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THE SEVEN WORDS SPOKEN AGAINST  
THE LORD JESUS.

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THE SEVEN WORDS SPOKEN  
AGAINST THE LORD JESUS:

OR

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MOTIVES WHICH  
LED HIS CONTEMPORARIES TO  
REJECT HIM.

Being the Hulsean Lectures for the Year 1860.

BY  
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*Τίνα κατηγορίαν φέρετε κατά τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τούτου ;*

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1861.





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MASTER OF S. JOHN'S COLLEGE;

TRUSTEES OF MR HULSE'S BENEFACTIONS

AT CHRISTMAS, 1859.



## P R E F A C E.

VERY few remarks indeed are necessary as a preface to these Lectures, which were written and preached and are now published in accordance with the directions of the munificent Founder of the Hulsean Lectureship.

The shape in which they now appear is that of seven lectures and a conclusion. They were all preached before the University in the year 1860, excepting the fifth, which was not preached, on account of some new regulations having been made with regard to the Lectureship. The Conclusion was preached as part of the introductory Lecture.

It may perhaps be well here to notice, with respect to the title, *The Seven Words spoken against the Lord Jesus*, that no allusion is made in the text of the Lectures to the number of the accusations against the Lord being exactly seven. It is, however, no fanciful or unnatural grouping which separates the accusing words thus. And it may well suggest food upon which the devout mind may meditate in private, that the words spoken against the Lord Jesus by the world in His lifetime, as well as the words spoken by Him to the world from His Cross of shame and suffering, group themselves

severally into the mystical number of completion—seven.

In endeavouring to investigate the motives which induced the opponents of our Lord to act as they did, I have particularly avoided a method of looking at the subject which is not uncommon,—I mean, the method of regarding those who rejected and crucified the Lord as such monsters of iniquity as to make it unnecessary to suppose that they were influenced by the same motives and methods of reasoning as those which influence us and are the springs of our daily action now. For if we explain all the wickedness of that period as a mental phenomenon, we not only miss all the lesson which is to be derived from a contemplation of the crime, but also very unnecessarily throw around the perpetrators of it a supernatural halo which prevents us from seeing them clearly.

With reference to Lecture IV. and the conclusions there drawn about one of the great questions of the day—the Sabbath question—it is with regret that I have arrived at a conclusion from which I know many eminently good and devout men will differ. But the fact, that there have throughout the whole history of the Church always been numbers, also eminent in love to God and in holiness of living, whose views are those which I here advocate, prevents that sentiment of regret from assuming the force of an argument.

With reference to another question of the day—the evidences of the Christian religion—which is touched upon in Lecture VII, I will merely remark here, that it is those only who think lightly on the

subject, that will now, after the turn the discussion on the evidences has taken, repeat as though it were indisputable Paley's axiom, "That we are unable to conceive of a revelation being made except by miracles<sup>1</sup>." To others it is clear that this position is not merely untenable, but is one which is terribly convenient for our enemies.

May the Holy Spirit of God, Who did, as it were at this time, most abundantly descend upon the infant Church, bless this humble effort to discover why He was resisted and thwarted when He taught and preached through Jesus of Nazareth; and may He overrule this and all attempts to illustrate the Life of the Son of God, in whatever spirit they be written, so that they may tend to the honour and glory of the Holy and Ever-blessed Trinity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Evidences of Christianity*, "Preliminary Considerations."



CLAUSES FROM THE WILL OF THE REV. JOHN HULSE<sup>1</sup>, LATE OF  
ELWORTH IN THE COUNTY OF CHESTER, CLERK, DECEASED,  
DATED THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF JULY, IN THE YEAR OF  
OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND AND SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-  
SEVEN.

By this Will it is directed that four clauses of it are to be prefixed to every series of Lectures<sup>2</sup>. Of these Clause 1 specifies the proportions in which the proceeds of certain estates are to be divided between a Dissertator and a Lecturer; Clause 2 directs that a salary of £60 be paid to the latter; Clause 3 names a further augmentation. The most important is Clause 4, which relates to the office and duties of the Lecturer. The discourses are to be twenty in number (reduced by an order of the Court of Chancery, Dec. 21, 1830, to eight); ten to be preached in the Spring and ten in the Autumn of each year. The subject of the discourses is by this Clause defined thus:

The subject of five sermons in the Spring and likewise of five sermons in the Autumn shall be to show the evidence for Revealed Religion, and to demonstrate in the most convincing and persuasive manner the truth and excellence of Christianity, so as to include not only the prophecies and miracles general and particular, but also any other proper and useful arguments, whether the same be direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, which he may think fittest to discourse upon, either in general or particular, especially the collateral arguments, or else any particular article or branch thereof, and chiefly against notorious infidels, whether Atheists or Deists, not descending to any particular sects or controversies (so much to be lamented) amongst Christians themselves, except some new or dangerous error, either of superstition or enthusiasm, as of Popery or Methodism or the like, either in opinion or practice shall prevail,

<sup>1</sup> See *Trusts, Statutes, and Directions affecting the Endowments of the University of Cambridge*, p. 262 sq., Cambridge, 1857.

<sup>2</sup> By a later Clause in the Will it is directed that, "to save unnecessary expense, only the material parts or chief heads shall be mentioned."

in which case only it may be necessary for that time to write and preach against the same.....And as to the ten sermons that remain the lecturer or preacher shall take for his subject some of the more difficult texts or obscure parts of the Holy Scriptures, such as may appear to be more generally useful or necessary to be explained, and which may best admit of such a comment or explanation, without presuming to pry too far into the profound secrets and awful mysteries of the Almighty. And in all the said twenty sermons such practical observations shall be made and such useful conclusions added, as may best instruct and edify mankind; and the said twenty sermons to be every year printed.

After the recital of the last clause Mr Hulse directs that the following invocation which occurs at the conclusion of the Will is “to be printed by way of preface in each particular work.”

And may the Divine blessing for ever go along with all my benefactions, and may the Greatest and the Best of Beings by his all-wise providence and gracious influence make the same effectual to His own glory and the good of my fellow-creatures!

After this pious invocation follows a sentence which, on this the last occasion when the words of this munificent supporter of religious truth will be printed as a preface to the work of his Lecturer, may well be published as shewing the liberality and fervour of his intentions:

Thus earnestly praying that due honour and reverence may be ever paid to the Supreme Fountain of bliss and goodness, and sincerely wishing all increase of true religion and virtue and satisfaction to mankind, I desire, when the Divine Providence shall think fit, to exchange this frail and transitory state for one that is infinitely and eternally happy in Jesus Christ.



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## LECTURE I.

### ON THE OPPOSITION TO THE LORD JESUS.

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HOSEA VII. 13.

*“ Though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.”*

UNDOUBTEDLY the most important event that has happened yet in the whole history of the world, is the execution of the Lord Jesus—the promised Messiah—as a common malefactor: the whole of the civilised world, Jew and Gentile, alike took part in it; the whole of the civilised world has been changed in consequence of it. Now although we believe it to have been in accordance with the counsels of God, long before determined, that the Messiah should thus be rejected, and put to death; yet as, in working out His plans, God usually works through certain laws, which we may observe regulating human motives and actions now, He probably did so in this case: at any rate we are not justified in considering those laws to have been suspended, unless we are expressly told that they were so: we must assume rather that human conduct, and human springs of action, were in the same connection with each other in the days when our Lord was on earth, as they are now. An investigation then of the motives, which led the contemporaries of the Lord Jesus to reject Him, is interesting even as a mere matter of historical research into the causes which brought about this great event, and will form a very fitting subject for discourses which have for their defined purpose, “ the illustration and confirmation of the sacred truths of Christianity, with express

reference to notorious objectors to the same"; for are we not likely to find that the same motives which led those, to whom the Lord Jesus first came, to reject Him, are at work still, and are influencing those who reject Him, and His truth now?

Now the most natural way to find out what motives led the contemporaries of the Lord to reject Him as Messiah, and to inflict the punishment of death upon Him, will be to examine, not merely into the accusation upon which He was condemned, but also into all the accusations which were brought against Him during His life on earth. We shall find that these resolve themselves into seven, each of which was brought against Him more than once, and some of which were frequently laid to His charge.

Now the first and most important accusation of all—for it is the one upon which the Sanhedrin at last condemned Him to death—is that of speaking blasphemy. The next in importance, for it was probably at the bottom of the bitter enmity of the Pharisees towards Him, is that of being anti-Judaical—that is,—of being opposed to those marks and privileges which were the chief distinction of the Jew; and under this charge I mean to include the three separate charges of speaking lightly of the Temple, appearing to disregard the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and neglecting the traditions of the elders. Another accusation, that of Sabbath-breaking, seems properly to belong to this last; but the importance this charge acquires, from its being repeated so frequently, and from its implying, as it did, a breach of the written law of Moses, makes it advisable to consider it by itself. Another accusation is that of being no ascetic; another that of associating with publicans and sinners. Then there is the accusation of treason against Cæsar, upon which the authority of Rome condemned and executed Him. And lastly we must consider the accusation of working miracles by Satanic agency, although this cannot have formed the reason His accusers had for rejecting Him, for it was only after they had really rejected Him in their hearts, that this charge was urged, in order to surmount the difficulty presented by His miracles.

And then, bearing in mind that our meditations are to be directed towards some of the most notorious opponents

of the truth, we shall in each case inquire who they are, in the history of the Church, that have acted in the spirit of these accusers. It is evident that the only opponents who have repeated, and continue to repeat, the very same accusations against the Lord Jesus, are the Jews themselves, who in this shew indeed that they consent to the deeds of their forefathers. In order therefore to bring a greater variety of objectors under our notice, it will be necessary to ask not the question, 'Who make the same accusation against the Lord now?' but the question, 'Who have adopted the error which was the immediate cause of the accusation being made?' or,—which comes to the same thing,—'Who bring against the Church of Christ the accusations which His contemporaries brought against him?' And in considering the views of those who differ from us, may the Holy Spirit fill us especially with the grace of Christian love and kindness; may we remember, that if we rejoice in the possession of the living truth, it is through the grace of God, and not of our own selves, that we hold this treasure; and that, if others have it not, the God, Who has not made any two of His creatures exactly alike, may have made these others to differ from us in this,—that what has seemed plain and convincing to us has not seemed so to them;—but how much this particular difference of their minds may be due to God, and how much to themselves, and therefore how much responsibility will be attributed to them by the God Who knows what He made them, are questions which are not set for our solution.

Now there are one or two preliminary considerations, with reference to some of these words spoken against the Lord Jesus by His contemporaries, which may conveniently form part of an introductory lecture.

With reference then to the first accusation,—that of speaking blasphemy,—I would here point out that it is undoubtedly the most important of all the charges brought against our Lord by the Jews; because it is the one upon which the Sanhedrin condemned Him to death. Now the Sanhedrin, at that time, was recognised both by Jew and Roman as the proper government of the Jews in all civil and ecclesiastical matters; and therefore, whatever may have been the different motives prevailing with the different classes of the

Jews in rejecting the Lord Jesus, the charge of blasphemy is really the ground upon which He was officially rejected by the recognised government of the nation. Nothing short of this condemnation of the Lord by the Sanhedrin could have involved the whole nation in the sin of rejecting and executing Him.

And here too perhaps it may be convenient to call to mind that the word 'blasphemy' has in Scripture rather an extended signification: besides the primary meanings of 'reviling God', and of 'denying Him His proper attributes', it has frequently the further meaning of 'assuming the attributes which belong to God alone'; and it is in this last sense that the word is used in accusation against the Lord<sup>1</sup>. Now according to the written law the punishment due to blasphemy was death by stoning: the oral law added that after the blasphemer had been stoned the body should be affixed to a cross<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, the oral law evidently looked on 'blasphemy' and 'idolatry' as precisely the same crimes: the punishments of the two crimes were to be in every particular alike. And when we consider the extended meaning of the word 'blasphemy', I think we can see a good reason for treating it as though it were 'idolatry'; for what is the difference between claiming the attributes of God for another, and setting up another God to be worshipped?

Now there is a question, which naturally arises in connection with this charge of blasphemy, and which we may conveniently discuss here. Did the Jews expect their Messiah to be a mere man, or to be Divine? Now, if they

<sup>1</sup> See Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 204, also Olshausen, *Commentary on Matth.* ix. 3. Bengel's definition (*in Matth.* ix. 3) is perhaps as concise and clear as possible: "Blasphemia est, cum 1. Deo tribuuntur indigna, 2. Deo negantur digna, 3. Dei propria communicantur cum iis, quibus non competunt." Grotius is driven to attribute a very forced meaning to the word 'blasphemy' on account of his opinion that our Lord was put to death for merely calling himself Messiah. He says (*in Matth.* xxvi. 65), "Βλασφημίαν vocat Pontifex quòd Jesus se Christum profiteretur: et sanè erat ni Christus fuisset; Nam qui sibi eam potestatem falsò arrogat, in Deum est contumeliosus."

<sup>2</sup> "Lapidati omnes suspenduntur: verba R. Elieseris. At sapientes aiunt: non suspenditur nisi blasphemus et idololatra" (*Mishna, Tract. de Synedriis*, Vol. iv. p. 235. Ed. Surenhusii).



generally believed that He that should come would be indeed Divine, their whole conduct with reference to this accusation was not only a very miracle of iniquity, but becomes altogether inexplicable. For they never brought the charge of blasphemy against the Lord for simply declaring Himself the Messiah,—which would have been the same thing to them as declaring Himself God, if they expected Messiah to be God;—and when the Sanhedrin were convinced that He claimed to be superhuman, they were at once satisfied that all that was necessary for condemning Him to death had been proved; whereas, if they had believed that the Messiah would be Divine, they would then have had to prove further, that He who claimed to be superhuman was not the Messiah; but this is a question upon which they evidently did not enter. And when we come to consider the different occasions upon which the accusation of blasphemy was brought against Him, we shall see plainly that the drift of the Jews' objection was always, 'This man blasphemeth, and therefore cannot be the Messiah', and never took the form, 'This man is not the Messiah, and therefore blasphemeth'. And besides all this, we know, from the earliest Christian writers<sup>1</sup>, that the Jews of their time, like the Jews of later ages, expected for a Messiah a merely human king and prophet<sup>2</sup>.

There is only one other of the accusations about which anything need be anticipated here—that of Sabbath-breaking.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Justin Martyr, who was certainly well acquainted with the opinions of the Jews of his day, puts into the mouth of Trypho, and allows to pass without contradiction, "καὶ γὰρ πάντες ἡμεῖς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀνθρώπων ἐξ ἀνθρώπων προσδοκῶμεν γενήσεσθαι." p. 235. Edit. Thirlby. And Origen says, "Ἰουδαῖος δὲ οὐκ ἂν ὁμολογήσαι ὅτι προφήτης τις εἶπεν ἤξειν Θεοῦ υἱόν· ὁ γὰρ λέγουσιν ἔστιν, ὅτι ἤξει ὁ Χριστὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ· καὶ πολλάκις γε ζητοῦσι πρὸς ἡμᾶς εὐθέως περὶ υἱοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς οὐδενὸς ὄντος τοιοῦτου, οὐδὲ προφητευθέντος." *Cont. Cels.* lib. i. § 49. (Edit. Delarue, p. 366.)

<sup>2</sup> The names of Pearson, Bull, Pococke, Allix and others who espoused the opposite view, are well calculated to make us pause in our conclusion; but the strength of the argument, drawn not merely from the probability of the case, but also from the narrative as we have it in the Gospels, and from the testimony of Jews of the age succeeding that of our Lord, is too great to be easily overwhelmed. See Basnage, *History of the Jews*, Book IV. Chap. 24, where the question is discussed well and fully; see also Wilson, *Illustration &c. of the N. T.* p. 2.

And with reference to this charge, of which we have more instances recorded in the Gospel than of any other, a discussion as to whether it formed one of the charges brought against the Lord at His trial may very well find a place here.

It has been recorded that seven of our Lord's miracles were wrought upon the Sabbath-day<sup>1</sup>—they were all of them miracles of healing. Two of them were wrought upon the same Sabbath, and on this occasion, no accusation of Sabbath-breaking appears to have been brought forward. It was at Capernaum, in quite the early part of His Galilæan ministry; the Pharisees of Jerusalem had not yet raised the cry of Sabbath-breaker after Him; and it probably never occurred to those of Capernaum to do so, on account of a healing, which simply followed at a word, and did not involve even the appearance of a broken Sabbath, by the carrying of a bed, or by the doing of any outward act that could be considered work. However on the five other Sabbaths, on which our Lord wrought cures, the Pharisaic cry of 'Sabbath-day' was raised against Him. And there is one other case recorded of this accusation being made, which was not connected with any miracle—the occasion of His disciples plucking the ears of corn, on their way through the fields on a Sabbath-day.

Now this accusation having been made so frequently during the Lord's ministry, we should naturally have expected to find it one of the prominent charges brought against Him at His trial before the Sanhedrin; and it is probably merely from conjecture such as this, that some of the Apocryphal Gospels have given it a very important place in the accusations then brought against the Lord<sup>2</sup>. Now although it is

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<sup>1</sup> When Trench (*Notes on the Miracles*, p. 312) suggests that in Mark i. 34, we have a general intimation of many more miracles worked upon the Sabbath day, he overlooks v. 32, from which we learn that the sun had set, and therefore the Sabbath was over before these miracles were wrought.

<sup>2</sup> The Gospel of Nicodemus, which only takes up the Gospel narrative where the Jews bring the Lord before Pilate, makes Sabbath-breaking the chief charge urged before him. This seems very like a guess at what may have happened; but still more so seems the answer to the charge, which is made by several upon whom the Lord's miracles had been worked, coming forward and describing the circumstances under which they had been healed. See Thilo's *Codex Apocryphus*, pp. 502, 558.

not altogether contrary to the testimony of the four Gospels to suppose that some charge of Sabbath-breaking was brought against the Lord at His trial—for we are not told in support of what accusation the evidence which broke down was given<sup>1</sup>—yet it is very worthy of notice, that this charge appears to have been altogether dropped by the Pharisees at least four months before the trial. Just as the accusation exhibits its most bitter enmity it is altogether withdrawn, as far as the Pharisees of Jerusalem, and the leaders of the Jewish nation are concerned. Let us see if we can discover any reason for this.

About four months before the crucifixion, when the healing of a blind man in Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day had heated the opposition of the Pharisees into the most violent animosity, the Sanhedrin were called together<sup>2</sup>, to consider the whole case of the Galilæan Prophet Who claimed to be the Messiah, and to settle some plan for preventing the people from proclaiming Him the Messiah-King of Israel. The Pharisaical party are vehement in urging that He should be condemned by the Sanhedrin, and put to death, and the question naturally arises as to which charge should be pressed against Him. It must soon have been evident that it would be impossible to carry successfully through the Sanhedrin such a charge as that of Sabbath-breaking by miracle-working; for, as soon as the charge is suggested, a division amongst the members of the council is apparent. When some of them put forward their argument, ‘This man is not of God because He keepeth not the Sabbath-day’, others answer, ‘How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?’ This answer may very possibly have come from the Sadducees, who formed a not inconsiderable element in the Sanhedrin<sup>3</sup>, and whose opposition to the Pharisees had led them to reject the oral law, which the Pharisees esteemed so highly, and upon which much of the charge of Sabbath-

<sup>1</sup> Matth. xxvi. 60; Mark xiv. 56.

<sup>2</sup> John ix. 13. The Pharisees being the most influential party in the Sanhedrin often stand, in S. John’s Gospel, for the Sanhedrin itself. See ch. vii. 47, xi. 46, 47. That the assembly mentioned here was an assembly of at least one of the lesser courts of the Sanhedrin if not of the great Sanhedrin itself, see Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 297, and Alford, on Joh. ix. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxiii. 6.

breaking depended<sup>1</sup>. However this may have been, the charge of Sabbath-breaking is henceforth dropped altogether in Jerusalem. During the whole of the Lord's subsequent dispute with the Jews at the feast of the Dedication, and during the whole of His teaching, and preaching, and disputing, in the week in which He was crucified, we do not once hear of any allusion to this charge, which the Jews had so frequently before brought up against Him. It was quite evident that some point must be raised, upon which Pharisee and Sadducee would agree to condemn Him; and it was also quite evident, that there would be no agreement upon the charge of breaking the Sabbath by working miracles on that day. All this makes it probable that Sabbath-breaking was not one of those charges which were brought against the Lord at the beginning of His trial, and which then fell to the ground.

And now it will be well to say a few words about the different opinions and prejudices, which combined to reject, with insult and scorn, the greatest blessing that Heaven ever sent to Earth.

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Now foremost amongst the opponents of the Lord Jesus undoubtedly stand the Pharisees. After once their animosity had been awakened, they became His most bitter and unrelenting foes while He was on earth; nor did they cease their opposition until they thought they had triumphantly established the fact that he was an impostor, and for ever rendered that imposture harmless.

The religion of the Pharisee was Judaism—Judaism in its most extravagant and perverted form. Religion in his eyes consisted essentially in descent from Abraham, in the temple with all its rites and sacrifices, in the law of Moses, and in the traditional or oral law, which he regarded as of equal importance with the law of Moses, for in his opinion both laws had been delivered to Moses by God upon Mount Sinai<sup>2</sup>. Now although all these things, with the exception of the last, were really parts, and important parts too, of the Jewish religion, they were not the vital truth and essence of

<sup>1</sup> See Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, xviii. 1. § 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Allix, *Judgment of the Jewish Church*, Book II; and Basnage, *Hist. of the Jews*, Bk. ii. Ch. x. § 3. For examples of the extravagant estimation in which the oral law was held, see Kitto, *Bibl. Cycl.* Art. 'Talmud.'

it, as the Pharisee supposed. The real essence of that religion was, what has ever been the essence of all true religion, namely, love of God to Man, meeting as its return the love of Man to God—Love of God to Man shewing itself in justice, mercy, and truth in His dealings with men; and Love of Man to God shewing itself most prominently in justice, mercy, and truth in man's dealings with man. And this love of God was not confined, as the Pharisee thought, to one particular family; God had created all men, and loved all men, alike; and if He had selected one family to be His peculiar people, to be nearer to Him than others, to worship Him the true God, while the other nations of the world were lying in heathen darkness, it was that they might be witnesses for His truth amongst men, that they might be the keepers of His Holy Word, and might thus, in His own good time, unfold their manifestation of Him to the world, might reveal their light to lighten the Gentiles, and spread abroad their blessing to bless all the nations of the earth. And thus we may notice that the Pharisees were not only false in their religion, but false in their very Judaism. The true Jew would have been a true follower of the Messiah when He appeared; for the Christ Himself was of course the truest of all Jews. How could it be otherwise? In Him all the types and symbols of the Jewish religion had their fulfilment; and in Him they had their origin: He was to them the beginning and the end. But when the Lord Jesus began, at the very commencement of His ministry, to proclaim the true view of the Jewish Polity, He found Himself immediately in antagonism to the Pharisees with their perverted Judaism. He had something to say, which was sure to offend them, about each of those three things in which they considered religion to consist: descent from Abraham was no thing to be relied upon, for John Baptist's had been no idle threat, that, if the Jews would not obey God, God could of the very stones of the ground raise up those, who would be in heart and soul the children of the faithful Abraham<sup>1</sup>: the temple at Jerusalem upon which

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. iii. 9; Luke iii. 8. For examples of the Lord teaching this same lesson see Luke iv. 25 sq.; Matth. xxi. 28 sq.; also especially the *Parable of the wicked husbandmen*.

they prided themselves so much was no longer needed; for the Church of the Messiah was to be a Church of the world, and sacrifices would no longer be necessary<sup>1</sup>: and as for the third thing on which they relied, namely, their observance of the law, the Lord had very much to say that would offend them; they had by the traditional law, which they had received from their fathers by the side of the law of Moses, and which they regarded with equal reverence, actually made in many instances the law of Moses to be of no effect<sup>2</sup>. On each of these three points they at once joined issue with Him. It was the animosity raised by opposing their views upon one of these points, which led them on one occasion to seek His life<sup>3</sup>; and His teaching upon another of these points was made the subject of an accusation against Him at His trial before the Sanhedrin, and of a scoff at Him, as He hung dying upon the cross<sup>4</sup>.

Next to the Pharisees in our consideration naturally come the Sadducees, who are so often mentioned as connected with them. Now it does not appear that the Sadducees ever brought any direct accusation against the Lord. They came indeed with the Pharisees, on one occasion, and asked our Lord (probably with reference to the law of Moses for the testing of prophets) to give them a sign that He was the promised Messiah<sup>5</sup>; and they were always quite ready to dispute with Him on those points on which they differed from Him<sup>6</sup>. But here their opposition seems to have stopped. They probably considered that, although they did not believe Jesus to be the Christ, they were not bound to take any active steps to prevent the people believing on Him. And perhaps the very bitter and decided hostility of the Pharisees to the Lord, founded partly on His neglect of the traditions of the elders, would in some way ward off the enmity of the Sadducees, who were so violently opposed to the Pharisees, and who had no sympathy whatever in their reverence for

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<sup>1</sup> John ii. 18 sq.; Matth. xxiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. xv. 8, 9; Mark vii. 6 et sq.; Matth. xxiii.

<sup>3</sup> Luke iv. 28, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Matth. xxvi. 61; Mark xiv. 58; Matth. xxvii. 40; Mark xv. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Matth. xvi. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Matth. xxii. 23 et sq.

the oral law<sup>1</sup>. It was this enmity between Pharisee and Sadducee which raised such difficulties in the way of the Pharisees, when they had determined to obtain a condemnation of the Lord by the Sanhedrin, and which probably, as we have seen, made them suppress altogether, at His trial, the charge which had been most frequently brought against Him during His ministry. It was necessary for the Pharisees, in order to secure the cooperation of the Sadducees, to find some charge against the Lord for which the law of Moses awarded death as a punishment, and of all the charges brought against Him that of blasphemy was the only one which answered this condition.

In S. John's Gospel we read much of a class of opponents of the Lord who are called "the Jews." S. John appears invariably to designate by this term the party holding the most exalted notions of Jewish privileges, and looking to the Sanhedrin as the highest authority of the nation: they appear also always to have belonged to the party of the Pharisees<sup>2</sup>.

The Herodians, another class of Jews, are twice mentioned as combining with the Pharisees in order to obtain from the Lord Himself materials for His accusation<sup>3</sup>. We can acquire no information from contemporary writers as to what the particular opinions of these Herodians were. We are therefore left to the two passages of Scripture where they are mentioned, and to conjecture, to form an idea of the principles which marked them out as a separate class amongst the Jews. They probably regarded the government of God's peculiar people by the family of the Herods, as the only feasible compromise for preserving the independent national existence of the Jews from the absorbing dominion of Rome. If so, the Herodians of the time of our Lord's ministry were probably scheming in order that Judæa might be removed from the

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<sup>1</sup> It was perhaps on account of the opposition of the Sadducees to the Lord having been thus so much less virulent than that of the Pharisees, that S. John omitted all mention of them in his Gospel. It is well worthy of remark that the opposition of the Sadducees becomes more evident *after the resurrection*. They are frequently mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as bitterly opposed to the truth.

<sup>2</sup> i. 19, vii. 1, ix. 22, xviii. 12, 14. See Ellicott, *Lectures on the Life of our Lord*, p. 115, note, 141, note.

<sup>3</sup> Mark iii. 6; Matth. xxii. 16.

jurisdiction of the Roman Procurator, and placed under that of Herod Antipas. The opposition then of the Herodians to the Lord would arise from their seeing, that if the multitudes following Him should set up the standard of rebellion with the Lord Jesus for King, as they appeared at one time likely to do, an end would be put to all Herod's hopes of being permitted to govern the whole kingdom of his father; and that the struggle, by which the power of Rome would certainly put down any insurrection in Judæa or Galilee, would be not unlikely to end in his being deprived of even his tetrarchy of Galilee<sup>1</sup>. The Herodians were thus in the position to afford the Pharisees just the assistance they required. For as soon as it had been determined to obtain a condemnation of the Lord by the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees must have seen that it would be necessary to obtain the sanction of the Roman Procurator to carry out the sentence<sup>2</sup>. They knew very well that Pilate would not be likely to confirm a sentence of death passed by the Sanhedrin, when he should hear that the crime for which the accused was condemned was only a breach of Jewish law; and therefore they saw the necessity of getting up another charge against the Lord, to be ready whenever He should be brought before the Procurator. The charge which naturally suggested itself to their minds, both on account of the certainty of Pilate's punishing it with death, and also from the plausibility of accusing one, who said He was Messiah, of claiming kingly dignity, was treason against Cæsar; and so they laid their plot to obtain satisfactory evidence, in support of this charge, to be produced before the Procurator; and here it was that the Herodians could be of service to them. Our Lord is teaching in the courts of the Temple; it is the last day of His public ministry; but He alone knows this. The people who are very attentive to hear

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<sup>1</sup> For references to conjectures upon this subject see Ellicott, *Lectures on the Life of our Lord*, p. 177, note.

<sup>2</sup> This necessity has been denied, and confusion has thus been introduced into the Gospel narrative, probably from Jewish pride being reluctant to confess that the power of life and death had been taken from the Sanhedrin by the Romans. It seems however most probable that the declaration of the Jews that it was not lawful for them to put any one to death (John xviii. 31) was strictly true. See again Ellicott's *Lectures*, p. 311, note, and Lardner, *Credibility of the Gospel History*, Book I. ch. ii. §§. v. vi.



Him are all around Him, when some of the Pharisees with the Herodians approach Him. They are not the leaders of the Pharisees, well known to the multitude as having often disputed with the Lord, but some who have not yet taken any open part in opposing Him. They come forward, and with base flattery on their lips to hide, as they think, from Him who knows all things, the malice in their hearts, they earnestly beg the great Teacher of the people to decide for them a question that is troubling them, namely, whether they the theocratic people, who pay the temple-tax commanded by Moses, ought also to pay tax to Cæsar. Now the object the Pharisees had, in going with the Herodians, was not to place the Lord in a dilemma: there was only one answer which the Pharisees wished to hear, only one which they thought it possible for the Lord to give, namely, 'you ought not to pay tax to Cæsar<sup>1</sup>.' But their object was probably two-fold. They wished it to appear that the question arose naturally in a dispute between themselves and the Herodians; they wished also to have witnesses who would not object to appearing before the Roman Governor, and giving evidence in support of the charge of treason,—evidence which a Pharisee could not have given, without appearing odious in the eyes of the people.

And in considering the different classes of those who opposed the Lord, we must not forget that large class called in the Gospels by a word<sup>2</sup> which has been rendered in our version sometimes "the multitude", and sometimes "the people." The Evangelists probably did not mean by this word the Jewish people in the strictest and most exclusive sense, (for whom they had another word<sup>3</sup>, which has been invariably rendered "the people", and whom we may suppose to have coincided in opinion with those whom S. John has called emphatically "the Jews"), but they included in the more general term all that mixed multitude of true Jews, and Galilæan Jews, and Jews of the dispersion, who followed the Lord in Galilee and Peræa, and who flocked up to Jerusalem in large

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<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom (*In Matth.* Hom. LXX.) says, 'In either way indeed they expected to lay hold of Him; but they desired rather that He should say something against the Herodians.'

<sup>2</sup> ὁ ὄχλος.

<sup>3</sup> ὁ λαός.

numbers at the great feasts. Now, I say, we must consider this multitude as amongst the rejectors and opponents of the Lord; for although they followed Him in crowds for a long time<sup>1</sup>, and heard Him gladly, and rejoiced at the mighty things that were done by Him<sup>2</sup>, and attended Him into Jerusalem in triumph<sup>3</sup>, they nevertheless at the last deserted Him, shouting for a robber and murderer, and giving up to death Him who had been their favourite<sup>4</sup>. Let us endeavour to trace this change of feeling towards the Lord in this Jewish mob. Smarting under the degradation of seeing a Roman Procurator administering justice from the palace of Herod<sup>5</sup>, the serried ranks of a Roman army marching along the streets of Jerusalem, Roman soldiers in the fortress where Maccabæan princes had reigned in splendour after having delivered Jerusalem from Syrian rule<sup>6</sup>, and every now and then goaded to madness and open rebellion by seeing the standards, with the hated effigies of Cæsar, desecrating the Holy City<sup>7</sup>, the Jews

<sup>1</sup> Matth. iv. 25, viii. 1, xii. 15, xix. 2, xx. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Luke viii. 40; Mark xii. 37; Matth. ix. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Matth. xxi. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Matth. xxvii. 20.

<sup>5</sup> See Ellicott, *Lectures on the Life of our Lord*, p. 339, note.

<sup>6</sup> When Simon the Maccabæan had finally expelled the Macedonian garrison from its last stronghold on the Acra, his first design was to destroy every defence which had been used so fearfully against his nation, and so for three years the work of destruction was carried on, until the very hill, upon which the stronghold had stood, was reduced below the level of the temple-hill beside it. (Joseph. *Ant.* XIII. 6. § 7.) He soon seems however to have changed his plan and to have determined that the Acra should be again the stronghold of the Jewish nation. He built a fort on the north side of the temple so as to command the site of the Acra, and here he and his immediate followers resided. (1 Macc. xiii. 52.) This fort or castle (*φρούριον* in Josephus) was first called Baris. It was enlarged and strengthened by Hyrcanus the son of Simon. (*Ant.* XVIII. 4. § 3.) It appears to have towered above the temple. (*Ant.* XIV. 1. § 2.) It could not however have been of much importance yet as a fortress, for, in the account of the siege of the temple by Pompey, it is not once mentioned. But when Herod besieged in the temple the last of the Maccabees, it had certainly become of more importance, for it then remained the only part of the whole city which was not taken. (*Bell. Jud.* I. 18. § 2; *Ant.* XIV. 16. § 2.) Herod completed, improved, and enlarged it, and named it Antonia after his friend Mark Antony. In the time of Roman rule it was regularly occupied by a garrison. (For further information see Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, Art. 'Jerusalem;' Winer, *Bibl. Real-Woert.* Art. 'Tempel,' Vol. II. p. 586.)

<sup>7</sup> About A.D. 10 Pilate introduced into the Holy City the standards with the images of the Emperor and of the Eagle, which former procurators had

were only too ready to flock around any one who would give out that he was a prophet come to deliver them from this hateful and disgraceful yoke. Thus they flocked around Judas of Galilee in quite the early days of the Province of Judæa<sup>1</sup>; and thus again even a hundred years after the time of the Lord, when Jerusalem had long been destroyed, they rose in rebellion at the call of one who said he was the prophet come to deliver them from hated Rome<sup>2</sup>; thus too the common people flocked around Jesus of Nazareth. The prejudices, which alienated the Pharisaical party from Him, had little root in them. Like the mob of every other time and country they were easily won, by their love of the marvellous and the supernatural, to an allegiance, which required to be nourished continually by fresh signs and wonders, which was an allegiance only while He to whom they paid it appeared to act as they wished, and which in the first hour that it was really tried, shewed itself unreal and valueless. Is it not true, if we state the case in more general terms, that popular favour, even when it is on the right side, is usually based on wrong motives; and that some popular fallacy is ever lurking concealed beneath every popular truth? Now the Lord certainly gave no encouragement whatever to these mistaken views of the people, who would have set Him up as an earthly sovereign: on the contrary He always checked them. After the miracle, which seemed to make the most impression upon the people—that of feeding the five thousand with bread created by the word of His mouth—when He saw that they would come and set Him up as King, He withdrew Himself from them<sup>3</sup>; and when on another occasion one of His followers came to Him, asking Him to assume an earthly authority, He distinctly refused with the words, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you<sup>4</sup>?” Once only did He appear in any way to yield to this desire of the people to set Him up as King. But the truth is, that He was their King, although not in the low carnal sense they supposed, and there were

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kept out of sight. This created such a disturbance that he was obliged to withdraw them. (*Joseph. Ant.* XVIII. 3. § 1.)

<sup>1</sup> *Joseph. Ant.* XVIII. 1. § 1.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of Barcochab see Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, III. 115.

<sup>3</sup> John vi. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xii. 14.

prophecies about His kingly entry into the Holy City which must be accomplished, and so, on His approach to Jerusalem not a week before His death, the multitudes who had been for the last few months thronging His every footstep, in the country beyond the Jordan, and who thought that He was about to set up the kingdom they so longed to see, had their feelings gratified by the one act of our Lord's life which was most after their own heart. He makes an entry into the Holy City accompanied by the multitudes from Galilee, and from beyond the Jordan, in a triumphal procession, with waving of branches, and garments spread for Him to trample under foot, and shoutings, and rejoicings: many too advance from the city with boughs to meet them<sup>1</sup>; and they all unite in shouting "Hosannah to the Son of David—Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." Now in tracing the change of feeling in these people towards the Lord, we must notice that this triumphal procession was not the turning point in the popular favour. His popularity appears to have gone on if anything increasing during the next two days, that is, throughout the remainder of the time of His public teaching and preaching in the Temple and the streets of Jerusalem. It is of these two days that S. Luke has written<sup>2</sup>, "in the daytime He was teaching in the Temple; and at night He went out and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives; and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the Temple for to hear Him." It was in these two days, that the Scribes and Pharisees sought to lay hands on Him, but dared not, "for they feared the multitude<sup>3</sup>." It was on the last of these two days that, before all the people, He put to silence, in succession, the Pharisees with the Herodians, and the Sadducees, and we read, "no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions"; and still, we read, "the common people heard Him gladly<sup>4</sup>." The second of these two days—the Tuesday of the week in which He was crucified—was the last day of His public ministry: He does not appear to have entered the city the next day; and the day after that He only

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<sup>1</sup> John xii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Matth. xxi. 46.

<sup>2</sup> xii. 37, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Matth. xxii. 46; Mark xii. 37.

entered in the evening to eat the Passover meal; so that the next time that the multitudes saw Him again, after He left the Temple on this Tuesday evening, was early on the Friday morning, when He was brought in custody from the High Priest's house to be delivered up to the Roman Governor. What then produced such a sudden change in their feelings towards Him? For although they do not appear at first to have accused Him before Pilate, or to have shouted for His blood, yet they were certainly from the beginning not on His side; and before the trial was over, they were persuaded by the Chief Priests to give Him up altogether. Now it seems probable that their low carnal views of the Kingdom He was about to set up, received a severe shock when they saw Him apparently helpless in the hands of the officers of the Sanhedrin, and disfigured by the sufferings which had been already inflicted on Him. Their affection for Him, although right in itself, was altogether founded on error; and when they saw Him thus suffering and smitten, all their love for Him vanished away. They could see no glory but in works of wonder, and triumphal processions, in prosperity and shoutings; and thus it was that His cup was filled up, and His sufferings drove from Him His only friends, just when apparently He needed friends most.

The Roman opposition to the Lord Jesus belongs entirely to the single accusation of treason against Cæsar; and it may therefore be conveniently left, until that accusation is before us, to consider the nature of the antagonism between Him and Romanity. It may be well however here to point out a similarity between the charge upon which the Jews, and that upon which the Gentiles condemned Him. The Romans executed Him for treason against Cæsar—their rightful sovereign: the Jews sentenced Him to death for blasphemy, or, in other words, for treason against God—the rightful sovereign of the theocratic people. The King of Heaven and Earth is put to death for treason against the Emperor of the World: and God Himself is condemned for treason against God. Another contradiction in each case produces another similarity between the two cases. The High Priest of the Jewish nation passes sentence upon the great High Priest of all the world: and the governor of a single Roman Province passes sentence upon the King of all the Earth.

We will now consider in order the different accusations, above enumerated, which were brought against the Lord in His lifetime by His contemporaries. And, while we meditate on the most fearful obstinacy and most wilful blindness, which the earth has ever witnessed, let us pray for the Holy Spirit so to enlighten our hearts and understandings, that neither our prejudices nor our passions may ever lead us to be blind to God's Truth, or to thwart His Will; and while we meditate on the meekness, the gentleness, and the forbearance, with which the Lord Jesus met the mad opposition and senseless revilings of wicked men, may we desire, above all earthly things, to be made like unto Him, and thus to be filled with His Spirit of Love, which is indeed the soul of our Christianity.

## LECTURE II.

### THE CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY.

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S. MATTHEW IX. 3.

*“This man blasphemeth.”*

FIVE times during the Lord's ministry was this charge of blasphemy brought against Him: it was the accusation upon which the Sanhedrin condemned Him to death: and as He hung dying upon the Cross, the words, for the utterance of which He had been condemned, were again cast in His teeth. We may expect then that we have here one of the motives which was most powerful with His opponents in leading them thus to put Him to death, and so doubtless we have. But we must remember that, in order to procure His condemnation by the Sanhedrin, it was quite necessary to find an accusation upon which Pharisee and Sadducee would agree; and therefore other motives than this may have had as much, or even more influence with some, in leading them to do their utmost to bring to a disgraceful punishment Him whom they knew not, and cared not to know.

Let us consider in order the circumstances under which these different accusations of blasphemy were brought against the Lord.

The first occasion was that described in the fifth chapter of S. John's Gospel. The impotent man at the pool of Bethesda had just been healed upon the Sabbath-day; and in answer to the Jews<sup>1</sup>, who cavilled at what they called a

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<sup>1</sup> The Lord's answer, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work”, suggests to us the probability that the Jews had quoted, against this act of healing on the Sabbath-day, Gen. ii. 2, 3, or Exod. xx. 10, 11.

desecration of the Sabbath, our Lord had used words, which implied that God was His Proper Father,—that is,—that He was the Son of God in some far higher sense than they supposed,—in a sense indeed which made Him equal with God<sup>1</sup>. It is happily not necessary for us to enter into the vexed question, as to what feast the Lord was now attending at Jerusalem; for whether it was the second Passover of His ministry, or the feast of Purim which fell about a month before it (and it is between the rival claims of these two, that the whole dispute seems now to lie), it is clear for us that it was His second visit to Jerusalem since His ministry commenced, and that that ministry had now lasted a little more than a year<sup>2</sup>. The question naturally arises then, as to whether this really was the first occasion, upon which Our Blessed Lord had revealed His Divinity to the Jews. Had the question never arisen in any dispute at His former visit to Jerusalem? Had it never arisen during His first year's ministry in Judæa and Galilee? Now when we remember that it was evidently Our Lord's plan to reveal Himself by degrees, and to unfold the great truths concerning Himself and His mission, in succession; and when we consider also, that one of the objects of S. John's Gospel appears to have been, to give us the whole history of this particular persecution of the Lord, which arose from His assuming to Himself the attributes of the Deity, and that the beginning of that persecution seems to be described in the eighteenth verse of the

<sup>1</sup> See Alford, *on John* v. 18.

<sup>2</sup> The solution of the chronological difficulties surrounding this feast by the feast of Purim is a modern suggestion, due first to Kepler, but which has won numerous adherents since, particularly amongst German commentators. Hug, Tholuck, Olshausen, Lücke, Neander, Lange, Wieseler, and Tischendorf are all of them in favour of this view, to whom may be added, of our own harmonists, Ellicott. Ancient authority is decidedly adverse to the feast of Purim, but is divided between the Passover and the feast of Pentecost, being rather in favour of the former. Thus Irenæus, Eusebius, Theodoret, and others, followed in later times by Luther, Scaliger, Grotius, Lightfoot, Hengstenberg, Greswell, Robinson, Trench, &c. are for 'the Passover': while Cyril and Chrysostom, followed by Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Bengel, &c. are for 'the Pentecost.' With opinion thus divided it is well that for our present purpose it is unnecessary for us to decide. Those who wish to see the arguments, and references, will find them in Ellicott, *Lectures on the Life of Our Lord*, pp. 136, 137 notes.



fifth chapter of his Gospel, where he says, "therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but had said that God was His Proper Father, making Himself equal with God"; we shall I think be inclined to conclude, that this was the first time that our Lord had claimed, before those who were unfriendly to Him, attributes which would lay Him open to the charge of blasphemy; or at any rate, that this was the first occasion upon which His enemies understood what it was that He was really claiming<sup>1</sup>.

Now we may remark here that the Lord never explains away His words which lead to the charge of blasphemy, and never accuses the Jews of misunderstanding them. On the occasion we are considering, in answer to the Jews, who appear to have accused Him of making Himself equal with God, He proceeds to say what must inflame them still more against Him. He had assumed a peculiar personal sonship, which seemed to make Him, as they said, equal with God; but now He goes on to claim two separate attributes of the Deity. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father<sup>2</sup>." By these words the Lord Jesus certainly assumed to Himself in full the Divine prerogatives, of 'raising the dead', and of 'judging the world.' Now although the Jews doubtless expected that the Messiah, who was to be greater than any of the Prophets, would of course do as great works as they had done, and would therefore call the dead to life again; and although they expected doubtless that He would be a Judge of Israel in the sense in which Joshua and Samuel were judges; yet they would see by such words as these that He was claiming these prerogatives in a far higher sense, that He was indeed on these points asserting His equality with Him, Whose

<sup>1</sup> The claim which He had made at His first Passover (John ii. 16) was certainly overlooked by the Pharisees, if indeed it was heard by them. Consider too the words with which S. John (ii. 24) ends his account of the Lord's first Passover at Jerusalem: *αὐτὸς δὲ Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἐπίστευεν ἑαυτὸν αὐτοῖς*, κ. τ. λ.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 21—23.

peculiar prerogative they were accustomed to consider it, 'to kill and to make alive<sup>1</sup>', and Whom they recognized as peculiarly the 'Judge of all the earth<sup>2</sup>.' Our Lord was indeed raising the veil, by degrees, in order to reveal Himself to them. It was as though He had said to them, 'You expect that your Messiah will be a Son of God: well He is indeed a Son of God, in a peculiar degree, in a higher sense than you have ever conceived. You expect your Messiah to be a raiser of the dead. He will indeed be a raiser of the dead in the highest sense of the words; for equally with God the Father, He can kill and make alive. You expect your Messiah to be a Judge of Israel. He will be so indeed, for He will be the Judge of all the earth<sup>3</sup>.'

Now let us consider the second occasion upon which the accusation of blasphemy was brought against Him. The Lord probably left Jerusalem immediately after His testimony of Himself had been thus rejected by the Jews, and returned to Galilee. Here after having been rejected by his fellow-townsmen of Nazareth, who now, like the Jews of Jerusalem, (although for a different reason,) actually sought to take His life, He migrated to Capernaum, and brought to this little town the perilous privilege of unexpected blessing, by making it for some time His chief abode. It was very shortly after His removal thither, and probably not more than a month after the accusation of blasphemy had been brought against Him at Jerusalem, that the same charge was brought against Him here<sup>4</sup>. It was on the occasion of His healing the paralytic who had been let down into the crowded

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6; 2 Kings v. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xviii. 25; Ex. xxxiv. 7; Ps. cv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Dean Trench (*Notes on the Miracles*, p. 258,) says of this discourse of our Lord with the Jews that "there is none weightier in Holy Scripture, for the fast fixing of the doctrine concerning the relations of the Father and the Son. Other passages may be as important in regard of the Arian, other again in regard of the Sabellian, declension from the truth; but this upon both sides plants the pillars of the faith."—See also, for the importance of this passage in fixing doctrine, Stier, *on John* v. 18.

<sup>4</sup> This was certainly after the rejection at Nazareth, and shortly after the call of the four disciples (compare Mark i. 21, and ii. 1). The order of events as arranged by S. Mark and S. Luke is probably the right one here; S. Matthew has recorded the same events, but not in their order of time. See Alford, *on Luke* v. 21.

room where He was. Now when we read that there were present in this crowd Pharisees and Doctors of the Law from every town of Galilee and Judæa<sup>1</sup>, we cannot help supposing that this was something more than a common assembly—that it was in fact some sort of previously arranged conference. If so, the Lord is not long before he gives the august assembly fresh and strange matter for their deliberation; for before them all He assumes another divine prerogative, as He addresses the paralytic before Him with the startling words, “Man, thy sins are forgiven thee<sup>2</sup>.” This was certainly ‘to assume a divine prerogative’; for who can forgive a debt save he to whom it is due? and who therefore can forgive a sin save the God against whom it is sinned<sup>3</sup>? Nor was this a prerogative which the Jews in any sense attributed to their expected Messiah<sup>4</sup>. So no wonder that we read, that the Scribes and Pharisees began to reason in their hearts, and to say, “This man blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but God alone?” As yet however they only thought this; they did not utter it. And now, as has been well observed, our Blessed Lord vouchsafed to them a two-fold proof of His right to assume this attribute of Divinity. First of all by reading their secret thoughts He gave each one of these cavillers individually a proof, that He had another attribute of the Deity which He had not yet claimed in words, for He shewed them that He was ‘a Searcher of the heart.’ And next by the power of His word He shewed them that He had a right to the very attribute He claimed; and in this way: Their accusing thought against Him had doubtless been, not merely, ‘that He was assuming an attribute of God’, but ‘that He was assuming an attribute,

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<sup>1</sup> Luke v. 17.

<sup>2</sup> ἀφέωνται σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. These words are, according to some Editors, common to the three Evangelists: Lachmann and Tregelles however read ἀφιένται in Matthew and Luke. The difficulty about the form ἀφέωνται would very likely lead to its being misread. For an explanation of that form see Winer, *Grammatik*, § 15. 3, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> Besides this, that forgiveness of sins was certainly a divine prerogative, see Exodus xxxiv. 7.

<sup>4</sup> John Baptist had certainly announced this as a prerogative of the Messiah (John i. 29), and John's father Zacharias had known that it would be so (Luke i. 77); and therefore the Jews must have read their Scriptures wrong not to expect it also.

which it was impossible to prove that He did not possess.' 'It is easy to say', they were thinking, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee; but how are we to know whether such words have any effect at all? How are we to see whether forgiveness really follows such an utterance?' Now the Lord fully answered all this; for His words and His deeds together made up this answer: 'You accuse me of claiming a Power that belongs to God, and of doing so safely because I claim a Power the absence of which cannot be proved. Well then, I will now claim another divine attribute which is such that, if I claim it falsely, I shall be convicted at once as an impostor and a deceiver; I say to this paralytic, Arise and walk'; and now you may judge whether I have a right to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'.<sup>1</sup> And here we really cannot but remark that such thoughts as those of the Pharisees seem very natural;—nay more, I think we may say that such thoughts might easily have occurred to minds not altogether irreligious. It was doubtless very startling for those, whose most deeply implanted dogma was Monotheism, to hear any one using such language as this. But if their doubt had been such as would have occurred to teachable, humble minds, they would have shewn it in a very different way from that in which they shewed this: and our Lord always reprov'd such doubt in them as sinful. The reason probably was this. Their hearts could not but feel the wonderful sublimity of the words and works of the Lord: they could not but be sensible—as the more teachable and child-like multitude around them were sensible—that His teaching was more than earthly; but they resisted all these holy impulses, from a reluctance to give up their cherished opinions and practice: and so throwing themselves thus into opposition to the Lord, they were glad to lay hold of circumstances, which might have caused doubts even to sincere minds, in order to justify themselves in their own eyes<sup>2</sup>. But on this occasion, at Capernaum, they were foiled in their attempt to raise a Galilæan persecution against the Lord; for the effect of the miracle on the multitude was such, that all attempts of the kind were evidently for the time

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<sup>1</sup> French, *Miracles*, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Olshausen, *on Matth.* ix. 3.

rendered hopeless; for we read, "they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day<sup>1</sup>." And not the least strange of them all, we may be sure, was it, to see the Pharisees, and the Doctors of the Law, some of whom had come all the way from Jerusalem, baffled and put to silence by the Prophet of Galilee, who had claimed an attribute of the Almighty.

It could not have been very long after this that the Lord was invited to the house of one of the Pharisees of Galilee. Here, while sitting at meat, He again assumed the same prerogative of 'forgiving sins', and assumed it too with the same words addressed to the object of His forgiveness,— "Thy sins are forgiven thee<sup>2</sup>." In all probability several of those present would be reminded at once of the healing of the paralytic at Capernaum, and of the charge of blasphemy which was then brought against Him, and of the way in which it was repelled. And so again the murmur is heard from some of those that sit at meat with him, "Who is this that even forgiveth sins?" No answer to the charge follows in this case. Indeed the Lord cannot answer as He did in that other case, there being no visible bodily disease before Him. But although He did not answer those who asked, "Who is this that even forgiveth sins?" His silence does really answer for us 'This Man can even forgive sins.'

This accusation does not appear to have been brought against the Lord again in Galilee. We must now pass on to the feast of Tabernacles, which took place about six months before the Passover at which He was crucified. His Galilaean ministry was now finished. He had taken leave of this the chief scene of His active ministry on earth, with that terrible denunciation of woe against the towns which had been blessed with the inestimable privilege of the presence of the Son of God abiding in them, but which had neglected and despised this blessing;—a denunciation which has been signally, perhaps typically, fulfilled, upon the out-

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<sup>1</sup> For the effect of the miracle on the multitude, compare Matth. ix. 8, Mark ii. 12, and Luke v. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Luke vii. 48.

ward walls and buildings, of which those towns consisted; for while Nazareth, and Cana, and Tiberias, and even Sidon, are still inhabited, and marble columns of beauty, tangled in the waves, still tell the fisherman where Tyre once sat a Queen in her pride, the traveller searches in vain for the sites of Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and finds that their very names have perished from the land<sup>1</sup>.

The feast of Tabernacles, for which the Lord was going to Jerusalem, fell that year about the middle of October<sup>2</sup>. The Jews were expecting Him, and were quite ready to renew their persecution of Him. Indeed we are told, (S. John vii. 25,) that they had already laid their plots to kill Him. Our Lord's visit to Jerusalem appears to have lasted only two days; and we have no account of any miracles wrought on this occasion. The greater part of each day appears to have been spent in the courts of the temple, where He went, for the purpose of teaching the multitudes, who flocked thither on feast-days, and where the Jews found Him and disputed with Him. In one of these disputes the Lord, after having openly spoken of His divine mission, and having alluded to

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<sup>1</sup> The few miserable houses on the site of continental Tyre are not worthy of the name of a town. Like most ruins of great cities, it forms an apparently inexhaustible quarry for successive generations. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, p. 180) thus describes the still visible remains of its ancient grandeur: "The number of granite columns that lie in the sea, particularly on the north of the island, is surprising. The east wall of the inner harbour is entirely founded upon them, and they are thickly spread over the bottom of the sea on every side. I have often rowed leisurely around the island to look at them when the surface was perfectly calm, and always with astonishment. Tyre must have been a city of columns and temples *par excellence*. The whole north end appears to have been one vast colonnade." See also Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, III. 395, and Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 269.

Many travellers have endeavoured to fix the situation of Chorazin, but have not succeeded in agreeing upon a site. No place of the same name has been historically mentioned since the days of Jerome. See Thomson, p. 359. The exact site of Bethsaida appears equally doubtful; while that of Capernaum has perhaps given rise to more controversy than any other. See Robinson (III. 288—294), who refutes the conjectures of all previous travellers, and favours a site, which however he afterwards gives up in favour of another—Khan Minyeh. (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, April 1855, p. 263.) See also Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 352. For the different conjectures as to the site of Capernaum see Stanley, p. 384, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> See Wieseler's *Calendar* (in the preface to Tischendorf's *Synopsis Evangelica*, p. li.)

His divine nature without being understood by His hearers<sup>1</sup>, at length proceeded to raise the veil still further, (for eyes however too prejudiced to admit the revelation,) and assumed a fresh attribute of Divinity. He had on His former visit to Jerusalem assumed 'an equality with God', and had claimed the prerogatives of 'killing', and 'making alive', and of 'judging the world'; and in Galilee, before some of those now present in the Temple, (and as the rest had probably heard,) He had claimed the further prerogative of 'forgiving sins'; and now He went yet further, and asserted the 'eternity of His existence.' His words were, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Now even if there were any doubt whatever, as to the plain meaning of these words, there certainly can be none as to the way in which the Jews understood them,—and that is the only point to which our attention need now be directed;—for the meaning they attributed to them has been made plain, not by any cavilling words let fall on the occasion, but by a speaking action, too expressive to be misunderstood:—"then took they up stones to cast at Him<sup>2</sup>."

And now we come to the fifth and last occasion, on which this accusation was brought against the Lord during His ministry. Two months have passed since the feast of Tabernacles: it is now the middle of December. These two months have been spent by the Lord, probably in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem; and at the feast of the Dedication He again visits the city, and is found by His enemies the Jews, as before, in the courts of the Temple<sup>3</sup>. They commence their attack upon Him by asking Him to tell them plainly, whether He is the Christ or not. Now as He has often told them by unmistakeable words that He is, it is clear that

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<sup>1</sup> John viii. 15—19. The Evangelist has added as though in surprise that the Lord's meaning should have escaped those who heard Him, "These words spake Jesus...and no man laid hands on Him." But he explains this (v. 27), when he says "They understood not that He spake to them of the Father"; i. e. they supposed Him to be speaking of His father according to the flesh.

<sup>2</sup> Stones connected with the repairs of the Temple were probably lying about. For an instance of stoning in the courts of the Temple some years before this time, see Josephus, *Antiq.* xvii. 9. 3.

<sup>3</sup> See Alford, on *John* x. 22.

what they want really, is to hear again that claim of our Lord, 'to be something higher than the prophet they expected', which claim they know that He has generally combined with that other one. They soon hear again the words they abhor, and yet long for. The Lord appealing to His works, as usual, to prove that He is the Messiah, in alluding to God the Father, first assumes close union with Him, and afterwards distinctly says, "I and the Father are one<sup>1</sup>." Much more is implied in these words in the original, than is conveyed by a literal translation into English; but it is quite sufficient for our present purpose, to notice how the Jews understood them; and this is perfectly plain, not merely in the present case by a repetition of the expressive action of taking up stones, but also by their words; for in answer to our Lord, who asked them for which of His good works they were going to stone Him, they said, "for a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God<sup>2</sup>." And now He stands before those who are ready to stone Him in calm unresisting majesty, and by this, more than by the words which He addresses to them, so arrests the hasty judgment they were about to execute, and so allays their excited passions, that they throw aside the stones they have picked up in their fury. He appeals to their law,—that very written law, the whole spirit of which they accuse Him of violating. He shows them that the general position, upon which they have grounded their accusation, is altogether a false one. For His answer amounts to this: 'You say that I blaspheme because I have made myself God, the Scriptures asserting, as you suppose, that no one can be God save God the Father; but in this you are wrong, for the Scriptures do not say this; indeed, as you yourselves well know, those human and therefore sinful beings, who filled certain offices of authority, are called in Scripture, Gods; if you then will go and search those

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<sup>1</sup> ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἔσμεν, on which Bengel remarks "per sumus refutatur Sabellius: per unum, Arius."

<sup>2</sup> On the same words Bengel also says, "In his verbis Jesu plus viderunt cæci Judæi, quam hodie vident Antitrinitarii. Si Judæi putassent, Jesum haberi velle tantum pro divino homine, ac non pro Filio Dei, qui tam vere sit Deus, quam filii hominum sint homines, non dixissent, tu homo cum sis, facis te ipsum Deum, neque blasphemie eum postulassent." on John x. 30.



Scriptures carefully, you may find that there is One alluded to in them, who will not only be called God, but who will indeed be God in the highest sense.' That the Lord could not mean to say that He was God, only in the sense in which the Judges of Israel were Gods, is clear from the words with which He now goes on to say, 'that His works prove Him indeed to be in the Father, and the Father in Him<sup>1</sup>.' There is certainly no explaining away of His Divinity here. The claim to be Divine becomes indeed more and more distinct as He proceeds; so that the Jews who had just sought to stone, now endeavour to seize Him<sup>2</sup>, thinking probably, that here was quite evidence enough to procure His conviction by the Sanhedrin.

Such were the circumstances which attended the five occasions, on which our Lord was charged with blasphemy during His ministry. Now before we consider the same accusation, as it was brought against Him at His trial, it will be well to touch briefly upon the intervening events.

Our Lord appears to have left Jerusalem, immediately after this attack upon Him at the feast of the Dedication, and to have spent the four months between this time and His last Passover, chiefly in the country on the other side of the Jordan. Once only did He approach Jerusalem. He came to Bethany, and within two miles of the spot where the Jews so lately sought to take His life, He performed the crowning wonder of His wonderful Life, calling Lazarus from his four days' grave. S. John, evidently with the intention of giving us the whole history of the persecution which the Jews directed against Jesus, tells us, that the immediate consequence of this miracle was, that the Sanhedrin were called together to consider what they should do. The result of their deliberations appears to have been a determination, that, on the first opportunity, Jesus should be brought before them, and sentenced to death<sup>3</sup>. They probably resolved also upon some plan for persuading the Roman Procurator to carry out their sentence, which, as it was to be sentence of death, they would have no power to enforce themselves. Their reasons for this determination about Jesus were remarkable. They

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<sup>1</sup> John x. 38.

<sup>2</sup> ver. 39.

<sup>3</sup> John xi. 53; compare 57.

admitted the reality of His miracles, and saw that the effect of them would be, to induce the multitudes to believe on Him. And then they thought that He would certainly be set up as Messiah-King, and the Romans would come and take away their place and nation<sup>1</sup>; or, in other words, that there would be an unsuccessful rebellion of the Jews. Now the assumption, running through all this, that the Lord Jesus could not possibly be the promised Messiah, seems, I think, to imply, that the council considered the charge of blasphemy unanswerable. None of the other things of which He was accused would, in Jewish eyes, so certainly vitiate His claim to the Messiahship. For this reason the charge of blasphemy is probably the one upon which the Sanhedrin resolved to prosecute Him.

After this council they appear to have waited quietly for the approaching Passover, at which they thought it probable that the Lord would again appear in Jerusalem. This was for many reasons a far better plan, than sending emissaries to Peræa, and seizing upon His person at such a distance from the Council, before which they would have to bring Him. Another reason too probably influenced them. They must have heard from time to time at Jerusalem, during those three months which preceded the Passover, of the wonderful progress He was making through the country beyond the Jordan. His popularity with the multitude was now greater than it ever had been. It is of this period that we read continually, that 'great multitudes were with Him', that 'they heard Him gladly', and that 'they rejoiced for the mighty works that were done by Him<sup>2</sup>.' The enthusiasm of the multitude in His favour appears to have accompanied Him, when He went up at last to the Passover, and to have shewn itself in a marked manner as He made His entry into the city on that occasion. They thought that the time they had so ardently longed for had come at last; and that the kingdom of God was about to be manifested. They were evidently quite willing to accept the Lord Jesus as the promised Messiah; and were probably quite ready to believe that He was the Divine Per-

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<sup>1</sup> John xi. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. xix. 2, xx. 29; Luke xiv. 25, xv. 1; John x. 41; Luke xiii. 17, xviii. 43.

son He said He was. And so, when the Chief Priests and Pharisees saw the crowd attending Him, and heard the people shouting of Him, actually within the courts of the Temple, "Hosannah to the Son of David", it is no wonder that they were dismayed<sup>1</sup>. They must have feared that they had calculated wrongly, and that it would be impossible to lay hands on Him at this feast.

And now Caiaphas called the Sanhedrin together again<sup>2</sup>. The only point probably which they discussed on this occasion, was, how they might apprehend Him, in order to carry out what they had resolved upon at the former meeting. The enthusiasm of the multitude in his favour had raised an obstacle to their plan, which they had not foreseen. It was probably at this very meeting<sup>3</sup>, and while they were yet in doubt as to what plan they should pursue, that they received the most unexpected offer, which removed all their difficulty. One of His own chosen followers asks for admittance, and offers to give them an opportunity of apprehending Him in the absence of the multitude.

It was in the middle of the next night but one after this meeting, that the members of the Sanhedrin received a message from Caiaphas, summoning them as soon as it should be day to his house<sup>4</sup>. Their plan had succeeded. The Lord had been apprehended in the course of the night, and was now awaiting His trial at the High Priest's house.

Now the first thing which we should notice with reference to this trial before the Sanhedrin, is, that it appears to have been, on the whole, conducted in accordance with Jewish law. The law of Moses appears to have been observed, as far as it bore upon the case<sup>5</sup>. Another thing

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 12; Matth. xxi. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. xxvi. 3—5.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxii. 66.

<sup>3</sup> vv. 14, 15.

<sup>5</sup> With reference to the evidence called 'false', Wilson (*Illustration of N. T.* p. 7) remarks well: "Testimony sufficient to convict a culprit might be said to be true, insufficient testimony false, in the eye of the Law. In this language S. John remarks, 'It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true': and it must be according to the same sort of phraseology that these witnesses (Matth. xxvi. 61) are called 'false witnesses'; for the only fact mentioned to which they deposed, appears to have been strictly true, but not sufficient to prove the crime of blasphemy."

to be noticed is that the evidence, whatever it was that the Jewish party had prepared against the Lord, broke down. We are not told what charge this was which was first made against Him,—probably because it did break down, and therefore was not the evidence upon which He was convicted<sup>1</sup>: but we cannot doubt, I think, that the charge which they tried from the beginning to establish was that of blasphemy. I have already pointed out one or two considerations which would lead us to this conclusion; and these are strengthened by the words of some members of the Sanhedrin, after they had at last convicted Him of this charge out of His own mouth: “What need we any further witnesses?” they said, implying, that he had convicted Himself of the very charge, in support of which they had been seeking evidence. The question now naturally arises How came this first evidence to break down? Surely it could not have been difficult to produce witnesses, to depose to words spoken in the temple, only six months before at the feast of Tabernacles<sup>2</sup>, or still later at the feast of the Dedication<sup>3</sup>. Now we learn from S. Mark that the evidence broke down, because the witnesses agreed not together<sup>4</sup>. By the law of Moses the concurrent testimony of two or three witnesses was necessary, to convict any one of a capital offence<sup>5</sup>. And I think we can easily understand how two witnesses, speaking to what they had heard, we must remember, under great excitement, and what they were not likely ever to have heard before, might differ as to the very words which had been used; although they might not doubt for a moment as to the general meaning of those words. And we cannot but notice here, that the breaking down of this charge, which, as it appears to us, might so easily have been proved, shews how careful the Sanhedrin were to conduct the case according to their view of Jewish law.

However at last two witnesses came forward to depose to some words spoken by the Lord, at least two years before, about the Temple. In this case probably the witnesses

<sup>1</sup> Matth. xxvi. 59, 60; Mark xiv. 55, 56.

<sup>2</sup> John viii. 58.

<sup>3</sup> John x. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Mark xiv. 56.

<sup>5</sup> Numb. xxxv. 30; Deut. xvii. 6.

agreed sufficiently to establish the words spoken, but the fact substantiated was not thought to amount to a capital offence. The charge in this case being proved would account for S. Matthew and S. Mark both of them recording this evidence, while they have not recorded the evidence of the preceding witnesses<sup>1</sup>.

Now the Lord had observed silence throughout all this accusation, and allowed the witnesses to refute each other. But, when all the evidence had broken down, the High Priest remembered that the character of the accused was ever to speak boldly concerning Himself and His claims, and so he conceived the plan of eliciting from the Lord's own mouth, in the presence of the Sanhedrin, words to prove the charge of blasphemy. In judging of this course we must be careful to divest ourselves of any idea of justice which belongs merely to our own age or country. We must remember too, that Caiaphas did not endeavour to make the accused confess Himself guilty of the offence with which He was charged; but merely gave Him an opportunity of committing that offence again before them all. First then he asks the Prisoner to answer the charges which have been brought against Him, charges which had not been proved; but the Lord still preserves His silence, and returns no answer whatever. Then the High Priest rises up from his seat, and administering to the Lord the oath of the Jewish courts of law, adjures Him, by the living God, to say if He be the Christ or not. This question was asked doubtless not because claiming to be the Christ was a capital offence, but because the Lord had often connected with this that other and higher claim, which they now long to hear him make<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> If this view be correct (and it seems the only way of accounting for this evidence being put on record by both S. Matthew and S. Mark, while they have omitted all the previous evidence), the words *οὐδὲ οὕτως ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτῶν* must be translated, 'neither so was their witness fair' (i. e. sufficient to condemn Him). That *ἴσος* has this meaning see Grotius, *on Mark* xiv. 56; see also Sophocles, *Phil.* 552 and 685, where it has a somewhat similar meaning. Erasmus translates *ἴση* (Mark xiv. 59) by 'non satis idonea.'

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke's narrative is probably the accurate one here, as it is less concise than the others. He has separated the two questions, 'Art thou the Christ?' and 'Art thou the Son of God?' In S. Matthew and S. Mark these two questions are joined together.

And now the Lord breaks silence, shewing indeed, to the very last, that the sacrifice He is making of Himself is a willing one; for when the evidence of His enemies has entirely broken down, He Himself supplies what they want. After telling them that He knows they have hardened their hearts against believing Him, and that the day of reasoning with them has passed by, He goes on to imply that they should indeed have evidence some day of His being the Person He claimed to be, when they should see Him coming with Power upon the clouds of heaven. This is exactly what they want. Here are the expressions claiming for Himself a grandeur not of earth. They can restrain themselves no longer, but break in tumultuously, between their President and the Prisoner, with the question, "Art thou then the Son of God?" And when the Lord answers in the affirmative, the High Priest rends his clothes, as if in horror of the blasphemy, and they say, "What need we any further witnesses? for we ourselves have heard of His own mouth." And then Caiaphas puts the question to them in form, "What think ye?" and all present say, "Guilty of death<sup>1</sup>." And thus the trial before the Sanhedrin ended; and Israel by this solemn official act of the nation rejected their Messiah, and condemned their God for blasphemy<sup>2</sup>.

And here it is suitable for us to inquire as to which of the laws of Moses it was, under which the Lord was condemned. Now if we turn to the laws in the Pentateuch which are directed against false prophets, we shall find, as one of the most learned of Jewish Rabbis<sup>3</sup> has pointed out, that they are directed against false prophets of two kinds—those who should falsely pretend to inspiration from the true God,—and those who should teach the worship of false gods. The former are to be convicted of imposture by the failure of their prophecies, and put to death<sup>4</sup>: the latter are to be considered as false prophets, and put to

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<sup>1</sup> The better members of the Sanhedrin, such as Nicodemus, Joseph, Gamaliel, had now probably withdrawn; Joseph certainly had done so; see Luke xxiii. 51.

<sup>2</sup> For the continuation of the trial, see below *Lecture vi.*

<sup>3</sup> Moses Ben Maimon, more commonly known as Maimonides.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. xviii. 21, 22.

death, simply for teaching the worship of other gods than the true one,—and this even although their prophecies should come to pass, and they should shew signs and wonders in proof of their divine mission<sup>1</sup>. Now the whole of our Lord's trial suggests to us that he was supposed to fall under the latter of these two cases. The failure of His prophecies was certainly not laid to His charge. The testimony of His miracles in His favour was laid aside. The charge against Him was that He made Himself God. This was in the opinion of those who judged Him setting up another god than the true one. Their sentence was that He should be put to death. Thus the accusation, the evidence, and the sentence, point alike to this law in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul...And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death." It may be well here to add, that it has been the opinion of learned Jews, who have written in justification of this great sin of their forefathers, that the Lord's case did fall under this law in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy<sup>2</sup>.

Does any one ask then, 'What was the sin of the Jews in condemning the Lord, if it was done thus in accordance with the law of Moses?' We may answer, that those learned scribes who were thus expounding the law, ought to have

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xiii. 1—11.

<sup>2</sup> The Jews have even gone so far as to assert that this law was framed purposely to meet the case of Jesus Christ. He is, they contend, particularly pointed out in one of the clauses: "If thy brother, *the son of thy mother*, entice thee secretly, &c." "This is Jesus," they say, "who denied his father, saying that he had a mother, but not a father; that he was the Son of God, and God." See Fagius on *Chald. Paraph.* Deut. xiii. in the *Critici Sacri*. See also his note on Deut. xviii. 15. Also for this and much more interesting matter about the belief of the Jews on this subject see Wilson, *Illustration of N. T.* II. 4, 5.

known very well that the Messiah, when He appeared, would be above this law<sup>1</sup>, and therefore, in judging by this law one who claimed the Messiahship, they ought to have seen that the paramount question was, 'Is this man the Messiah or not?' Again, if they had really studied the Scriptures in singleness of mind, desirous only to discover the truth, they would have found "that golden thread of doctrine concerning God and Man becoming one, which runs through the whole of the Old Testament<sup>2</sup>." And thus they would have seen that the Messiah would not break this law (Deut. xiii.) by claiming an equality with God; and so again the only point to be determined would have been, 'Is this man the Messiah or not?' But His judges blindly shut their eyes to these things, and so rushed wilfully into the most awful crime which ever disgraced a seat of judgment.

Now if we ask, 'Who have fallen into actually the same error into which these Jews fell?' we shall of course find that the only sect who has done this, are the Jews themselves, who have defended this deed of their forefathers. Thus one of them is merely expressing what have been the views of many of his brethren, when he says, "If a Prophet, or even the Messiah Himself, the acknowledged Messiah, had proved His divine mission by miracles, but claimed Divinity, he ought to be stoned to death<sup>3</sup>." But if we ask, 'who have adopted the error which was directly the cause of this sin of the Jews', we throw the net of our inquiry over many and various classes of heretics; for the error in the spirit of which the Jews acted, was the refusal to believe that Christ could be God.

Now it is not until nearly the end of the second century that we find in the Church any truly humanitarian heresy<sup>4</sup>. And we may just remark in passing, that this fact, of all the heresies before that time teaching in some modified form or

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. xviii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Lange, quoted by Stier, on *John* x. 32, note.

<sup>3</sup> Oróbio as quoted by Limborch, *Amica Collatio*, p. 252; see also p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> Theodotus was the first who taught that the Lord Jesus was a mere man. This is on the authority of Eusebius (see Burton, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 247). But it seems probable that even Theodotus held that Christ was endowed with some portion of the Divine nature. Browne, on the *Articles*, Art. I. Sect. I.



other the Divinity of Christ,—teaching, either that He was an emanation from the Deity, or that He possessed some portion of Divinity, forms a very good secondary proof that the Church held the doctrine of Christ's divinity in some fuller form, and is a complete answer to those Unitarian writers, who have asserted that Justin Martyr was the first who introduced into Christianity the Platonic idea of a second God. Since the second century however many heresies have either directly asserted humanitarianism, or, after a short course, have naturally produced those who have held such opinions<sup>1</sup>. Now all such have been willing to admit that the Lord Jesus was a great prophet,—that He was in fact the promised Messiah: and there is one consideration to be derived from that opposition of the Jews which is the subject of this lecture, which applies equally to all these, and with it I will now conclude.

It is because the humanitarian believes in the Divine mission of the Lord, that He is unable to adopt the Jewish explanation of words, which certainly present a difficulty, and to say boldly with the accusers, 'This man blasphemeth.' But the position of the Jew upon this point is quite intelligible, while that of the humanitarian is hardly so, and involves the greater difficulties of the two. For while the Jew believes that a false prophet blasphemously assumed the attributes of the Deity,—a thing certainly by no means incredible, or even unheard of,—the humanitarian must believe

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<sup>1</sup> Thus those Sabellians (Mosheim, *Ecl. Hist.* Soames, Vol. I. p. 271), who held that it was not the Godhead, but only an emanation from the Godhead, which dwelt in Jesus, bordered very closely on mere humanitarians. The Valentinians (p. 200) also were no better; and then the Arian heresy arose, prolific of others, all of which with perhaps the exception of the Macedonian (p. 403) were humanitarian. And although these sects became almost extinct during the enormous development of the temporal power of the Church; yet when the landmarks of the Faith were shaken, and in some instances removed, by the internal convulsions of the Church at the Reformation, these heresies soon again raised their heads. Thus Servetus (Vol. III. p. 556,) seems to have held views like those of the lower Sabellians. And although Socinus held in some peculiar and evasive sense the Divinity of our Lord, his followers very soon became mere humanitarians. "In Germany and Switzerland the rationalism, which so generally prevails among foreign Protestants, has been favourable to Unitarian views of the Godhead, and humanitarian doctrines concerning Christ." Browne, *on the Articles*, Art. I. Sect. I.

that One Who was a true prophet, the expected Messiah, used on several occasions words, which certainly admitted easily of a terribly blasphemous interpretation, and which were so interpreted by the Jews, and that yet the Prophet attempted not in any way to set them right, or to explain the true meaning of the words, which had been thus misinterpreted. He must believe also, that after the Prophet had thus often given this occasion for such an accusation being brought against Him, He was at last publicly tried by the highest court of His people, and was by them condemned to death, and consequently rejected as Messiah, on account of His using again, before them all, words of the same nature, which were again interpreted by His judges in the same way, and yet that He offered no explanation of these words, and did not accuse His judges of misunderstanding or misinterpreting them. Is such conduct consistent even with His being merely 'a true prophet'? There may be minds to which such thoughts present no insuperable contradictions; but to many the view of the Jews will seem more easy to be entertained; and when all the circumstances are considered, which led them to say, "This man blasphemeth", it will seem to be certain that one side or the other was blaspheming, and that the only question which remains to be determined, is, which it was.

In conclusion then I would suggest that all of us have at times to put the question of the Jewish Sanhedrin—God grant we may not put it in their spirit—"Art thou then the Son of God?" Doubts will at times creep into the minds of all, and particularly into the minds of those who think deeply, upon many of the truths which have been poured into the open ears of childhood. There is no subject so high and holy, no truth so sublime, as to be free from such doubts. Now while we need not fear these doubts, if they are truly the result of difficulties which have presented themselves to our minds,—for the faith which is really at the bottom of such honest doubt as this, will be sure to bring us right again,—we may fear them, we ought to fear them, nay rather, we ought to be ashamed of them, if they proceed, as doubts too often do, from a shallow prejudice, from pride of intellect, or from an unholy life. Let us then first search into the origin of our doubts, and if they spring from such roots as

these, let us pluck them out by these roots, and cast them from us; but if they proceed from sincerity, and singleness of mind, let us face them at once, and, casting aside all prejudice, determine by the grace of God to find out the truth; remembering ever the method which our Lord has himself pointed out for us, "If any man be minded to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

## LECTURE III.

### THE CHARGE OF ANTI-JUDAISM.

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S. MARK xiv. 58.

*“We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.”*

THE charge of being Anti-Judaical which was involved in this accusation was essentially the one which had raised against the Lord Jesus the enmity of the Pharisees. It probably formed their leading motive for rejecting His testimony, and for persecuting Him as they did. And although they would doubtless have liked the triumph of sentencing Him to death for the very offence which had thus excited their hatred, this was evidently impossible; and so they allowed this charge against Him to be waived. That this feeling was really the one at the bottom of their persecution of Him, is confirmed by this charge being the first which they brought against His infant Church. The accusation with which they brought S. Stephen before the Sanhedrin was, “This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law; for we have heard Him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us<sup>1</sup>.”

Now, although the Lord's teaching was continually directed against the narrow Judaical views of the Pharisees, and therefore must often have been very offensive to them<sup>2</sup>, there are only three recorded cases in which they distinctly brought against Him this charge of being Anti-Judaical.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts vi. 13.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 9.

The first was when, in the Temple at the first Passover of His ministry<sup>1</sup>, He uttered those words upon which the accusation in the text was founded;—and here we must notice, that the words appear to have been treasured up, and the charge not made for two years: the second was at Nazareth when his fellow-townsmen rejected His teaching, and endeavoured to kill Him, for having hinted that His mission would be to the Gentiles, if the Jews rejected Him<sup>2</sup>: and the third was at Capernaum, when the Pharisees complained of His disciples neglecting the traditions of the Elders<sup>3</sup>. And we may notice here that these three charges are connected with the three main points in which, as we have seen, the Pharisees' perverted Judaism consisted—one with each<sup>4</sup>. The first has reference to the Temple, with its rites and ceremonies: the second to the descent from Abraham: and the third to the law.

Now there is one other point of our Lord's conduct which gave particular offence to the Pharisees, and which seems as if it ought to be classed with these, I mean what they called His violation of the Sabbath: but, as I said before, the frequency with which this charge was made, and its appearing to involve, at least in one instance, a breach of the written law of Moses, give it an importance, which will make it advisable to consider it in a separate Lecture.

And now we will consider in order the occasions before alluded to, when the Lord's words gave rise to his being charged with Anti-Judaism.

Jesus of Nazareth has just commenced His public ministry. The Promise of all Prophecy has just been baptised by the last of the Prophets. He has been publicly pointed out by the Baptist as the Promised one. It is quite expected that He is about to put forth His claims to be the Messiah, when He appears at the Passover in Jerusalem. He had probably attended this feast unnoticed for the last eighteen years; but now, on account of what the Baptist

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<sup>1</sup> John ii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Luke iv. 24—28.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 5. That this was at Capernaum, compare John vi. 22, 24, 59, Matth. xv. 1, and Mark vii. 1; also John vii. 1 and Mark vii. 24.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 8.

has said, all attention is directed upon Him. Many are wondering how He will first exhibit His claim—what sign or wonder He will perform, to shew that He is the greatest of all prophets—which of the many prophecies about the Messiah He will first fulfil. The Pharisees, and the leading Jews of Jerusalem, are probably already prejudiced against Him, on account of their having heard that He belongs to the obscure town of Nazareth in Galilee, and so have easily satisfied their own narrow minds that He must be an impostor. They think it doubtless the strangest feature in the Baptist's ministry, that he should have pointed out such a one as this as the Messiah. While thoughts like these are held about Him, He appears in the Temple, amongst the other worshippers come up to the feast, and assumes to Himself the office of Messiah, by fulfilling one of the latest prophecies which had been uttered about Him. Malachi had said<sup>1</sup>, that immediately after the forerunner of the Lord had come, the Lord Himself should appear suddenly in His Temple, and should purify it. The Forerunner Himself too had spoken of Him Who was to come<sup>2</sup>, "as one whose fan was in His hand, and who would thoroughly purge His floor": and now both these prophecies receive a partial and symbolical fulfilment, by the Lord Jesus coming into the Temple at this Passover, and, in the manner of a zealot, driving out those who were shamelessly desecrating that holy place by unholy traffic. "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise<sup>3</sup>." Now we need only just notice in passing that, at this the very commencement of His ministry, He failed not to give a hint of His being in a higher sense than the Jews expected the Son of God. It was indeed a strange thing for those around Him to hear any son of man call the Jehovah of Israel simply and distinctively His father. But they perceive not this claim at present: they listen not to what He says: they only see what He has done. They see that He, unaided and in a moment, has done what they probably had been pretending for years that they were longing to do; but then forsooth they have been hindered from doing it, be-

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<sup>1</sup> iii. 1—3.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. iii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> John ii. 16.

cause, as they have said, they could not see how it was to be done, or because these things, evil though they were, were yet time-honoured, or because it would have been impolitic to throw the slightest obstacle in the way of the Jews of the Dispersion coming to the Temple with their offerings. But they consider not the righteousness of the act; although their better feelings could not but confess an admiration of this zeal for the honour of God's House. They only see that the Galilæan claimant of the Messiahship has acted as a prophet of old would have acted, and so they put at once the question, which they had probably prepared beforehand, according to the law of Moses for the testing of prophets<sup>1</sup>: "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" Now our Lord did not on this—nor indeed did he on any other—occasion, shew the Jews a sign at their demand; but he does nevertheless give them a sign, which should come to pass in its own time; and thus He fulfils all legal righteousness, as far as their question was grounded upon, that<sup>2</sup>. He says, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up"—a word of mystery for them to ponder over, to treasure up in their memories, and then to bring forth in evidence against Him, when they thought the time was come; or else a word by which they might recognize at last the sign and wonder proving that He was indeed the expected Prophet.

Now the comment of S. John upon these words of our Lord, namely, "He spake of the Temple of His body," has seemed to some expositors to be involved in so much difficulty, that they have actually contended that the Evangelist was in error as to the Lord's meaning. Of course we cannot accept such an explanation as this. But surely the difficulty, which has been supposed to exist, has been unnecessarily magnified. It is quite true that the Jews understood the words as having reference to the Temple, in one of the courts of which the Lord was standing at the time He uttered them: and it is evident too that our Lord must have intended his words to be so understood by them. But when S. John tells us that His words referred to the temple

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xviii. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Stier, on *John* ii. 16—19.

of His body, He does not mean to say that they had not that other reference as well. We were sure to be able to see the reference to the Temple of stone, in one of the courts of which the Lord was standing, just indeed as the Jews saw it, and thought, at the time, that it was the only reference the words had; and therefore the Evangelist does not mention that interpretation; but the more hidden and inner meaning of the words He does point out to us, in order that we may not pass it by. Nor is it at all that these words of our Lord have a misleading double sense. The two meanings are in reality one. For did not the Jews, in destroying His body upon the cross, really cast down their Temple, and effect its destruction? And again, what was the new Temple which was to be built up by Christ to take the place of that Jewish Temple of old, but His Church, the House of the Father and of the Son, the Sanctuary of the Holy Ghost? And is not this Church His Body<sup>1</sup>? But for the object before us at present, we have only to consider the meaning which the Jews attached to these words of the Lord, and the sense in which they brought them up against Him in evidence at His trial. Now although it is quite possible, and even probable, that, before the end of the Lord's ministry, the Jews had learnt that these words had an application to the Body of our Lord<sup>2</sup>; yet, at His trial, we cannot doubt that they meant them to convey the idea, that He had spoken lightly of the Temple, intimating that its time had passed away, and that He Himself was about to establish something, in the stead of that Temple, which should be more enduring. It is only with this interpretation of making light of the Temple, that the words could have been brought up in accusation against Him. However as this charge against the Lord was dropped, probably for the reasons which I have before suggested<sup>3</sup>, we need not dwell any longer upon the opposition to which these words, spoken at the first Passover of His ministry, gave rise. I only just remind you that they were again

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<sup>1</sup> See the very excellent remarks of Stier, on *John* ii. 16—19, to which I am indebted for much of what I have here written.

<sup>2</sup> *Matth.* xxvii. 40, 63.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 33.



thrown in our Lord's teeth, while He was hanging on the cross, by some, however, who used them as though they understood well their deep inner reference to His Blessed Body.

We come now to the second time when occasion was given for bringing against the Lord the charge of being Anti-Judaical. About a year has elapsed since this first assumption in the Temple of the office of Messiah. The Lord had not stayed long in Jerusalem at that time; but He had given the Jews all the necessary proofs, by many miracles worked there during that visit, that He was indeed the Messiah<sup>1</sup>. One of the leading Jews, a member of the Sanhedrin<sup>2</sup>, after having ingenuously pondered in his mind all he had heard and seen, had come, (although he had come by night,) and confessed himself convinced of the truth of the Divine Mission of the Lord. Many too of the people had believed on Him on account of His miracles<sup>3</sup>; but this was, after all, but small progress for the Promised Messiah, the End of all Prophecy, the Son of God, to have made, in attaching followers to Himself; and so after lingering in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem<sup>4</sup> for some time, as though reluctant altogether to turn away, and deeply desirous still of gathering together her children in His love and care, about the autumn of the year He appears to have returned into Galilee; and after a circuit through that region teaching in the towns and villages, and performing many wonderful works, so that a great fame has already gone out far and wide about Him<sup>5</sup>, He comes to the town of Nazareth, in which He was brought up, and where He lived for nearly thirty years, as any one of the other inhabitants, veiling His glory from the eyes of men. It is the Sabbath-day; and with the stream of His fellow-townsmen He enters the synagogue of the place. As the inhabitants observe the return of Him who had lived amongst them from His youth up, unthought of, and unesteemed, except perhaps by a few, and who now, in little more than a year's absence, has won such fame and renown, many are the conjectures as to what great work He will

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<sup>1</sup> John ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> John vii. 50.

<sup>3</sup> John ii. 23.

<sup>4</sup> John iii. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Luke iv. 14.

do in this His own town of Nazareth. He enters with the others into the synagogue, and, when the time comes for reading and expounding a portion of the Prophets, He stands up, in accordance with a Jewish custom, to offer Himself for this office. The roll is handed to Him. It is the roll of the prophet Isaiah. He unfolds it, and reads a text alluding to the coming and preaching of the Messiah, and then rolling it up gives it again to the servant of the synagogue, and sits down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue are rivetted upon Him. They are all eager to hear what this fellow-townsmen of theirs, this artisan who claims to be the Messiah, has to say to them. Now S. Luke has only recorded the words with which the Lord commenced His exposition of the passage He had read<sup>1</sup>, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," and has been guided by the Holy Spirit to pass on thus rapidly to the effect which His preaching produced upon those who heard it. We read, that "they all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." Now this first impression of His preaching is not at all to be conceived of, as though the people were merely struck with admiration at finding that the carpenter's son could preach as He did. This is an idea which altogether belongs to the modern vicious habit of looking for entertainment, where we ought only to be looking for instruction. But it was not possible that such should be the effect, where the Lord was the preacher. It was not possible that His words should be otherwise than effective in stirring the inmost depths of the soul; and when those depths are stirred, other feelings than those of admiration overwhelm the man<sup>2</sup>. It was not possible that his arrows should so far miss their mark, that any could be merely gratified and charmed, when they were meant to be awakened to burning contrition of heart. This admiration, this being entertained and charmed, can be the effects of those sermons only, where frail, sinful men are the preachers. But the first impression of this sermon of the Lord's upon His hearers was, doubtless, that they felt the power and the wisdom with

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<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See Stier, on *Luke* iv. 20—22.

which He spake. They felt indeed, as none who ever heard Him could help feeling, that 'the Spirit of God was upon Him to preach the glad tidings.' They were seized with that inward impulse, which all who heard Him seem at times to have felt, to throw themselves entirely upon Him, to trust Him at once as the Messiah, and to take for simple truth every gracious word which should proceed out of His mouth. But then, alas, their next impulse is to reaction. Shocked, as it were, at finding themselves so carried away by their feelings, as to be on the point of acknowledging this despised fellow-townsmen of theirs as the greatest of the great, they recoil, and call to mind all they can, to bring down their high thoughts of Him. "Is not this Joseph's son?" That is, 'Can it really be possible that this man who has lived amongst us here in a lowly position, for so many years, as the son of a poor carpenter, certainly not one of the great ones of our town, can yet be the greatest in all Israel, the Messiah of prophecy, the one expected from the beginning of time? Is it possible that He can have lived amongst us so long, and we not have recognized Him?' And then as their thoughts run on to the rumours they have heard of Him within the last few months,—how many wonderful works have been done by Him, in Jerusalem, and on the shores of their Galilæan lake—they would naturally ask themselves the question, 'Why does he not, if He really be the Messiah, shew us here in Nazareth some of these wonderful works? Why has He thus gone away from us, who certainly have the first claim upon Him?' And now the Lord, in compassion to this His own poor Nazareth, gives them another opportunity of recognizing the Spirit of God within Him; for He reads their thoughts, as He says to them, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself; whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum do also here in thy country." But by His concluding words to them He shews that He can see they have already rejected Him in their hearts. He mentions the two examples of Elijah and Elisha, conferring the benefits of their power upon those who were strangers to the land of Israel, to shew the Nazarenes, that there might be a reason why He should not only turn away from His own country of Nazareth, but

also from His own country in a much wider sense of the word, even from Israel His people. This, however, is a truth which Nazareth and Israel, with their incurable Jewish pride, will not hear, and which never fails to call forth their wrath<sup>1</sup>. They can bear it no longer; but they all rise up, and lay hands on Him, and take Him out of the synagogue, and hurry Him along, in order that they may actually mark their rejection of the carpenter's claim to the Messiahship, by throwing Him down the precipice in the neighbourhood of their town. As however His hour to be offered up has not yet come, He passes through the midst of them, and goes His way. He turns upon them one look of majesty; they again involuntarily recognize the Power and the Spirit that is in Him; they feel compelled to move aside, as He passes through the midst of them, and are left in shame and confusion, idly inquiring of each other, 'Why was He allowed to go?'<sup>2</sup>

Now the narrow prejudices of this insignificant village up in the remote Galilean hills, in thus rejecting the greatest blessing which ever approached it, represent very well the prejudices of the whole Jewish people (particularly as represented by the Pharisees), in rejecting the same blessing. Insignificant and remote towns and villages have ever been notorious for the narrow and limited view they can take of things beyond them, and for the extreme importance they attach to the affairs of their own community. Thus Nazareth could not believe but that its own established order of dignity and honour was the order of the world. The inhabitants could not believe that one, who certainly ranked low in Nazareth, could be really the greatest in all Israel. They

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<sup>1</sup> Acts xxii. 22; xxviii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> We need not suppose that there was an external miracle—such as blindness inflicted on His enemies. The Evangelist, if he had meant this, would hardly have used the words *διεθῶν διὰ μέσων*. But still such an explanation as Robinson's (*Palestine*, III. 421) is most miserable, where he suggests that Jesus took advantage of the narrow streets of the city to escape. More nobly conceived is Stier's comment (*on Luke* v. 4—10), "The Lord merely turns on them a look of majesty hitherto kept back; and they receiving from Him at parting a sign of the power of His Spirit, are restrained from touching Him, and compelled reverentially to make way for Him, right and left, as He moves along." Still more striking is Pfenninger's conception, quoted by Stier: "They stood—stopped—inquired—were ashamed—fled—separated."

could not recognize any grandeur in a Nazarene, which had not been sanctioned at Nazareth; and they thought that Nazareth alone would certainly be the first and chief object of a Nazarene Messiah's care. Now these narrow views about their own village correspond exactly to the narrow views of the Pharisees about the nation of Israel. The importance they attached to the whole Jewish polity was such, that they made sure that the Messiah, whenever He should appear, would come in a position of honour in the Jewish state. They believed too that it was for the Jewish nation only that He was to come; that His coming would be their glory, and their triumph, and would make them greater than all the nations of the earth. And so whenever our Lord implied that He was come to bless Gentile, as well as Jew, they were filled with wrath, and rejected that part of the blessing which might have been theirs; just as those wretched Nazarenes blindly rejected the greatest honour and glory which was ever offered to any spot of earth. Little did those Nazarenes think, as they tumultuously hurried the Lord along to the top of the rock, whence they would cast Him down, that the only thing which would rescue this village of theirs from the insignificance in which it really lay, was, that for thirty years it had been the dwellingplace of Him Whom they were now seeking to destroy; and as little did the blinded Pharisees foresee, that the only thing which would render their land dear to all God-fearing people, and still give it the name of 'Holy,' when those whom they called the Holy People had been driven from it, was, that it had been hallowed by the footsteps of Him Whom they followed about to find how they might destroy Him.

We come now to the third occasion, when these national prejudices were excited against the Lord.

Immediately after this rejection at Nazareth, the Lord, and His mother, and those relations of the family who lived together in the place which He honoured with the name of 'home'<sup>1</sup>, appear to have moved to Capernaum. But some time has now elapsed, and much has happened since the events at Nazareth which we have been considering. Then

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<sup>1</sup> Mark ii. 1; vii. 17.

our Lord was only just commencing His Galilæan ministry; now it is almost finished: then He had done only a few mighty works in Galilee, so that the Nazarenes could allude to them as having been wrought at a particular place<sup>1</sup>; now the whole of Galilee has been blessed by His works of wonder and of love, and resounds with His fame. He has now collected around Himself many devoted followers, and out of them He has chosen twelve to be His most intimate and dearest companions. These twelve He has solemnly instituted in the Apostolic office, and has already sent them forth on a mission of preaching to the Jews. Twice again has He Himself made the circuit of Galilee, teaching, and preaching, and healing. Such a fame of Him has now gone forth that great multitudes follow Him wherever He goes<sup>2</sup>; and on one occasion five thousand that had followed Him into a desert place have been miraculously fed from food created by the word of His mouth<sup>3</sup>. Again, in His mercy and condescension,—and this is one of those touches in His character, as drawn by the Evangelist, which we should do well not to overlook,—again He has visited His own poor Nazareth, to see whether they will now repent, whether they will now recognize Him,—now that His fame as the Prophet of Galilee is so well established. But no! they turn away again;—still the same prejudice,—the same wilful blindness,—‘Is not this the Carpenter, the son of Mary? How can He be the Messiah?’ Such obstinate unbelief might well earn the distinction of making the Lord to marvel<sup>4</sup>.

But although His fame now amongst the common people of Galilee was so great, the Scribes and Pharisees had by no means given in their adhesion to Him. On the contrary, they appear already to have plotted His destruction<sup>5</sup>, and some of them have even come down from Jeru-

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Mark ii. 1, 2, 13; iii. 20; Luke xi. 29; viii. 19; xii. 1; Matth. viii. 18; ix. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Matth. xiv. ; Mark vi. ; Luke ix. ; John vi.

<sup>4</sup> Alford and many others suppose that this visit to Nazareth, narrated by S. Matthew (xiii. 54—58), and by S. Mark (vi. 1—6), is the same as that we have considered above, narrated by S. Luke (iv. 16—31). For the arguments in support of two different visits, see Wieseler, *Chron. Synops.* p. 284.

<sup>5</sup> Matth. xii. 14; Luke xi. 54.

salem to Galilee to endeavour to get up a definite charge against Him<sup>1</sup>. In pursuit of this object they put to Him the question, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Now the question appears, at first sight, only to touch the disciples; but the design to hit their Master through them is scarcely concealed. The Pharisees of course know that the disciples must at least have their Master's sanction for what they do. They know too that the Lord Himself is in the habit of transgressing this same tradition<sup>2</sup>. They know too that He has often spoken lightly of the traditions of the elders; and so think that this will be a convenient way of raising the whole question. The Lord certainly does not disappoint them; for on this occasion He speaks out more plainly than on any other, and states, without any flinching from giving offence, His whole teaching on the subject of these traditions. These traditions form, as we must remember, that oral law which the Pharisees believe to have been handed down by word of mouth from the time of Moses, and which they hold so steadfastly against the Sadducees who reject it, that they have exalted it even above the law of Moses itself<sup>3</sup>. Now our Lord answers the accusation, of despising the oral law, implied in their question, "Why do thy disciples neglect the traditions of the elders?" by the counter-question, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" And then He gives an example from this system of lies with which the word of God had been overlaid, where the tradition was itself contrary to the law of which it pretended to be the interpretation. Now His answer plainly amounts to this: that so far from the oral law having any force above the law of Moses, it had none whatever; and when it perverted or altered the written law, it was itself not only invalid, but actually sinful; or in other words, so far from its being a sin to transgress these traditions, there were occasions when it was a sin to observe them. And in depressing the oral law the Lord elevates in a remarkable way the law of Moses. He acknowledges the law of Moses as proceeding directly from God; for

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xv. 1; Mark vii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xi. 37, 38, shews what was probably the Lord's custom.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 8.

His words are not 'Moses commanded', but, 'God commanded.' And having thus shewn completely the folly of an accusation of transgressing commands which had no authority, and were sometimes wicked, with reference to the particular charge about the tradition of washing hands, He turns to the multitude, and says, "Hear and understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." But in these very words He gives fresh offence to the Pharisees: for does He not now seem to be speaking lightly of the law of Moses, which had much in it about what might be eaten, and what might not? No wonder that His disciples come to Him, after He has entered into the house from teaching the people outside, and tell Him that the Pharisees were offended at this last word of His<sup>1</sup>. It seems to the disciples, in their present timidity, and with their understandings about the law of Moses not yet enlightened, that the Lord is throwing away all reserve, and rashly provoking the Pharisees. And then He explains to them His words, shadowing forth as they do the abolition of the outward ordinances of the Old Testament, and pointing to the spirit and not the letter, as being the permanent ordinance of God.

This appears to have been the last time<sup>2</sup> that the accusation of being anti-Judaical was brought against the Lord, until the charge rose up again, when He was before the Sanhedrin: but this apparently was not part of their prearranged plan for the prosecution, and so the charge was not proceeded with<sup>3</sup>.

With reference then generally to the charge, we may notice, that the offence, which our Lord gave on this subject, was due entirely to His hinting, that the time would come when Judaism would be at an end. He did not say that the Temple with its rites and ceremonies had actually come to an end, but foretold that the time was coming when they would be replaced by better things. He did not say that the barrier between Jew and Gentile was already broken down, He was indeed very particular in respecting it Himself, but He

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xv. 12; compare Mark vii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> John viii. 48: "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan?" had probably somewhat of this accusation in it; but our Lord took no notice of it.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 33.



foretold that it would be so. As to the other point on which He gave the same offence to the Pharisees,—the traditions of the elders,—He spoke out plainly, and pronounced them not to be part of the Jewish law at all; but, with reference to the written law itself, He never said that it was abrogated, but only hinted that the time was coming when it would be so.

Now, immediately after the national prejudices of the Pharisees had been excited against the Lord on this last occasion by His teaching on the subject of traditions, He left Capernaum, and went into the parts about Tyre and Sidon<sup>1</sup>. That, just at this time, He should thus move to the very edge of the Holy Land, if not actually over the boundary<sup>2</sup>, is not without its deep significance. Has the time really come at last to which He has more than once alluded? Is He really now going to carry the blessings of His ministry to the heathen? No. Even with this apparent turning away from the obstinate and prejudiced opposition of the Pharisees, His mission is still only to Israel His people. The heathen woman who comes forward to shew, as it were to those around Him, the ripeness of the Gentile world for the Gospel message, is repulsed with words addressed to His disciples, so expressly stating the exclusiveness of the privileges which belong to the favoured nation, that they would have satisfied even the Pharisees themselves; “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”; and again to the woman, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.” Now although it is quite true that in our version these words sound more harsh than they really were, by our not perceiving that the word used for ‘dogs’ is the familiar diminutive, which expresses therefore not so much the uncleanness of the animal, as its attachment to, and dependence on the human family<sup>3</sup>, they certainly cannot be altogether deprived of their repulsive force. It is however upon this

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<sup>1</sup> John vii. 1; Matth. xv. 21; Mark vii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. xv. 22. It is not quite clear whether the Lord crossed the frontier or not; the words ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρίων ἐκείνων ἐξελθοῦσα, applied to the Canaanitish woman, would seem to imply that He had not crossed the frontier; but it may be, as Alford says, that “ἀπὸ τ. ὀρ. ἐκ... does not belong to ἐξελθ., but means ‘of’ or ‘from those parts;’ and ἐξελθ. means ‘coming out,’ i. e. from her house, or town, or village.”

<sup>3</sup> See Alford, on Matth. xv. 27.

one favourable point in our Lord's words that the woman seizes, and by her perseverance, her humility, and her faith, she presses into the kingdom of God, and takes it by force. And this is the single exception in our Lord's life when He appeared in any way to minister to the heathen<sup>1</sup>.

Now it was on the last day of His public ministry<sup>2</sup> that His teaching was most plain as to the Gentiles being admitted into the kingdom of God. It was on this day, that, as He was teaching in the courts of the Temple, He spoke the parable of the wicked husbandmen<sup>3</sup>, which set forth the rejection of the Son of God by Israel, and the consequent rejection of Israel from being God's favoured people, so plainly, that all the people, when they heard the threat with which the parable ended, exclaimed, 'God forbid<sup>4</sup>', and the Pharisees too perceived to what the parable unmistakably pointed, so that they would have arrested Him on the spot, if they had not feared the multitude, who were now so enthusiastic on His side<sup>5</sup>. And then He went on, and spoke the parable of the marriage of the king's son<sup>6</sup>, which set forth in another unmistakable picture, the rejection of Israel, and the admittance of the Gentiles into covenant with God. And then after the Pharisees, and Herodians, and Sadducees, had endeavoured in vain to entangle Him in His talk, and He had answered them all so as to astonish them<sup>7</sup>, and had yet further pushed His victory over them, by asking them the question about Christ 'the Son of David', which they could not answer without condemning their own opposition to Him<sup>8</sup>; and after He had denounced those terrible woes against the Pharisees, before all the people, for having rejected His mission through their hypocrisy and wilful blindness<sup>9</sup>, He uttered His lament over Jerusalem, implying that all Israel too had rejected the blessing that might have been theirs<sup>10</sup>; and then, taking opportunity from the request of some Greeks, proselytes of the gate, to have an interview with Him<sup>11</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> The Centurion (Matth. viii. 5) was probably 'a proselyte of the gate.'

<sup>2</sup> The Tuesday of the week in which He was crucified. See above, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Matth. xxi.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xx. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Matth. xxi. 46.

<sup>6</sup> Matth. xxii. 1-14.

<sup>7</sup> Matth. xxii. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Matth. xxii. 46.

<sup>9</sup> Matth. xxiii. 13-36.

<sup>10</sup> Ib. 37-39.

<sup>11</sup> John xii. 20-33.

He returned once more to the subject of the Gospel being sent to the Gentiles;—not indeed that He admitted these Greeks as followers,—for it does not appear that He even granted their request to see Him;—the hour for this turning to the Gentiles had not yet come; but He pronounced solemnly that the hour had come for the Son of Man to be glorified, and this was to be the only preliminary step before the admittance of the Gentiles: “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

And now the Lord’s public ministry was over. He took leave of the Temple that evening, and, in departing from its courts, foretold that the day was shortly coming, when it would be completely destroyed, and all its beauty laid low in the dust<sup>1</sup>. And then, as though in His mercy still loath to close His ministry, on His way back to Bethany He stopped, and sat down on the Mount of Olives, just opposite the Temple, and told His disciples of the fearful fate which was hanging over all the glowing beauty of battlement, and turret, and pinnacle which rose before them<sup>2</sup>. He told them, too, much about the fearful calamities which were about to come upon the Jewish nation, and how all the Jewish dispensation was itself to pass away; and He then went on to describe the End of the World, His second Coming, and the final struggle of that Church, which was to take the place of the Jewish system; and having spoken, with reference to this subject, His last and parting parables,—the parable of the ten virgins, and that of the talents,—He concluded by drawing, for the perpetual contemplation of His Church, that most wonderful and awful picture of the last great Day of Judgment<sup>3</sup>.

And now we must really notice again that the teaching of the Lord about Judaism was here, as always, not that it was at an end, but that it was coming to an end. He never Himself actually broke the barrier between Jew and Gentile. He repeatedly declared that His mission was

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xxiv. 1, 2; Mark xiii. 1, 2; Luke xxi. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. xxiv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Matth. xxv. 31—46. Three Evangelists have given us the Lord’s words about the End of the World; but one alone has recorded for our meditation this marvellous description of the Day of Judgment.

only to the House of Israel. He upheld the observance of the Law, and denounced the traditions of the elders, because they were contrary to the written Law. He observed all the Law Himself, and asserted plainly that He was come not to destroy it, but to fulfil it. But, with all this, He was continually hinting that these things were to pass away, and give place to a better and more spiritual order of things. The Apostles, too, after the Lord had ascended, confined their mission at first to the Jews. So little do they seem to have been prepared, even by the Lord's words, as to what was to be the case, that when at last the command was given to S. Peter to disregard the separation between Jew and Gentile, it was not without some hesitation that he obeyed<sup>1</sup>. And when, after this, it became plain that the door of the kingdom of Christ was indeed opened to the Gentiles, and that they were pressing into it, up rose again, within the Church itself, that same spirit of Judaism, which had opposed the Lord, and contended fiercely with the progress of His Church. And as the Pharisees, the representatives of the most extravagant and perverted Judaism, were the most bitter opponents of the Lord on earth, so Judaisers have ever been the greatest opponents to the spread of His spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men. The Church has had no worse enemy to contend with in the world than Judaism, and has never been free from the fear of its corrupting influence. The false opinions in the early Church, as has often been remarked, fall into two classes—the one derived from a mixture of the Gospel with Judaism, the other from a mixture of the Gospel with Oriental or Platonic Philosophy<sup>2</sup>. Now as the systems of heathen philosophy soon vanished away in the civilized world before the bright light of the Gospel, the latter class of these errors ceased, after a little time, to offer much opposition to the spread of the truth; but the fact of the Jewish system not being extinguished, and the entire scheme of civil and ceremonial mixed with moral ordinances being continually brought before Christians in the Sacred Writings, the Church has never been free from

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<sup>1</sup> Acts xi. 20, 47.

<sup>2</sup> Browne *On the 39 Articles*, Art. I. sect. I. pt. 2.

the danger of the first class of these opinions,—the danger, that is, of seizing for realities, what were once looked upon as realities, but what were only shadows, of mistaking the letter for the spirit, of supposing that Christianity was founded upon Judaism, instead of being, as it really was, a system which took the place of that other,—a system of better things, which it had, from the beginning of the world, been God's purpose to set up, and of which that other was only an imperfect and transitory type.

And thus most of the errors which had corrupted the Church in the sixteenth century, and from which the Reformers strove, with the help of God, to purify and cleanse it, were due to a Judaising spirit. It was this spirit which had displayed itself in the multiplication of rites and ceremonies, in regarding the Holy Communion as a continuation of the daily sacrifice of the Jews, and in looking on the Christian Presbyter as the representative of the Jewish Priest, and consequently as, in some sort, a mediator between God and man. Now it was from these Judaising errors that the leading Reformers endeavoured to cleanse the Church; and they certainly themselves acted consistently throughout; they seem to have been quite free from anything like a Judaising spirit. Not so however with many of their followers. For it is indeed one of the strangest facts, connected with the history of religious opinions since the Reformation, that none have ever fallen so completely into the errors of Judaism, as many who have looked to the Reformers as their guides, and have followed, as they supposed, the teaching of the Reformation.

Thus the rejection of Church-traditions and the appeal to the text of Scripture, were supposed to be a return from the Judaising error of making the law of God of no effect by the traditions of men; and so they were. But when ignorant and illiterate followers of the first Reformers went one step further than this, and asserted the right of each one to judge of the sense of Holy Scripture for himself, they fell at once into another and most dangerous error of Judaism. For it followed, as a necessary consequence of uneducated men interpreting Scripture, that the literal meaning of every text was upheld as the true one, and thus the letter instead of the spirit of the Scriptures came to be chiefly regarded;

and detached and single texts were wrested from their proper position in the Christian scheme, and made to prove doctrines contrary to the spirit of all the rest of Scripture. Again, the adoration of the letter of Scripture, which followed naturally upon this, led to another error of Judaism. The letter of the Old Testament being received with this reverence soon caused a serious confusion between the obligations of Mosaic and of Christian laws; and thus sprung up that system of Puritanism, which has been so pernicious to the spread of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and which certainly is as full of the errors of Judaism as ever was the Church of Rome.

Again, the Church before the Reformation had erred in regarding the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood as corresponding to the daily sacrifice of Judaism: but soon there sprung up in the Reformed Church a party, who, in avoiding this error of Judaism, fell into another; for, by regarding the Holy Communion as nothing more than a commemoration of Christ's death, they did in reality make it correspond exactly to another institution of the Mosaic Law, —the Passover. The one, in their opinion, looked back to Christ's death, the other, forward to it; both precisely in the same way. And thus those who were, as they thought, fleeing from the errors of Judaism, fell into its toils again.

And lastly, on the subject of Baptism, there grew up, amongst those who thought they were avoiding all the errors of Judaism, an error in its very spirit. For by looking on this sacrament as nothing more than a sign of admission into Christ's flock, they were really regarding it precisely as circumcision was regarded by the Jews.

In conclusion, then, let these things warn us all how easy it is to fall into the errors of Judaism. Would to God that we could all realize, more than any of us do, the deeply spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ. Let us not turn our eyes backwards, to look for our models in the Jewish Polity, which, thank God, has passed away for ever. What is this but to gaze in stupid and useless admiration at 'the hole of the pit whence we have been digged'? Let us rather look onwards. Let us remember that this dispensation too is to be succeeded by an order of things, as much more spiritual than the things around us, as these are

more spiritual than that dispensation which is passed away. Once God was worshipped at Jerusalem only, with fire and smoke, and blood and incense, with gorgeous rites and ceremonies: now He is worshipped in spirit and in truth, wherever there is a heart to love Him and a tongue to praise Him<sup>1</sup>. But His worship is to take a yet more sublime and spiritual form, when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God<sup>2</sup>."

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<sup>1</sup> John iv. 21, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxi. 3.

## LECTURE IV.

### THE CHARGE OF SABBATH-BREAKING.

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S. JOHN IX. 16.

*“Then said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath-day.”*

THIS was, no doubt, thought a clear and concise argument to set at rest the question, as to whether Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah. One advantage about it was that the people could fully understand it. ‘We’, the Pharisees were saying to the people, ‘we, your spiritual guides, know that this man who calls himself Messiah is an impostor. We know it for many reasons; but here is one of them which any of you can easily understand. You know the Sabbath has been established between God and ourselves, as peculiarly His covenant with us, to be a sign between Him and His people for ever<sup>1</sup>. Well, this claimant of the Messiahship does not observe the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, and therefore clearly is not of God,—has not been sent by Him, and consequently cannot be the Messiah.’

Let us then now consider the occasion which the Lord Jesus had given for the accusation being brought against Him, and His answer to this charge of Sabbath-breaking.

There are six occasions, as I mentioned in my introductory lecture, on which this charge of Sabbath-breaking was brought against the Lord<sup>2</sup>. The first was at His second visit to Jerusalem after His ministry had commenced,—that visit when the impotent man lying at the pool of Bethesda was healed; and it was this healing which gave rise to the charge being brought<sup>3</sup>. He had healed the sick man with

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<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxxi. 17; Neh. ix. 14; Ezek. xx. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> John v. 1—18.



the words, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk", conveying by these words the power to him who already had the will to obey, so that he arose, took up his bed and walked.

Now this was on a Sabbath-day; so the Jews (and by this term we may remember that S. John always means the extreme Judaic party<sup>1</sup>) immediately stopped the man, with the words, "It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." And it does seem, at first thought, as if carrying any burden on the Sabbath-day was contrary, not merely to their traditional interpretation of the law, but also to the written law itself<sup>2</sup>. When S. John now tells us that the Jews after this "did persecute Jesus, because He had done these things on the Sabbath-day", we are probably meant to conclude, that this was the commencement of the persecution of the Lord on account of His anti-sabbatism.

But now let us examine His answer to this first charge of Sabbath-breaking. It is, we may notice, the only occasion on which He could be charged with disregarding the written law on the subject. On all the other occasions, when a similar charge was brought against Him, it was at the most a charge of violating the traditional interpretation which had been put upon the written Law. Now the Lord's answer in this first case is certainly a very remarkable one. For He does not here assert the lawfulness of doing works of mercy on the Sabbath-day,—that answer belongs to a later period of His ministry, and would not have refuted their accusation, which was, that He had told a man to carry a burden on the Sabbath-day. The Jews had probably referred Him to the reason given in the law of Moses for the observance of the Sabbath, 'that God rested from His work of creation on the seventh day'; and He answers, with reference to this, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"; thus refuting the charge of breaking the Sabbath, by explaining, not the proper relation of the Sabbath to them His accusers, but its proper relation to Him the only-begotten Son of God. He was not in any way here relaxing the observance of the Sabbath for them; for it is clear that he does not touch the question at all; but He asserts, that He Himself is no

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xvii. 21, 22; Neh. xiii. 15—19.

more breaking the Sabbath than God is, who, without cessation from the creation, with no regard to Sabbaths, has been sustaining what He created from day to day, from hour to hour, and moment to moment. If God rested on the Sabbath-day, in the way in which the Jews carnally supposed He did, the world itself would fall away, the flowers would droop, and all life would be suspended<sup>1</sup>. No: God's 'resting from His work', must not be interpreted in this low carnal sense at all. Rest for God is no inactivity; and consequently inactivity alone cannot be man's duty with regard to the Sabbath. "Man must cease from his work indeed, by reason of his infirmity, that a time may be found for a higher and more glorious work in him; but with Him Who is One with the Father, it is otherwise; in Him the deepest rest is not excluded by the highest activity; nay rather in God, in the Son as in the Father, they are one and the same<sup>2</sup>." This was the nature of our Lord's answer, and we can hardly wonder after this that the accusation of the Jews against Him changes suddenly, from that of Sabbath-breaking, to that of making Himself equal with God. The charge that thus arose has already been considered in another lecture<sup>3</sup>. We pass on now to the next time when it has been recorded that the accusation of Sabbath-breaking was brought against the Lord.

He appears to have left Jerusalem, immediately after this event, and to have returned at once into Galilee, to pursue there the ministry He had already commenced. Not long after His return He and His disciples were walking through the cornfields on a Sabbath-day. Probably their walk did not exceed the limits which tradition had assigned for a lawful journey on that day: for although this restriction belonged to the oral, and not the written law, we are not told that our Lord on any occasion violated it; and we are not at liberty to suppose that he violated even the traditionary law, in any other way than that in which we are told He did. The disciples were hungry,—probably because their

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<sup>1</sup> Consider the admirable comment of Bengel (*on John v. 17*), "ἐως ἀπρι] inde a creatione, sine intervallo sabbati. Nam sabbato non tenetur: perpetuâ quiete non caret. Si non operaretur, ubi esset ipsum sabbatum?"

<sup>2</sup> Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> See above, *Lecture II.*

attendance on the Lord, who had been teaching, and preaching, had left them no time to take their regular meal,—and so, as they passed along, they plucked the ears of corn by the side of the footpath, and ate, rubbing the grains out in their hands. Now for those passing along a footpath to gather ears of corn within reach, and eat them, was expressly permitted in the law of Moses<sup>1</sup>; but the traditional law had added a comment to this passage, forbidding the act upon the Sabbath-day<sup>2</sup>. So the Pharisees immediately accused the disciples to their Master—“Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-day.” Now there is this difference between the charge here made, and the one we have just been considering. Then the written law had apparently been violated: now it is merely the gloss of the Pharisees upon the written law. Then our Lord was not called upon by the Jews to excuse a violation of the Sabbath, but to excuse His own act which had led to a violation of the Sabbath; here He is called upon distinctly to defend the act of His disciples, which, in the opinion of their accusers, is a violation of the Sabbath. Now the answer is certainly not exactly what we might have expected. For we should have thought that the Lord would have answered this accusation, as He did the one of breaking the traditions of the elders, by denying their authority; but He does not. His whole answer assumes that what the disciples have done is contrary to the written law, and therefore assumes this gloss of the Pharisees to be in accordance with the words of the text. He reminds them of a well-known example of a ceremonial law being broken in a case of necessity—broken too by David, whom they esteemed a very pattern of holiness. In this example the necessity which led to the breaking of the law is the same necessity as that which had led the disciples to break the Sabbath-law. But the second example which the Lord produces is still more a case in point for the accusers; for it is an instance of this very law of the Sabbath being broken, and that continually, and by the necessity of

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxiii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> “Metens sabbato vel tantillum reus est. Et vellere spicas est species messionis.” Maimonides, ‘Sabbath,’ ch. viii. cited by Lightfoot (*Hor. Hebr. in Matth.* xii. 2).

another law. There is the case of the Temple. The sacrifices, with all the laborious preparation which these imply, do not cease on the Sabbath: yes, on the Sabbath-days, the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless; 'so that ye yourselves', our Lord would add, 'acknowledge that this outward observance of the Sabbath must sometimes give place to a higher law,—namely the law of the Temple, with its services'; and then He adds, "But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the Temple." This then was the nature of our Lord's answer to the accusation: the first example was to remind the Pharisees of a case where the same necessity, which had just led the disciples to commit a violation of the outward ordinance of the Sabbath, had on one occasion led King David and his attendants to violate one of the ceremonial laws; while this violation was rightly visited with no censure from them: and the second example was to remind them of a case, that was continually happening within their knowledge, where, for the sake of some of the ceremonial laws, the priests of the Temple violated the law of the Sabbath, and yet were blameless. Now what we must notice particularly in the argument is this; that the Lord certainly here ranks the outward observance of the Sabbath with the ceremonial laws, and ranks it too as inferior to some of them; for there is no force whatever in the first example adduced, unless the law of the Sanctuary, which David broke in his necessity, was at least of as high an order as the law, which the disciples were breaking in their necessity; and the argument from the second example may be summed up, as it has been by one of the most penetrating and yet concise of commentators: "The Temple gives way to Christ: the Sabbath gives way to the Temple: therefore the Sabbath gives way to Christ<sup>1</sup>."

And here will be the proper place to allude to an argument of a similar kind to this which the Lord used on another occasion<sup>2</sup>. With reference to one of His acts of healing on the Sabbath-day (we are not told which one), He said to the Jews, 'You yourselves for the sake of circumcision violate the Sabbath; that is, rather than not keep Moses'

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<sup>1</sup> Bengel, on *Matth.* xii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> John vii. 23.

commandment about circumcision, which requires that the child should be circumcised on the eighth day from its birth<sup>1</sup>, you will, if that day fall upon a Sabbath, do all the work of circumcision upon it. You make, that is, the Sabbath, which is lower, give place to circumcision, which is higher; and shall it not then give place to my works of mercy, which are greater than circumcision itself<sup>2</sup>?' Here we notice again, that there is no argument in this at all, unless the outward observance of the Sabbath was inferior in importance to the law of circumcision.

But to return to the occasion under our immediate consideration. Our Lord after having answered the Pharisees perfectly with the two examples adduced, the one from the history of the nation, the other from the law itself, and then having reproved them for their narrow and limited insight into that law of love, which was really the woof running through all the law of God, proceeds to speak some of the weightiest words about the Sabbath, which have been recorded for our learning: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath<sup>3</sup>." It has been well remarked, that "the principle here laid down is one which it is impossible to confine to Sabbath-law alone. Rather it must extend to the whole circle of outward ordinances. Man is the end, and the ordinances of the law are the means; not these the end, and man the means. Man was not made to the end that he might observe these; but these were given that they might bless man, that they might train and discipline him till he should be ready to serve God from the free impulses of his spirit. And all this being so, 'the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath<sup>4</sup>.'" Now we may

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> For this form of our Lord's argument with the Jews I am indebted to Trench. See *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 314, note.

<sup>3</sup> See a remarkable parallel, 2 Macc. v. 19, cited by Bengel (*on Mark ii. 27*), "οὐ διὰ τὸν τόπον τὸ ἔθνος, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ἔθνος τὸν τόπον ὁ κύριος ἐξελέξατο." Consider also the passage in the Talmud: "The sabbath is in your hands, not you in the hands of the sabbath; for it is written, The Lord hath given you the sabbath. Exod. xvi. 29; Ezek. xx. 12." Cited by Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 318, note.

<sup>4</sup> Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 318.

notice, that it quite destroys all reasoning in these words, if we interpret 'Son of Man', as having no other meaning than 'man', and so draw from the words the meaning that 'man' may deal with the Sabbath as he pleases. For besides the fact of the term 'Son of Man' meaning always in other places of the Gospels, the 'Messiah'<sup>1</sup>, this liberty in man's dealings with the Sabbath certainly cannot be found in the words before us: for it is plainly a *non sequitur* to say, that because the Sabbath was made for 'man,' therefore 'man' is Lord of the Sabbath; but it is sound reasoning enough to say that, because the Sabbath was made for man, therefore He by Whom 'man' was made, Who with the Father gave the ordinance of the Sabbath to 'man',—that He is Lord of the Sabbath<sup>2</sup>. And thus, on both the occasions that we have already considered, we may notice that the Lord was leading the thoughts of His accusers upwards, from low carnal ideas about the law to contemplate Him the End of all law, to look on Him as the One to Whom the law pointed, and in Whom alone it was all summed up; that He might thus open their eyes, by degrees, to behold Him as greater than all the ordinances of the law,—as greater than the law itself, in that He was One with the Giver of it; and that thus they might at last be drawn to confess that He was indeed the 'Son of God.'

Let us now proceed to the third occasion when this Sabbath-question rose in dispute between the Lord and the Pharisees.

It was probably on the very next day<sup>3</sup> after that on

<sup>1</sup> Trench says, "There is no one passage of the New Testament, where 'Son of Man' (occurring as it does eighty-eight times) means other than the Messiah, the man in whom the idea of humanity was altogether fulfilled." *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> "Non sequitur; Hominis causa factum est sabbatum: Ergo homo est Dominus sabbati. Sed bene sequitur: Ergo is, cujus est homo, et qui propter hominem venit in mundum, quique omnem potestatem in cœlo et terra possidet, in hominis salutem et bonum est et Dominus sabbati." Cocceius (quoted by Trench, *Miracles*, p. 319, note).

<sup>3</sup> Compare Matth. xii. 9, Mark iii. 1, and Luke vi. 6. With reference to the apparent difficulty of two consecutive days being Sabbaths, see Tischendorf, *Conspectus Synopsis Evangelicæ*, p. xxix, and Ellicott, *Lectures on the Life of our Lord*, p. 175, note.

which our Lord repelled the accusation we have just considered, that He again encountered the same enemies on the same subject. According to His custom on a Sabbath, He entered into a synagogue and taught. Now there was a man in the crowd before Him with a withered hand: and so the Pharisees, who seem to have been completely silenced by the arguments of the preceding Sabbath,—silenced indeed but not convinced,—watched Him, to see whether He would heal on a Sabbath-day. The Lord knowing their thoughts said at once to the man with the withered hand, “Rise and stand forth in the midst.” And then, challenging a discussion, He turns to the still silent Pharisees, with the question, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath-days to do good or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?” We are not told that they answered Him a word. They were probably content to sit and watch Him in order that they might have something to accuse Him of; but we know that what they thought in their hearts was, ‘It is not lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day.’ And here we must notice, that the case of Sabbath-law now before us is rather different from either of the other two we have just considered. In the first of those the Sabbath appeared to have been broken by the man who had been healed carrying a burden on that day: in the second case too, the disciples had certainly violated one of the oral laws about Sabbath observance: but in the case now before us, there is no question about carrying a bed, or doing any forbidden work, on the Sabbath-day. The question is simply, ‘May one, who has the power to heal with a word, speak that word upon the Sabbath-day? Or does such an act break the Sabbath rest?’ This is clearly a case not contemplated either in the written or the oral law; and therefore the answer must come from the principle upon which the law is founded. And it is to this principle that the Lord appeals, when He says to the Pharisees, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath-day to do good or to do evil? to save life or to destroy it?” It is as though He said: ‘You see that withered hand there; you cannot doubt, for you have seen too many of my miracles to doubt, that I can with a word make that hand whole. Is it lawful for me to do this undoubted good to-day, now that the opportunity is before

me? or must I abstain from doing it because it is the Sabbath, and so do evil? For what is 'neglecting to do good' when we have the opportunity but 'doing evil'<sup>1</sup>? May I save a life upon the Sabbath-day, by speaking the word which will heal? or am I to abstain from so doing because it is the Sabbath; and thus by allowing disease to continue its ravages, really do the work of the destroyer<sup>2</sup>? Having thus completely vindicated His works of mercy from the charge of a violation of the Sabbath, by a question, which there was certainly only one way of answering, and having hinted at the error in all views of the Sabbath, which regarded inactivity itself as a duty, He proceeds to unveil to the multitudes the hypocrisy, which was at the bottom of all this sabbatism of the Pharisees. For although the Pharisees objected to His breaking the Sabbath, for the sake of doing an act of mercy to a man, yet they were willing enough to relax its rules, when their own property was in danger, and so would break it to save the life of a sheep. He puts to them the reproachful question, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" But still they held their peace. They could not answer Him a word to any of these things. And now having fully vindicated what he was about to do from the charge of being a violation of the Sabbath, and having driven home to the hearts of his accusers the charge of hypocrisy, He looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, and said to the man before Him, "Stretch forth thine hand." The word, as ever, was powerful to save: he stretched forth his withered hand, strong and healthy as his other one. The rage of the confuted Pharisees was now so great, that, we read, they went immediately and took counsel with

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<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. Consider also Olshausen's remarks (*on Matth.* xii. 10): "It appears as though the question at issue should not have been the *ἀγαθοποιῆσαι*, or *κακοποιῆσαι*, but the *ποιῆσαι* or *μὴ ποιῆσαι*. But it is this misleading contrast from which the Redeemer wishes to withdraw them, and to point out to them that the 'not doing' may very often be a sin."

<sup>2</sup> It was the subject of a lengthened dispute between the schools of Hillel and Schammai, as to whether the sick might be comforted on the Sabbath-day. Our Lord's words have evident reference to this question.



the Herodians how they might destroy Him. Thus it has ever been; thus it ever is now; evil factions will lay aside their mutual jealousies and hatreds to make common cause against the truth. So at a later time, Pharisee and Sadducee, Herod and Pilate, Roman and Jew made friends over the foulest persecution of the truth which ever disgraced humanity.

No other occasion of this charge being made against the Lord in Galilee has been recorded by the Evangelists. The next occasion, which appears to have been given, is that recorded in the ninth chapter of S. John's Gospel. It was the healing of the man who had been born blind. This great miracle was performed at Jerusalem upon the Sabbath-day. It was probably at the commencement of the feast of the Dedication, which the Lord attended at Jerusalem a little more than three months before His crucifixion. Now the only point in which this miracle, as a violation of the Sabbath, differs from either of the other two which we have been considering is this. In the first of those,—the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda,—the violation of the Sabbath consisted in the man's carrying his bed; in the second miracle,—the restoring of the withered hand,—there was no visible work performed to violate the Sabbath, and the question raised was, whether the simple healing by a word was a violation of the Sabbath; but in the case now before us the Pharisees possibly considered the violation of the Sabbath to consist in the mixing the clay and spittle, with which to anoint the eyes of the blind man<sup>1</sup>. It has not been recorded, that the accusation on this occasion was made against the Lord in His presence, and so we are left in ignorance of His answer to it, if any

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<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot quotes the following from a Rabbinical treatise on the observance of the Sabbath: "Vinum in medium oculi injici (sabbato) prohibitum, poni super palpebras licitum. Alter dicit, sputum etiam super palpebras poni prohibitum." And again from another: "Dolens dentibus acetum ne absorbeat, iterum exsputurus: ast absorbere licet, modo deglutiat. Guttore dolens oleo ne gargarizet: ast oleum deglutire licet." Augustine (*Hom.* 86) says of this work of our Lord's, "In this instance the spitting on the ground, the making clay, and anointing the man's eyes, is doing some work. Let no one doubt it; it was doing a work. The Lord did break the Sabbath; but was not therefore guilty."

was given; but we can see that any one of the answers we have already examined would perfectly have met the case.

And now the charge of Sabbath-breaking is suddenly dropped, so far as the Pharisees and leading Jews at Jerusalem are concerned; and into the probable reasons for this we have already examined in a former lecture, as also, into the reason why no charge of Sabbath-breaking was brought against the Lord at His trial<sup>1</sup>. But although He was thus, for the last three months of His ministry, freed from this accusation of Sabbath-breaking in Jerusalem, He was twice again charged with it in the country beyond the Jordan. Thus the recorded occasions, upon which the Lord taught the nature of the Sabbath, are divided equally between the three chief regions of His ministry: two belong to His ministry in Jerusalem; two to that in Galilee; and two to that in Peræa. The first of these last two was on this wise<sup>2</sup>. He was as usual teaching in one of the synagogues; on the Sabbath-day; and there was a woman before Him who had been afflicted with a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, whose body was so bent together, that she could not stand upright. The Lord laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made whole. Now the only difference between this miracle, and the one of healing the withered hand, which affects the question before us, is that, in this case, the Lord used the action of laying on His hands, instead of healing by a simple word. It does not appear however that it was upon this 'work' that the accusing Pharisee laid the violation of the Sabbath. Indeed he does not directly charge the Lord with breaking the Sabbath at all. He is afraid to do this; and he thinks that he may escape the shame and confusion, which always follow a dispute with the Prophet of Galilee, by blaming in this case not the Prophet, but the people. And so it is to the people that he says, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day." But the Lord does not allow him thus to escape the reproof to which he has justly subjected himself, no neither him, nor yet those who

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xiii. 10—27.

set him on; for the Lord answered him and said, "Hypocrites",—not "Thou hypocrite", as our version has it, but—"Hypocrites<sup>1</sup>, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath-day loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?<sup>2</sup> And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?" The answer is distinct and telling; 'You have your own relaxations of the Sabbath-law. It is necessary that you should have them. You are rightly interpreting God's written law of the Sabbath when you violate its outward observance, in doing an act which is dictated by the higher law of mercy, although that mercy be shewn only towards a dumb animal; and am not I acting in accordance with the eternal law of God in shewing mercy to a human soul, although the outward observance of the Sabbath may be violated thereby?'

The second occasion in Peræa happened thus<sup>3</sup>. On another Sabbath, about the same time, one of the chief Pharisees made a feast and asked the Lord to come to it. We must remember that with the Jews the idea of 'the Sabbath' was not that of 'a day to be austere kept': on the contrary, it was a very common day for their festal entertainments<sup>4</sup>. And, from our Lord accepting this invitation, we must doubtless conclude that this was not in itself wrong. Now it seems strange to meet with this instance of courtesy from a Pharisee towards the Lord, at so late a period of His ministry, when the whole party of the Pharisees was exasperated against Him. But when we see that the sacred laws of hospitality were not sufficient to defend Him from the malice of His foes, and that those were present 'who watched Him', we may perhaps fairly conclude that the invitation itself was not given in good faith. There is a case before Him for His healing power. A man is present with a dropsy. The Lord as before, on a similar occasion in

<sup>1</sup> The weight of MSS. decidedly preponderates in favour of *ὑποκριταί*; and the alteration to *ὑποκριτᾶ* is easily accounted for in order to make it suit better to *αὐτῷ*.

<sup>2</sup> ἀπαγαγῶν] verba cumulantur ad *opus* demonstrandum. Bengel on *Luke* xiii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xiv. 1—6.

<sup>4</sup> See Neh. viii. 9—12; Tobit ii. 1, 2.

Galilee<sup>1</sup>, so now here, challenges the Pharisees to discuss the question, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?" But they hold their peace. Then He heals the man, and sends him away, and answers the thoughts of the Pharisees at once: "Which of you shall have a son, or an ox",—for the authorities in favour of this reading, instead of the one followed in our version, are overwhelming<sup>2</sup>,—"Which of you shall have a son, or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath-day?" Shewing them, as before, that where their worldly affections or interests were concerned, they did and did rightly that very thing, which they now make an accusation against Him. And they could not answer Him again to these things: not that they were convinced; they were only silenced; and the unanswerable statement of the truth which had failed to win them, only maddened them in their blind opposition.

Such were the six occasions when our Blessed Lord was charged with violating Sabbath-law. Let us now endeavour to gather up His whole teaching on the subject, and thus we shall easily see who they are in the history of the Church that have opposed Him in the spirit of these Pharisees.

We may remark then, first, with reference to the two occasions<sup>3</sup> when the Messiah assumed for Himself a Lordship over the Sabbath, and the power of abrogating Sabbath-law if He pleased, that, at any rate, He did not do so. But then we must remember at the same time that He never abrogated any of the Mosaic law, but only asserted that the time would come when it would be done away. It will be necessary then for us to consider the relation of Sabbath-law to the rest of the Mosaic law, and to examine whether in part or in whole it belonged to that portion of the Law which was to be done away. For although all the Law as delivered by Moses was really fulfilled and abrogated in the death of Christ; those enactments which it had in common with that eternal and unchangeable Law, written by

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> All the uncial MSS., excepting three (K, L, X), are in favour of *υἱὸς* instead of *δύος*. This ought to be quite sufficient to set the question at rest, even if it were not easy to account for *δύος* having been substituted in some MSS. for the correct reading.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 61, 65.

the finger of a creating God upon the hearts of men, must of necessity still remain in force. And thus it is that what is called the 'moral law', as delivered by Moses, is still binding upon us<sup>1</sup>,—not binding indeed upon us, because God commanded it to the children of Israel through Moses, but binding upon us, by the necessary conditions of that human system of which we form a part. And it is into this simple question as to whether Sabbath-law belongs to the moral law or not, that all disputes on the Sabbath question at last resolve themselves.

Now it must strike every one, who has ever pondered at all over the decalogue, that the fourth commandment is of a different nature from all the others; for while the others are such, that their very fitness and even necessity for the nature of man must be acknowledged by all,—such indeed that the command is in each one of them of necessity what it is, and could not have been the opposite or different; yet, in the case of the fourth commandment, no such necessity is apparent; and this command could certainly never have been discovered in the shape in which it stands, without an express revelation from God. But perhaps some one may say, that its position amongst the other commandments of the decalogue is such, that we must take it to be with them a moral commandment; and that God might have commanded it for all times and places, although it was not really a natural law. Let us then consider the teaching of our Blessed Lord on this subject, and see whether He has in any way guided us as to where we ought to class this Sabbath-law.

Now we have seen that, in answering the accusation of Sabbath-breaking, He in three instances has enabled us to judge of the relative position in which He set Sabbath-law: once He placed it below the laws of the sanctuary<sup>2</sup>; once below the Law of the Temple with its rites and sacrifices<sup>3</sup>; and once below that of circumcision<sup>4</sup>: and the whole force of His argument, in each case, depended upon its being in that position of inferiority. He also made it give way to the law of mercy<sup>5</sup>. Certainly not one of the other nine commandments of the decalogue could have been treated thus.

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<sup>1</sup> *Article VII.*

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> p. 71.

And if any one should say that our Lord's example and teaching only go to shew, that the command may be broken in letter, in order to be preserved in spirit, it may be answered, that it is so; but this is nothing less than to separate the fourth commandment from the moral law; for of which of the other nine could it be said, that the letter might be intentionally broken, and this not merely in exceptional cases, but continually, in order that the spirit might be kept. The truth is, that in the case of all the ceremonial laws the spirit is still to be observed. We observe the spirit of the law of circumcision, when we dedicate our members to God, and mortify our carnal lusts and appetites. We observe the spirit of the law of sacrifice, when we plead the one great sacrifice upon the cross for the forgiveness of our sins; and we observe the spirit of the law of the Temple, when we, each one of us, look upon our bodies as living temples dedicated to Christ, and to be kept holy in His service.

Add to these reasons, for separating the outward observance of the Sabbath from the moral law, the fact, that while each of the other nine commandments was touched upon by our Blessed Lord, in order to enforce it upon His disciples with greater stringency than ever, we cannot but remark the omission of any such word with reference to the fourth. And remember that S. Paul has left us in no doubt as to where he classed the law of the Sabbath. He says, in writing to the Colossians<sup>1</sup>, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ<sup>2</sup>." Nothing can be plainer than this passage: S. Paul not only classes the Jewish Sabbaths with the ceremonial law, but tells us too that these things were done away by the death of Christ.

It remains then that we should now examine into the fourth commandment, to see what is really the spirit of it, which is to be observed; or, in other words, to discover what part of it belongs to the natural or moral law. Now

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<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> No one who approaches this passage without a preconceived conviction that S. Paul must have been a Sabbatarian, would think of asserting that 'sabbaths' do not here include the *weekly* festival.

I take it to be part of the moral law, that times, no less than places, should be consecrated to the God who made us; that any place, which God has sanctified by His particular presence, or time, which He has marked out by any extraordinary work, should be to men more holy than any other places or times. And if we ask in what sort of way a time thus sanctified to God should be spent, what should be the nature of the religious joy with which such festival times should be hallowed, we shall find no better answer than that supplied by the thoughtful and devout Hooker, who writes<sup>1</sup>: “The most natural testimonies of our rejoicing in God, are first His praises set forth with cheerful alacrity of mind, secondly our comfort and delight expressed by a charitable largeness of somewhat more than common bounty, thirdly sequestration from ordinary labours, the toils and cares of which are not meet to be companions of such gladness. Festival solemnity therefore is nothing but the due mixture, as it were, of these three elements, Praise, Bounty, and Rest.” One more question upon this part of the subject: ‘How often ought these holy days to occur?’ ‘Does natural law in any way mark out their frequency?’ And here we must notice that a week is that natural division of time which is next greater than a day. I call it a natural division of time, because it is probably on account of its being roughly marked by the changes of the moon, that it has been found in existence as a division of time amongst nearly all nations on the face of the earth<sup>2</sup>. If then certain days as they recur are to be kept holy to God, they must be taken weekly, monthly, or less often. Now I think natural law alone might teach us that once a month would not be often enough to turn aside from the busy and distracting hum of this world’s business, in order to refresh ourselves by keeping high festival to God. That these festivals should occur at least once a week, seems then to be part of God’s moral or natural law.

If this then was the spirit of the Law of the Sabbath

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<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book v. ch. lxx. § 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Jahn, *Arch. Bibl.* ‘de hebdomadibus;’ Kitto, *Bibl. Cycl.* art. ‘Sabbath.’

which would be binding after the letter was abrogated by the death of Christ, it remained only for some properly constituted Christian authority to settle which day of the week should be the Christian festival. This appears to have been done by the Apostles, who naturally named the first day of the week as having been consecrated by the most marvellous and momentous of all the Lord's acts on earth. Now what I contend for here is, that this must not be looked upon as a changing of the day from the seventh to the first day of the week. It was the establishing of a new Christian festival, not the changing the day on which a carnal Jewish feast was kept. All the passages usually drawn from the New Testament to prove such a change, do really prove only, that the first day of the week was certainly observed as a Christian festival, which is not denied; and one of the passages, upon which much reliance is laid, really shews that the ideas of the Jewish Sabbath were by no means transferred from the seventh to the first day; for it tells us, that on this first day of the week S. Paul commenced a long journey on foot, and travelled certainly much more than a Sabbath day's journey<sup>1</sup>. The testimony too of the whole of the early Church is against this idea of the days having been changed; and when a modern writer, in support of the idea, can find no better authority than a passage in the Homily "de Semente", bearing the name of Athanasius, where it is stated that "the Lord transferred the Sabbath to the Lord's day"; and adds that, although this Homily was not really written by Athanasius, it is a proof of the opinions prevailing at the time it was written<sup>2</sup>; it would

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<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 7. This first day of the week must be considered as commencing on the Saturday evening according to the Jewish method of calculation. See Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of St Paul*. 1st Edit. Vol. II. p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Baylee, *History of the Sabbath*, p. 107. But we need go no further than this same homily, 'de Semente,' to shew that the author transferred no idea of Sabbath law from the seventh to the first day. He says, with reference to our Lord's argument about the priests in the temple profaning the Sabbath, "The Jewish people then were forbidden to work on the Sabbath; but the priests were not forbidden, wherefore it is permitted all of us to work on the Sabbath-day,"—not, because we rest on another day, but—"because we are a royal priesthood." *Athanasii Opera*, Paris, 1627, p. 1072.



really be quite sufficient to match so frail an argument with one of a similar nature on the other side, and appeal to the well-known interpolated passage in our own Cambridge manuscript, as a proof that the opinion of the next age was that the Lord had abrogated the Sabbath altogether<sup>1</sup>. But we have very clear proof indeed that the Early Fathers were most careful to distinguish between Sabbatising, and keeping the holy Christian festival of the Lord's day. So far from looking upon the Lord's day as the Jewish Sabbath, they did not look upon the Christian festival as even the perfect antitype of the Old Sabbath. They considered that the Jewish Sabbath obtained its real fulfilment in that perfect rest into which Christians enter in Christ. Thus, Justin Martyr, in the dialogue with Trypho the Jew, whom he has been supposing to reproach the Christians with not observing either holy days, or sabbaths, or circumcision, answers him thus<sup>2</sup>: "The new law intends you to keep a perpetual sabbath.....If there is amongst you any perjurer, any thief, let him cease sinning; if there is any adulterer, let him repent, and he will have celebrated God's true and joyful Sabbath." And Irenæus writes<sup>3</sup>: "The Sabbaths taught us that we should persevere every day in the service of God." And Chrysostom<sup>4</sup>: "So we ought no longer to celebrate one day of the week only, since God commands us now to make but one single holy day of all our life, let us celebrate the feast." Jerome also<sup>5</sup>: "Lest irregular assemblies should diminish faith in Christ, certain days are fixed for meeting together. It is not that the day on which we meet is more worthy to be celebrated, but it is in order that whatever day may be chosen to assemble together, we may rejoice the more from seeing one another. But he who

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<sup>1</sup> The Codex Bezae has the following passage inserted between Luke vi. 4 and 6: *τη αυτη ημερα θεασαμενος τινα εργαζομενον τω σαββατω, ειπεν αυτω ανθρωπε ει μεν οιδας τι ποιεις, μακαριος ει· ει δε μη οιδας, επικαταρατος και παραβατης ει του νομου.* This MS. is now generally supposed to have belonged to the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century.

<sup>2</sup> Paris Edition, 1615, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> *Adversus haereses*, lib. iv. cap. xxx. (Paris, 1596, p. 350).

<sup>4</sup> *Homil. on St Matth.* xxxix.

<sup>5</sup> *On Gal.* iv. 9, 10.

can more perfectly answer the question laid down, affirms that all days are alike." Augustin, whose views upon some points approached very near to what Calvin afterwards propounded with all the fervor of a discoverer, seems plainly to have been of opinion that among all the ten commandments the fourth alone was to be observed figuratively<sup>1</sup>. And in another place, he has written<sup>2</sup>: "When you ask, why the Christian does not observe the rest of the Sabbath, if Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, I reply that the Christian observes it not, because Christ fulfilled what this figure announced. We have our Sabbath in Him who has said, 'Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

Let these quotations suffice to shew the opinion of the Early Church. And now if we turn to the period of the Reformation, we shall certainly find that, on this Sabbath question, the leading Reformers were most careful to avoid anything like Judaism. They, at least, did not consider the Lord's day to be the Jewish Sabbath in any shape whatever. Thus, Luther says<sup>3</sup>: "Now it has come to pass that all days are holy days, as Isaiah prophesies (lxvi. 23); and, on the other hand, all days are working days. Yet the rest is necessary, and was established by the Church for the sake of the laity, for the artisans and workmen, in order that they also might meet to hear the Word of God...For the rest now is not necessary nor commanded except in order that the word of God may be heard and preached:" and again<sup>4</sup>: "Keep the Sabbath holy, for its use both to body and soul; but if anywhere the day is made holy for the mere day's sake, then I order you,"—I do not quote his command as having any authority with us, but merely to shew his opinion,—"then I order you," he says, "to work

<sup>1</sup> *De spiritu et litera*, I. 15. (27).

<sup>2</sup> *Contra Faustum*, Lib. XIX. ch. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *De bonis operibus tertii præcepti*, § 17.

<sup>4</sup> Cited by Coleridge, *Table Talk*, Vol. II. p. 315. But Luther's opinions on the subject are so well known that it seems needless to quote them. Consider however the following: "Nostris temporibus in Moravis, natum est stolidum genus hominum, Sabbatharii, qui Judæorum exemplo Sabbathum servandum contendunt, et forte circumcisionem quoque pari ratione urgebunt." *On Genesis* xiii. 16.

on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on the Christian spirit and liberty." And Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, when treating on the subject of the Sabbath, writes<sup>1</sup>: "There can be no doubt that, on the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ceremonial part of the commandment was abolished....Christians therefore should have nothing to do with a superstitious observance of days." It is want of time which compels me to produce the opinions of these two alone as specimens of the opinions of the leading Reformers<sup>2</sup>. Let us turn to our own Church of England. Now on this point, as indeed on all others, her formularies and articles are singularly free from all Judaism. She retains the fourth commandment in her services, as implying that it has in it what is moral as well as what is ceremonial; and in the Catechism, where all the commandments are explained, this commandment is explained in exact accordance with those views of the Early Fathers, and of the Reformers which I have just quoted<sup>3</sup>.

But on this point, as on those other points which were under our notice last Sunday, many, who have supposed that they were following the Reformers in their great work of cleansing the Church from all Judaizing errors, and especially those who were looking with the greatest respect to Calvin, whose opinions on this subject I have just brought before you, have fallen into the most grievous Judaism on this question of the Sabbath. They have asserted that the whole of the fourth commandment, in its

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<sup>1</sup> Book II. ch. 8. § 31.

<sup>2</sup> The confession of Augsburg, which may be supposed to embody the opinions of many of them (Art. VII.), runs thus: "Those who think that by the authority of the Church the observance of the Sunday was substituted as necessary, instead of the Sabbath, are in great error. The Scripture, which teaches that the Mosaic ceremonies since the revelation of the Gospel may be omitted, has abrogated the Sabbath."

<sup>3</sup> The word 'Sabbath' is nowhere in our Liturgy applied to the Lord's day; and even the Sundays themselves are in no place gathered together for any peculiar honor. The Collects, Epistles, and Gospels are those 'for every Sunday and Holyday throughout the year;' the Litany is to be used on every Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday; proper lessons and proper psalms are not peculiar to Sundays.

ceremonial as well as its moral teaching, is binding upon Christians; that the Lord's day is the 'Sabbath', and is to be observed according to Sabbath law. And one Church has actually gone so far as to assert in her authorised Directory, that the Sabbath, (meaning by this term the Lord's day,) is to be sanctified by "a holy cessation or resting all the day, from all unnecessary labours, and an abstaining not only from all sports and pastimes, but also from all worldly words and thoughts<sup>1</sup>." It is a natural consequence of such Judaism, that amongst those who are brought up in these views, Pharisaical ideas of the Sabbath are very prevalent; and Sabbath law is esteemed, as it was with the Pharisees, of more importance than those eternal and unchangeable laws, which God has written upon the hearts of all men.

It would not be in accordance with the scope of these Lectures to enter into the question of the due observance of the Christian festival of the Lord's day. If it were, the remarks of Hooker, which I have already brought to your notice, would form an admirable starting-point for us. But I cannot conclude without a few words to remove the impression, (if any such has been conveyed by what I have said,) that I am of those who would rejoice to see the Lord's day less observed amongst us than it is. It is, God knows, not from a wish to bring down that High Festival from the position it occupies, but from a wish to exalt it before your eyes, that I have endeavoured to shew you that it is a Christian, and not a Jewish Feast. For being such, it is not elevated, it is not sanctified, but it is rather degraded, by observing it according to carnal Jewish ordinances, instead of in a spirit of Christian liberty. Does any one then say, 'If this is so, what forbids us to occupy ourselves with any frivolous amusement on the Lord's day, such as playing cards, or the like?' I answer that, if you regard the Lord's day as merely the old Jewish Sabbath, you are not forbidden; for the Sabbath law only forbade those pleasures which involved work. But regard it as a Christian festival, kept holy to God from the earliest days; and you are forbidden by a far

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<sup>1</sup> Directory of the Church of Scotland, *Of the Sanctification of the Lord's Day*.

higher law than that of Moses to waste such precious moments in frivolous enjoyment. What would you think of him who should play cards upon his death-bed, in an hour so awful, that we continually pray that in it the Good God will deliver us? There is no law against playing cards at such a time; but should you not think it the most fearful recklessness, if any one should do so? Of such kind is the recklessness of wasting, in any frivolous amusement, hours which the best men, from the earliest Christian time to the present, have agreed to give up to holy thoughts of God and Heaven. Do you think one-seventh of your time too much to be given up to thoughts of Him who created, Him who redeemed, and Him who sanctifies you? Or can you look up to your God and affirm that you live in Him so continually, that He is so present to your thoughts every day, that you need make no difference between the Lord's day and other days? Oh beware! if you despise this day, when the gate of Heaven stands more particularly open, and 'blessings are plentiful and rife', lest God should deprive you of the privileges of that high festival, and allow the cankering cares of this world to gnaw, without cessation, at the life of your soul; until to you there will be no rest, no cessation from the jarring din of earthly business, from day to day, from week to week, from year to year; for what delight, what blessing, will there be left for you in the solemn day, the day of the feast of the Lord?

## LECTURE V.

### THE CHARGE OF WORLDLINESS.

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S. MATTHEW XI. 19.

*“Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.”*

WE have our Lord's own authority for it, that this was the form which one accusation of the Jews against Him assumed. And as He has thus joined together two charges, which at first seem distinct<sup>1</sup>, that of being no ascetic, and that of associating with publicans and sinners; and as on all the occasions when the Jews brought the one accusation against Him, the other seems to have been implied or expressed<sup>2</sup>, it will be best for us to consider the two charges together. And when we come to consider all that is implied in either charge, we shall see that they are really very closely connected,—that they do in fact both together make up the one charge of ‘conformity to the world.’

Now the first occasion upon which we hear any of these murmurings, which afterwards grew into a definite charge, probably often repeated in disputings with the Pharisees, was at the feast which S. Matthew made for the Lord upon his giving up his home and his profession, and attaching himself as a follower to the Messiah<sup>3</sup>. It has been suggested<sup>4</sup> that

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<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. ix. 10—14; Luke xix. 8.

<sup>3</sup> If we suppose some interval to have elapsed, as Robinson does, between the call of S. Matthew and the feast which he made for the Lord, we must not only disturb the order in which the three Evangelists have recorded the events of this period, but also shall have no previous recorded accusation of the Pharisees to which to refer our Lord's words in Matth. xi. 19. The reasons Robinson gives for supposing this interval (*Harmony of the Gospels*, § 58, *note*) seem hardly weighty enough.

<sup>4</sup> Neander, *Life of Jesus Christ*, § 141 (Bohn, p. 230).

S. Matthew intended this as a farewell feast to those who had been associated with him in the business of tax gathering. However this might be, there were certainly many of such companions present. We must remember that this is quite in the early part of the Lord's Galilæan ministry. Accusations have indeed already been made against Him at Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>, and an echo of them has just been caught up in Galilee<sup>2</sup>, but we may consider the position of parties at this time to have been that the people, having heard much of all the great wonders done at Jerusalem<sup>3</sup>, and even in their own neighbourhood also since the Lord's return to Galilee<sup>4</sup>, were quite ready to give in their adhesion to Him as the Messiah, and were eagerly expecting some great and glorious display of His Power; while, on the other hand, the Pharisees, having already fallen perversely into their position of hostility towards Him, and having had their ranks recruited by some of their brethren from Jerusalem, who are eager to follow up in Galilee the opposition commenced in Judæa<sup>5</sup>, were cautiously waiting for some opportunity of shewing plainly to the people that the Prophet of Galilee was an impostor.

They think they have discovered the opportunity they are waiting for, when they see the mixed company whom the new-made disciple asks to meet his Master at his house. They, in their pride, see here at once a proof that this man cannot be the Messiah. Can the Promised One, the Hope of Israel, the Truest of all Israelites, associate with the detested publicans, traitors to the Theocracy? And so they address His disciples as though they were not yet without hope of detaching them from His side<sup>6</sup>, and suggest to them the inconsistency there is in One, Who sets up this high claim, associating on a level with such a degraded class. But the Lord hears them and answers for His disciples, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." He descends here we notice to a lower level than that of these publicans and sinners in whom was often awakened, as

<sup>1</sup> John v. 16, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. ix. 3.

<sup>3</sup> John ii. 23, iv. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Luke iv. 23; Mark i. 28, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Luke v. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Not, as Neander suggests, that they hesitate to attack the Lord. This hesitation belongs to a later period of His ministry (see above, p. 70).

appears plainly in the Gospel story, a burning thirst after righteousness,—He descends to the level of the benighted Pharisees, and is content to take their view for the time of the distinct line of separation which can be drawn between their righteousness and others' sinfulness. 'Granted that you Pharisees are holy, and that these who are gathered around Me are unholy; but to whom is it the Physician's duty to go? Is the fear of infection to keep him amongst those who are in health? or is it not exactly where infection rages that his duty calls him?' But not only this. There is a law of God running through all His revelation to man which overrides all these mere outward regulations of propriety,—namely, the law of mercy; and so the Lord refers them to their Scriptures, so well read, so little understood, with the very words they often used to their own disciples—"Go ye and learn<sup>1</sup>." He refers them to a text from Hosea (the same to which He referred on the occasion of another accusation being brought against Him of breaking a law also overruled by the general law of mercy<sup>2</sup>): "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And thus He would have them to learn that mercy towards the souls whom He came from Heaven to save, was far more precious in the sight of God than any mere outward observances, such as sacrifice or purification<sup>3</sup>.

And now some disciples of the Baptist, who appear to have been present on the occasion, give the conversation a slightly different turn<sup>4</sup>. They had perhaps been directed to

<sup>1</sup> לָמַד וְלָמַד is a very common expression in the Talmud.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> We must remember that the reason why the Pharisees abjured the society of publicans and sinners was not in the least from a fear lest they should catch their sinfulness; they had too good an opinion of themselves to fear this; but from a fear lest they should contract outward ceremonial defilement.

Pusey (*Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, Hosea vi. 6), amongst many excellent remarks upon the text quoted by our Lord, has the following: "When the Pharisees murmured at our Lord for eating with publicans and sinners, He bade them, *go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice*. He bade them learn that deeper meaning of the words, that God valued mercy for the souls for which Christ died, above that outward propriety, that He, the All Holy, should not feast familiarly with those who profaned God's law and themselves."

<sup>4</sup> That the conversation about fasting was a continuation of the one we have just considered, see Luke v. 32, 33, where the question about fasting is recorded as having been put by those who had asked the previous question.



the Lord Jesus as the Messiah by their master, but they could not yet understand how one who in their eyes fell so far behind the Baptist, in the ascetic life which belonged to the ideal Prophet, could nevertheless be that Baptist's Master,—the One to Whom the Baptist was only forerunner—the One Whose shoelatchet the Baptist, according to his own confession, was not worthy to unloose. And so leaving the exact ground of the Pharisees' accusation, which they can see the Lord's answer has rendered untenable, they take up, as they think, a stronger position, and assail the Lord with much the same accusation in a slightly different form. Admitting, as they seem to do, that it may be necessary for the Messiah, whenever He may come, to go to sinners, in order to teach them and call them from the errors of their way, 'Surely', they reason, 'when with them He need not actually eat and drink: surely it would be more in accordance with the office of Messiah, if He were to carry into His communications with the people, the exalted asceticism of an Elijah or a Baptist.' "Why", they say, "do the disciples of John fast oft and make long prayers<sup>1</sup>, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?"

And now our Lord answers this fresh accusation by pointing out to His opponents their inconsistency in rejecting Him as Messiah on account of His not fasting. For, by assuming to Himself the title of 'Bridegroom', He claimed many prophecies as being fulfilled in His Person<sup>2</sup>, and reminded the Pharisees that they rightly concluded from the words of Zechariah, that the days of the Messiah would be days of feasting, not of fasting<sup>3</sup>.

But the reason for the followers of the Messiah leading lives free from the asceticism of the Older Prophets and of John the Baptist, lay deeper than merely in the outward ful-

<sup>1</sup> "These prayers," as Alford well remarks, "must be understood in connexion with an ascetic form of life, not as only the usual prayers of devout men."

<sup>2</sup> See Isa. liv. 5; Hos. ii. 19, 20. Consider also John Baptist's allusion to the Messiah under the same figure (John iii. 29).

<sup>3</sup> We learn from Maimonides, that the Jews taught that "all fasting would cease in the days of the Messiah, and that there would be then only holidays and festivals, as it is written in Zech. viii. 19." See Lightfoot, *on Matth.* ix.

filling of Old Testament Prophecy; or rather, Prophecy had deeper reasons for the truths it uttered, than merely that it might give certain signs and tokens by which the Messiah should be known. All the fasting of the Old Covenant was like its other ordinances—an outward form. It bore no exact corresponding likeness to the grief within. But in the New Covenant, under which the worship of God was to be the worship of the heart, outward forms and ceremonies would be no longer required. They would come indeed as the fruit of the true worship of the heart, not in any way as its substitute. The disciples of the Lord would indeed fast, because they would indeed mourn, when their Lord should be taken from them. The Church, the Bride of Christ, would sorrow when she should find the Bridegroom gone—the Espousals indeed with all their rejoicing over, but the Marriage itself so long delayed. The Church would indeed wait for her Lord. Her cry, “How long, O Lord, how long?” would be the earnest expression of her desire for His appearance, her lament at His lingering so long. But true sorrow requires no fixed laws for the outward demonstration of its intensity<sup>1</sup>. And then our Lord goes on in two parables<sup>2</sup> to point out the mistake which was at the bottom of these false opinions of the Pharisees about the Kingdom of Heaven. The new garment of Christianity was not one which would be made by merely patching up the old garment of Judaism. Such an attempt to mend would only lead to schism and confusion<sup>3</sup>; for the spirit of the Church of Christ could no more be retained and confined within the decaying outward ordinances of Judaism, than new wine could be contained in old bottles. Should any attempt it the loss would be great. There would be neither the upright Jew, nor yet the faithful Christian. Both would be gone. The spirit of Christian liberty would burst the worn-out husk of Judaism, and become itself lost by having been confined therein.

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<sup>1</sup> John xvi. 20; Matth. ix. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Those of ‘The new patch in the old garment’ and ‘The new wine in the old bottles.’

<sup>3</sup> *χείρον σχίσμα γίνεται.* Can we doubt that our Lord had here before His eyes the rents, which would be made in His Church, by attempting to unite the doctrines of Christianity with the worn-out system of Jewish ordinances?

The next occasion when our Lord's words bore upon this accusation, was one on which have been recorded His words alone—His answer, that is, to the charge; and we are left to gather from that answer what the charge was. It must have been very shortly after the conversation we have just been considering<sup>1</sup>, and possibly in allusion to the charge which was then brought against Him, that the Lord taking occasion from a visit of John Baptist's disciples, with a message from their master now in prison, observed with reference to the Baptist's Mission and His own, that the generation to whom they came were like peevish children at play whom nothing would please. "For", He went on to say, "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He hath a devil.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.' But wisdom is justified of her children<sup>2</sup>." Now we must not fail to observe here that the Lord in thus answering the charge of conforming to the ordinary life of men, elevates in a remarkable way the Mission of John Baptist; for he places it side by side with His own. From His point of view those differences in the outward appearances of the two missions, which seemed so important to the eyes of the Pharisees and the multitude, altogether vanished away. They were only means for the same ends. John came indeed leading the austere life of a prophet of old, exhibiting in his own person the fulfilment of all the strict legal requirements of the Old Covenant: the Son of Man came in the spirit of the new Christian liberty, mixing in the common life of men, partaking in their human pleasures, and sharing their human sorrows: both came that they might draw men out of their little narrow selfish lives, in order to elevate and refine them. Both proclaimed that the only admission into the New Kingdom was through the lowly door of repentance<sup>3</sup>; but one, a

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<sup>1</sup> Some Harmonists place the visit of John's disciples and the conversation which immediately followed it (Matth. xi. 2—19, and Luke vii. 18—35) before the feast at S. Matthew's house and the conversation arising from it (Matth. ix. 10—17, and Luke v. 29—39); but there does not seem sufficient reason for thus disturbing the order of events as arranged by two of the Evangelists. See above, p. 82, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> Matth. xi. 18, 19; Luke vii. 33, 34.

<sup>3</sup> Matth. iii. 1, 2, iv. 17.

pattern of what was required under the Old Covenant, holding himself aloof from all the allurements of human society, endeavoured to win men to repentance by the austerities and threatenings of the law; the other, a pattern of a far higher and more exalted type, descended into the common life of humanity, to draw men to repentance by moving their sympathies, their gratitude, and their love.

We learn indeed from our Lord's words on this occasion, that this conforming Himself to the ordinary rules of society around Him, was a stumbling-block in the way of some; but not of any except those who were wilfully and blindly opposing the truth. For we cannot but suppose that our Lord meant to say that those who brought this accusation against Him of conforming Himself to the world, were just the very ones who, when a Prophet came, like John, preaching the same message, but carrying out to its just conclusion the principles of asceticism and abstinence from the world, immediately derided him as a mad enthusiast. Some too, we learn, there were, true children of wisdom<sup>1</sup>, who could recognise the truth in whichever form it came; who doubtless followed John Baptist when they heard him preach, being convinced that it was the Spirit of God within him, and then when he had directed them to Christ, or when the dungeons of Machærus had closed upon his preaching, had attached themselves to Him Whose fame was now spread far and wide, and Whom under a very different outward form of life, their inward hearts recognised at once as One full of the Spirit of God.

We may now pass on to almost the close of our Blessed Lord's ministry. We need not consider the occasion<sup>2</sup> when the Pharisee asked Him to dinner, and beholding with amazement that a notoriously sinful woman who had come unbidden into the place where they were dining, was allowed by the Lord to approach Him and anoint His feet, murmured within himself, "This man, if He were a Prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, for she is a sinner." We need not consider this, I say, for although at first it seems to be, yet really it is not, a repetition of that charge against the Lord which is now

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<sup>1</sup> Luke vii. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Luke vii. 36—50.

under our notice. For it is clear that if the Pharisee was taking offence at the Lord being in the society of sinners, it was for him in his own house to have prevented it. No. What he is really offended at is the technical, ceremonial pollution involved in the touch of such a woman<sup>1</sup>. He cannot believe that the Lord would willingly allow such a one to touch Him; and thinks therefore that He does not know, what every one else around Him acquainted with the place knows well, the character of the woman; and then concludes that he who has not this discerning power can be no true Prophet. The Lord's answer we may just notice, as we pass on, is of the same nature as that given more than once before<sup>2</sup> to similar objections derived from the ceremonial law. He teaches by a parable<sup>3</sup> that God's universal law of love and mercy overrules all these inferior temporary and local laws of ceremonies and pollutions.

Now the next occasion when the accusation we are now considering rose up again in its complete form against the Lord, was shortly before His last approach to Jerusalem. He has now broken entirely with the Pharisees and leading Jews of the metropolis. They have most distinctly rejected the Gospel message and are plotting against the life of the Messenger. The wild and secluded hill country of Peræa, which had once afforded the wandering David a refuge from the persecution of his enemies, now performs a similar office for David's 'Greater Son<sup>4</sup>.' Here the multitudes which crowd around Him may be allowed yet to hang upon His words, undeterred by the murmurs, the sneers, or the threats of hostile Pharisees. Here perhaps even yet some of these Pharisees themselves, away from their more prejudiced and less teachable brethren of the metropolis, may listen and be saved. But although one of them at least went so far as to ask the Lord to a feast at his house<sup>5</sup>, he checked the impulse which would have led him on to declare himself a follower of the Prophet of Galilee, wrapped himself up in his Phari-

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<sup>1</sup> 'Quanto spatio a meretrice recedendum est?' was a question discussed by Jewish Rabbis; see Schoettgen, *Hor. Heb.* Vol. I. p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> That of 'The two debtors.'

<sup>4</sup> John x. 40—42.

<sup>5</sup> Luke xiv. 1.

saic prejudice<sup>1</sup> and pride<sup>2</sup>, and thus excluded himself altogether from the blessing which had come so near him. This was the last occasion upon which there was any appearance of friendship on the part of the Pharisees towards the Lord. Henceforth all is undisguised hostility<sup>3</sup>. He turns now completely to the people, and He associates entirely with those to whom His preaching is now directed. All the publicans and sinners, wherever He goes, draw near to Him to drink in the words of mercy which issue from His mouth<sup>4</sup>. For them and with them He appears now to live. The Pharisees and Scribes still hang however on the outskirts of the crowd in order to catch words from Him at which they may cavil, and to detach, if possible, some of the multitude from His side. And for this purpose they say now to the people, but so loud that He may hear, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them<sup>5</sup>." They mean to urge this as a sure proof that He cannot be the Great One Whom He gives Himself out to be. 'This man the Messiah indeed!' Will the Messiah when He comes leave the leading men of His nation, the Scribes and Pharisees, to associate with the despised classes of notorious sinners and outcasts from the Jewish Theocracy? Can it ever be that He should actually mix in their social life; eat at their tables; abide in their dwellings? No. Surely one who acts thus cannot be the Messiah. And now our Blessed Lord, Who will not even yet give up altogether to be lost these poor prejudiced Pharisees, teaches those of them whose hearts are not too hardened to learn, by three parables on this subject<sup>6</sup>. He endeavours by these three parables to raise the thoughts of these Pharisees into a higher region than that in which they were so wont to grovel. He would shew them that such offence as that which they are taking at Him, and such murmurings

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xiv. 3—6.

<sup>2</sup> vv. 12—14.

<sup>3</sup> See Luke xv. 2, xvi. 14; Matth. xix. 3; John xi. 57, xii. 19; Luke xix. 39, with other instances, until on the last day of His public ministry (Matth. xxiii. 13—39) He denounces those terrible woes against the Pharisees which can leave no doubt as to the state of frenzied opposition to Him into which they had then fallen.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xv. 1.

<sup>5</sup> v. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Those of 'The lost sheep,' 'The lost piece of money,' and 'The prodigal son.'

as theirs, have no place in the Heavenly World, or in His Kingdom. He shews them that in the eyes of the angels of Heaven, the Messiah cannot appear more fitly occupied than in seeking to save those whom man deems lost. And although He does not deny that these Pharisees have lived more uprightly and more in accordance with the Will of God than those with whom He is now associating, He would have them to see that if they persist in relying upon this righteousness of the law, it may end in these lost ones, whom they so much despise, being brought home far nearer to God than they themselves are. The lost sheep when found was brought home to 'the house', while the ninety-nine that went not astray were left in the wilderness. The fatted calf was killed for the returned prodigal, while the son who never left his father's home had not so much as a kid given him. But in this last parable the warning becomes louder and more awful; for there is a hint thrown out that this very feeling of jealousy which they are now indulging may perhaps at last shut them altogether out of the Kingdom of Heaven<sup>1</sup>.

Once again, and once only is the voice of this accusation heard. The time for the Lord to keep His last Passover in Jerusalem has drawn nearer, and the Lord Himself is drawing nearer to Jerusalem to meet the persecution of His enemies and the desertion of His friends, which He knows full well await Him there. He has come on His way up as far as Jericho. And here He invites Himself to the house of one who had doubtless been drawn towards Him almost unconsciously as a follower, but who, knowing the contempt in which his class was held by all the leading Jews, dared not do what he nevertheless longed to do—ask the Lord to his house. And now again a murmur of surprise and disgust is heard from some of those who are accompanying Him, but who will not cross with Him the threshold of a detested Publican: "He is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner." As this objection must of course have been raised by those who stayed outside, the Lord cannot answer them; but what He says to the penitent

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<sup>1</sup> See Trench *on the Parables*, p. 371, and Olshausen, *Commentary on the Gospels*, on Luke xv. 1—32.

publican within, has evident reference to what He knows the Pharisees are saying of Him without: "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The Pharisees regarded this publican as a heathen, because they considered him as a traitor to the Theocracy, and their accusation against the Lord is, that He has gone to sit down with a Gentile. The Lord distinctly denies the truth of this view of the matter. He has not gone to be a guest of a Gentile, seeing that this Publican "also is a son of Abraham." And the remaining part of the Lord's answer is not without a reference to the parable by which He had so lately taught on this very subject. For here, if they will only consider, they may see the very case alluded to,—the lost one sought and saved,—the wandering sheep brought home to the shepherd's house.

Now this is not an accusation which we need expect to find raised against the Lord at His trial. It was one which would neither prevail with the multitude, nor yet with Pilate. Nothing remains for us then in this case but to consider what errors in the Church of Christ have sprung from the same mistaken notions which gave rise to these murmurings against the Lord.

Now the error at the root of this offence at the Lord for mixing with the world, was the idea that an outward separation from the world, an outward separation from even all its enjoyments in private, as well as from social intercourse with it in public, was a necessary element of holiness. And this idea of a marked separation from the world being necessary for Christians, has in the course of the Church's history given rise to two very different errors. The first course to which this idea impelled those whom it possessed, was naturally to betake themselves altogether to some place where they might live apart from the world. The deserts of Egypt and the neighbouring countries appeared to offer to such minds a convenient spot for perfecting this separation from the world. Hence arose that system of asceticism, which played such an important part in the history of the first five centuries of the Church's existence, and which is so marvellous to look back upon now. Difficult indeed is



it now to conceive, that for many generations the life which alone was considered worthy of admiration for its lustre of piety, was that of men, who in many points strove to imitate the wild beasts in their simplicity of living, who roamed about like madmen, who, scorning the use of clothes, the preparation of food and all the other amenities of social life, devoured such grass and roots as might come in their way—and by these means thought that they had separated themselves entirely from a wicked world. We are all of us so accustomed to ridicule the folly of this now, that it is needless for me to point out the absolute and entire failure of this proposed cure for worldliness. We had better therefore at once pass on to the other error to which the idea, ‘that a separation from the world is necessary’, has given rise, an error indeed which is now as prevalent as that other was formerly.

Those then who were impressed with the idea that a separation from the world was necessary, and who saw that such a separation as that conceived of by the hermits was impossible, next bethought them of limiting the range of things from which it was necessary to separate; and to these alone to give the name of ‘world.’ Thus arose that system, which calling out, as strongly as ever the hermits did, for a separation from the world, demands really a separation from certain parts only of this world’s system. Thus, according to this scheme, certain enjoyments, certain amusements, and certain occupations constitute ‘the world.’ From these it is necessary for Christians to keep aloof—from these to separate themselves—and so they will be separated from the world. As the line drawn here is quite an arbitrary one, it naturally varies considerably in position. Now we need not dwell upon the fact, that this limitation of ‘the world’ to only a certain portion of its system is utterly unknown in Scripture; for the fact that Scripture never enjoins a separation from the world is far more to our present purpose. We are indeed told not to be conformed to this world: but we cannot separate ourselves from it. We must live in it: but we must live in it, as not of it. God never intended that our religion should be antagonistic to our occupations or even our enjoyments, but meant it to elevate and refine them. And thus the Chris-

tian's duty lies neither in avoiding all social intercourse, like the hermits of old, nor in avoiding certain forms only of social intercourse, as some do now.

I hope no one will mistake what I mean to say. An enjoyment, an amusement, or an occupation, may be in itself sinful; and then no Christian can too carefully separate himself from such, or abhor it too much. But if the only charge which can be brought against one of such things is that it is of 'the world', then, although it will be your duty carefully to guard against such an allurement winning and possessing your soul to the exclusion of higher and holier longings, you are no more called upon to separate yourself from it altogether, than you are called upon to separate yourself from the society of friends, from innocent merriment, or from the pursuit of knowledge and science, all which are also things of 'the world', and may allure your soul away from God.

Do you want to know with reference to any particular pleasure, whether it is one which you are called upon to renounce? Ask yourself not, whether it belongs to this or that class, but, whether it alienates your soul from God. Does it come between you and God? Does it shut out Christ and Heaven from your sight? Do you feel that, when in the enjoyment of it, the thought of Christ and of His love would be incongruous with it—would be altogether out of place,—would be in fact unwelcome to you? Do you find that, on returning home from such a pleasure, you are reluctant to pour out your soul to your God before you lie down to rest? Do you find it impossible to compose yourself for prayer? If so, give that pleasure up. Whatever it may be for others, for you it is undoubtedly wrong, because it draws you away from Christ. This is all to which you have to look. Renounce it, as being for you, whether for others or not, that very 'world' which you have promised in your baptism to renounce. Renounce it because you are the servant of Christ, and it shuts your Master from your sight; and that is the very hour for His enemy to assail you with temptations. But do not too hastily conclude that what is wrong for you, must also be so for others. We are all of us differently constituted; and it is quite possible that, bad as the effect may be which such a pleasure has upon you, upon others, for some reason or other, it may fall harmless.

Oh may many of you, my younger brethren, for whom in one sense this world with all its allurements is only now opening, be enabled, by the grace of God, to walk through it unspotted by its impurities. May He who received you as His own children at your baptisms, and then washed you and sanctified you with the Holy Ghost, preserve you in holiness. And so when this world's system has ended, and all its temptations, its mortifications, its trials of joy and sorrow, its allurements, and its heart-burnings are passed away, may He, by Whose grace alone you were kept from falling, "present you blameless with great rejoicing before the presence of His glory. To Whom the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever."

## LECTURE VI.

### THE CHARGE OF TREASON.

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S. JOHN XIX. 19.

*“And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross; and the writing was, ‘Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.’”*

THE last, the most unscrupulous, and apparently the most successful, of all the accusations which the Pharisees of Jerusalem brought against the Lord Jesus, was undoubtedly that of ‘treason against Cæsar.’ It excelled all the others in malignity, because they might have been brought sincerely, but this could not have been so. Those others were grounded upon objections, which would be sure to present themselves to minds regarding the Lord from the point of view from which His opponents regarded Him. With Monotheism for their most firmly implanted dogma, they were certainly not unlikely to be staggered, at even the long looked-for Messiah coming to them disguised as it were with the attributes of Divinity; although, when once He had made this wonderful claim, they ought to have searched their Scriptures in all singleness of mind, to see “whether these things were so.” Again, with their incurable Jewish pride, they were likely to feel strongly the objection that His preaching and teaching appeared to do away with the difference between Jew and Gentile; although here too a sincere endeavour to find out what their Scriptures said on the point in question, would have led them to see that what they had at first thought an objection was really an additional proof that He Who spake thus was indeed the One foreshadowed in every Holy Prophecy. And so also with the other accusations which they brought against Him. But for these proud Jews,

proverbially impatient under the Roman yoke, and sensitive in the highest degree to the degradation there was for them, in an unbelieving foreigner occupying the seat of power, where David, and Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah, and Maccabæan Princes had reigned in splendour—for these Jews who were always rebelling against this subjection to Cæsar to accuse even one, whom they believed to be an impostor, of attempting to throw off this foreign yoke, presents us with a picture of hatred and malice towards a fellow countryman overcoming, for the time, the enmity felt towards a public foe, which has happily never been equalled, in this world of fierce passion and discords.

But the full malignity of this cry of ‘treason’, which rose from the mob around the judgment-seat of Pilate, is not realised by considering merely the feelings with which the Jew regarded the Roman. It is necessary rather to remember that it was, really, because the Lord would not be a traitor to Cæsar, that the disappointed mob now cried, “Crucify Him, Crucify Him.” On one occasion He had been compelled to withdraw Himself from them lest they should come by force, and set Him up as King<sup>1</sup>; and only a few days before this sudden fit of loyalty to Cæsar seized them at the tribunal of the Roman Procurator they had accompanied the Prisoner into Jerusalem, awarding Him the honours of royalty, and shouting of Him, “Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.” But now, when at last persuaded by the chief Priests, they have shouted for Barabbas, and demanded that Jesus should be crucified, in answer to Pilate’s mocking question, “What, shall I crucify your king?” they allow the chief priests with treason in their hearts towards Cæsar, and the blackest treason towards God in their mouths, to answer for them with the cry, “We have no king but Cæsar<sup>2</sup>.”

But although the charge was thus basely false in the mouth of a Jew, it might have been sincere in the mouth of a Roman; and as it was the accusation upon which the Lord was really sentenced to death by the authority of Rome, (for the title on the cross bears witness to this, although Pilate had three times declared that He was not guilty of the

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 15.

charge<sup>1</sup>), it will be necessary that we should consider briefly the meaning of the accusation in the mouth of a Roman.

The Roman 'Law of Majesty' under which the Saviour of the world was condemned to die as a traitor, had been the subject of very recent legislation<sup>2</sup>. In the early days of the republic the only idea of 'treason' was 'treason against the state.' It was 'treason' to betray an army to the enemy, 'treason' to injure the state by sedition, or by corrupt administration<sup>3</sup>. Such acts as these were the subject of accusation; words passed disregarded: and it was not until nearly the end of the republic, that the idea of offending against the dignity of the state in the person of its officer, crept into the list of crimes of 'injured majesty<sup>4</sup>.' Now it was naturally to this '*lex majestatis*' that those who were endeavouring to secure to themselves permanent power out of the ruins of the republic looked, for protection, and so we find that, at this transition period the law was being continually changed and continually extended, so as to embrace the new crimes, which arose out of this new order of things. Under Julius Cæsar, indeed, the law had already assumed so distinct a shape and embraced so many offences, that Augustus was content with merely extending it, so as to include written satires upon the Emperor. But at the time we are now considering—the time of the trial of Jesus of Nazareth,—an Emperor so morose and suspicious in disposition, as to form a remarkable contrast to the good-humoured and placable Augustus, was robed in the purple. To him had descended the protection of the 'law of majesty'; on him had devolved more than the dignity and majesty which we are accustomed to see around the representative of a long line of hereditary kings. 'The divinity that doth hedge a king' was no mere poetical figure in the early days of the Roman empire; for images of the reigning Emperor were frequently regarded as gods; and only three years before

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<sup>1</sup> John xviii. 38; Luke xxiii. 4; and Luke xxiii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See Merivale, *History of Roman Empire*, ch. xliv. (Vol. v. pp. 145—157).

<sup>3</sup> Tacitus, *Annales*, I. 72.

<sup>4</sup> The '*Lex Apuleia*' (about 100 B.C.) was the first law which protected the majesty of the people as represented in the person of the officer. Henceforth the law of '*Perduellio*' becomes merged in that of '*Majesty*.'

the trial of Jesus of Nazareth, eleven cities of Asia had contended for the honour of having Tiberius for their tutelary God<sup>1</sup>! But the disposition of that Emperor naturally led him to look more to the protection of definite laws than to any such uncertain reverence as this: and one of the first acts of his reign was to extend the operation of the 'law of majesty', so as to include words spoken against the Emperor, as well as written libels, within the list of crimes to which the law applied. Then it was that 'speaking against Cæsar' acquired a new and terrible meaning in the mouth of an accuser. Such was the law which the Jew, traitor both to God and Cæsar, invoked upon the head of Him by Whose permission Cæsar reigned.

Now although the personal character of him whose power this law upheld does not seem at first sight to enter into the question of the justice of the sentence against the Lord, nor indeed, as far as the Roman was concerned, did enter into it; yet as the charge in the mouth of the theocratic nation, combined with the cry, "We have no king but Cæsar," implied a choice, on their part, of Tiberius instead of Jesus, it will be well, for one moment, to withdraw our eyes from the representative of the Roman power at Jerusalem, to glance at his master, the despot of the civilised world, who, in the sulky solitude of his island rock, held gathered in his hands the chains with which that world was bound. It was only seven years after Tiberius had succeeded to the imperial power, when it became evident that he had tasted the vanity and worthlessness of what must have been for years the object of his highest ambition<sup>2</sup>. He appeared disgusted with everything around him. The pleasure of a residence at that Rome, which his predecessor had so adorned that the ideas of magnificence and empire were henceforth for ever combined, had for him no charms. What has generally afforded tyrants their highest pleasure gave him none. He cared not to see the height he was raised above his subjects. But although his power and position thus afforded him no gratification he dared not relinquish them. The time had passed away when the man and the office were conceptions so distinct in

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<sup>1</sup> Merivale, *History of the Roman Empire*, ch. xlv. (Vol. v. p. 247).

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Annales*, IV. 42.

the minds of the people, that he who had wielded the chief power could lay that power down, and live in safety amongst the thousands he had injured. The time had not yet come when an Emperor could give up the Palatine to a successor, and depart to live in retirement and peace. And so a disgust of power and a fear of letting that power go together ruled, or rather tore asunder, the ruler of the world. At the same time, dark misgivings and suspicions troubled the tyrant's breast, and a strange superstitious horror froze him. He required from the astrologers and diviners, by whom he surrounded himself, an interpretation of every sound he heard. His whole time was occupied in consultations, not as to the welfare of his people, but as to what every sight he saw, omened with reference to his own miserable self<sup>1</sup>. The historian, who considers that what is supernatural is beyond his province, and that all events, which he is called upon to narrate, must be accounted for by purely natural causes, may well be perplexed when he has to treat of these humours of Tiberius. But those who believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God appeared at this time in Judæa, endowed marvellously with the Power of God, and accompanied by supernatural signs and wonders, such as to draw astrologers from a far distant country to do homage at His cradle, such as to bear witness, throughout His short ministry, and especially at His death, that some marvellous struggle was going on in the spiritual world, in which even earth and nature were compelled to sympathise, such as to make a hardhearted Roman soldier acknowledge the Divinity of Him, upon Whom he was carrying out the sentence of death, such as to reach even the wife of the heathen Governor of Jerusalem in her private chamber—those who believe all this, as we do, will have no difficulty in accounting for the superstitious horror which seems, at this time, to have seized the Roman Emperor: even in distant Rome he felt the Presence of the God-Man on earth. Would it not indeed on the other hand have been remarkable, if, when we turned from the contemplation of all those stupendous and supernatural events which were

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<sup>1</sup> See Merivale, *History of the Roman Empire*, ch. xlv. (Vol. v. p. 209).



at this time hallowing for ever the very soil of Palestine, to see what was happening in the rest of the world, we could find no trace of any extraordinary visit to this earth, no sympathetic throbbings of the natural world elsewhere, when natural life in Palestine was so strangely disturbed? Can we conceive it possible, that He who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and who alone has a right to the title of 'Lord of the whole Earth',—can we conceive it possible, that He should come down to visit this earth, to dwell among His subjects for thirty years, and yet that he, who falsely arrogated to himself the title of 'Lord of the whole world' should not in any way be sensible of His Presence, should not be compelled to feel in his inmost heart, that One was actually treading this earth, before Whom this Emperor of the Roman world was as dust and ashes—a rival indeed for the homage and affection of his subjects—the setter up of a more glorious throne than that of Augustus, and one which should last when the Roman Empire had long vanished away?

With these considerations as to the law of Majesty and the power of this world which that law supported, let us now review, in order, the occasions on which our Lord may be thought to have given any cause for the accusation of treason being brought against Him.

Now, as it is the last accusation which is heard, speaking out as it does by the superscription from the stillness around the cross, after all other accusations are silenced, so also it is the first which meets us at His birth. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords has no sooner been born into the world He made, than the King of the Jews seeks to slay Him, because he thinks that He will be a rival for the throne of Judæa<sup>1</sup>. But this first attack upon the

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<sup>1</sup> As Herod died a very few months after this deliberate attempt to frustrate all the prophecies which had been accumulating in the hands of the Israelites from the time of Moses, we cannot tell whether he ever found out that his murderous intention had miscarried. His views on prophecy were evidently a strange mixture of credulity and unbelief, and probably he was quite satisfied with having slain all the children in, and about, Bethlehem under the age of two years. Now considering that the Lord could only have been a month or two old at the most, and that the wise men's account of the time at which the star appeared, is not likely to have made Him out older

Lord ended with the life of Herod; and when, ten years afterwards, the deposition of Archelaus had closed for the time the reign of Herods in Jerusalem, there was no longer any ruler of Judæa to feel jealous of this One who was born King of the Jews. Judæa had henceforth during the life of the Lord Jesus no King. The sceptre had departed from Judah, for Shiloh had come.

Now although often, throughout the Lord's life, the mistaken views of the people, as to the kingdom He had come to establish, would have led them to take Him and set Him up as an earthly King of the Jews, He was ever careful to frustrate this intention of theirs, and indeed seems studiously to have afforded the Roman Government no opportunity whatever for accusing Him of treason against Cæsar. On one occasion, as we are distinctly told, He purposely withdrew Himself from the people, upon whom so great an impression had just been made by one of His marvellous works that they were coming to set Him up by force as King<sup>1</sup>. On another occasion, when asked to assume the office of an earthly Judge, He distinctly refused<sup>2</sup>. Once only did He appear in any way to yield to this mistaken desire of the people. This was on His last approach to Jerusalem. But even in this His only hour of earthly glory, there was much to shew those, who would observe it, that it was no carnal kingly power that He was assuming. There were tears, which no view of an earthly kingdom could explain, and those sad words of lamentation, which implied that, in His eyes, all the earthly beauty and grandeur before Him had already passed away. Little indeed could this triumphal entry into Jerusalem have realised the hopes of the people, who were looking for an earthly kingdom of heaven to be set up; as little could it have offended the Roman Procurator, who, with a powerful force, was always present at Jerusalem<sup>3</sup>, to suppress any disturb-

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than He really was, we must conclude that Herod fixed two years as the limit, in order to make all perfectly sure, and is not likely to have troubled himself with the thought that the family to which the child belonged might have moved away from Bethlehem so soon after the child's birth as they did.

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> For instances see Lardner, *Credibility of the Gospel History*, Bk. I. ch. vii. § vii.

ance which might arise amongst the multitudes who came up to the great feasts; so that we do not hear of its being even alluded to at the trial before Pilate, although it must have been present to the minds of all, having taken place only five days before.

Now there is one other event recorded of the last week of our Lord's life, upon which we must just touch, before considering the accusation of treason, as it was made against Him at His trial. When the Pharisees were maturing their plan for the condemnation of the Lord by the Sanhedrin, they must have looked forward to the necessity of getting that sentence confirmed by the Roman Procurator. We have considered in a previous lecture the reasons which would be likely to weigh with them, in choosing, as they did, the accusation of treason against Cæsar, as the one to be pressed before Pilate. It was probably to obtain evidence in support of this charge that they and the Herodians went to the Lord with their questions about tribute, only two days before they apprehended Him. We have already considered the circumstances surrounding this question<sup>1</sup>. Here we need only observe, that the answer with which the Lord baffled their wicked plot, was certainly not an answer whose meaning could anyhow be twisted into treason against Cæsar. And so, although the chief Priests before Pilate accused Him of forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, it does not appear that they brought any evidence derived from this occasion.

And now let us consider the accusation of treason, in the form it assumed before the representative of Rome and Tiberius. We need only take up the trial where the Sanhedrin, having condemned the Lord to death, led Him away to Pontius Pilate the Procurator<sup>2</sup>. The Judgment-hall of Pilate, to which the Sanhedrin were leading their prisoner, was probably one of the halls of the magnificent palace, which Herod had built on Mount Zion, and which

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Pilate, although he had the title of Procurator, had the power of a President. This, probably, gave him the power of life and death. He was 'Procurator cum potestate.' See Lardner, *Credibility of the Gospels*, Bk. I. ch. ii. §§ ix—xi.; see also Smith, *Dictionary of Antiquities*. Art. 'Province.'

was inhabited by the Procurator when he visited Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>; and the judgment-seat was probably a seat, on a raised tessellated pavement, in front of this palace. Here the officers of the Sanhedrin found the Roman Governor, and delivered into his hands their Prisoner; and so the Saviour of the world passed from Jewish into Roman custody<sup>2</sup>. Now the Chief Priests, and the elders of the people, and the Sanhedrin will not enter the Judgment-hall themselves; for scrupulous to the last degree about trifles, while they are violating the whole spirit of the law, they will not, when they are going to eat the Passover, enter a house from which the leaven has not been cast<sup>3</sup>. Pilate is quite ready to humour them. Indeed, throughout the awful perplexity into which he is now cast, his fear of acting against the wishes of those whom he has to govern, is what leads him astray. He goes out to them, since they will not come in, and asks them what accusation they bring against the Prisoner. They at first endeavour to get him to confirm their sentence without enquiring into its grounds. "If He were not a malefactor," they say, "we would not have delivered Him up unto thee<sup>4</sup>." Pilate answers them, "Then take Him and judge Him according to your law"; by which he meant doubtless to remind them that, if the power of inflicting death had been taken from them, and reserved for him, it was just in order that they should not inflict it merely for breaches of their law, and that therefore, before he confirmed their sentence, he must know the accusation. And so now they bring forward not the real accusation upon which they had condemned Him, but the one which they had prepared, on purpose for the Procurator, should he refuse to confirm their sentence without enquiry: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King<sup>5</sup>." This accusation must doubtless have perplexed

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<sup>1</sup> See Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* II. 14. 8; 15. 5; see also Winer, *Bibl. Real-Wert.* Art. 'Richthaus.'

<sup>2</sup> Alford (*on Matth.* xxvi. 47) thinks 'the band of men and officers,' who apprehended the Lord in the garden (*John* xviii. 3), was a band of Roman soldiers; but this seems rather improbable.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xvi. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *John* xviii. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *Luke* xxiii. 2.

Pilate, who knew the Jews too well to believe for a moment that it could really be the accusation upon which the Sanhedrin had condemned Him. However, as he knows that the Prisoner is that same one, who, two or three days before, was escorted into Jerusalem by such a vast multitude, and about whom seemed to hover all the excitement at this feast, which he had probably been watching in apparent carelessness, but in secret anxiety, he thinks that he will follow the matter up a little, and so, without asking the Jews for any evidence in support of their accusation, he turns into the Judgment-hall<sup>1</sup>, leaving the Jews outside, and confronts this Prisoner, whom the seditious Jews have delivered into his hands, for having tried to seduce them into rebellion against Cæsar.

And now the hard Roman Procurator is no more proof than others have been against that winning power, which the personal presence of the Lord seems always to have had over those hearts, which had not purposely steeled themselves against Him. The Roman is won immediately to take a deep interest in the Jew before him. The words he hears stir his heart, in a way that heart was never stirred before. He cannot indeed make out yet for what the Chief Priests have delivered up such a Prisoner; but he receives an answer to his direct question "Art thou the king of the Jews?" which convinces him that the Majesty of Rome has nothing to fear or to avenge<sup>2</sup>. King indeed the Prisoner asserts He is, but King of a Kingdom not of this world, a Kingdom indeed which is over the world, although not of it, and therefore, not to be won or sustained by worldly weapons, nor to be a cause of jealousy to those who are content with worldly power. So much is in answer to the charge. But now the Prisoner proceeds, (as His follower did afterwards on a similar occasion<sup>3</sup>), and will carry away captive His judge. The answer about the kingdom was addressed to the Statesman and the Roman, now He proceeds to testify about His own Person as the centre of all living truth, thus appealing to the man of education and the Philosopher, and so availing Himself of just so much of truth as Pilate had in him, to draw him onwards, if he would only yield himself to the influence. That

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<sup>1</sup> John xviii. 33.

<sup>2</sup> John xviii. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxvi.

Pilate goes out directly he has asked "What is truth?" without waiting for an answer, is no proof that he is not deeply interested in what he has heard. We see plainly from many things that he felt the influence of this conversation in an extraordinary degree; but he had heard quite enough to acquit the Prisoner of the charge, and therefore wished to finish the matter at once, and perhaps, like Felix afterwards, thought that at some more convenient season he would talk with this strange Jew again. And so Pilate went out to the Jews and said, "I find in Him no fault at all." But the Procurator wants the courage to declare at once that the trial is over, and the Prisoner free; and the chief priests seeing this press him the more. They are made the more fierce by this heathen testimony to the Lord's innocence; and they begin to accuse Him of many things<sup>1</sup>. We are not told what these things were; but they must doubtless have been still connected with the charge of treason. The Lord, who appears now to have been brought out of the Hall to hear the charges made against Him, answers not a word. The Governor is greatly perplexed. He fears to do what his newly awakened conscience tells him he ought to do. At last, out of the multitudinous accusations ringing around him he catches the word 'Galilee<sup>2</sup>', and remembering that Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, is at present in Jerusalem, he thinks he can see a way to get himself out of his terrible dilemma. He asks whether the Prisoner is a Galilæan; and hearing that He is, he sends Him away with all His accusers to the tetrarch, hoping that thus he has got rid of the fearful responsibility which is overwhelming him. That he has a quarrel with Herod, which may have arisen from the Roman Governor of Judæa interfering in some way with Herod's jurisdiction, only makes him the more eager to shew the tetrarch this courtesy. Let Herod be convinced that Pilate will not in any way interfere in a case which seems to belong to Galilee rather than to Judæa. But Herod is not to be outdone in courtesy by one with whom he has quarrelled, and so, instead of adjudicating upon the Prisoner, he returns Him again to Pilate; and thus the Saviour of the world is sent backwards and forwards, a peace-offering,

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xxvii. 12, and Mark xv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiii. 5.

to make up the differences between the half-heathen Herod and the wholly heathen Pilate. Herod's opinion however of the absurdity of the charge, which has been brought against the Lord, is shewn, by his mocking Him and sending Him back again to Pilate dressed in the robe of Jewish Royalty<sup>1</sup>. And so Pilate finds the hateful responsibility thrust upon him again. He must now either confirm the sentence or acquit the prisoner. In his fearful struggle to escape the dilemma again he thinks he can see a middle course. He knows well that the priestly party have delivered up the Lord and are accusing Him, on account of their envy at His having drawn the people away from following them as teachers, and so, in his emergency, the thought strikes him that he may play off the people against the Pharisees and Priests. A custom has grown up for the Procurator to set free, at the Passover feast, any political prisoner for whom the multitude may shout, and he thinks he may free the Prisoner thus; for he knows that the multitude were all with Him two days ago, and cannot believe that they have so suddenly changed their minds. He proposes then to the multitude, for release, either Jesus, or a notorious rioter, robber, and murderer<sup>2</sup>. We have no reason to suppose that Barabbas had enjoyed much popularity before being cast into prison. Probably it was on account of his not having been popular, that Pilate to make all safe, places the choice now between him and Jesus. To his surprise however the multitude shout loudly for Barabbas; and, when he asks "What then is to be done with Jesus?" they all shout again, "Let Him be crucified." Now how had the multitude been won over thus to give up their favourite of two days before? We are told that the priestly party persuaded the people<sup>3</sup>: nor is it difficult to see how they may have done so. Availing themselves doubtless of the erroneous views at the bottom of all the people's attachment to the Lord, they would say: 'Surely, if this person is the Messiah, He can take care of Himself. Pilate's sentencing Him to death

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<sup>1</sup> The word *λαμπρὸν*, translated in our version 'gorgeous,' suggests the idea of 'whiteness.' White was the royal colour of Israel. See Matth. vi. 28, 29.

<sup>2</sup> John xviii. 39, Matth. xxvii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Matth. xxvii. 20.

will only make Him shew forth His Messianic power; and, if the sentence should be really carried out, it will be a good proof that you have been deceived by Him, and that He is not the Messiah.' Pilate has made a great mistake in placing this choice before the people; for by so doing he has actually declared Jesus to be a malefactor, which he had not done before. His perplexity is greater than ever. At last, he allows the popular clamour to prevail; and, after a vain ceremony to declare his own innocence, which really declared no innocence save that of the Prisoner<sup>1</sup>, he delivers up Jesus to be crucified. And now, as though all wickedness had to be fulfilled upon Him Who fulfilled all righteousness, having already been mocked and buffeted by the Jews in the house of Caiaphas the High Priest, and again by the servants of Herod half-Jew, half-Gentile, He is now again scourged and mocked by the Roman Soldiery. And then Pilate, even after this shameful violation of justice, before he lets Him go away to execution, makes yet another attempt to set Him free. He leads the 'Man of sorrows', the popular favourite of yesterday, forth again to the people from the Judgment-hall. He is wearing the cruel crown of thorns and the mocking robe of Roman Royalty, and presents to the multitude the most fearful picture of pain and suffering that the world has ever witnessed. 'Surely', thinks Pilate, 'they will consider this sufficient punishment for whatever it is that He has done; surely they will now relent.' But no, the Chief Priests and Officers cry out again for Pilate to proceed with the punishment: "Crucify Him, Crucify Him<sup>2</sup>." The people probably are silent. Pilate, maddened at having the responsibility thrust back on him, endeavours to thrust it away with the petulant words, "Take ye Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." He perhaps means to say, in his despair, "If you will take the responsibility upon yourselves and do it in an uproar, I will not interfere." However the Jews will not take it so, but remind him that he can confirm their sentence, if he likes, and so get over the responsibility of condemning Him himself. "We have a law", they say, "and by our law He

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xxvii. 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 6.



ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." And now Pilate hears, for the first time, what the charge is, upon which the Sanhedrin has condemned Him. But hearing the charge has a very different effect upon Pilate from what the Jews desire. He is now more afraid than ever, and retires again into the Judgment-hall with the Prisoner, and throws all the fears and suspicions, which have long been torturing him, into that one trembling question, "Whence art thou?" Not that Pilate understands all that is implied in the Jewish expression, 'Son of God', but that the claim of this Prisoner to be something more than earthly strikes in with the conviction, which he has been long endeavouring to stifle within himself. Jesus gives him no answer to his question. Is it that the Lord will reprove him, for coming with his question too late, after he has unjustly scourged Him? or is it that, by His silence, He assents to the truth of the Governor's suspicion, that He is from above? But this silence provokes the unhappy Pilate. All the dignity of his office comes to rescue him from the fear that had well nigh saved him. "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?" Then the Lord, Who will still preach the truth to the last, and that even to Pilate who has already so far sinned against his conscience that to human eyes recovery seems hopeless, answers him, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above, therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." This answer was doubtless calculated to pierce the heart and conscience of him to whom it was addressed. Pilate, in his agony, had put forward the power of his office, which in his inmost heart for the moment he was hating, as the cause of this fearful responsibility which is oppressing him; and the Lord shews him that He can read his thoughts, and answers that other question of his, which had remained unanswered until now,—confessing that He Himself is from above, and telling Pilate that it is from that 'above' also that this very power comes, the responsibility of which is so overwhelming. Pilate has been placed by Power above, purposely, in this very position, that he, a heathen Governor, might have to decide the sentence of the Son of God; but he who delivered the Lord to Pilate (and I think we cannot

doubt that the Lord meant Caiaphas by this expression) was placed in no such fearful position; and therefore his sin was the greater of the two<sup>1</sup>. And now Pilate goes out again to the people, and makes a fourth and last attempt to release his Prisoner<sup>2</sup>. Oh! if he had only staid with his Prisoner, there might have been safety for him; but he leaves his Prisoner's presence, and is lost. The Jews, who see plainly that Pilate's indecision arises from fear of giving them offence, begin to threaten him that they will complain of him to the Emperor. They shout out, "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend<sup>3</sup>; whosoever maketh himself king speaketh against Cæsar;" thus shewing Pilate that they know both how the case of the Prisoner may be brought under the Law of Majesty as lately altered<sup>4</sup>, and how Pilate himself too may fall under the condemnation of the same law, if he lets go a prisoner whom he ought to punish<sup>5</sup>. And this was no idle threat of theirs. Pilate's subsequent deposition by the Emperor Vitellius shews that it was by no means improbable that the Jews should complain to the Emperor, and that the Procurator should be disgraced. The fear that is now aroused is too much for Pilate. It outweighs that other fear, which has oppressed him when in the presence of his Prisoner, and so he gives way, and makes up his mind to act altogether against the better feelings which have been striving within him, to prostitute the power which has been entrusted to him, and to condemn to death for treason, Him Whom he acknowledges, in his inmost soul, not only as innocent of this charge, but also, as peculiarly 'from above.'

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<sup>1</sup> The descending order of iniquity appears to be Pilate, Caiaphas, Judas; for this is the ascending order of advantages enjoyed.

<sup>2</sup> That Pilate was thus anxious to release Him, we gather not only from the narrative as it stands in the Gospel, but also from S. Peter (Acts iii. 13).

<sup>3</sup> The title of 'Amicus Cæsaris' was given to some if not all the higher officials of the Empire.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> The Cornelian law made it treason if a public officer shrunk from asserting to the full the prerogative of his office, whether military or civil, or failed to deliver his prisoner to the proper authorities for punishment or ransom. The Julian law, amongst other things, made it treason for a magistrate to release a criminal from punishment. That it was not at all improbable that an accusation against Pilate of 'treason' should be listened to by the Emperor, we know from what Tacitus has said of Tiberius (*Annales*, III. 38), "majestatis crimen omnium accusationum complementum erat."

He hates, however, the Jews who have thus goaded him to act against his conscience, and gratifies himself with the pitiful revenge of casting upon them an insult, which certainly cannot be made a complaint of to Cæsar. He brings Jesus out to them, and says, "Behold your King!" They cry out "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." And then, in bitter mockery, Pilate says to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The Chief Priests then consummate the rejection of the Son of God by the theocratic nation, by answering, uncontradicted by the people, "We have no king but Cæsar."

And Pilate will carry his insult to these seditious Jews whom he hates and fears still further. He has an accusation written to be affixed to the cross, according to custom, to proclaim to the passers by for what offence the victim is dying. He will not write, as he knows the Jews would like him to write, that the offence is, that this man pretended to be King of the Jews; but, with a bitter insult to them, as declaring what the Romans would do with any one, who should not only assert that he was King, but who should also be accepted by the nation as King, he orders the title to be written "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." And so the accusation of 'treason against Cæsar' appears the most successful of all the malicious charges brought against the Lord. The World and Jewdom have their way; and for six fearful hours the superscription proclaims, to those who pass in and out of the gates of Jerusalem, that the injured Majesty of Rome is being avenged.

And now if we turn to the history of the Church of Christ we shall find that in this, as in the case of the other charges, the Jews of succeeding generations shewed that they did consent to the deeds of their fathers by repeating the accusation against the Lord. Throughout the Roman Empire, for the first three centuries, wherever there was an unconverted Jew, there was one of the bitterest enemies of the Church. And like their forefathers, in order to invoke the arm of the law against the Christians, they were continually charging them before the governors of provinces with being hostile to the Majesty of Rome, sometimes urging, as a proof, that they acknowledged as their King a malefactor, who had been justly put to death by Pilate; sometimes that they

expected a Great King, called Christ, who was to overthrow the dominion of Rome, and rule the whole earth<sup>1</sup>.

But, if we turn from the Jews who thus exactly repeated the sin of their fathers, and ask 'Who have acted in the spirit of the error, in which these Jews acted?' our thoughts are directed to a class which is continually reproducing itself, and that in ever varying form in the history of the Church. For the spirit of the error, which was blinding the Jews, was, that the kingdom of Christ was to be a kingdom of this world, was to be supported by worldly force, and extended by worldly means. Now this is an error which of course we need not expect to find within the Church, in the first three centuries of her existence. Throughout that period the Powers of the World were arrayed in open hostility to the Church. Even, when there was no actual persecution on the side of the earthly kingdom, the antagonism was evident; so that it was very necessary for Christians often to call to mind the apostolic injunction, that the powers of the earth, such as they were, were ordained of God, and therefore were not to be resisted, and were even to be prayed for, for their office sake. But, when the conversion of Constantine had enlisted the crown and the sword upon the side of the Church, all was changed. Many Christians, in their fond imaginations, supposed that the kingdoms of the world had now become the kingdoms of the Lord. They joyfully accepted the assistance of the civil authority to put down divisions and heresies within the body of the Church. Sadly thus did the Church forget that Christ's kingdom was never to be a kingdom of this world. The Heads of the Church and the Heads of the Civil Government were now no more arrayed in open hostility the one to the other, but, under the guise of an alliance, struggled secretly between themselves for the chief power over those who were the subjects of both kingdoms, but whose allegiance as such need not and ought not ever to have been divided. The result of this struggle was different in different parts of the great Roman Empire. In the East the power of the State prevailed: in the West the power of the Church. This may easily be accounted for

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<sup>1</sup> Epistle of the Church of Smyrna, *de Martyrio Polycarpi*, §§ xii. xiii. See also Mosheim, Bk. I. Cent. I. i. v. § ii.

by the fact, that the East had become the chief seat of Empire. Here was all the influence which the immediate presence of the crown and the sword ever brings<sup>1</sup>. But it is the West, where the Church acquired for itself the chief worldly power, that demands our attention, as illustrating the subject under our consideration. Here there were many circumstances which favoured the Church's usurpation of temporal authority. The Western Empire was never so splendid as the Eastern, and, for the short time of its existence, was continually disturbed. This, and the ever-present and complete organization of the Church in the midst of the confusion and disorder which were brought upon the decaying Empire, by the continued migration southwards of the rude Northern tribes, and, above all, the stand which the Church of the fourth and succeeding centuries undoubtedly made on behalf of civil liberty against the despotic tyranny of Emperor and King—all combined to raise the Church to a high state of temporal influence and power; so that the prophecy of the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdom of the Lord seemed to find a sort of delusive fulfilment in the kingdom of Christ becoming a kingdom of the world<sup>2</sup>. And Christendom at last presented the monstrous sight of kingdoms governed in the Church's name, armies fighting under the Church's banner, and the temporal sword and crown eagerly grasped for the Church of Him, Who expressly said, that His kingdom was not of this world<sup>3</sup>.

But we must not let these thoughts turn our attention upon others to the exclusion of ourselves. It is true that the Reformation did cleanse our branch of the Church Catholic from much of this lichen of worldliness, with which the whole tree was overgrown. But still the true spiritual nature of the Church of Christ was not revealed in all its purity.

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<sup>1</sup> So powerful was this influence that when the Emperor adopted the heresy of Arius, the whole of the Eastern Church appeared suddenly involved in the same error. As an example of this influence being used as powerfully on the side of truth, take the case of the Sandwich Islanders who, in 1819, at the request of their chief, professed Christianity without scepticism and without examination of the evidences. See Thompson, *Story of New Zealand*, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold, *Letters (Life)*, Vol. I. p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Barrow, *On the Pope's Supremacy*, Introduction.

“My kingdom is not of this world” are words, whose deep living truth was still unfelt by those who were seeking to restore that Church to its early simplicity. The arm of the civil magistrate, the sword, and the stake were still invoked for the support of Christ’s Church. Her own spiritual forces within her, with which she had been endowed by Christ Himself, and which the Presence of the Holy Spirit was ever blessing and invigorating, were disregarded. Is it any wonder that the extension of Christ’s kingdom amongst us seems to be paralysed? Is it any wonder that the time, when every thought and word and work shall be brought into submission to Christ, seems to be as far distant from us as it was three hundred years ago<sup>1</sup>?

Oh let us endeavour always to bear in mind the essentially spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ. The weapons with which it is to be propagated are spiritual: the weapons with which it is to be defended are the same. Its temporal affairs, its endowments, its externals, are indeed necessarily subject to the civil law of the country in which it exists; but these things are not essentials; they are only the accidents of the Kingdom of Christ. Oh let us ever remember, that His promise, that the gates of Hell should not prevail against His Church, was made to a Church, against which all the Powers of this world were arrayed, which had no recognised position, was possessed of no endowments, and neither used nor desired any carnal strength.

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold, *Letters* (*Life* Vol. I. p. 217).

## LECTURE VII.

### THE CHARGE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH SATAN.

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S. MATTHEW XII. 24.

*“This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”*

THE defence of Christianity from the infidel assaults made upon it in the last century exhausted nearly all its strength in holding fast the miracles of the Gospels. Many of those, who then stood forward as the champions of the truth, appear to have thought, that the whole strength of Christianity lay in the fact of its having been established with signs and wonders. They have written as if it were only necessary to establish the truth of the miracles, in order that the whole religion might carry by storm all doubting minds; and thus they have too frequently used language which would seem to imply that every miracle without regard to the doctrine in support of which it is wrought, or to the end which it immediately achieves, must be acknowledged at once as a work of God, and the credentials of His messenger. We have thus been in danger of falling into a state of mind which would be most disastrous in the case of those upon whom the end shall come. For we have our Lord's own words for it,—that at the last ‘false Christs and false prophets shall arise, who shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect<sup>1</sup>.’ And S. Paul does not leave us in doubt as to whence this power of

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xxiv. 11, 12, 24; Mark xiii. 22.

working miracles may be obtained; for, with reference to those same miracles which may be expected to shed a lurid glare about the advent of the wicked one, he says, that his coming will be after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders<sup>1</sup>.

Now leaving for the end of the Lecture all consideration as to the real force of the miracle as a testimony, we need only notice here that the Jews of the time of our Lord were certainly not in danger of attributing to it too high an authority. It was their firm belief that miracles could be wrought by the Powers of Evil as well as by God. Had not the gods of Egypt actually striven to rival the miracles of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the presence of Pharaoh? and had not the magicians actually been able to follow Moses and Aaron far beyond the boundaries of nature? And, besides this, had not Moses particularly foretold that false prophets would arise, who would give signs and wonders, and yet whose words must not be listened to?—"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, 'Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;' thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.....And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God<sup>2</sup>." Was it unnatural then that the Jews should hesitate about accepting at once a message from the Most High, although that message was born witness to by the power of working miracles? Was it unnatural that, with this commandment in their hands, they should seek to prove the miracles by the doctrine, rather than accept the doctrine as proved by the miracles? Is it unintelligible that after they had rejected

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 9—11. See also Rev. xiii. 13. Gregory the Great was of opinion (*Exposition of the Book of Job* xxxiv. iii) that one of the greatest trials of the elect, at the end, will be the far more glorious miracles which Antichrist shall shew, than any which in those last days the Church shall be allowed to accomplish. See also Augustine, *De Trin.* iii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xiii. 1—3, 5.



the miracles on account of the doctrine—however wicked such rejection may have been—is it unintelligible that they should have brought the accusation against the Lord, which I have taken as a text to-day? Nay rather, after once rejecting the doctrines as they did, they had according to their views no choice about the rest. In their eyes miracles proved this much, that he who worked them, was a messenger either of God, or of Satan; ‘if then,’ they doubtless reasoned, ‘this man’s doctrine is not of God, his miracles must be of Satan.’

Now there are two recorded instances of this accusation being brought definitely against the Lord; and one of these has found a place in the narratives of three of the Evangelists; the other in S. Matthew’s alone<sup>1</sup>. But there are, besides, three other occasions when a sort of echo of the accusation was caught up, once by the people, who coarsely taunted Him with having a devil<sup>2</sup>; once by the Jews, who when they could not answer Him (is it not after the manner of those who are foiled in argument to this very day?) began to revile Him with, “Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil<sup>3</sup>?” and once again, (but not in His presence,) by the Jews, who in order to turn away the multitude from listening to Him, said, “He has a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him<sup>4</sup>?”

Let us then now consider these occasions in their order, and the answer to the charge which was made by the Lord in each case.

From the very nature of the accusation, we might have concluded that it would not be brought against Him by any, until they had really rejected Him in their hearts. For it was unnecessary to account for His Power of working miracles in this way, until they had made up their minds that this Power could not come from God. And so we find that every other accusation is brought against Him, before this one is. He has already been up to Jerusalem twice during His ministry<sup>5</sup>. He has there offended the Jews by His

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xii. 22—37, Mark iii. 22—30, Luke xi. 14—23; Matth. ix. 32—34.

<sup>2</sup> John vii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> John viii. 48.

<sup>4</sup> John x. 20.

<sup>5</sup> The first of these visits is that described at John ii. 13—25, iii. 1—21;

words about the Temple, and they have treasured them up in their wicked hearts to use against Him when the time shall come<sup>1</sup>. They have also at Jerusalem directly accused Him of breaking the Sabbath-day and of making Himself equal with God, and have already laid their plots to kill Him on account of these things<sup>2</sup>. And so He has been obliged to turn away from Jerusalem, to which place He made the first offer of the Gospel of life, and has devoted Himself to Galilee. He has already been rejected by His own village of Nazareth, whose Judaical zeal actually sought to kill Him on the spot<sup>3</sup>. He has been once, if not oftener, accused by the Pharisees of not living the rude ascetic life of a true prophet of God<sup>4</sup>; and once, at least, blamed by them for associating with publicans and sinners<sup>5</sup>; and in Galilee He has been twice again accused of breaking the Sabbath<sup>6</sup>; and once again of assuming for Himself the prerogatives of the Deity<sup>7</sup>. All these accusations shew how much the leaders of the Jewish nation had been offended at His doctrine, and how zealously they had determined to oppose and persecute Him. But then there was one great obstacle in their way. There was His daily increasing popularity. The common people heard Him gladly<sup>8</sup>. They saw the miracles which He performed, and were quite ready to take them as a proof that He was a messenger of the Most High. They had no preconceived theories or prejudices which would make them argue so falsely as "This man is not of God because he keepeth not the Sabbath-day;" but in simplicity of heart they reasoned "How could a man who is a sinner do such things as these?" It became necessary then for the Pharisees and Rulers of the people, if they would stop this increasing influence of His over the people, to account in some

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the second is the one described at John v. 1—47, which has afforded such an endless subject of dispute for harmonists. See above, p. 20, *note*.

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 16, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Luke iv. 16—31.

<sup>4</sup> Matth. ix. 11. Comp. Mark ii. 16, Luke v. 30; see also Matth. xi. 16—19, and Luke vii. 31—35.

<sup>5</sup> Matth. ix. 14. Comp. Mark ii. 18, Luke v. 33; see also Matth. xi. 19 and Luke vii. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Matth. xii. 1—14. Comp. Mark ii. 23—iii. 6, Luke vi. 1—11.

<sup>7</sup> Matth. ix. 3. Comp. Mark ii. 7, Luke v. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Luke xii. 1; Mark v. 21.

way for His miracles. It does not appear that they doubted at all at the time that these marvellous works were truly supernatural, any more than they did afterwards, when they reasoned in the Sanhedrin and said, "This Man doeth many miracles, if we let Him alone, all men will believe on Him." They did not doubt the truth of the miracles, because, as we have seen, their unbelief in the doctrine He taught, did not necessarily lead them to deny that miracles were wrought by Him. They had another way of escape from the apparent dilemma. These signs might be the work of Satan and not of God. And so having determined to bring this fresh accusation against the Lord, by way of justifying all the others which they had already brought against Him, they wait for a fitting opportunity; and they certainly choose the best miracle for their purpose<sup>1</sup>. The Lord has just cast out a devil. And the people in their admiration confess openly for the first time their belief in Him as the Promised Messiah<sup>2</sup>. "Is not this the Son of David?" is the exclamation which bursts forth at the sight of wonder. Now the accusation which the Pharisees were waiting to make, although they certainly meant it to throw a shadow over all His miracles, yet fell with a greater appearance of probability on this sort of miracle than on any other. There seemed a connection between the Evil One and the person cured, which to the vulgar mind might make plausible the suggestion of a connection between the Evil One and the Worker of the miracle. And so they bring their accusation at once, and say, not to Him Himself, but to the people in answer to their cry of "This one is surely the Son of David," "This one doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the Prince of the devils<sup>3</sup>." And here we shall do well to remark the meekness with which our Blessed Lord answered this blasphemous taunt. Here was an accusation, which, unlike all the others that had been as yet levelled against Him, required to be met with a distinct and unqualified denial. The accusation indeed combines the malignity of a triumphant and the reviling of a defeated foe. But the Lord answers not reviling with reviling. He speaks indeed to deny the charge, as He must do, but He speaks as the Lord. He

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xii. 22—37.

<sup>2</sup> v. 23.

<sup>3</sup> v. 24.

answers meekly, but with majesty, as though from a region far removed from, and elevated high above all, this jarring malice which was creating such a tumult in those around Him. He answers with mercy and kindness; appealing to the only remaining ground on which He could appeal to these wicked Pharisees; shewing them that their accusation was altogether contrary to common sense. It is as though He would not yet give up even such as these to be altogether lost in their sins; and thus He has set all His ministers an example of not ceasing to teach and persuade, even in circumstances where teaching and persuading appear to be unsuitable and hopeless. He answers the rebuke of insolent unbelief, by quietly and plainly setting forth the truth. He appeals against the wicked suggestion of the Pharisees, not to fresh miracles;—such an appeal would not have been a suitable answer to such an accusation. He does not strike dumb the blaspheming Pharisees to shew the falseness of their words;—such an act would have been altogether unlike Him whose mission was to be that of one neither striving nor crying in the streets. But He appeals to the doctrines He taught, as a proof that the miracles He wrought were of God. For His answer must not be supposed to apply to any single miracle, such as that which had just been witnessed by those around Him, as in that case His words would not have carried conviction with them. It was quite possible, and not at all contrary to common sense, that Satan should give way in a single case in order to advance his kingdom in many, that he should be content to lose in a small thing in order to gain in the end: but it was altogether contrary to common sense, and quite incredible, that the Prince of Evil should be making the unremitting, ceaseless, unqualified attack upon evil, and all that belonged to evil that the Lord was making<sup>1</sup>. The immediate end and evident aim of all His miracles had been to raise men from a state of degradation and suffering,—the sure signs of sin, the broad-arrow marks of the kingdom of evil,—and to turn their eyes upwards. His whole life testified that His mission was to make the spiritually blind look up; to cause the morally lame to walk; to enable those

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<sup>1</sup> See the admirable remarks of Trench, *On the Miracles*, chap. v. § 1.

who were bowed together in the bands of Satan, stand upright in the image of God. All this could be no work of Satan's. Here was no giving way in a little so as to gain in the end; but here was an uncompromising, unflinching, unceasing warfare being carried on against the kingdom of evil, and all that belonged to it.

And now, after this appeal to the whole tenor of His life, He passes on, with those words with which He ever prefaced the revelation of something new, "Verily I say unto you," to warn the Pharisees in His kindness of the great danger they were in of committing the sin which could not be forgiven<sup>1</sup>. He does not say that they have already committed it, but His words imply that their present sin was certainly not unlikely to lead to it. 'You may speak against me,' he says, 'and yet be forgiven; but there is a speaking against, and a resisting the Spirit of God, which is the most hopeless state into which any one can fall.' We know not how near any of those Pharisees may have been to falling into this sin: we know not whether some of them had not already fallen into it: we cannot tell whether they were yet actually resisting the Spirit of God; for we know not whether the Spirit was actually striving with their spirits, speaking to their hearts and consciences in His hidden way, and testifying to each one of them separately and in secret, that He whom they were thus denying was indeed the Son of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Their opposition and unbelief alone do not prove that they had as yet thus sinned the sin which shall not be forgiven; for we know that Saul could oppose the faith, and persecute those who believed on Christ, and yet be all this time a chosen vessel for God's work. Those too who actually affixed the Lord to the Cross could not have committed this sin; for, if they had, what was the meaning of His prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"? But, if the Holy Spirit was really striving with the spirits of these Pharisees,—if that winning influence had indeed been exerted upon them by the Lord which forced from so many the confessions, "Surely man never spake like this man," "We never saw it on this wise,"

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<sup>1</sup> Matth. xii. 31—37; Mark iii. 28—30.

“This is the Son of David,” “This is Christ the Son of God,”—if they were perversely resisting the bursting forth of such confessions as these from their lips, then they were sinning the sin unto death,—the sin that shall not be forgiven.

The next occasion, upon which we read of this accusation being brought against the Lord, was not very long afterwards; and the circumstances which gave rise to the accusation were very similar to those which we have just been considering. The same sort of miracle had been worked, and there had been the same cry of “Son of David.” Indeed it was probably the very similarity of the circumstances in this case to those in that other one, which suggested to the minds of the Pharisees the explanation which immediately arose to their lips, “He casteth out devils by the prince of the devils<sup>1</sup>.” Our Lord does not appear on this occasion to have taken any notice of the accusation. He had already answered it fully and convincingly to all minds eager to admit the truth; and had already warned the Pharisees to what an awful end this perverse contradiction of their minds might lead. And from the charge being again so shortly afterwards repeated by them, it seems that some of them at least had fallen into that disastrous condition, in which there was no hope, no forgiveness;—why then should He any longer cast before them the precious pearls of His lips?

The next occasion upon which anything like this accusation was brought against the Lord was at Jerusalem at the feast of Tabernacles; and then, it is to be remarked, it came not from the mouth of the Pharisees, or from those opponents of the Lord whom S. John always calls the Jews, but from the mixed multitude, that is, from those who, except on this single occasion, are always represented as being on the side of the Lord until the very last, when they were persuaded by the chief Priests to shout for Barabbas and to give up Jesus<sup>2</sup>. The Lord had been reasoning with the Jews in the Temple, the people as usual standing round and listening. He had reproached the Jews with going about to kill Him, Him in whom they could really point out no fault at all, when some of the

<sup>1</sup> Matth. ix. 32—34.

<sup>2</sup> For the behaviour of the multitude towards the Lord see above, p. 13 sq.

people break in with, "Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee<sup>1</sup>?" Now this is probably an echo of the charge brought against Him by the Pharisees in Galilee; and those who uttered it could not have understood its full malice and wickedness. It is perhaps possible that the common people, with their love of the strange and marvellous, did not regard the words as the Pharisees, with their more accurate views of the relation of good and evil, did, as implying a hateful and sinful connection with the kingdom of evil. And it is quite in accordance with this view that our Lord passes over the words altogether without notice, and proceeds to reason with the Jews about another accusation which they had brought against Him, namely, that of breaking the Sabbath-day<sup>2</sup>.

And again, at this same feast, the same reviling accusation is brought against Him, and this time it is by the Jews<sup>3</sup>. They have been confounded by His simple and yet crushing way of pressing the truth upon them. They have nothing to answer; but they will not yield. They begin in their senseless opposition to revile and blaspheme: "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" It is as though in bitter insult they would tell Him what they say amongst themselves about Him in order to annoy Him. 'Say we not well?' that is, 'Are we not right in saying amongst ourselves that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?' It is thus that they connect their words with the already twice made accusation of the Pharisees. But the more insolent, the more violent His opponents, the more gentle and humble is He. 'I have not a devil' is the quiet rejoinder with which He asserts the truth in front of the most blasphemous and malicious contradiction with which it was ever opposed. And then He appeals, as once before, to His whole life, as a proof that He stood in a completely hostile relation to the kingdom of evil.

Once again, and that a short time after this, we read of the same accusation being made against Him; but this time it is in His absence, and only given to the people as a reason to turn them away from Him<sup>4</sup>. And then the

<sup>1</sup> John vii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> vv. 21—24.

<sup>3</sup> John viii. 48.

<sup>4</sup> John ix. 20.

charge vanishes altogether; we never hear of its being made again; it never rises up against Him at His trial. And there is a good reason for this. When once they began to plot how they might destroy Him, by bringing Him to a trial and sentencing Him to death, it was clear that the accusation of His having a devil must be dropped; for such a charge would itself become an excuse for Him, and would so defeat the very purpose upon which they had now set their whole hearts.

Now before considering, according to the plan laid down, the cases of those who in the spirit of these Jews have endeavoured to do away with the testimony to be derived from the miracles of Christ, it will be suitable to allude to one argument against the truth of the Christian miracles, to which what has gone before suggests a good reply. It has been stated<sup>1</sup> that the rejection and crucifixion of the Lord by the Jews prove that they discredited His miracles; "for," it is said, "the united force of their prejudices would have been irresistibly borne down by the natural influence of an undoubted miracle." Now the answer to this is that the Jews certainly did not regard a miracle as having any such overwhelming authority. As we have seen, they conceived it quite possible for miracles to be wrought by the Power of Satan as well as by the Power of God. They had also in their written law an intimation that false prophets would arise and shew signs and wonders which were certainly not to be taken as marks of God being with them. And, as we have also seen<sup>2</sup>, it was probably upon the authority of this very prophecy that the Lord was tried and sentenced to death. And thus the rejection of Him by the Jews forms no proof whatever that they did not believe His miracles

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<sup>1</sup> Orobio the Jew quoted by Edwards, *A Sermon on the Jewish and Heathen Rejection of the Christian Miracles*, p. 8. The answer, however, which Dr Edwards gives (p. 10) is admitted to be one not calculated to have weight with the gainsayer, and intended only to be "devoutly admitted by every pious Christian." For the argument which I have produced against this objection I am indebted to Wilson, *Illustration of the New Testament*, p. 27. But Orobio's argument frequently admits the reality of the Christian Miracles, thus he contends (as quoted by Limborch, *De Veritate*, 1787, p. 156), "etiãmsi hæc miracula facta essent, tamen non debuissè nec potuissè Judæos Jesum agnoscere esse Messiam."

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 34, 35.



to be truly miracles. And it is quite in accordance with all this that the early Jewish opponents of the Christian religion surmounted the difficulty presented by the miracles in exactly the same way as their forefathers who had disputed with the Lord had surmounted it. They admitted that they were really miracles, but ascribed them to the power of Satan.

And not only this but Jews of every age have contended that miracles afford no proof of the Divine mission of a prophet, who teaches false doctrine, such as they say the Lord taught; and so according to their notions He certainly might have been rejected and crucified, although the Jews of His time did not for a moment doubt that His miracles were really supernatural<sup>1</sup>.

Thus then, as in the case of the other accusations, the Jews are the only opponents of Christianity who exactly sin as their forefathers did, ever repeating the same sinful charges which were brought against the Lord in His lifetime. But if we turn to consider who they are in the history of the Church that have acted most nearly in the spirit of these Jews, we must seek for those who not doubting the supernatural quality of the miracles themselves, nevertheless deny their force.

Now the first Gentile assailants of the Christian miracles who, while they admitted the miracle, rejected it as evidence, are the Heathen of the first three centuries. They, living in a time when the wonderful lives of the heroes and Gods of the old mythology were yet mixed up with the history of nations, found no difficulty in believing the Christian miracles. But here their belief stopped. They could not see why miracles should be thought an unanswerable reason for a change of religion and for worshipping one God instead of many. Had not numbers of their heroes of old done many wonderful works? Had they not performed

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<sup>1</sup> Some Jews of a later age adopted the strange legend of the 'Sepher Toldoth Jesu' ('Book of the Generation of Jesus'), which admits the miracles of the Gospels, but ascribes them to the power which the Lord Jesus obtained, by hiding himself when a child in the Temple, and discovering the secret of the 'ineffable Name' graven on a stone which David when digging the foundations of the Temple had found and had removed into the Holy of Holies. Wagenseil's *Tela Ignea Satanae*, 'Liber Toldos Jeschu,' p. 6.

wonderful cures? And had not some of them even disappeared from the earth in as marvellous a way as Christ had done, and yet no one called upon them to regard any one of these in the way in which Christians called upon them to regard Christ<sup>1</sup>. Such an argument as this against the miracles has of course died away with the belief in those legends from which it sprung<sup>2</sup>. It has long ceased, (at any rate for us in Europe,) to be a contest between the Christian and any other miracles, or indeed between the Christian and any other religion; and so the strife has swept far away from the ground it first occupied. And while we now contemplate a position so far within our own lines, it seems hard to believe that here once the battle waged hotly and fierce, and that this was the ground for which Origen contended with Celsus. And very strange indeed it seems to us that Eusebius should have preserved the memory of a certain Apollonius from perishing, by shewing that his life was not worthy to be compared for its wonders with that of Christ<sup>3</sup>.

But the assault upon the Christian miracles soon took an entirely different turn: or rather, the open opposition of educated Heathendom having ceased, all arguments de-

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<sup>1</sup> This is the argument of Celsus (as quoted by Origen); and of Philalethes (Hierocles, a Governor of Bithynia in the time of Diocletian), whose attack on the Christian miracles we know chiefly through the answer of Eusebius. See also Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*. The Heathen assault upon the Christian miracles seems, however, sometimes to have assumed the shape of an accusation that they were wrought by magic. This was probably borrowed from the Jews, and was merely their accusation of Satanic agency in another form. Origen, *contr. Cels.* Bk. I. (Cambridge, 1677, p. 30); Arnobius, Bk. I. (Rome, 1583, p. 21).

<sup>2</sup> A similar argument may still sometimes be met with in the present day. Thus the Persian Mahometans, when they heard the miraculous story of the Gospel from the mouth of Henry Martin, immediately matched it with the miraculous life of Mahomet. *Life of Henry Martin*. It is evident from this why Justin Martyr made scarcely any use of the Miracles in the *Apology*.

<sup>3</sup> It is a curious fact connected with this heathen estimation of our Lord as on a level with Apollonius and others, that "the first pictorial representations of Christ of which we read were not in the abodes of believers, but in those of heretics and heathens; for example, in the chapel of the Emperor Alexander Severus (about A.D. 230), where a figure of the Saviour, though here rather to be considered as an ideal representation than as a portrait, stood next those of Apollonius of Tyana, of the patriarch Abraham, and of Orpheus." Kugler, *Handbook of Painting* (Eastlake, 1855), p. 11.

rived from a belief in the myths of the Heathen world ceased too.

Now of all the attacks that have since been made upon the miracles, there is only one which, according to the plan laid down for these lectures, we need now consider. For all, except one, have cut at the very root of the miracle itself; in either denying that a miracle is possible<sup>1</sup>; or, asserting that the evidence against one ever having been wrought is overwhelming<sup>2</sup>; or, explaining away the miraculous element so as to leave nothing but natural facts<sup>3</sup>; or with more recent opponents giving up the fact of the miracle altogether to accept only its emblematical teaching<sup>4</sup>. We may pass over all these ways of opposing the miracles, I say, because they do not come within the scope of our present purpose, which is to consider those opponents only of the miracles who, like the Jews, have accepted the miracles as facts, but have denied that their source was the interference of the one Supreme God.

Thus the only modern view of the miracles which under this scheme we have to consider is that connected with the name of Schleiermacher. I will endeavour to state that view briefly and I hope fairly. It takes its rise thus. If we once admit the fact of a miracle, there have been only three ways suggested of accounting for it:—(1) It may arise from a life in God and with God; or (2) it may arise from fellowship with demons; or (3) it may arise from

<sup>1</sup> This is the pantheistic objection to miracles which denies their *possibility* on account of their being contrary to the idea of God.

<sup>2</sup> This is the sceptical objection which, leaving their *possibility* alone, denies their *credibility*. Hume was the author of this objection.

<sup>3</sup> This is the rationalistic explanation of miracles, of which the following may suffice for examples: The impotent man at the pool of Bethesda is an impostor detected by Christ: the wine at Cana was brought by Him to the house: He did not multiply the loaves, but, distributing His own and His disciples' little store, set an example of liberality which was quickly followed by others: He did not walk on the sea, but on the shore: He did not tell Peter to find a piece of money in a fish's mouth, but to catch as many fish as would sell for that money: He did not raise Lazarus from the dead, but guessed that he was in a swoon. The full development of this scheme is due to Dr Paulus. See his *Commentary*.

<sup>4</sup> This view took its rise from an exaggeration of the critical difficulties surrounding the accounts of the Christian miracles, and is now chiefly associated with the name of Strauss.

powers acquired or inherent in the mind and not therefore supernatural and only wonderful, in that they have not yet been discovered by science. The Jews, as we have seen, chose the second solution. The third is the one which we have now to consider and which was put forth about forty years ago by Schleiermacher, as an answer to the difficulties suggested by those who attempted to prove the impossibility of a miracle<sup>1</sup>. This theory then asserted that the miracles were only relatively miraculous,—that is, that they were only miraculous to those in whose sight they were wrought. It must be evident to every one that the whole force of the miracle is thus entirely done away. For thus every one who has penetrated into the secrets of nature a little deeper than those around him is a worker of miracles. It is plain that thus the miracle itself, and all the worth it has as an evidence is really destroyed. It has been well said<sup>2</sup> that “if what is a miracle to-day will not be one to-morrow, it is not one to-day but only seems to be one.” A living writer of our own too has so admirably described the effects of this theory, that I cannot do better than use his own words<sup>3</sup>: admit this explanation, and then, he says, “the miracle has no longer an eternal significance: it is no longer a halo which is to surround the head of its worker for ever.

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<sup>1</sup> *Der Christliche Glaube*, of which the 1st edition was published in 1821. But the view is really as old as the time of Julian, who ascribed the miracles of S. Paul to a superior knowledge of nature. And it has just now been put forward again by the late Professor Baden Powell, who has asserted (*Essays and Reviews*, “Study of the Evidences of Christianity,” p. 142) that “an alleged miracle can only be regarded in one of the two following ways; either (1) abstractedly as a physical event, and therefore to be investigated by reason and physical evidence, and referred to physical causes, possibly to *known* causes, but, at all events, to some higher cause or law, if at present unknown; it then ceases to be supernatural, yet still might be appealed to in support of religious truth, especially as referring to the state of knowledge and apprehensions of the parties addressed in past ages; or (2) as connected with religious doctrine, regarded in a sacred light, asserted on the authority of inspiration.” The first of these views is simply a restatement of Schleiermacher’s views. The second is only stated to be rejected; and, indeed, the whole drift of the essay is to shew that of the two views the first alone can be accepted as in accordance with the advanced knowledge of the present age.

<sup>2</sup> J. Müller, *De Mirac. J. C. Nat. et Necess.* par. 2, p. 1. Augustine (see *De Civ. Dei*, 21. 5) has been supposed by some to hold this view. Trench (*On the Miracles*, chap. v. § 5) refutes this supposition.

<sup>3</sup> Trench, *On the Miracles*, chap. v. § 5.

With each enlargement of man's knowledge of nature a star in his crown of glory is extinguished, till at length it fades altogether into the light of common day; nay rather declares that it was not more than a deceitful and meteor-fire at the best. For it implies a serious moral charge against the doer of the works, if he vents them as wonders, as acts of a higher power than nature's, or allows others so to receive them, when indeed he entirely knows that they are wrought but according to her ordinary laws." And that the moral character of our Blessed Lord should thus in any way be assailed is by far the most important objection to this view of the miracles; for the other objection, that their worth as an evidence of Christianity would be destroyed, is not nearly so convincing to most minds; few, if any, actually holding their faith on the outward evidences, while the belief of thousands is really grounded, as indeed it ought to be, in love towards the personal character of Christ<sup>1</sup>.

And this naturally brings us to the few remarks, with which I shall conclude this Lecture on the real value of the miracle as an evidence.

What does a miracle in itself signify? Does an undoubted miracle demand our unqualified assent to all the worker of that miracle tells us? The considerations that have gone before would seem to suggest that a miracle has not this indisputable force about it. But more than this. We are told distinctly that Antichrist will come with signs and lying wonders. Now have we any tests by which we may distinguish such false miracles from those that are truly wrought in God's name? I think we have. We may call to mind that our Lord to shew that His miracles were of the right sort, appealed to two things—(1) the immediate end and object of the miracles themselves, and (2) the doctrine in support of which they were wrought. For we shall find that it is no arguing in a circle, although at first

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<sup>1</sup> This argument, I admit, is directed only against the effects of this view of the Miracles, not against the view itself. But it is a fair mode of argument against any opinion to point out the inevitable conclusions to which that opinion will lead.

it appears so, to say that the doctrines prove the miracles, and the miracles prove the doctrine<sup>1</sup>.

1. First then as to the immediate end and aim of the miracle itself. The end and aim of all Christ's miracles was to redeem man from the curse, to rescue him from his bondage to disease and death, the servants of sin. And so His miracles were all directed against the chains which sin and Satan had woven around man. He thus destroyed disease, and baffled death himself, and resumed that hold over the powers of nature which man had forfeited. There was none of the aimlessness about His miracles that strikes us at once as the distinguishing mark of the miracles attributed to the Saints of the Romish Calendar. His miracles had always some good purpose for which they were wrought; and were never worked merely to be a sign or a wonder: these others certainly have not the merit if they are not true, of having been invented with probability; for they are purposeless, boasting and trifling<sup>2</sup>.

2. Again, miracles are to be tried by the doctrine in support of which they are wrought. Our Lord appealed to this proof that His miracles were of God. And this was an argument which the Jews would fully understand, for they had been told to prove the miracles by the doctrine. They had been given a test of this nature to discern true miracles by. They had been told that they were not to regard miracles if they were wrought by one who endeavoured to turn them away from the worship of the true God<sup>3</sup>. And we have a somewhat similar test given us by our Lord Himself. He has said "that no man which shall do a miracle in His name will lightly speak evil of Him<sup>4</sup>." Hence it follows that any one who speaks evil of Christ cannot perform a miracle in His name. So the Jews were to reject a miracle if wrought by one who tried to turn them away from the true God. And we are to reject a miracle if wrought by one who speaks against the Lord Jesus<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See some admirable remarks of Pascal (*Pensées* 'Sur les Miracles').

<sup>2</sup> See Lyall, *Propædia Prophetica*, p. 441; see also Trench, *On the Miracles*, chap. III.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xiii. 1—11.

<sup>4</sup> Mark ix. 39.

<sup>5</sup> This test was suggested by Pascal (*Pensées* 'Sur les Miracles,' § II.).

Let us then, in order that we may acquire a frame of mind which will be proof against all the seductions of Antichrist, learn to regard the miracles of our Blessed Lord aright. Let us not regard them as hard irresistible evidences of Christianity. The Lord Himself never put them forth as such, never appealed to them as such. He appealed to them in connection with their apparent immediate ends, and the doctrines which He preached; and from these two things we should never separate them. Let us regard them as proofs of His Power indeed, but as natural rather than as supernatural proofs. For, on the other hand, could we have conceived it possible for the Lord of Nature, the Conqueror of Death, the Restorer of all things, to be revealed to man in human form, and yet at the same time to shew no sign of the Power which was really His? Do we not feel that, in the manifestation of Such a One, it was only natural that the deaf should be made to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk; and that even the dead should come to life again in His Presence, and that all Nature should thus acknowledge Him as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords?

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See also Dr S. Clarke, *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, § XIV, where the whole question of proving miracles by doctrine and doctrine by miracles is well discussed. The test at which he arrives is as follows: "If the doctrine attested by miracles, be in itself impious, or manifestly tending to promote vice; then without all question the Miracles, how great soever they may appear to us, are neither worked by God Himself, nor by His commission; because our natural knowledge of the attributes of God, and of the necessary difference between Good and Evil, is greatly of more force to prove any such doctrine to be false, than any miracles in the world can be to prove it true." See also the admirable remarks of Trench, *On the Miracles*, chap. III. § XIV. 6. Dr Arnold's view appears to have been that miracles should be judged of by the doctrine; but then, at the same time, it appears doubtful whether he contemplated the possibility of a miracle being wrought in behalf of error. He says, "It has always seemed to me that the substance of a Revelation is a most essential part of its evidence; and that miracles wrought in favour of what was foolish or wicked, would only prove Manicheism. We are so perfectly ignorant of the unseen world, that the character of any supernatural power can be only judged of by the moral character of the statements which it sanctions: thus only can we tell whether it be a revelation from God or from the Devil.... We can only recognise God's voice by the words spoken being in agreement with our idea of His moral nature." *Life of Arnold*, Vol. II. p. 226.

## CONCLUSION.

### ON THE REJECTION OF THE LORD JESUS BY HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

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Now different as were all these accusations against the Lord Jesus, which we have been considering, and different as were the several classes of the people to whom was given the awful responsibility of rejecting or accepting Him as Messiah, there is one error which is at the root of all the opposition to Him—the error of prejudice. The reason why His contemporaries rejected Him was, that they had their own preconceived opinions and ideas about the Messiah—opinions and ideas indeed which they firmly believed to be right, but which were not right, and which they ought to have re-examined in sincerity and singleness of mind, when their correctness was challenged by such a one as the Lord Jesus appeared even to them. For we form to ourselves a very improbable picture of the Jews—a picture so monstrous and distorted, and unlike human nature such as our own, that no improvement can be derived from the contemplation of it—if we suppose that they saw the prophecies of the Old Testament about the Messiah to be fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus, and that yet they knowingly and deliberately threw themselves into opposition to Him. No. Many of the prophecies,—the most striking ones indeed of them all,—were no arguments at all until the act of rejection was consummated by those events, which in a few hours brought about the fulfilment of so many striking images and prophecies, upon which all searchers for God's Truth had pondered in perplexity from the birthday of Scripture. But, during the life of our Blessed Lord, it was quite possible for



a sincere Jew to have doubts, as to whether He really was the Messiah. "For," such a one might have reasoned with himself, "is not Christ to be born in Bethlehem? How then can the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee be He? And was not Elias to appear on the earth before the coming of the Messiah? And has anything happened which can be called the coming of Elias? And again, would not the Sanhedrin the great council of the nation be sure to recognise the Messiah whenever He shall appear? and how then can this Person with whom those learned Scribes and Pharisees are continually in hot dispute be the expected One? Is it probable that the Messiah, when He shall come, will in the least way appear to cast a slight upon the Sabbath, which is to be a witness between God and His people for ever? And lastly, is it possible that He, who is to be sent by God into the world upon this extraordinary mission, should use words which, to say the least of them, lay Him open to the charge of 'blasphemy'? And then besides this, where are the triumphs foretold of the Messiah? where His glory? where His kingdom?" Now all these objections might have occurred, as I have just said, to any sincere Jew; but what ought to have followed? Were they sufficient reasons for his rejecting the Lord Jesus? Certainly not. For remember how much prophecy was evidently fulfilled in the person of the Lord. The time of the birth of the Messiah had been so plainly foretold that the Jews were all anxiously looking for Him to be born about the time the Lord was born: He was to be a descendant of David: and as He was to be the greatest of all prophets He would of course perform greater miracles than any prophet before Him. And so when, about thirty years after this time of the generally expected birth of the Messiah, there appeared one amongst the Jews, apparently about thirty years of age, undoubtedly of the house of David, professing to be the Messiah, and performing such marvellous works as to draw from the people the exclamation, 'Is it possible that Messiah will perform greater miracles than these?' there was certainly sufficient *primâ facie* evidence in favour of this being the Messiah, to make any sincere Jew examine into these apparent objections, to see whether they were real or not: and if he had examined in sincerity of mind, would he not have found that they all vanished away, and that a thousand

other points came out, in which this same claimant of the Messiahship had fulfilled, and by fulfilling had explained, some dark word of prophecy, which had been a riddle and a perplexity until then?

But the proof to His contemporaries that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah, was not merely in the evidence of prophecy, which could have been thus investigated only by those learned in the Scriptures, but consisted far more in His whole life, His manner, His teaching, His works, and His words, which appealed, even to the convictions of the unlearned multitude, and forced from them, every now and then, the confession, that this Man certainly was of God.

And in estimating the power of this proof, and the corresponding sin of the Jews in resisting the conviction arising from it, we must never forget that our Lord's presence seems to have had an indescribable influence in appealing to the hearts of those to whom He came. The striving of His Spirit with the spirit of others was intensified, as we might have expected, when His visible form stood face to face with theirs. This influence itself, of course, it is impossible to describe; but its effects may be seen frequently throughout the Gospel narrative. For instance, was it not this attractive power, which the presence of Christ had about it, which caused the unborn Baptist to leap for joy<sup>1</sup>? How did Simeon recognise the Saviour of the world in the manifestation of a helpless infant in its mother's arms, save by this same influence, which made him feel towards that infant as he never felt before<sup>2</sup>? What was it which made those who were desecrating the temple with unholy traffic, flee at once, and in confusion, from the presence of One<sup>3</sup>? What was it, when the Nazarenes were hurrying the Lord along to destroy Him, enabled Him to walk away through the midst of them unhurt<sup>4</sup>? What is the meaning of the people having been astonished at His teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes<sup>5</sup>? What, but that His presence and His manner had that indescribable something about them, which awed, while it astonished them? How was it that officers sent to seize His person, returned without

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 27, 28.

<sup>3</sup> John ii. 13—16.

<sup>4</sup> Luke iv. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Mark i. 22.

Him to their superiors, with the excuse, "Never man spake like this man"<sup>1</sup>? How was it that the malefactor, suddenly dragged from the silence of his cell, and hurried along to punishment in all that scene of terror and confusion, was able to recognize the majesty of Him, Who was dying at his side, the mark of all the ribald taunts and mocking cries of the vile rabble below<sup>2</sup>? Nor does this indescribable influence of His presence appear to have been powerful only over the Jews. The heathen Pilate is no sooner admitted into the presence of his Prisoner, than his interest is awakened, and he is earnestly desirous to let Him go<sup>3</sup>. From what we know of Pilate, it is not likely that he ever felt towards a prisoner as he evidently felt towards this one. What is it which makes him the more afraid, when he hears that this Prisoner has called Himself the Son of God<sup>4</sup>? and sends him back with the trembling question, 'Whence art thou?' what, but the half-stifled conviction, which has been oppressing him, that his Prisoner is indeed superhuman? and whence came the conviction, except from the secret workings of this influence of the presence of the Lord<sup>5</sup>?

Thus the last appeal of the Lord Jesus lay to the hearts of those who saw and heard Him. And the great sin of those who rejected Him was that they rejected this appeal; that they resisted the Spirit of God which was thus striving with their spirits; that they stifled the impulse within them, which in answer to this silent appeal of Christ's, would at times have led them to fling themselves at His feet, and worship Him, by cherishing their prejudices, and calling to mind all they could against His claims to be the Messiah. Pilate's sin too in rejecting Christ, was thus of exactly the same nature as the sin of the Jews. He stifled the convictions of his own inward experience, and adopted as truths untested the assertions of minds evidently inflamed, and therefore probably in error.

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<sup>1</sup> John vii. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiii. 42.

<sup>3</sup> John xviii. 38; comp. Acts iii. 13. See also above, p. 110 and *note*.

<sup>4</sup> John xix. 8. See also above, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> The curious story in the Apocryphal 'Gospel of Nicodemus' (Thilo's *Codex Apocryphus*, p. 506) of the 'cursor' sent by Pilate to summon the Lord, worshipping Him, and the rage of the Jews thereat, is at least founded on the above truth of the marvellous influence of Christ's presence.

And here lies the application to ourselves of the lesson to be derived from the rejection of the Lord by His contemporaries. The last appeal which Christ's truth still makes is to the hearts and consciences of us all. Oh doubt not that there is ever still a majesty about the truth, which forcibly demands the homage of those to whom it is addressed. There is still a pleading of His Spirit with our spirits. We still feel, when in the presence of His truth, something of what His contemporaries felt, when in His living bodily Presence. And it is the faith of the heart grounded on this feeling, which is the only safeguard against those doubts, which will at times assault us all. He whose faith is built upon intellectual conviction alone, must be swayed to and fro by every sceptical objection, which endeavours to shew to the intellect that the great truths of our religion are shadows and not realities; and he who holds his creed solely on the authority of others,—the authority of priests, or parents, or bible,—must listen in alarm whenever that authority is questioned; but he whose convictions are based upon the striving of Christ's Spirit with his own spirit, who holds the great doctrines of his creed, because they satisfy an inward longing, and chime in with the inward experiences of his own heart, who feels their truth first, and because he feels it, knows it—he, and he alone, has his faith founded on a rock, which will stand firm amid all the assaults of scepticism.

Oh let us all then cultivate a devotion of the heart to Christ. Let us remember, that the road to knowledge lies through obedience, and that obedience is the firstfruit of a loving heart. Let us strive to bring our wills into submission to His Will. Let our only object be in singleness of mind to live as He has told us we ought to live; and then we may assuredly hope that He will in His mercy give us, as He has promised, a knowledge of His truth here, and in the World to come life everlasting<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> John v. 24; vii. 17; xiv. 21, 23.

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