter tears! (see Mark xvi. 10). Any thinking of stealing the Master’s body? why, they have quite forgotten His own plain predictions. How true the first part of our second text for rep.—‘Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice!’ Next Sunday, shall see the second part true also.

II. THINK OF JESUS IN THE TOMB.

How the angels must have wondered! They had marvelled when the Son of God came down and took a human body and human soul—marvelled when they saw that body could be weak and weary, and that soul sad and downcast, like other men’s—but now, to see that body and soul separated by death, how wonderful! His soul—where? In happy place where souls go when leave bodies, called ‘Paradise’ (Luke xxiii. 43). His body—where? Lying alone in the cold, dark tomb. What condescension!—‘Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hades.’ [*Explain; see Preface.*]

But, while angels wondering, priests rejoicing, disciples weeping—*two thoughts for us*—

1. *Our bodies will also be buried one day.* Blue eyes, round cheeks, soft hair, all to fall to pieces—only dry bones left! When? Just what we don’t know. [*Illust.—Boy, thinking whether he might die, went to cemetery, and measured the graves; found many shorter than himself.*] Is this a thought that brings terror? Then think of Jesus in the grave too. Because He died, death cannot hurt those who love

Him. How is that? see 1 Cor. xv. 55—57—'the sting of death is *sin*'—Jesus died to take away sin, and now, though the body may decay, the soul alive and happy, and the body shall one day be alive again and happy too, see Phil. iii. 21.

2. *Our souls must be 'buried' too.* How can that be? the soul does not go into the tomb. But see Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12—'buried with Him in baptism.' What meant? Think—when Jesus rose again, was His body one that could suffer pain, &c.? No—it rose perfect and glorious—all infirmities left behind in grave. Now think of Paul preaching at Ephesus: heathen man believes, throws away idols, will be a Christian—goes down into river to be baptized—comes up again a new man, resolved to obey God and serve Christ—feels as if had cast off his sins and left them in

the water, as Christ left infirmities in tomb—just like being buried, and rising again quite changed.

You too have been baptized? Did you leave your sinful hearts behind? are your bad ways buried? If not, bury them *now*. But you must kill them first, as St. Paul told those very Colossians because they did *not* leave all their sins in the water, Col. iii. 5—'mortifying' (*put to death*) what is bad; see also ver. 8; Rom. vi. 6; Gal. ii. 20, v. 24; Eph. iv. 22. Let not God or man see your sin any more—out of sight as if *buried*. Is this hard and painful? ah, *very* hard and painful; but can do it 'through the Spirit' (Rom. viii. 13). 'O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in these children may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in them. Amen.' (*Bapt. Service.*)

NOTES.

1. Among the Romans, the bodies of the crucified were left on the crosses till they wasted away or were devoured by birds of prey; but in Judæa they allowed the Mosaic regulation (Deut. xxi. 22, 23) to be observed, and therefore despatched the victims, by breaking their legs or otherwise, before sunset, and buried them on the spot. In cases of execution by other methods (as beheading, &c.), the friends of the deceased were often permitted to take the body; but this very rarely occurred in the case of one condemned to so ignominious a death as crucifixion.

2. On the speedy death of Jesus, which prevented the soldiers offering His sacred body the further indignity of having the legs broken, see last Lesson, Note 6.

On the 'blood and water' from the Saviour's side, see the same note. The soldier doubtless made the thrust with his spear to ascertain positively that life was extinct. St. John appears to record the circumstance with a similar design, viz., to show that Jesus did actually die; as, before this Gospel was written, a heretical sect the Ebionites, had sprung up, who denied the reality of His death. Evidently the Evangelist mentions them also to show the fulfilment of prophecy.

'A bone of Him shall not be broken' refers to the Divine command respecting the Paschal lamb, Exod. xii. 46. It is noteworthy that in Zech. xii. 10, which St. John also quotes, the word 'pierce' means 'thrust through with a spear,' and is not the same word as is used in Ps. xxii. 16, where it means 'bored.'

3. Joseph of Arimathea is only mentioned in this place; Nicodemus in John iii. and vii. That they were members of the Sanhedrim is implied in the words 'ruler' (John iii. 1) and 'counsellor' (Mark xv. 43; Luke xxiii. 50). Nicodemus must have been rich as well as Joseph, as the spices brought by him (myrrh and aloes—probably the wood dried and pulverised) were a costly gift—about 100 lbs. troy weight.

The spices were laid on the linen to form a kind of bed, upon which the body was then laid; comp. 2 Chron. xvi. 14. Apparently the women did not wish to be deprived of the privilege of doing honour to their dead Master; and meant, with the further spices they prepared, to do more

thoroughly afterwards what the two rulers had been only able to do hastily.

4. On the shape, &c., of the tomb, see Lesson LXXI., Note 6. The stone was probably a huge circular block like a mill-stone, which was rolled (like a wheel) and fitted into a groove in the rock. Tristram (*Land of Israel*, p. 406) describes such a stone at the 'Tombs of the Kings,' at Jerusalem.

The tomb given one not yet used is an important circumstance, as proving that the body that came out was the same one that was put in.

5. The women mentioned as present at the crucifixion and burial are (1) Mary Magdalene (Matt., Mark, John). (2) Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses (Matt., Mark), who is probably the same as Mary the wife of Cleophas (John), 'Cleophas' being the same name under another form as Alphaeus, which is the name of the father of James the less (Matt. x. 3). This Mary seems also to have been the sister of our Lord's mother (John), and James and Joses therefore two of His cousins or 'brethren' (comp. Matt. xiii. 55). (3) Salome (Mark), the wife of Zebedee, and mother of John the Evangelist and his brother James (Matt.). (4) Many women (Matt.) of Galilee (Luke). The mother of Jesus was present at first (John), but not being afterwards mentioned, was probably taken home by John when Jesus committed her to his care. The beloved disciple returned, however, to Calvary and witnessed our Lord's death.

6. The Pharisees seem not to have gone to Pilate about setting a guard at the tomb till the Saturday. Certainly the guard were not posted till Saturday night, or the women would have known of their being there, which they clearly did not (Mark xvi. 3). Pilate's words should probably be translated, 'Take a guard,' i.e., 'you may have some of my soldiers.' They were Roman soldiers, and not the Jewish 'officers of the Temple.'

7. 'After three days,' rather, 'on the third day.' The Jewish mode of reckoning is often puzzling; they calculated any part of a day as a day. Our Lord was actually in the grave only one day and two nights.

Lesson XCVIII.—The Morning of the Third Day.

'Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.'

Read—Matt. xxviii. 1—10; John xx. 1—18; (*comp.* Mark xvi. 1—11; Luke xxiv. 1—12)

Learn—Matt. xxviii. 5—9; John xvi. 20. (*Hymns*, 64—71, 81, 319.)

TO THE TEACHER.

This and the following Lesson stand in much the same relation one to the other as do the two Lessons on the Crucifixion. In each case, the design is that the details of the narrative should be almost exclusively dwelt upon in one Lesson, and that the way should thus be prepared for giving full effect, in a second, to the great truths taught by the facts, and to their application to ourselves.

Although the paragraphs in the Sketch are numbered for facility of use and reference, there are no actual divisions, and the teacher has only to give a straightforward narrative as graphically as he can. The order of St. Matthew is however slightly departed from, in order to finish off with the soldiers and the priests before turning to the movements of the followers of Jesus.

The words 'fear and great joy' are used as a kind of thread on which to hang the various incidents and thus connect them together, and they serve also to introduce a suitable application.

Some teachers may find that the appearance of the angels at the sepulchre will give them a good opportunity of alluding to the popular superstitions about churchyards and ghosts, with a view to showing, not that there is no such a thing as supernatural agency, but how different it is from what is commonly imagined; that whatever there *is* can be no cause for alarm to God's children; that it is only sin which makes people afraid, and that sin ought really to make them much more afraid, only in a different way.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Last Sunday we saw how true the first part of John xvi. 20 proved to be. To-day see the second part true also—'sorrow turned into joy.' 'Crucified, dead, and buried'—*that* caused the sorrow; 'the third day He rose again from the dead'—*that* caused the joy. But not all joy—shall see another feeling to-day—see 1st text for rep., '*fear and great joy.*'

Let us stand by Joseph's tomb on the morning of that 'third day,' and see what happened.

I.

(1) All night long the soldiers pacing up and down—watchful (death to a Roman soldier who slept at his post)—and well-armed. And besides, the great stone door fast in its place, and the seal untouched. Sepulchre 'made sure' (Matt. xxvii. 66)—all safe!—chief priests can sleep comfortably—impossible for 'that deceiver' to trouble them any more. *Not possible?*—something else *is* 'not possible' (Acts ii. 24)—to keep Jesus in the grave. Could you stop the sun from rising? or the tide? [*illust.—Canute*]

'Vain the stone, the watch, the seal!'

Daybreak now—first streaks of light over Olivet—yet still dark under the trees of Joseph's 'garden.' Suddenly—ground trembling, rocks shaking, shining figure rolling the great stone away! Roman soldiers strong and brave, but what doing now? Matt., 4. [*See Note 3.*]

Here we see 'fear and great joy.' Where is the joy? [*Refer to second verse of hymn, 'Songs of praise the angels sang.'*] Angels have come down on many joyous errands, but what so joyous as this? They watched their Lord in the manger, fed Him in the wilderness, strengthened Him in His agony—now His last humiliation over—now glory and triumph—

'Worthy the Lamb that died, *they* cry,
To be exalted thus!'

(2) Now see another case of 'fear and joy'—but in this case the joy first. We have seen the priests' joy—now imagine their fear—why? see Matt., 11—15. What would expect of them? Will they see their dreadful sin, turn to God, and accept His Son? No cause for doubt now—He said He would rise, and He has risen—the earthquake and the angel, too, are not these 'signs from heaven' such as they used to ask for? Ah, their joy was because they hated Him, and now they hate Him still in their fear—*will not* 'be persuaded, though One *has* risen from the dead' (Luke xvi. 31). Whom do they fear? not God, but men—'if the people get to know this, what shall we do?' See them bribing the soldiers to lie [*see Note 5*]; and the soldiers bad men too, willing to say what was false (and what was disgraceful to them, too), if only get money by it.

We have done with Christ's enemies at last—see them no more in these Lessons.

Now see sorrow and fear turned into joy.

II.

(1) Early that morning, before sunrise, a party of women coming out of the city. Who? what carrying? A sad party—going to see the Face they loved for the last time—then home to weep. Suddenly, a halt—they forgot—no use coming—why not? Mark, 3. But look—the tomb over there—even in the dark can see that great stone not in its place [see Note 4]—oh! the priests must have taken Him away. One (John, 2) cannot wait—back to tell Peter and John; the others go on—yces, and go in (how brave of them!)—the supposed robbers might be there—any how, going into an open tomb in the dark! Empty! no bodies there before Jesus put in; none now.

Then another startling sight—two white forms close to them. Down on their faces in terror (Luke)—but then a gentle voice—‘Fear not ye (Matt.)—His enemies well may, but not ye His friends [see Note 4]. But why (Luke) seek ye Him here? it is the third day now—have ye forgotten?’ Another joy for the angels, to be permitted to give such tidings to Christ’s people; comp. Heb. i. 14.

Back quickly to the city. Fear or joy now? both (Matt.)—overjoyed indeed, yet trembling with wonder (Mark)—besides, is it not ‘too good to be true’?

(2) Only just gone—then two men running in haste (John xx.)—heard of the stone being moved, from Mary—come to find out what happened. To them the angels invisible, but one strange thing they notice (ver. 7)—would robbers have carefully arranged the grave-clothes? no robbers been here—He must have risen! [See Note 6.]

(3) Mary came back to the tomb with them, but she can’t leave it again. See her standing there, all alone, weeping. Suddenly, she too sees the angels—but is she frightened? John, 13—so sorrowful, can think of nothing but the great loss. Then Another standing by: her eyes too full of tears to know Him; but her ears—yes, it is His Voice uttering her name—she is the first to meet the risen Saviour. Is not this indeed sorrow turned into joy? how different the sorrowful ‘Sir’ from the joyful ‘Rabboni’ (dear Master)! But is He come back to be with them again as before? no,

she must not now treat Him as a dear friend, John xx. 17—He is not going to stay—they must not think His ‘going to the Father’ (John xiv. 12, 28. xvi. 5, 10, 16, 28) was while His soul and body were separated—that He has been and come back—no, ‘not yet ascended’—His body going also to heaven, glorified but still the same—‘I ascend’ [see Note 7]. Yet how full of love His message to the disciples!—despite all their cowardice and want of faith, ‘not ashamed to call them brethren’ (Heb. ii. 11).

(4) This Jesus’ first appearance. Now see the second, Matt., 9, 10—to those other women. ‘Great joy’ they had already, but what must it have been when they saw His face, heard His voice, embraced His feet! Before, they had fear with it; but now He says, ‘Be not afraid.’

(5) Another appearance yet, the third. To whom, do you think? Which apostle least deserved to see Him? To that very one, the coward who denied Him with oaths, He has sent a special message (Mark, 7); for that one now a special meeting (Luke, 24; 1 Cor. xv. 5). Which must Peter have had, fear or joy? Surely fear first, and shame too—how could he face his Master? We know not what was said, but will not Matt. ix. 2 give us an idea of it? and then, what ‘great joy’!—the joy David prayed for after his sin and repentance (Ps. li. 12), the joy he did get (Ps. xxxii. 5, 1, 11).

If you met the Lord Jesus, would it be with fear, or with great joy? You will meet Him one day: will you feel as in Rev. vi. 16, 17, or as in Isa. xxv. 9? ‘Prepare, my soul, to meet Him!’

If you would rejoice when He comes from heaven, must be like those who could rejoice when He came from the grave. How be like them?

(a) Repent of sin, like Peter (Matt. xxvii. 75). (b) Believe in Christ, like John (John, 8). (c) Love Him, like Mary Magdalene (John, 13, 16). (d) Worship Him, like the other women (Matt., 9). (e) Tell of Him, like the angels (Matt., 5–7; Mark, 6, 7; Luke, 5–7). Then can sing now,

‘Jesus Christ is risen to-day,
Hallelujah!’

—and shall sing one day,

‘Hallelujah!

Jesus comes, and comes to reign.’

NOTES.

1. It is very difficult to harmonise the four narratives of the events which marked that memorable ‘morning of the third day.’ We need not doubt that they could be harmonised if we had all the particulars, but the accounts are extremely brief and fragmentary. Matthew and Mark record the visit to the sepulchre of Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Josès (comp. last Lesson, Note 5); and Mark adds that Salome was with them. Luke mentions the two Marys and Joanna, ‘and other with

them.’ John only narrates what occurred to Mary Magdalene.

It would be impossible here to compare the very numerous attempts which have been made to arrange the incidents, but the following seems the most natural order:—

It is probable that all these women arrived in sight of the sepulchre together, whether they came in company or met there by appointment; that when they saw, some little way off, that the stone was rolled away, Mary Magdalene left the

rest and hastened back to tell Peter and John ; that the others went to the tomb, saw the angels, and returned to tell some of the other Apostles (Salome, perhaps, to tell her sons James and John ; Mary, the mother of James the less, to tell *her* son),—who may have been lodging in another part of the city ; that soon after their departure from the tomb Peter and John came running to it, followed by Mary Magdalene, who, lingering there still after the two Apostles left, was privileged to be the first (see Mark xvi. 9) to see Jesus ; and that Jesus, shortly after this, appeared also to the other women, who, if (as is quite possible) they had a longer distance to go than Mary Magdalene had had, might still be on their road to the houses they sought.

Certainly, if we had only Matthew's narrative, we should conclude that Mary Magdalene met the Lord along with the others ; and some have thought that St. John, in narrating His appearance to her, is only giving a different account of the meeting mentioned by Matthew. But this is extremely improbable ; and we must let John correct, *not Matthew* himself, but the false impression we get from Matthew's fragmentary history. Luke xxiv. 10 may well be a general statement, and does not necessarily imply that the women there named together informed the Apostles all at one place and at one moment. On the other hand, John's narrative does not exclude the possibility of Mary Magdalene having been with the others *at first* ; rather the contrary, for she says, 'We know not where they have laid Him.'

The difference between Luke's report of what the angels said to the women, and that of Matthew and Mark, has led some to suppose that two different visits are implied ; and this *may* have been the case, though it seems more probable that all were together—except Mary Magdalene, whose interview with the angels, recorded only by John, is evidently quite distinct.

The variation with regard to the number of the angels cannot be urged as a real difficulty, considering our utter ignorance of the conditions and circumstances under which angels are visible or invisible to different persons. It is clear that Peter and John did not see them at all. Some have thought that it depended on the spiritual sensitiveness of the individual ; but this would certainly not account for their being seen by the soldiers.

2. It is evident that our Lord's body, though essentially the same after His resurrection, was much altered in its relation to material things. All His appearances are mysterious. He 'appears,' 'shews Himself,' 'is seen,' 'stands in the midst,' 'vanishes' ; but we do not read of His 'coming,' except when He 'came' suddenly into the supper-room, doors and bolts notwithstanding ; or, of His 'going,' except when He 'went with' the two disciples to Emmaus. Alford says, 'It seems to have been the normal condition of His fleshly body to be visible to mortal eyes ; of His risen body, not to be ; but both these He could suspend when He pleased, without affecting the substance or truth of either.' As regards food, Augustine observes that He had the *power*, but not the *need*, of eating. His *appearance* seems also to have changed, see Luke xxiv. 16, 37 ; John xxi. 14 ; and even to have varied, see Mark xvi. 12. Ellicott thinks that the glorification which was to be perfected at the Ascension had already

begun. These circumstances, together with the rarity of His visits, must have tended greatly to heighten the impression of His appearances upon the disciples' minds. They must have felt that He was no longer the companion of their daily life, but One infinitely removed from their level ; and this would prepare them for the deeper revelations of the Spirit concerning His true Deity.

3. The familiar representations, in pictures, of Christ's resurrection give very erroneous ideas of what must have taken place. The grave was not dug perpendicularly in the ground, but cut horizontally out of the side of the rock ; see Lesson LXXI., Note 6, and last Lesson, Note 4. It was not the rising of Jesus from the tomb, but the appearance of the angel, which terrified the soldiers. The actual resurrection is not related at all ; simply stated as a fact by the angels, confirmed by the empty sepulchre, proved by His subsequent appearances. There is no distinct ground for supposing that He rose and came forth when the stone was rolled away. He may have gone before that. The stone could be no obstacle to His risen body ; and the mission of the angels, so far as appears, was not to release Him, but to announce the event to His followers, and to open for them the way into the sepulchre, by intimidating the guard and removing the stone.

4. In Matt. 5.—'Fear not ye'—the 'ye' is emphatic ; and as it does not appear that the soldiers had yet mustered up courage to get away, this emphasis seems to imply a contrast between the women and them : 'Ye, His friends, have no cause for fear.'

Mark, 4, seems to imply that they could see at a distance that the stone had been moved, because of its large size. They did not then see the angels, who are represented by Mark, Luke, and John (and Matthew is not opposed) as only appearing *inside* the sepulchre.

There is no contradiction between Matt., 8, and Mark, 8. The latter verse means that they said nothing to any one on their way to the disciples.

5. The story put by the priests into the mouth of the soldiers is a strange instance of the absurdity into which reckless wickedness may be led. 1st, How impossible that the timid disciples should attempt to break into a sepulchre so well secured ! 2nd, How impossible that, if they did, they should succeed ! For, 3rd, how unlikely that any of the soldiers should be asleep ! 4th, How much more unlikely that *all* should be ! And, 5th, how was it, even then, that none were awakened by the heavy motion of the stone ? And, 6th, if not, how could they know who did it ? 7th, If the Apostles did do this wondrous deed, why were they not prosecuted for it ?

6. There has been some question as to *what* it was that John 'believed' when he saw the linen clothes, &c. Did he believe that Jesus had risen ? or only see that Mary's words about the empty tomb were verified ? The former is on many accounts the most probable view. The next verse simply remarks the fact that he did not believe, despite the Scriptures, *until he saw*.

7. Christ's words to Mary Magdalene, 'Touch Me not,' &c., have been variously interpreted. It could not be that she was not to touch Him

only because of the difference in Himself, for He allowed the other women to touch Him (Matt., 9), and invited the Apostles (Luke, 39) and Thomas (John, 27) to do so. Probably He saw that Mary Magdalene was thinking of Him, not as One now glorified, and therefore to receive adoring worship, but as the Master of former days, who had gone away as He said, but had now come back to be with them again. He said, therefore, 'Touch Me not; treat Me not now as an earthly friend; I am not come back to you yet: I have not indeed

yet gone to the Father, as I said I should.' It may be further implied that when He does come back, when His people are like Him in the resurrection life, when they are 'for ever with the Lord,' there shall be a renewal of that intimate intercourse which He held with His disciples on earth. Some explain the saying thus: 'Touch Me not now with thy bodily hands, but when I have ascended to My Father, touch Me spiritually by faith.'

Lesson XCIX. — Christ Risen.

'I am He that liveth and was dead.'

Read—Passages referred to below; Learn—Rom. vi. 9—11; 1 Pet. i. 3. (*Hymns*, 64—71, 206, 210, 211, 212.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The Death and the Resurrection of Christ meet with exactly opposite treatment in popular religious teaching. When the former is the subject—as happily it very often is—the narrative of the Crucifixion receives little if any attention, and the efficacy of the Atonement is dwelt upon, illustrated, and enforced, with great (and it cannot be with too great) earnestness. When the latter is the subject, which, it is to be feared, is rarely the case except at Easter, the narrative is dwelt upon almost to the exclusion of the great truths taught by the fact of Christ rising from the dead. It is natural that, with our unquestioning reception of the Gospel History, the importance of so decisive a proof of Christianity should not present itself to our minds as it did to those of the early Christians; but, making every allowance for this, it is still true that the place of the Resurrection in the scheme of redemption, and its impressive practical teachings, are not sufficiently appreciated.

Let the teacher, therefore, strive to realise for himself the force of the four points urged in the four divisions of the Sketch. It is not, however, likely that he will be able to take all of them in the class; and it may be well not to attempt the 1st and 3rd heads except with intelligent scholars. How effectively the 2nd may be taught even to infants has been shewn in the Easter Lesson by Mr. G. Warrington in the *Church Sunday School Magazine* for April, 1870—from which the illustrations in the Sketch are borrowed. The 4th is comparatively easy.

The illustration on which the 3rd head is based is from Dr. Chalmers' Lectures on Romans vi., in which the whole subject is most powerfully treated. The *judicial* aspect only of the verses referred to is presented below; but their more directly practical teachings concerning the mortifying of the old nature have been already briefly pointed out in Lesson XCVII.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Which is the most joyful Sunday of the Christian year? There is one famous hymn with Hallelujah at end of every line—when do we sing it? Why Easter day so joyful? what then commemorated? But why should we be so glad that Christ rose? Of course the disciples glad to see their Master again, but what has His Resurrection to do with us?

To-day see why Christ's Resurrection important, and why we rejoice at it.

I. BECAUSE JESUS ROSE, WE ARE SURE HE WAS THE SON OF GOD.

So St. Paul says, Rom. i. 4. But why sure?

Think. Here was a poor carpenter from a little country village—called God 'My

Father,' 'made Himself equal with God' (John v. 18)—said He had come from heaven (John iii. 13, viii. 23) to be the long-promised King and Saviour—that nobody could be saved except by believing in and obeying Him (John iii. 16, v. 24). Were not these tremendous things to say? How could the people know if they were true? By His miracles? But some wanted a greater sign than any of these, and He promised them *one* very great sign; see Matt. xii. 38—40. What meant? Jonah—swallowed by fish—would be thought dead—yet on third day there he was, alive! So Jesus would die and be buried—be put 'in the heart of the earth'—yet on third day come forth, 'alive for evermore.'

Now suppose Jesus had *not* risen—what

proved? His own promised sign come to nothing—His words not to be trusted—the whole thing a delusion! But He *did* rise—His words proved true—all His words, even the most tremendous—for would God let a man rise again who *falsely* 'made Himself equal with God'?

So when the Apostles went forth to preach, what had they to tell? Not merely of a good, kind, wise man, who had been unjustly killed, but of One who had proved Himself to be Son of God, King and Saviour, by coming forth alive from the grave. What then the great thing they would speak of? See how they did everywhere speak of the Resurrection, Acts i. 22, ii. 24, 36, 37, iii. 15, iv. 2, 10, 33, v. 31, x. 40, xiii. 30, xvii. 3, 18, 32, xxiii. 6, xxv. 19, xxvi. 8, 23; comp. 1 Cor. xv. 1—8, 14.

II. BECAUSE JESUS ROSE, WE ARE SURE THERE IS SALVATION FOR US.

What is it we want, in order to be saved—to be happy here and hereafter? We want *our sin* taken away. But it was by dying on the cross that Christ took away sin—what then has His rising to do with it? It shows us that He has been punished *enough*, that He has borne *all* the penalty, that God is satisfied. How shows this? Does not His coming out of the grave show He need be kept there no longer? free to go because punishment complete. [*Illust.*—*Man in prison—when let out? when time of punishment fixed by judge is over, then free.*]

If Jesus had not risen, how be sure God's justice satisfied? see 1 Cor. xv. 17—'If Christ not raised, your faith vain—yet in your sins.' But now we *know* all is accomplished—our sin punished in Christ—'no condemnation' for us (Rom. viii. 1), but, what? what done with man in whom the judge finds no guilt? *acquitted* or *'justified.'* So He 'rose again for our justification' (Rom. iv. 25); and we can have 'a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus' (2nd text for rep.); may we not well, then, sing 'Hallelujah'?

But have *all* of us this hope? can we *all* thus sing? There is 'justification' for every one, yet every one is not justified—why not? It is for those who *believe* (see Acts xiii. 38—41; Rom. iii. 21—25)—'when Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to *all* believers.' But some will not believe. [*Illust.*—*Man in prison—message that he is acquitted, may go—does not believe it—will not go—whose fault?*]

III. BECAUSE JESUS ROSE, WE MUST LIVE AS THOSE WHO ARE 'ALIVE UNTO GOD.'

[*Illust.*—*Criminal is condemned to death—is executed—does die. Suppose him by a miracle restored to life, would he be punished again? No, a free man now. How feel? Glad of his new term of life, begin afresh, take care not to break law again.*]

A Christian just like that. See Rom. vi. 1—13. Ver. 10—Jesus 'died unto sin once'—died for our sin once for all. Ver. 11—'Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin'—*reckon* that you *have* died, *have* been punished for your sin—why? because when Christ died, just as if we died—'crucified with Christ' (Gal. ii. 20). But He rose again to a new life, and 'because He lives,' His people 'live also' (John xiv. 19); they have a *new term of life*—ver. 11 again, 'alive unto God through Jesus Christ.' Well, then, how live now? In sin? See ver. 2—'How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?'—how go and break the law again after such an escape? how grieve and vex Him who went to death as our Representative, who died that we might live for ever? Well may St. Paul exclaim (ver. 13), 'Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead!' (Comp. ver. 4, 6, 12; Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 1—3.)

Arise, then (Eph. v. 14), and walk 'so as to please God' (1 Thess. iv. 1). Is it very hard? yes, impossible in our own strength [*see Lesson XXXVIII.*]—'no power in ourselves to help ourselves.' How then? [*Illust.*—*How does a fountain rise? The water comes first from above.*] Pray, 'O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts.'

IV. BECAUSE JESUS ROSE, OUR BODIES WILL RISE TOO.

When the Son of God became man, He united Himself in a sense to all the race, to every man; just as Adam is connected with all men as their ancestor. So, 'as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor. xv. 22). He is called the 'first-fruits' (1 Cor. xv. 20; comp. Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5)—so the 'harvest' yet to come. What a 'harvest'! 'All that are in the graves' (John v. 28)—all 'the dead, small and great' (Rev. xx. 12).

Is this a joyful prospect? A terrible one for some, see Dan. xii. 2; John v. 29. But if 'justified' [*see above*], then a 'sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life' (Burial Service). *Then*, need not be afraid of the cold grave: it is painful to think of *this body being put there*, but can feel it is only for a time—Christ will watch over our bodies, and raise them up again, made glorious like His own, see Phil. iii. 21; also 1 Cor. xv. 42—54 (and *therefore* we read this glorious chapter at funerals). Can say, 'O Death, where,' &c. Why? Because Jesus rose—

'Jesus lives! no longer now
Can thy terrors, Death, appal us.'

Let each pray to have this hope—

'Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that so I may
Rise glorious at the awful day!'

Lesson C.—The Walk to Emmaus.

‘Did not our heart burn within us?’

Read—Luke xxiv. 13—35; Learn—Mal. iii. 16; Rom. xv. 4. (*Hymns*, 71, 116—118, 179, 201, 259, 285, 289, 291, 344.)

TO THE TEACHER.

The accompanying Sketch is mainly devoted to shewing how to make the narrative before us interesting, and how to draw out its direct teachings. But with scholars who can readily turn from one part of the Bible to another, a much larger portion of the time than is here indicated should be occupied by pointing out the leading Old Testament prophecies, &c., the teacher carefully selecting beforehand those to which he will refer. In this selection, and in his comments on the passages chosen, Lesson II. will furnish him some assistance.

Doubts are sometimes thrown on the expediency of children learning by heart numerous texts of Scripture which they only partially understand. This narrative may well dispel such doubts. The two disciples did not understand the ancient types and prophecies, but if they had not been perfectly familiar with the *letter* of them, how could Christ have given them the ‘oral lesson’ which He did?

As taken in the Sketch, this is a Lesson with a *key-word* (or phrase), viz., ‘Burning Hearts.’ Such key-words are often useful, both in furnishing a centre around which the teacher’s thoughts can (so to speak) crystallize, and in giving the children a definite idea of what the lesson is about.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Look at ver. 32—‘Did not our hearts burn within us?’ *Burning hearts*—do you know what that is? Feelings excited—scarcely knowing how to keep them in. Sometimes because interested [*illust.*—*boy listening to story of battle or shipwreck*]; sometimes because alarmed [*illust.*—*in sudden danger, as being nearly run over*]; sometimes because offended and angry [*illust.*—*flushed face in a quarrel—how hard not to utter violent words!*]; sometimes because of sudden joy [*illust.*—*meeting absent friend unexpectedly; gaining prize*]. See Ps. xxxix. 3, cxix. 139; 2 Cor. xi. 29.

To-day see two men whose hearts ‘burned’; and what made them burn.

I. HOW THE TWO HEARTS BURNED.

Two men coming out of Jerusalem—walking away towards the country. Sad faces—downcast looks—why? Would not you look sad, only three days after losing your best friend by a cruel murder? Whom had they lost? But not only sorrow because of loss—bitter disappointment too—why? See ver. 21—‘*we trusted*,’ did hope and believe that He was the Redeemer so long looked for (Luke i. 68—75; Acts xxvi. 6, 7), therefore joined Him, did not mind scorn and opposition, looked forward to day when all would acknowledge Him and joyfully crown Him King at Jerusalem,—but *now*—all over! Have given up all for lost—wonder how could have been so deluded—perhaps think how they will be mocked in years to come as ‘foolish followers of that man who was crucified’; and yet can’t get rid of the old feeling, ver. 19—

He ‘*was* a prophet mighty in deed and word.’

Now see how their chilled and disappointed hearts began to burn.

1. *Burning with interest.* A stranger, unknown, walking the same way—joins them—His kind inquiries (ver. 17) make them tell Him all the sad story. Then what a strange reply! ver. 25, 26. ‘O fools’ [see Note 4]—then they *were* foolish—yes, but why? not for believing too easily, but because ‘*slow*’ to believe! And now they are the listeners—all the way, mile after mile, up and down the hills, through the vineyards and fields of ripe corn, to Emmaus. No thrilling story of travels and adventures—only a *Bible lesson*—yet do they get tired or restless? The subject an old one—used to hear about it in the synagogues—yet does it weary them now? Their hearts ‘burning’ more and more as they hang on those words of love and wisdom.

What is it He tells them? Those very things which had convinced them that their Master was *not* Messiah—arrest, condemnation, cross, grave—the very things that proved He *was*!—right and necessary that Messiah *should* die, and in *that* way (not by fighting the Romans) ‘enter into His glory’! They see it all now—‘Jesus *was* Messiah—it will be all right—we shall see Him again’: how grateful to their companion for telling them about Him! (They still know not who He is.)

2. *Burning with sudden surprise and joy.*

At last at Emmaus—but don’t like to lose such company; ‘sun going down quickly now—why should he go further

to-night?—stay with them.' Supper soon ready; then, instead of waiting to be helped like a visitor, what does the stranger do? Fancy their silent wonder as He takes the *host's* place—'Who can it be?'—then the 'taking bread,' 'blessing,' 'breaking,' 'giving to them,'—it must be! it is He! [see Note 2]—but, in a moment, no one there, the seat empty, the bread left, He is gone! What a fire in their hearts now! Not only convinced that their Master was Messiah, and will triumph after all—but know now that they have seen Him, alive from the dead, with their own eyes!

3. Burning with eagerness.

Eagerness for what? Why, to tell the rest. Can't stop a moment—think not of long walk, back they go—a dark journey now, but how bright their hearts! Fancy them rushing into the 'upper room,' hot and breathless, with the glad tidings. No mistake either—Peter has seen Him too (ver. 34)—'The Lord is risen indeed!'

II. WHAT MADE THESE HEARTS BURN?

See ver. 32—'While He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures,' Two things here:—

1. The Opening of the Scriptures.

'Opening,' i.e., explaining, making clear. Scribes used to try and explain, but how could they? did not themselves know—had no key. [Illustr.—Box locked up—children have never seen it opened—how pretend to tell one another what inside?—but father comes with key—shows all the fine things—children astonished.]

How did Jesus 'open the Scriptures'? Ver. 27—told what said there about Himself. He the bruiser of the serpent (Gen. iii. 15); He the true Ark of refuge (Gen. vii.); He the seed of Abraham to bless all nations (Gen. xxii. 18); He the Lamb slain (Exod. xii.), the sin-bearing Sacrifice (Lev. xvi.), the true High-priest (Exod. xxviii.); He the great Prophet (Deut. xviii. 15); He the King to 'reign in righteousness' (Isa. xxxii. 1; Ps. ii., xlv., lxxii.); He the 'Child born' (Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6); He the mysterious Sufferer (Ps. xxii., Isa. liii.); He the 'Lord our Righteousness' (Jer. xxiii. 6); He the great 'Son of Man' (Dan. vii.); He the 'Sun of Righteousness' (Mal. iv. 2), &c. &c. [See Lesson II.]

2. The Company of Christ.

'While He walked with us by the way.' True, they knew not who it was; but that shews all the more His power to kindle the heart. Here is (as they think) a perfect stranger; yet very soon they are letting out their discipleship, which Peter was afraid to confess, and which the Apostles were concealing from the Jews with doors locked (John xx. 19); and after two or three hours together they can't bear to part with Him. Though they knew Him not, His presence made them happy.

We may have the same 'burning hearts'—the same joy with which they returned to Jerusalem. And in the same way:—

(a) By having the Scriptures opened to us. Have your hearts ever 'burned' at what you have read and heard in God's Word? Why not? or why not more often? Because, don't care about it. Those two men *did*; foolish and ignorant they were, yet they loved the Lord Jesus,—therefore ready to listen. Do you say you would listen eagerly if Christ Himself taught you? But they knew not that it was He; and sometimes when minister or teacher speaks, it is Christ speaking by his voice. Do you say the Gospel is not *new* to you, as it was to them? But the Scriptures were not *new* to them—they knew them without understanding them. If you will *study* them, you will find it is so with you. Christ has the *key*: ask Him to open His treasures to you.

(b) By having Christ as our companion. Sometimes, like those men, two of you take walk together. *They* talked about *Him*: what do you talk about? Is it not about what interests you most? Matt. xii. 34; and what is that? (Comp. Deut. vi. 7; Mal. iii. 16, 17; 1 Thess. v. 11; Heb. x. 24). If He were really to 'draw nigh,' would your talk stop? and if so, how would you be pleased? Only *try* having Christ with you—it does not perhaps seem such a happy thing till you do try it—but when you do, you will be just like those two disciples, anxious to *keep* Him—will say,

'Abide with me from morn to eve,
For without Thee I cannot live.'

NOTES.

1. Cleopas is quite a different name from Cleophas (John xix. 25: see Lesson XCvii., Note 5). It is entirely uncertain who he was, who was his companion, and what was the object of their journey. The numerous conjectures in which the older commentators indulged are not worth repeating. All we know is that they were not of the twelve (see ver. 33). The site of Emmaus also has yet to be identified; the places usually named are further from Jerusalem than the 7½ miles mentioned by St. Luke and by Josephus.

2. The non-recognition of Jesus by the two disciples is ascribed to 'their eyes being holden,' and they did not know Him until 'their eyes

were opened.' St. Mark (xvi. 12) says that He appeared 'in another form.' It would seem that the Lord *willed* and *caused* that they should not recognise Him, in order that nothing might distract their minds from the testimony of Scripture itself, as He unfolded it to them. Yet He may have *used means* to effect this: His appearance may have been designedly altered; and He may have revealed Himself to them at last by some well-known action of His in blessing, breaking, and distributing the bread, or (as Alford suggests) by allowing the nail-marks in His hands to be seen.

Some have thought that the supper was a celebration of the Lord's Supper; but Trench (*Studies*

in the Gospels) convincingly refutes this idea; and obviously it would not account for Christ's being 'known of them in breaking of bread,' for they were not present when the Eucharist was instituted three days before.

3. In ver. 18, 'Art thou only a stranger?' should be rendered, either, 'Art thou the only stranger?' (i.e., Surely there can be no other, even of the strangers now here, who has not heard of these things)—or, 'Art thou a sojourner alone?' (i.e., Have you kept so much to yourself as not to have heard of these things?)

4. 'O fools!' This is not a contemptuous term like 'Thou fool' in Matt. v. The word means 'without understanding,' and might be rendered more mildly, 'O foolish ones,' or 'O unreasoning ones.'

'Ought' is the word ($\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}$) mentioned several times before as so often used significantly of Christ's work: 'Was it not right, necessary, and fitting?' 'Christ' should be 'the Christ,' i.e., the Messiah: it is not 'Was it not necessary that

Jesus of Nazareth, your Master, should suffer?'—but 'Was it not necessary that the promised Messiah should suffer? Does not, therefore, the death of your Master prove that He was Messiah?'

'In all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.' Alford takes these to mean 'something' very different from mere prophetic passages. 'The whole Scriptures,' he observes, 'are a testimony to Him; the whole history of the chosen people, with its types, and its laws, and its prophecies, is a shewing forth of Him. . . . Observe the testimony which this verse gives to the Divine authority, and the Christian interpretation, of the Old Testament; so that the denial of the references to Christ's death and glory in the O. T. is henceforth *nothing less than a denial of His own teaching.*'

The sufficiency of Scripture alone, without any personal revelation of Christ, is strikingly shown in this narrative. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'

Lesson CL.—In the Upper Room.

'Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself.'

Read—Luke xxiv. 36—43; John xx. 19—29; Learn—Acts x. 40, 41; 1 Pet. i. 8.
(Hymns, 64—71, 105, 121, 147, 149, 289, 320, 342, 345, 371.)

TO THE TEACHER.

It is commonly thought that 'picturing' refers mainly to the scenery and furniture (so to speak) of a narrative. But the most important and effective kind of picturing is not that which comes of the study of Jewish topography and antiquities, useful as this is. It consists in bringing out the full meaning of the simple language of Scripture by a reverent use of the imagination. The present lesson affords a good illustration of this. There is scarcely any room for 'scene-painting,' and any speculation as to the appearance of the Saviour's risen and perfected body would be both unwise and unprofitable. But we have various men of differing characters and temperaments passing through all the stages of despondency, fear, doubt, hope, surprise, joy; and if the teacher, by careful thought during his preparation hours, can put himself into the position of those men, and imagine (however faintly) their successive changes of feeling, he will find, when he goes to his class, that nothing will interest children more than the vivid representation of human emotions. This applies equally to the senior and infant classes.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

To whom did Jesus appear on that first day of the week? [*Recapitulate*].—Mary Magdalene, the other women, Peter, the two travellers. To-day see two visits to the Apostles.

I. THE FIRST SUNDAY EVENING. Luke xxiv. 36—43; John xx. 19—23.

That same evening, all assembled together to talk of the strange news (John, 19; Luke, 33). They had not believed the women's first report (see Luke, 22—24), but now—not only is the grave certainly empty, but the Lord has been *seen*. Yet are all agreed on the matter? see Luke, 34, some convinced; Mark xvi. 14, some still doubting.

A knock at the door—who can it be?

yes, friends—door opened—the two come back from Emmaus, 'burning' with eagerness [*last Lesson*] to tell—what? Door again carefully fastened—why? John, 19—might be arrested and accused of stealing body of Jesus (see Matt. xxviii. 12, 13). Then more questioning, arguing, doubting, affirming.

Suddenly—*there is Jesus!* But, door fast, how got in? can't be He! is it a spirit? No wonder 'terrified and affrighted' (Luke). But now His Voice breaking the breathless silence—'Peace.' Then mark what He does—three things:—

1. *He satisfies them that it is Himself.* No mistaking that Voice; yet Jesus, in His tenderness, will make them quite sure. Three proofs, Luke xxiv. 38—43:—

(a) '*Behold My hands and My feet.*' The nail-marks there still! His body changed—before, a weak, mortal body like ours, could feel pain, fatigue, hunger—now a 'glorious body' (Phil. iii. 21), perfect and immortal—all its infirmities left in the grave, but not those nail-marks—the shameful slave's death never to be forgotten—why, do you think?

(b) '*Handle Me and see.*' They should know not only by seeing, but by touching—eyes might be deceived, might fancy Him there—but, no phantom, no ghost—can feel the flesh and bones (see 1 John i. 1). Jesus has a *real body still*. What do the disciples think and feel now? Wondering joy (Luke); 'glad' (John); John xvi. 22 fulfilled;—yet so joyful that can't be sure! (Luke)—'too good to be true' (comp. Ps. cxvii. 1, 2). So another proof:—

(c) *Did eat before them.* Did He need food? no, yet could take it [see *Lesson XCIII. Note 2*]. Disciples satisfied now—this a proof indeed—see what Peter thought of it, Acts x. 41.

2. *He assures them of His forgiveness and love.*

'Peace be unto you'—not only usual greeting, but says it *twice*. What would it remind them of? Three nights before, He said it to them in that very room [see *Note 1*], John xiv. 27. Ah, but then they were His faithful servants, ready to die with Him; and what have they done since? Can't help being glad to see Him, yet would they not feel like Jacob's sons when Joseph made himself known?—see Gen. xlv. 3, 'troubled at his presence.' But that word 'Peace'—what does it tell them and us? Of forgiveness and favour (see Micah vii. 18, 19)—His 'nature and property always to have mercy and to forgive.' And we know *how* He procured mercy and peace for us sinners—those nail-marks remind us of that.

3. *He renews their apostolic commission.*

One thing to forgive—another thing to trust again. [*Illust. boy employed at particular work—neglects it—may be forgiven, but will he be set to same work again?*] 'Peace' a great mercy, but this not all, see ver. 21—they forfeited their apostleship when they forsook Him, yet He will make them Apostles again. And what an office it is! an office like His own: He, 'sent' by the Father—they, 'sent' by Him (comp. John xvii. 18); He, the Apostle (Heb. iii. 1)—they, Apostles too; He, sent to *make peace* between men and God (Col. i. 20), they, to *proclaim peace* (2 Cor. v. 18—20).

But how be fit for such a work? Failed before—will they not fail again? Yes, if left to themselves. But they shall not be left; that promised Comforter [*Lesson LXXXVIII.*] is coming; and to assure them of that, what does Jesus do? ver. 22. Why 'breathed'? Breath a sign of life—if you stopped breathing, what then? what does 'breathed his last' mean? So God

gave Adam life by breathing (Gen. ii. 7)—life of *body*; but life of *soul* only by the Holy Ghost (see Rom. viii. 5—13; comp. Ezek. xxxvii. 9; John iii. 6—8). Without Him, *dead*; with Him, *alive*, and strong to do Christ's work.

And then, sent by Christ, and taught by the Spirit, fit to be rulers and judges in the Church, ver. 23—both to punish and to pardon men who sinned in the Church. See how St. Peter acted so afterwards, Acts v. 1—11, viii. 18—24; and St. Paul, 1 Cor. v. 3—5, 13; 2 Cor. ii. 6—10. [*See Note 3.*]

II. THE SECOND SUNDAY EVENING.

John xx. 24—29.

One of the Apostles not there that night. How glad he would be when heard news—how sorry at absence! *Was He?* ver. 25. How this? did not Thomas love Jesus? ah yes, see xi. 16; yet that very text shows what at bottom of his unbelief—was gloomy and desponding—looked at dark side of everything; thought *then* that they were all going to death; so in John xiv. 5, what a sad and dark question he put! And now, had given all up—the others might have a passing hope of some day seeing their dead Master again, but not he—has made up his mind about it. So when news comes, 'We have seen the Lord,' perhaps a sad shake of the head—they might be deluded, not he—only one thing would satisfy him (what? ver. 25), and that out of the question, of course—'no, I will not believe.' [*See Note 5.*]

Yet he is persuaded to join them again—meet on the next 'evening of first day.' Doors fastened as before (ver. 26); yet suddenly, *there is Jesus again!* First the greeting, 'Peace'; and then—? ver. 27. Does Thomas want now to touch the wounds? ah, he has a better proof than that—sees that Jesus knows all his thoughts—that Master whom he believed dead and gone has been watching his dark soul all the week—all 'naked and open' to Him (Heb. iv. 13). So he knows it is Jesus now. More than that: light has burst in upon his heart (compare Nathanael, John i. 46—49)—he sees all—sees what the others have not fully seen yet—*this Jesus is none other than God!* mark what he calls Him, ver. 28.

Now see what Jesus said to Thomas, ver. 29. A good thing for Thomas to believe; but a better, a most blessed thing for others—for whom? Well, we are like that in one thing—we 'have not seen'; is the blessing ours? have we 'believed'? What shall we believe?

(a) That Jesus is God. Well, we do believe that. Yes, but do we treat Him as our God, honour, obey, worship Him? Do we lift up our hearts, and say, as Thomas did, with love and adoration, 'My Lord and my God'?

(b) That Jesus is Man—Man *still* in

heaven. with the real body that rose from the dead. We believe that too. But do we think of His condescension in 'taking the Manhood into God,' and look to Him as our sympathising Friend and ever-living Advocate?

(c) That Jesus died for our sins—that those nail-marks were made for us. This,

too, we believe. But have we come to Him to have our own sin taken away? and have we renounced sin out of love to Him?

If so, then 'peace' for us, Rom. v. 1. 2. More than that—see 2nd text for rep.—'though now ye see Him not, yet, believing, ye'—what?

NOTES.

1. It is highly probable that the room in which the disciples assembled was the same in which the Last Supper was eaten. That was an 'upper room,' and after the Ascension we find them gathered together in an 'upper room' (Acts i. 13). The owner of the house was very likely himself a disciple, see Lesson LXXIV., Note 3.

St. Luke says 'the eleven' were gathered together, although Thomas was absent. The term, like 'the twelve,' is used as a collective title for the Apostles, without reference to the exact number present at any particular time. St. Paul speaks of this very visit, being to 'the twelve,' 1 Cor. xv. 5. Compare Tennyson's lines about 'the Six Hundred' at Balacava, which expression does not mean that there were 600 exactly, neither more nor less.

2. It is not to be supposed that Christ invisibly opened the closed door, and so came in. To His risen body, such material obstacles were evidently no obstacles at all. See Lesson XCVIII., Note 2.

3. Christ's breathing on the disciples was not the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was not until Pentecost; rather a symbolic prophecy of the gift yet to come.

On the much controverted 23rd verse, the following extracts are the best comment:—

'To no human being, save to Christ alone, has the power of forgiving sins primarily and absolutely been committed by God. See Matt. ix. 6; Rev. iii. 7. But to admit to the Church (*i.e.*, to Christ's kingdom on earth) by baptism, to exclude from it by excommunication, to restore again by absolution and remission of censure—these are powers which Christ commits to His people, and especially to the rulers and elders of His people' (Bp. Harold Browne, *Expos. Articles*, p. 768).

'The Apostles, though endowed with the gift of tongues. . . . were not endowed with power to bestow an actual remission of offences, such as would free the soul from all danger, when appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ; and as little might they hurl the thunderbolt of vengeance, and sentence transgressors to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. . . . The power to retain and to remit sins was but the same authority [as to 'bind and loose'] conveyed in different terms (*Ibid.*, p. 770).

'The remitting and retaining of sins answer to the loosing and binding spoken of on other occasions (Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18). This power is exercised in two ways. First in regard to external privileges, the Church having authority in her Lord's Name to admit to, and to shut out from, the means of grace. . . . Secondly, in regard to the actual relation of the individual soul to God, the Church pronouncing God's sentence

in His Name. This takes place in the Absolutions. In them the priest, as the messenger or ambassador of Christ, declares and pronounces the sentence of Christ's pardon for the comfort and assurance of His people' (Canon Walsham How, in the S. P. C. K. Commentary, *in loco*).

'With the gift and real participation of the Holy Spirit, comes the conviction, and therefore the knowledge, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. . . . They who are pre-eminently filled with His presence are pre-eminently gifted with the discernment of sin and repentance in others. . . . The Apostles had this in an especial manner, and by the full indwelling of the Spirit were enabled to discern the hearts of men, and to give sentence on that discernment. See Acts v. 1—11, viii. 21, xiii. 9' (Alford, *in loco*).

It should be observed that our Lord's words were not addressed to the Apostles only, as there were others with them, Luke xxiv. 33.

4. If we had only St. Luke's Gospel, we might imagine that our Lord ascended to heaven on the evening of the day He rose, though, even apart from the other Gospels, such an idea is corrected by St. Luke himself in Acts i. 3. The forty days' interval must be understood between the 43rd and 44th verses of Luke xxiv., as the command to 'tarry in Jerusalem,' in ver. 49, must have been given when the Apostles had returned from Galilee after the Lord's appearances there. This return was very likely by His direction, as was the journey to Galilee itself.

5. The character of Thomas has been much misunderstood. A man who lived in an age of general belief in the supernatural, and who attached himself to a worker of miracles, can scarcely be regarded as the prototype of modern sceptics. He seems to have been of a desponding nature (comp. John xi. 16, xiv. 5), and if so, the death of Christ may well have overcome him so completely as to render him almost inaccessible to comfort. Like most persons who give way to despondency, he showed also a willfulness in clinging to his doubts—'I will not believe.' But that he was nevertheless peculiarly attached to his Master is clear both from John xi. 16, and from his noble burst of adoring devotion in this passage. What a much higher kind of love his was than even Mary Magdalene's we may learn from our Lord's different treatment of them: to her who loved His sacred humanity, He says, 'Touch me not': to him who was ready to confess His Divinity, He says 'Reach hither thy hand.' The chapter on 'Thomas,' in Dr. Hanna's *Forty Days*, is particularly good.

Lesson CII.—The Morning by the Lake.

'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'

Read—John xxi. 1—19; Learn—John xxi. 6, 17. (*Hymns*, 76, 132, 160, 161, 171, 324, 330, 340, 347, 355.)

TO THE TEACHER.

There is a good deal of matter in this Lesson, and probably each teacher will have to make a selection for his own class: which will not be a difficult task, because the various parts can be taken separately without much loss of interest. The best part to omit, with junior classes at all events, will be Division I. The second section of Division II. should by all means be taken with intelligent classes, as it may probably be new even to the best instructed, ver. 18 being often slurred over in expositions of this chapter.

Many children who have never seen sea-fishing know about river-fishing. This knowledge should be utilised by the teacher, and the differences briefly explained.

In dealing with the subject of love to Christ, the very common test—'How may you know that you love Him? do you *obey* Him?'—should be used sparingly and with caution. We do not set a child to examine its conduct in order to see whether it loves its mother. Love is an emotion consciously felt. Peter knew his conduct had belied his love, yet he *felt* that he did love his Master, and confidently appealed to that Master's omniscience. Rather should we say, 'If you love the Saviour, you must feel and know that you do'; and then go on, not to urge the *duty* of loving Him, but to dilate on His love to us. If we wish others to love and esteem a dear friend of ours, is not the most effective way to awaken the desired feelings in them, this—to *tell them what he is*?

This Lesson is a good opportunity of briefly shewing the children *why we come and teach them*. Christ commissioned His Church to 'feed His lambs,' and the Church commissions us to undertake the work. The Sunday-school teacher is not the parent's substitute. His work does not at all lessen parental obligations. He stands, not *in loco parentis*, but *in loco pastoris*. Sunday-school work will not be properly appreciated until this, its true foundation, obtains more general recognition.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

A long while since we were in Galilee. To-day come there again. The Apostles at their old home by the Lake [*see Note 1*]. How come they there? Mark xvi. 7—waiting to meet the Lord again. Meanwhile go back to old occupation [*see Note 3*]—see them starting off in a large fishing-boat [*see Note 5*] in the evening—toiling all night at casting and drawing net—what result? ver. 3. Day dawning now—no fish to be got—how weary and downcast!

What other time in their lives would they be reminded of? Luke v. 1—11. Ah! they had the Master with them then, and what did He do? But now it seems all different—He is no more with them in every-day life—can only expect Him to visit them (as at Jerusalem) when gathered together for prayer—ill-success in fishing too small a thing for Him to think of—no hope of such another miracle.

A man calling to them from the shore, kindly asking how they have got on, then telling them to try again, and where. Anything strange in this? No—perhaps (they might think) he can see up there where the shoal is [*see Note 4*]—no harm trying. Net soon dropped—but is it soon

lifted again? why not? ver. 6. Ah, this is no mere 'man seeing a shoal'—'it is the Lord!'

Yes, Christ has chosen this very time to come to them. Why, think you? Was it not to shew them and us that He is *always* watching His servants, that nothing is too small for His notice, that His commands and His blessings may come when least expected? He may meet you, not only in church, but in school, workshop, street, home, playground. Are we, like Habakkuk (ii. 1), 'watching to see what He will say unto us'?

But they were to learn much more than this that day. Two other great lessons:—

I. WHAT THEIR WORK FOR CHRIST SHOULD BE LIKE.

When Jesus first called these fishermen, what did He say He would make them? Mark i. 17 [*see Lesson XXIII.*]—and see His parable about casting the net, Matt. xiii. 47. Now what more do they learn about this spiritual fishing, this 'catching men'?

(a) It would be toilsome and often discouraging work. How often St. Paul found it so! And sometimes now *we*

teachers 'toil all the year, and take nothing.' How is it in *this class*?

(b) But His eye would watch them and His voice direct them. See Mark xvi. 20; Acts xviii. 9, 10.

(c) They must listen for His directions and follow them without question, and then they should be successful. See Acts xvi. 6—10.

(d) Another thing. Watch the men bringing the fish to shore—they in a little boat [see Note 5], dragging net through water. Will it not be broken? Seems as if it must, yet landed safely, and fish counted out exactly, ver. 8, 11. Here is an encouragement for them! In the parable of the Net, good and bad caught, and afterwards separated; here all good, and all safe. What meant? Not one of their true converts should be lost. On heaven's shore all should be counted—not one missing. [See Note 6.]

(e) No need of the fish for breakfast, see ver. 9—breakfast prepared already [see Note 7]—the Lord inviting them to take it! Where can it have come from? Think—whence came the *similar food* (bread and fish) for the 5,000 a year ago? John vi. 10, 11. And there shall be a feast on the heavenly shore too—the faithful 'fishers of men' shall sit down with their Master in glory.

II. IN WHAT SPIRIT CHRIST'S WORK MUST BE DONE.

1. *Christ's workers must love Christ.*

See ver. 15—17 [see Note 9]. Look at—*The Three Questions*—'Lovest thou Me?' Why is Peter asked? What did he do that morning when the draught of fishes came? help his comrades? no, left them to do the work—swam on shore to Jesus. Just like him!—putting himself forward again—thinking he cares most for the Master—as before, Matt. xxvi. 33. John stayed to help, yet did he love Jesus less? So Peter must be rebuked. But how tenderly—'Do you love Me more than these?' But why three times? Think—what had Peter done three times before?

The Three Answers. Does he dare to say 'more than these'? Ah, he is humbled now. Does he say, 'Look at my conduct—that shews my love'? Ah, he can't say that. Yet he knows he does love his dear Lord; and he feels that his Lord knows it also—knows all his sin and weakness, yes—but knows his love too.

The Three Commands. Jesus can employ Peter now that he is thinking little of himself, and is full of love to Christ. But is it all great work he is to do? No, not always bringing in great shoals of souls—must often be content with quietly feeding the flock, teaching and caring for Christ's people. Even the little ones he used to despise (Matt. xviii. 1—6, xix. 13, 14): he is to feed the 'lamb.'
And Peter *did*; and see what he wrote

in his old age to the other 'shepherds' in the Church, 1 Pet. v. 2—5.

Does Christ ask that question now—'Lovest thou Me?' Has He not a right to ask it? Count up what he has done and is doing for us. Can we help loving Him? But how will you answer? Do you *know* you do love Him, despite your sins? Can you ask him to look into your inmost heart, and see that you do? Are you '*not sure*' about it? how strange! you know whether you love your mother—why uncertain whether you love Christ?

'Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee and adore:
O for grace to love Thee more!

See what Scripture says about this:—
(a) What kind of love does He expect? Matt. x. 37; Eph. vi. 24. (b) Who are they that do love Him? Cant. i. 4; John viii. 42; Luke vii. 47. (c) How can we shew our love? John xiv. 15; 1 John v. 2. (d) What is said of those who love Him not? 1 Cor. xvi. 22. (e) What is promised to those who do love him? Jas. i. 12; John xiv. 21, 23.

2. *Christ's workers must follow Christ.*

See what else Jesus said to Peter, ver. 18, 19 [see Note 10]. What does 'following Christ' mean? Doing as He does, going where He goes, being like Him, imitating Him. And what would come of that? What came on Christ would come on His followers—hatred of men, suffering, perhaps death; see John xv. 20. Once before, Peter said he was ready to follow Jesus to death, Luke xxii. 33; *did he*? But even then Jesus promised He should 'afterwards,' John xiii. 36; and what is the prediction now? ver. 18.

What meant? When young, Peter girded himself, &c.—he had *his own way*—whether good or bad, he did as he liked; even just now he 'girded himself' and 'stretched forth his hands' to swim from the boat to Jesus, just because *he chose*; but if he follow Christ, who came 'not to do His own will' (John vi. 38), he must be ready *not* to have his own way, must be ready for things he would *not* choose; yes, he will be 'girded' and have his 'hands stretched forth' in a very different way. What way? *Bound as a prisoner—stretched upon the cross!*

Are these words for Peter only? No, for all, see 2 Tim. iii. 12. You will not have to be crucified; but you will have to 'take up a cross'—*your cross*—some hard, painful thing—if you would follow Christ, Matt. xvi. 24 [see Lesson LL.]; but what will be the *end*? John xii. 26. Peter and the Apostles have long since got that reward, and myriads of others—

'A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid—

'O God! to us may grace be given,
To follow in their train!

NOTES.

1. 'The Sea of Tiberias'—another name for the Lake of Gennesareth, on which see Additional Note VI., and Map on page 65. Tiberias was the chief city on the shores of the Lake.

2. 'Sheved Himself.' All our Lord's appearances after His resurrection are described in similar language. He was not visible except when He willed to be. See Lesson XCVIII., Note 2. Trench observes that it is the same with angelic manifestations. 'Men do not see them, but they appear to men, being only visible to those for whose sakes they are vouchsafed, and to whom they are willing to show themselves.'

St. John calls this the *third* appearance of Christ; i.e., the third to the assembled disciples.

3. Why did the Apostles 'go a fishing'? Not, as some have thought, that they had abandoned Christ's service; but as a temporary means of subsistence. Honest work is not inconsistent with the attitude of waiting for the Lord.

4. There was nothing in Christ's words to the disciples in the boat which any stranger might not have said. 'Children' is a familiar Oriental mode of address. 'Meat' signifies food generally, and the question is equivalent to 'Have ye caught anything?' As they evidently saw nothing strange in the direction to 'cast the net on the right side of the ship,' it is probable that they attributed it to the stranger seeing a shoal there. Shoals can often be discerned, from the higher level of a bank or cliff, by the colour of the water, while the fisherman may be close to the fish without noticing them. In Cornwall, men are stationed on the cliffs to watch the sea and give signals to the boats where to cast the nets for pilchards. The miracle lay in the large number of 'great fishes' which the Lord's power brought to the spot at that moment.

It is characteristic of the two men, that John the thoughtful was the first to recognise Christ, and Peter, the impulsive, the first to go to Him.

5. The 'fishers' coat' was probably the upper garment, which Peter first put on, and then 'girt unto him' to facilitate his swimming.

The 'little ship' (ver. 8) was the *plotiarion* or small boat attached to the 'ship' (*ploton*), i.e., the large fishing-vessel. See Lesson XXIII., Note 5.

6. Trench (*Miracles*, p. 468) well expounds the symbolic meaning of the miracle, one or two points only of which are noticed in the Sketch. Augustine and others of the older writers entered into laborious calculations to ascertain why the number of the fishes was 153; but the significance probably lies simply in the fact of its being a definite and not a round number, denoting God's exact knowledge of 'the number of His elect.'

7. 'Come and dine'—literally, 'and breakfast.'

8. In the two figures of the Fisher and the Shepherd, Christ describes the two branches of ministerial work, the preaching to the heathen and the ungodly, and the *pastoral* work of feeding and tending the flock of believers. The treatment Peter himself received from the 'Chief Shepherd' is a model of this pastoral work. 'The prayers, the warnings, the look of love, the angel's

message, the private interview, the conversation by the lake-side, these all told Peter of the thoughtfulness, the care, the kindness, the pitying sympathy, the forgiving love, of which he had been the object. Thus had he been treated by Jesus; let him go and deal with others as Christ had dealt with him' (Hanna's *Forty Days*, p. 135).

9. Some very interesting points in ver. 15—17 are not seen in our English version. The Greek word used to express love, in Christ's first two questions (*αγαπᾶν, agapain*) is different from that used in His third question and in all Peter's answers (*φιλεῖν, philein*). The former expresses the higher love of reverence, esteem, gratitude, and is always used of love to God. The latter expresses a lower personal attachment. It would seem that Peter dared not avow that he loved his Lord in the sense involved in the first two questions, and used the lower word; and that Christ in forbearance adopted the latter in His third question. This is the generally received explanation; but Trench thinks that Peter was not satisfied to use the more reverential word, and avowed a more ardent love even than Jesus spoke of; and that the third question means, 'Do you indeed so love Me?'

The Greek words for 'feed' are also different, and (according to the probable reading) those for 'sheep'; and the three commands might be more exactly rendered, 'Feed My lambs'; 'Tend My sheep'; 'Feed my choice sheep'—each commission higher than the preceding one.

10. The remarkable prediction to Peter, in ver. 18, is briefly explained in the Sketch; but its fulness of meaning cannot be given within reasonable compass. See Alford, Trench, and especially Stier, *in loco*. According to St. Jerome, Peter was crucified under Nero, with his head downwards, because he alleged himself to be unworthy of being crucified in the same manner as his Lord.

It is not easy to fill in the details of the narrative here. Perhaps our Lord was moving away from the group, and the words, 'Follow Me,' were spoken as a farewell injunction. Peter, mistaking them to mean 'Come with Me now,' began literally to go after Jesus, and John also followed.

Our Lord's reply to Peter's inquiry about John was evidently a gentle rebuke. Peter had received the words about himself rather as a curious prophecy than as a solemn warning, and his curiosity was excited about his friend's 'fortune' also. Yet it is the almost unanimous opinion of expositors, that Christ's words *did* indicate the future of St. John. The expression, 'Tarry till I come,' has been variously explained. Certainly the destruction of Jerusalem is in some places spoken of as a 'coming' of the Lord; see Lesson LI., Note 6, and Additional Note X., page 215; and St. John did live to see that great event, which Peter (and probably most of the others) did not. 'At the destruction of Jerusalem began that mighty series of events of which the Apocalypse is the prophetic record, and which is in the complex known as the COMING OF THE LORD, ending as it shall with His glorious and personal advent' (Alford). And this Apocalypse Christ personally gave to John in Patmos.

Lesson CIII.—The Ascension.

'Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God.'

Read—Luke xxiv. 50—53; Acts i. 1—11; *Learn*—Heb. ix. 24; 1 Pet. iii. 22.
(*Hymns*, 71, 72—79, 101, 316.)

TO THE TEACHER.

Children are too apt to think of Christ merely as One who lived and died many centuries ago. It is not generally realised that Jesus of Nazareth *is alive now*. Nor is this confined to children, as the common neglect of Ascension-Day, as compared with Christmas-Day, Good Friday, and Easter-Day, abundantly shews. Yet there can be no more impressive thought, no more awakening consideration, than that 'that same Jesus,' as Man, with human body and soul 'taken into God' (as the Athanasian Creed expresses it), is at the right hand of God now; that He who knows, not only in virtue of His Divine omniscience, but by personal experience, 'what is in man,' is ever watching us,—and watching to pity, to intercede, to interpose, to 'save to the uttermost.' We rightly dwell much upon a crucified Saviour; but let us dwell more than we do upon a *living Saviour*.

The typical significance of the High-priest's going within the veil, as indicated in the first section of Division II., will prove interesting to intelligent classes, especially if they can turn readily to the references in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The other two sections, introducing the analogies of the Advocate and the Elder Brother, will, however, be easier to work in classes where references cannot be used. The still more important and interesting subject of Christ as the King is taken by itself in the following Lesson.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

How many appearances of our Lord after His resurrection have we read of? To Mary Magdalene, to the other women, to Peter, [*Lesson XCVIII.*]; to the two travellers [*Lesson C.*]; to the assembled Apostles without Thomas, and with Thomas [*Lesson CI.*]; to some of them by the Lake [*last Lesson*];—seven in all. We are told of three more:—

(1) To the whole body of His disciples, 500 of them, 1 Cor. xv. 6. This (probably) on an appointed mountain in Galilee. Matt. xxviii. 16. There Christ gave His whole Church a solemn commission—see about it in next Lesson.

(2) To St. James, 1 Cor. xv. 7—probably not John's brother, but Jude's brother, afterwards first Bishop of Jerusalem, and who wrote the Epistle.

(3) Once more to the Eleven, at Jerusalem, Luke xxiv. 44—53; Acts i. 1—12. There His final directions—to wait for the promised Comforter (Luke, 49). Then His final departure. Whither? See Creed—*'He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.'* Think about this to-day.

I. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

1. *Going up from the earth.*

They are in the city—very likely in that same 'upper room' where Last Supper eaten, where Jesus appeared on those two Sunday evenings. He 'leads them out'—whither? (Luke, 50)—by the old familiar road, over the Kedron, past Gethsemane, up Olivet, over towards Bethany. He is telling them what they are to do when He is gone (Acts, 8)—'*witnesses.*' [*Illustrate by*

witnesses in law-courts.] What have they 'witnessed'? His life, miracles, character, sufferings, death, resurrection. One thing more they are now to witness—to see with their own eyes the Man Christ Jesus ascending to heaven.

Look! His hands are lifted up—what to do? Like the high priest's blessing of old, Lev. ix. 22, Numb. vi. 22—27. And at that moment He rises from the midst of them, wafted upwards into the air. His last act to them to bless them; what is *their* last act to *Him*? (Luke, 52)—see them worshipping Him as their Lord and their God. Now standing again, gazing up—but He is gone—only a white cloud there. Suddenly a touch, a voice—two strangers—who? Come to tell them of one thing more they shall witness—what? But not yet—no, and even now, 1800 years after, it is still *not yet*—but it *shall be*, and *we all* shall witness it. 'He cometh with clouds,' as He went. Rev. i. 7. And He will come *blessing*—but blessing *whom*? His own faithful followers—shall we be among them?

2. *Going up into heaven.*

It was a quiet scene on Olivet; men knew nothing of what was going on—not even the people over the hill in Jerusalem. What would Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas, have thought, had they seen that sight? And as to the great men far away in Greece and Rome, what was it to them what happened on that Jewish mount?

But in heaven—what thought of it there? How would the angels receive their Lord—His time of humiliation over—His reign of glory begun? See the picture of the

triumph which God put into David's mouth, Ps. xxiv. 7—10. And remember, the Son of God does not go back to heaven as He left it: He is *Man now* as well as God. He was made 'a little lower than the angels' for a while—but now?—see Heb. ii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Phil. ii. 7—11. He came to fight with Satan—He returns a conqueror, Ps. lxxviii. 18. See the Father's words to the Son, Ps. cx. 1.

II. CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

Has He gone away and abandoned His Church? Has He forgotten the world He lived in? Why *He is there to represent us.*

1. *Like the High Priest.* Every year, on 'great day of atonement,' after offering sacrifices for sin, the High-priest went within the veil into the Holy of Holies: what with? (a) The blood of the sacrifice; (b) incense to burn before God. All this typical of, a *picture of*, Christ's work. See Heb. iv. 14, vi. 19, 20, viii. 1, ix. 11, 12, 21, x. 12. He offered Himself, the 'one sacrifice for sins for ever' (x. 12)—then went within the veil [see *Lesson XCVI.*],—out of sight—into God's presence—to present (as it were) His blood to God—and something else, the *incense, His intercession for us.* He is always there, pleading for us; therefore we may be 'saved to the uttermost,' Heb. vii. 25; Rom. viii. 34. See also Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15. 16.

2. *Like an Advocate.* What is an 'advocate'? [*Explain: illustrate from courts of law.*] One who 'appears for' us. Just what Jesus does, Heb. ix. 24. We like prisoners at the bar; Satan the accuser (Zech. iii. 1; Rev. xii. 10) laying things to our charge; and we are 'verily guilty.' But Christ is our Advocate (1 John ii. 1), and pleads our cause. Can He fail? No, for He has Himself paid the penalty, borne the punishment.

3. *Like an Elder Brother.* Heaven the inheritance of God's children, Col. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 4. Why theirs? It is for the Heir and His brethren. Jesus the Heir, Heb. i. 2; we (if His true servants) His brethren, Heb. ii. 11—therefore joint heirs, Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iv. 7. He, the Elder Brother, has gone before to take possession of the inheritance, to 'prepare a place for us'—then will 'come again and receive us unto Himself,' John xiv. 2, 3.

Therefore,—

(1) *Think of Christ as a Living Saviour.* We like to think of Bethlehem—of the Son of God becoming a little child for our sakes—'the mystery of His holy Incarnation.' We like to think of Calvary—of His 'precious Death and Burial.' But forget not 'His glorious Resurrection and Ascension.' Not a Saviour who once lived and died, but One who *is alive now*—our Friend and Brother in heaven.

The Lord Jesus looks down—sees Christian child sorry for sin—prays that he may be forgiven; sees child struggling against sin—prays that he may be strengthened. If he did not, none would be forgiven, none strengthened. Can you turn away from such a Friend? Must you not love Him?

(2) *Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God* (Col. iii. 1). [*Illust.—Emigrant engaged in country he is going to; reads of it, asks about it, thinks of it day and night; almost there already in his thoughts.*] So should we think of the 'better country' (Heb. xi. 16). Then heaven not so strange to us when we get there. 'Grant . . . that like as we do believe . . . Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend' (Collect, Ascension Day).

NOTES.

1. It is remarkable that the Ascension should have been recorded only by one Evangelist, St. Luke, and that in both his works, the Gospel and the Acts. The *fact*, however, is stated in Mark's Gospel, though no circumstances are given. Matthew ends with the great Commission; yet his Gospel plainly implies the Ascension, as it speaks prominently (chap. xxiv. xxv.) of Christ's Second Advent. St. John's Gospel also implies the fact; see chap. vi. 62, xx. 17.

The conclusion of Mark's Gospel is a brief summary of the Lord's final interview with the disciples. Ver. 14—20 must not be read continuously: ver. 14 evidently refers to the earlier appearances at Jerusalem; ver. 15—18 is probably parallel with Matt. xxviii. 18—20, where the commission given to the assembled Church on the mountain in Galilee is given; ver. 19 simply records the fact of the Ascension, without stating the time and place—only that it was after the delivery of the final instructions.

The whole of Luke xxiv. 44—53 no doubt refers to the *last* interview at Jerusalem; see Lesson Cf., Note 4.

2. It is both unwise and useless to speculate on the *locality* of our Lord's body in heaven. We can say no more than is said by Bp. Pearson (*Expos. Creed*, Art. vi.)—'Whatsoever heaven there is higher than all the rest which are called heavens; whatsoever sanctuary is holier than all which are called holies; whatsoever place is of greatest dignity in all those courts above,—into that place did He ascend, where in the splendour of His deity He was before He took upon Him our humanity.'

Bp. Ellicott (*Lectures on Life of Christ*, p. 417) says:—'To none of the great truths relating to the two natures of our Lord is it more necessary to adhere firmly in the present age than to this. A hearty belief in the literal and local ascent of our Lord's humanity into the heavens is in itself a belief in the whole mystery of the union of the Godhead and Manhood. If in His death our Lord has assured us of His humanity, and in His resurrection has demonstrated His divinity, most surely in His ascension has He displayed both.'

Lesson CIV.—The King and His Kingdom.

‘Thy Kingdom come.’

Read—Matt. xxviii. 18—20; Learn—Matt. xxiv. 14; Ps. xxii. 27, 28. (*Hymns*, 51, 73, 87, 88, 89, 102, 103, 121, 127, 229, 231, 235, 238.)

TO THE TEACHER.

A Course of Lessons on the Life of Our Lord cannot end as an ordinary biography does. Christ's sojourn on earth was but, as it were, an *episode* in His life. Of every man who has died it may be said in a very important sense that he is still alive. But the Lord Jesus is alive as men will be after the Resurrection, *i.e.*, in body and soul too—and that without taking His Godhead into account. Moreover He is not only living, but ruling over that earth on which He lived for a time, and spiritually present with His Church. It is therefore well to conclude this Course with a Lesson on the dispensation which intervenes between His assumption of the Kingdom at His Ascension and the consummation of that Kingdom at His return in glory. And this Lesson will, for those teachers who may intend to take up the succeeding Course on the Acts of the Apostles, fitly introduce the Lessons to come.

The first part of this Lesson ought not to occupy so much time in proportion to the rest as it appears to do in the Sketch. The steps of the argument are given somewhat fully, and will need very little expansion. Let the teacher hasten on to what are really the two great topics before him, *viz.* the position of baptized Christians as the subjects of the Kingdom, and the duty laid upon every Christian to help in the extension of the Kingdom.

Although the remarkable testimony of the passage before us to the doctrine of the Trinity is not referred to in the Sketch, it well deserves to be noticed in passing, if possible. The baptismal formula in the 19th verse, and the benediction in 2 Cor. xiii. 14, are probably the two most convincing of the Scripture proofs of that great doctrine; for unless the Son and the Holy Ghost are co-equal with the Father, how can they be mentioned in this close connection with Him? The familiarity of the words, too, makes them always *available* as proofs.

On the authority afforded by the passage for the Baptism of Infants, see Note 2.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

Why England called a ‘kingdom’? governed by King (or Queen). Who are the Queen's subjects? If honour her, obey laws, sing ‘God save the Queen’ heartily, what sort of subjects are we? But suppose *not* loyal, are we subjects still? All Englishmen her subjects—even if disloyal and rebellious, *duty* still the same—no power or right to say, ‘I won't be her subject.’

Queen's dominions very large—subjects all round globe, ‘on her empire sun never sets.’ But there is a King far greater, with far wider dominions—? see Ps. xlvii. 7—‘God is the King of all the earth.’

Who then are God's subjects? What kind of subjects are most men, loyal or disloyal? Look at missionary map of world—how few and small the loyal parts! Even here, in Christian country, how few really loyal!

How came this? Satan, a rebel himself, first started rebellion on earth—when? Usurped God's dominion (John xiv. 30; 2 Cor. iv. 4). Now men *naturally* rebel—need no tempting—‘at enmity with God’ (Rom. viii. 7).

Now what did Christ come for? To conquer the Kingdom; to win back the

rebels to their rightful King. To-day see what He has done and is doing to accomplish this great purpose.

I. CHRIST THE KING.

Of course, the Eternal Son always was King, *as God*. But this quite a different thing. God's plan this—to make a *man* King of men—one of themselves to win them back. But, *not one* loyal enough! How then? (a) The Son of God became Man, was born, lived, died, ‘in all things like’ us (Heb. ii. 17). (b) He took on Him all our guilt, and bore the punishment Himself. (c) Then, sin atoned for, God's justice satisfied, He rose again and went back to His heavenly throne—but not as before—Man now as well as God. [*Last Lesson.*]

And what then? The Kingdom given into His hand to restore it back, make it a loyal Kingdom. He is King now *as Man*, almost like *God's Viceroy*. See Matt. xxviii. 18 (‘All power given unto Me,’ &c.); Ps. ii. 6 (‘Yet have I set My King,’ &c.); Isa. ix. 6 (‘Unto us a child is born . . . and the government shall be upon His shoulder’); also Jer. xxiii. 5; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Mic. v. 2; Zech. ix. 9; Luke i. 32; Phil. ii. 9—11.

Now see how the King sets about winning back His rebellious subjects.

II. CHRIST'S PROCLAMATION TO THE REBELS.

1. *What is proclaimed.* See Luke xxiv. 47—'Repentance and remission of sins.' How wonderful! A proclamation, not of judgment, but of mercy; not that all shall be 'prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law' (though that would be quite *just*), but a free pardon for all who submit! Two difficulties, indeed—men *won't* turn, and *can't* turn; but see the remedies—the story of a crucified Saviour, of the King Himself dying for them, to make them *willing*; the King's power to make them *able*; see Acts v. 31—'a Prince to give *repentance*' as well as forgiveness.

2. *How it is to be proclaimed.* See Luke—'preached to all nations.' By whom? See Mark xvi. 15—'Go ye'—spoken to all Christ's servants—'and preach the Gospel, the *'glad news,'* 'good tidings of great joy to all people' (Luke ii. 10).

But now see what is to be done with the returning rebels:—

III. CHRIST'S NEW 'KINGDOM' OR SOCIETY OF LOYAL SUBJECTS—THE CHURCH.

See Matt. xxviii. 19, 20—[see Note 2]—'Make disciples'—'baptize'—'teach.'

1. Every repenting rebel to come out and be separate (see 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18)—to join the 'blessed company of all faithful people' (*Commun. Serv.*)—to take the King's side in the face of all—to be 'made a disciple.'

2. But how? Must be some public sign of this. *Baptism*, which 'doth represent to us our profession' (*Bapt. Service*)—to be 'signed with the sign of the cross in token that hereafter,' &c. But something in Baptism besides this: 'baptizing them *into* the Name,' &c. [see Note 3]—'into Christ' (Gal. iii. 27)—into a share in God's *covenant* (*i.e.*, agreement with repenting rebels to forgive them, see Acts ii. 38)—'into the kingdom of God's dear Son' (Col. i. 13).

3. And what after that? See 20th verse—to learn diligently 'all things whatsoever commanded'; having joined the King, to study the King's laws, listen to His messengers, be *loyal* in everything.

This company or society *Christ's Church*. Called also His 'kingdom';—all the earth His Kingdom in one sense, all men His subjects; but His *loyal* subjects make up His 'kingdom' in another sense. This the 'kingdom of heaven' announced by John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 2), and about which Jesus taught so much (Matt. iv. 17, v. 3, 10, 19, 20, vi. 33, vii. 21, viii. 11, xiii. 11, 24, 31, 33, 44—47, xvi. 19, xviii. 3, xix. 14, 23,

xxii. 1, xxv. 1, 14). [See *Lessons XLIII., XLV., XLVIII., XL., LXVI., &c.*]

Think of that band of five hundred on the hill in Galilee [see *last Lesson*], to whom Jesus said these words of Matt. xxviii. 18. What would they think? (a) The Master's wondrous claim—'all power.' (b) Their tremendous task—to go to 'all nations,' 'every creature'—how could *they*, weak and ignorant, do *that*? ah, there is a third thing,—(c) The gracious promise—'Lo, I am with you'—I who have 'all power'—'always,' every day [see Note 4]—wherever you may be, whatever may happen, however you may feel—'unto the end'! And what *then*? Why then, instead of *He with them*, *they with Him* (John xvii. 24; 1 Thess. iv. 17).

YOU ARE IN THE 'KINGDOM.' Not only because Christ rules over *all* 'in heaven and earth'; but specially dedicated to Him, enlisted among the loyal subjects, received into the Church—when? When baptized, what said? 'We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock,' &c. What a happy thing, to be not in the camp of the rebels, but 'under Christ's banner'!

But are you loyal subjects indeed? Do you 'observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded'? What! disloyal *now*! a rebel in Christ's camp! a traitor! a deserter! Ah, there are thousands like that. When we pray for 'Catholic Church,' have to ask 'that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth.' Let us be '*faithful* soldiers and servants.'

Are you helping to extend the Kingdom? You pray 'Thy kingdom come'—do you *care* about it? Have you ever thought of winning *one* companion over to the side of loyalty? Do you take a share in the great missionary work? Jesus said to us *all*, 'Go ye.' Let each say, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have *me* to do?'

But whether we remain loyal or not, whether we help to extend the kingdom or not, it *will* extend. The end *will* come.

'Jesus shall reign wherc'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run.'

Where shall we be then? The Lord preserve us from the fate of those who say, 'We will not have this man to reign over us,' Luke xix. 14, 27. Rather may we be among that great multitude that shall say, 'Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth' (Rev. xix. 6).

'Oh that with yonder sacred throng,

We at his feet may fall,
Join in the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!'

NOTES.

1. The 'Kingdom' referred to in the Sketch is what is theologically termed the 'Mediatorial Kingdom' of Christ, *i.e.*, His Kingdom as the Mediator, the Glorified Man; which is quite

distinct from the eternal Kingdom or rule over all things of the Triune Jehovah. The purpose of this Mediatorial Kingdom is, as more simply explained above, the restoration of this earth

and its inhabitants to its pristine position in the moral universe, the 'restitution of all things' (Acts iii. 21), the 'redemption' for which 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth' (Rom. viii. 22). When this Divine purpose shall have been finally accomplished, the Mediatorial Kingdom will apparently be merged into the Eternal Kingdom of Jehovah; see 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

2. Two distinct Greek words in ver. 19 and 20 are both rendered in our version '*teach*,' which somewhat obscures the sense. What our Lord does say is, 'Go ye and *make disciples* of all nations'—*i.e.*, make them Christians, bring them into My Church. Then follows the 'baptizing,' and then the '*teaching*' or instruction in all things that Christ has commanded.

This passage, compared with the parallel one in Mark xvi. 15, 16, clearly lays down the *order* of missionary operations. Baptism is not to precede faith ('He that believeth *and* is baptized'); nor, on the other hand, is it to be delayed until the convert has been fully taught 'to observe all things.' First the 'preaching of the Gospel'; then the baptizing of those who believe and accept it; then the detailed teaching of the baptized.

At the same time, the passage affords a strong, though indirect, argument for Infant Baptism, in the simple circumstance that infants are *not excluded*. For the Apostles would unquestionably interpret the command in the light of the ordinance of circumcision, with which they were so familiar. If a Gentile became a proselyte, he would be circumcised, and his infant sons would be circumcised with him. Had Christ therefore said, 'Go ye and make disciples of all nations, *circumcising* them,' the command

would be understood, as a matter of course, to include children; and the appointment of Baptism as the new sign and seal of the Christian covenant could not alter the principle of action without a distinct direction to that effect. And accordingly we find the Apostles afterwards baptizing '*households*,' without a word to limit the expression to adults.

3. In ver. 19, 'in the Name' should be '*into* the Name.' It is not merely that Baptism would be done 'in the name of,' *i.e.*, by the authority of the Trinity, but that the baptized would be brought *into* a certain relation to the Trinity, *i.e.*, into the Christian covenant. Compare the expressions 'baptized into Christ' (Gal. iii. 27), and 'baptized unto Moses' (1 Cor. x. 2). The Greek is the same in all three places.

Observe that it is not said '*into the names*,' although the Three Blessed Persons are mentioned; but '*into the Name*,' implying Their essential unity.

4. The Catechism speaks of the Sacraments as 'generally necessary to salvation.' This expression is fully warranted by Mark xvi. 16. At the same time there is no mention of 'not being baptized' as causing a man to be 'damned': for two reasons, (1) that the lack of baptism is no absolute bar to salvation, (2) that those who 'believe not' will be 'damned' *whether baptized or unbaptized*.

Whatever may be the destiny of the heathen, they are certainly not finally condemned in this particular verse. The words, 'He that believeth not,' obviously mean, 'He that believeth not *when he hears your preaching*.'

5. '*Always*,' in ver. 20, is, in the Greek, 'all the days,' *i.e.*, every day, even to the end.

THE END.

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