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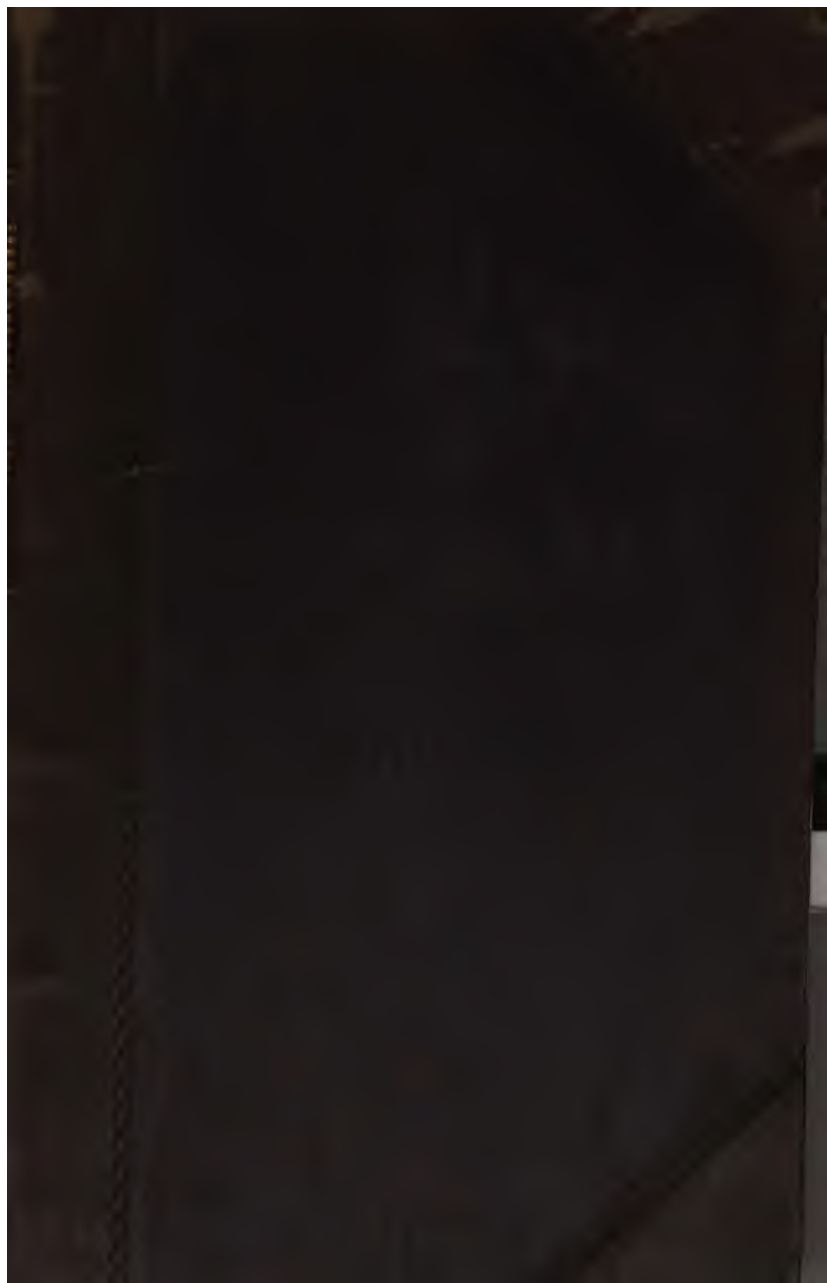
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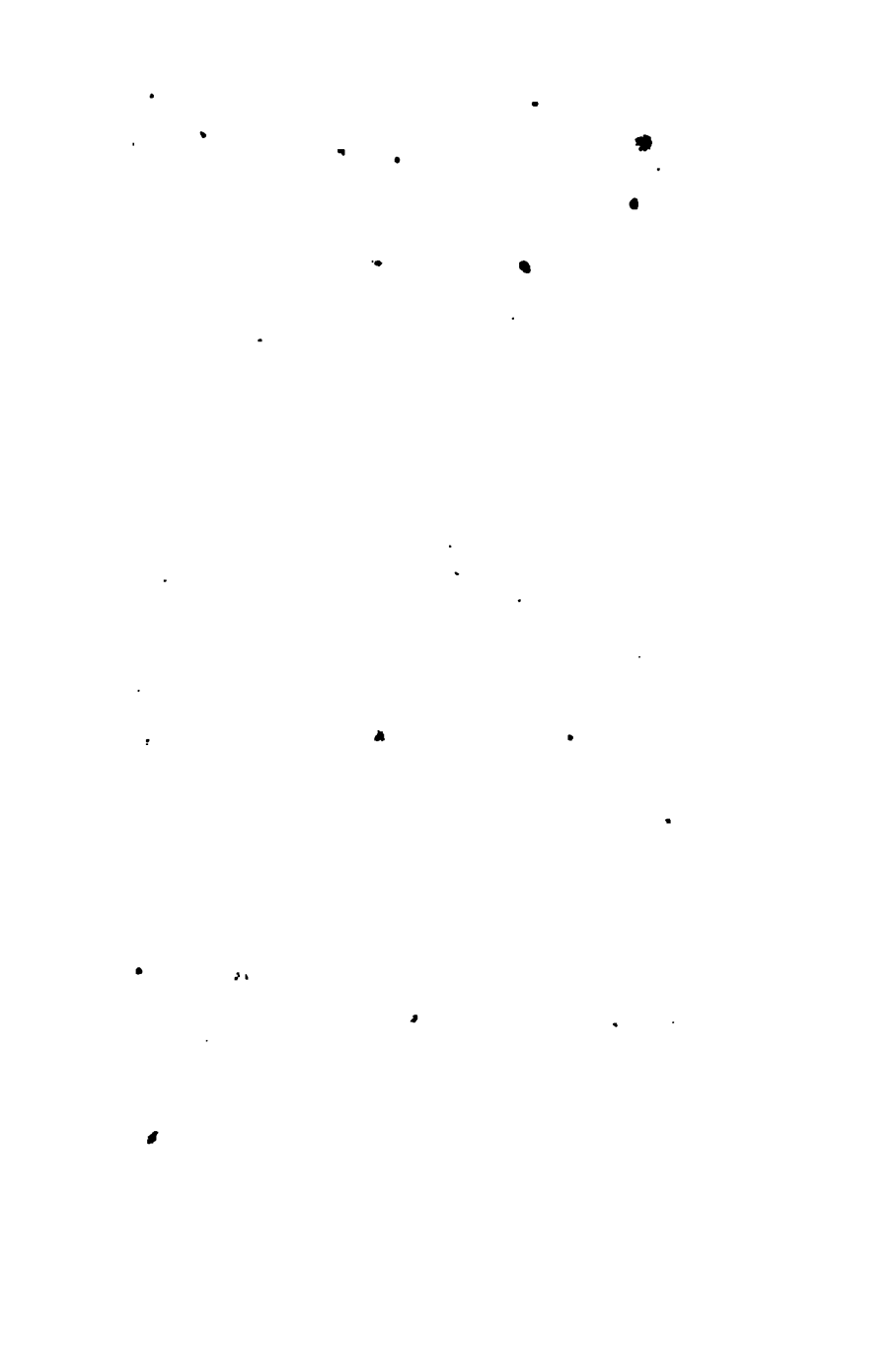
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A
PLAIN COMMENTARY
ON
The Four Holy Gospels,

INTENDED CHIEFLY
FOR DEVOTIONAL READING.

—
VOL. III.—PART I.
S T. L U K E.
CHAPTERS I.—XII.
—

ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK
THEREIN; AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.
JEREMIAH VI. 16.

GRANT, O LORD, THAT IN READING THY WORD, I MAY NEVER
PREFER MY OWN SENTIMENTS BEFORE THOSE OF THE CHURCH
IN THE PURELY ANCIENT TIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.
Bishop Wilson.

LONDON,
JOHN HENRY PARKER.

M DCCC LV.

101. d. 256.



TO
THE MEMORY
OF THE REVEREND
WILLIAM JOSCELYN PALMER, M.A.,

FOR NEARLY HALF A CENTURY, RECTOR OF MIXBURY

AND FINMERE :

THE VERY MODEL OF A PARISH PRIEST :

SO SOUND AND JUDICIOUS IN HIS TEACHING ;

SO FAITHFUL IN HIS STEWARDSHIP ;

SO KIND TO THE POOR :

This Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel

IS DUTIFULLY INSCRIBED,

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THE LESSONS

LEARNED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS

HIS CURATE.

2

3

A
PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON

St. Luke's Gospel

INTENDED CHIEFLY
FOR DEVOTIONAL READING.

HE GIVETH MEDICINE TO HEAL THEIR SICKNESSES.

♦

ALMIGHTY GOD, WHO CALLEDST LUKE THE PHYSICIAN, WHOSE PRAISE IS IN THE GOSPEL, TO BE AN EVANGELIST, AND PHYSICIAN OF THE SOUL; MAY IT PLEASE THEE, THAT, BY THE WHOLESOME MEDICINES OF THE DOCTRINE DELIVERED BY HIM, ALL THE DISEASES OF OUR SOULS MAY BE HEALED; THROUGH THE MERITS OF THY SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

THE LEAVES OF THE TREE WERE FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS.

A

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE FIRST CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

1 The Preface of Luke to his whole Gospel. 5 The Conception of John the Baptist, 26 and of CHRIST. 89 The prophecy of Elizabeth, and of Mary, concerning CHRIST. 57 The nativity and circumcision of John. 67 The prophecy of Zacharias, both of CHRIST, 76 and of John.

ST. LUKE, who wrote his Gospel after those of St. Matthew and St. Mark had been published, will be found to supply many particulars of our LORD's life which the two earlier Evangelists omit. He was divinely guided to begin his Narrative from a much earlier period than they; and to "set forth in order" the history of the Birth, not only of our Blessed SAVIOUR, but of His Fore-runner likewise. It has been piously, and reasonably thought, that he derived some of his information as to these events, (subject to the suggestions and guidance of the HOLY GHOST,) from the Virgin Mother herself. In the course of this portion of his Gospel, occur the three Inspired Hymns which make part of our Daily Service.

St. Luke then proceeds to relate the same events, generally, as are found in St. Matthew and St. Mark ; but always with important differences, in matters of detail. Five consecutive chapters, however, (ch. xiii. to ch. xvii.) contain information peculiar to the present Gospel.

Though not actually one of the Apostolic body, he seems to have been an eye-witness of many of the events which he describes. (See below, the note on verse 3.) And there are places in his Gospel where he has been permitted to come wonderfully near his LORD ; as when he describes the mysterious hour of His Agony in the Garden:—xxii. 41 to 46.

He begins his Narrative with relating something about himself ; his qualification for the work of an Evangelist, and the purpose with which he wrote his Gospel:—where every word is full of wonder, and even of difficulty. The Reader will also, (it is trusted), find that every statement may be turned to edification and delight, as well. St. Paul relates ^a that St. Luke was a Physician of the Body. “The Brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches^b,” is found to have been also a skilful Physician of the Soul.

I. FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among

^a Colossians iv. 14.

^b 2 Cor. viii. 18.

us, even as they delivered them unto us, 2
 which from the beginning were eye-wit-
 nesses, and ministers of the Word :

These first four verses are called the 'Preface' to St. Luke's Gospel: from which, we learn many things of importance; as, first, that there was a time when, from the report of eye-witnesses, many narratives of our LORD'S Life, besides the four which we now possess, had been committed to writing. But observe,—their Authors had "*taken in hand*" a task which they were not divinely commissioned to perform. It may be inferred from what is here said, that, to be in possession of the personal notices of eye-witnesses even, was not a sufficient qualification to enable a man to become an Evangelist; inasmuch as all the narratives here alluded to, have perished. St. Luke did not so "*take in hand*" to write a Gospel. The HOLY SPIRIT moved him;—whereupon it seemed good to him;—and he wrote.

it seemed good to me also, having had 3
 perfect understanding of all things from the
 very first, to write unto thee in order, most
 excellent Theophilus,

You observe that St. Luke contrasts the way in which *he* had obtained his information, with that in which the "many" who had "*taken in hand*" to write a History of our LORD'S Life, had ob-

tained theirs. *They* wrote from tradition : St. Luke had enjoyed “ perfect understanding of all things from the very first,”—probably as an eye-witness. The Church has indeed always inclined to the belief that he was one of the Seventy Disciples,—whose sending out, he alone describes in his tenth Chapter. *That* portion of Scripture is therefore appointed to be read on St. Luke’s Day.

- 4 that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

This, then, was the object with which this Gospel was written. The Evangelist seems to have bestowed all his labour in building up one Gentile heart in the Christian faith. And God blessed him in the deed ; for thereby the whole Church of CHRIST hath been, and will be, edified for ever. Shall *we* sometimes disdain a narrow field of labour, and be discontented at having to minister (if need be) to a single soul?

About Theophilus, whom St. Luke addresses, we know nothing : but his name signifies “ Beloved of God ;” and (O Reader !) be sure of this, that if *thou* art beloved of God, St. Luke’s Gospel is specially addressed to *thee*.

- 5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia :

David distributed the priests into twenty-four courses^c; when "the eighth" lot came forth "to Abijah." (ver 10.) Zacharias was descended from one of the priests who belonged to *his* 'course.'

and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

The Old Testament names immediately meet us. 'Elisabeth' is the same word as 'Elisheba^d,' and 'Mary' as 'Miriam^e.'

And they were both righteous before God, ⁶ walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the LORD, blameless. And they had ⁷ no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

The expression in the original is,—“they were both *far advanced in their days* :” as if implying that this holy pair had well nigh reached the end of their earthly race.

And it came to pass, that while he exe- ⁸ cuted the Priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom ⁹ of the Priest's office, his lot was to burn in-

^c 1 Chron. xxiv. 1—18.

^d Exodus vi. 23.

^e Exodus xv. 20.

cense when he went into the Temple of the LORD.

- 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense.

Refer, here, to Leviticus xvi. 17.

- 11 And there appeared unto him an Angel of the LORD standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

The dawn of the Gospel takes place in the Temple of God.

Concerning the Altar of incense, see Exodus xxx. 1 to 9. It stood "before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony." Incense was symbolical of Prayer; whence it is said in the Book of Revelation that the 'odours' in the golden vials, are "*the prayers of Saints*",—chap. v. 8. See also Revelation viii. 3, 4; and the note on St. Matthew ii. 11 may be consulted.

We are reminded by this description of where the Angel stood, not only of the place of Session of the Eternal Son^f,—but also that it was on *the right side* of the Holy Sepulchre that a heavenly Messenger was seen after the Resurrection of our LORD^g; and on *the right side* of the ship that the net was lowered on the capturing of the second miraculous draught of fishes^h.

^f St. Mark xvi. 19. ^g St. Mark xvi. 5. ^h St. John xxi. 6.

And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was ¹² troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the ¹³ Angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias : for thy prayer is heard ; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son,

So that, in former years, Zacharias had prayed earnestly for children : but he had long since made up his mind that God had refused his petition. The Angel informs him that it was far otherwise.

Until this time, only two cases of conception, predicted by an Angel, are recorded to have occurred : namely the prediction respecting Isaac, made to Abrahamⁱ ; and the prediction respecting Sampson, made to Manoah's wife^k. See the note on St. Luke ii. 21.

and thou shalt call his name John

See the note on the latter part of St. Luke ii. 21.

And thou shalt have joy and gladness ; ¹⁴ and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he ¹⁵ shall be great in the sight of the LORD, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink : and he shall be filled with the HOLY GHOST, even from his Mother's womb.

That is to say, the vow of the Nazarite should

ⁱ Genesis xvii. 21, &c.

^k Judges xiii. 3.

be upon him, (as it had been upon Sampson¹) from the time of his birth. Concerning that vow, see Numbers vi. 2, 3.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he
17 turn to the LORD their GOD. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the LORD.

This is best explained by a reference to the actual prophecy of Malachi (iv. 5, 6), alluded to by the Angel. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: and he shall turn the heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the heart of the Children to their Fathers." The Baptist came "in the Spirit and power of Elias," inasmuch as he was one who "constantly spoke the truth, boldly rebuked vice, and patiently suffered for the Truth's sake^m."

18 And Zacharias said unto the Angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man,
19 and my wife well stricken in years. And the Angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am

¹ Judges xiii. 4, 5.

^m Collect for St. John Baptist's day.

sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

An awful, yet most calm rebuke, truly ; and worthy of an Angel from Heaven². He that speaks to thee is Gabriel, (that is 'the Man of God,') whose office in Heaven it is to stand in the presence of the MOST HIGH. I, who in the days of old was sent to Daniel³, behold am now sent with heavenly tidings *unto thee!* . . . How must the heart, which a moment before wavered, have been overcome by the solemn recollections which every word of the glorious Speaker awakened !

And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and ²⁰ not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed ; because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

So that Zacharias received a sign, though a very different one from what he had expected : and an appropriate sign it was ; for behold, the faculty of speech, which he had misused to express mistrust in God's promises, was for a fixed time withdrawn. He became *deaf* moreover, as well as dumb ; for, when the Baptist was to be circumcised, we shall find that the neighbours "*made signs* to his Father, how he would have him called." ver. 62.

In the words actually employed by Zacharias,

² Compare Jude ver. 9.

³ Daniel viii: 16: ix. 21.

and the Blessed Virgin Mary, respectively^p, there does not seem to be much difference; but the Speakers were very diversely affected. While *her's* was the hesitation of *Faith*^q, which timidly asked for *explanation*,—*his* was the reluctance of *Unbelief*, which required a *sign*. Hence, *her* doubt was solved,—*his*, punished.

- 21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the Temple.

They were waiting for him to come out and bless them. "How was he honoured in the midst of the people in his coming out of the sanctuary!"—as it is said by the son of Sirach. "He went down, and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation of the children of Israel, to give the blessing of the LORD with his lips^r."

- 22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the Temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

He could not pronounce the accustomed words of Blessing. Surely it was a highly significant circumstance that at the moment when the good tidings of the Gospel had been proclaimed, and an

^p See ver. 34.

^q See ver. 45.

^r Ecclesiasticus l. 5, 20.

event had been announced by which the Law was to cease, the Priest should come forth from the Sanctuary of God with dumb lips! Consider St. Luke xvi. 16 ; and St. Matthew xi. 13.

And it came to pass, that, as soon as the 23 days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

And after those days his wife Elisabeth 24 conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the LORD dealt with me in 25 the days wherein He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

She speaks after the manner of the daughters of Abraham,—with whom, to go childless was accounted a reproach.

The case of Elizabeth more nearly resembles that of Sarah, than of any other pious Matron whose history is given in the Bible*: but Rebekah, Rachel, Manoah's wife, and Hannah, are all additional instances of that mysterious economy which from the beginning had been preparing the minds of faithful men for a Birth in 'the latter days' which should be out of the course of Nature: the Birth of One whose name should be called 'Wonderful.' Accordingly, in ver. 36, we shall find the Angel Gabriel bringing forward this very case of Elizabeth, in order to

* See note on ver. 37.

reconcile the mind of the Blessed Virgin to that mysterious destiny which was in store for herself.

- 26 And in the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

No common Angel, but one of the high order; as was meet, at the sending down from Heaven of the most blessed message which had ever yet reached this suffering Earth.

That message was to exalt Human Nature above the Cherubim, by proclaiming the Incarnation of the WORD. Yet the Archangel Gabriel hastens with love and obedience to fulfil his embassy. 'And,' (to quote the pious words of Bishop Taylor,) 'if we were to reduce our prayers to action, and do God's will on earth as the Angels in Heaven do it, we should promptly execute every part of the Divine Will; though it were to be instrumental in the exaltation of a brother above ourselves.'

- 27 to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Something has been already said (in the Commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel) concerning the Divine Economy by which it was over-ruled that Mary should have been "espoused" to Joseph,

the time of the Annunciation ; and immediately afterwards have become his Wife. See notes on St. Matt. i. 16, 18, 24. It was needful in this manner, at first, to shroud the mighty mystery of our LORD'S Birth from the eyes of carnal men : and (what is more) it was seen fit by this masterpiece of divine contrivance, to defeat the vigilance of the Powers of Darkness also.

Do but note with what amazing simplicity, the most wonderful event which had happened in all the ages, is described ! *This* was the hour for which Creation had groaned, ever since the Fall. The eyes of Patriarchs and Prophets had ever been turned in wonder and adoration towards *this* event. Faith and Hope had supported themselves ' since the world began,' in sure belief that the day for the disclosure of the great mystery here revealed, must at last arrive. When it came, how unlike did the manner of its coming prove, to what men had expected ! The House was David's House indeed ; yet, reduced to what a low condition ! In the secrecy of her private chamber,—to a Virgin,—dwelling in a despised city,—far from Bethlehem of Judæa, the scene of the promises,—the Angel Gabriel brings the wondrous tidings which were destined to make all the ends of the Earth rejoice !

See the second note on St. Luke ii. 38.

And the Angel came in unto her, 28

The Angel came *in* unto her,—so that the

Blessed Virgin was *within* when she heard the heavenly tidings. Sarah, in like manner, was "in the tent," when she heard the promise^t. In connexion with this subject, consider the following texts,—St. John xi. 20; 1 Tim. v. 13; Tit. ii. 5.

and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the LORD *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

The angel is instructed to bid Mary "Hail;" that is, to bring her a message of *Peace* and *Joy*: whereby God revokes the sentence which He had pronounced on our first Mother,—"*In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children*."^u

29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the Angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

He calls her by her name,—as if to inspire confidence, and shew that he knew her.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His Name JESUS.

It should not escape notice that these words are formed exactly upon those of the prophet

^t Genesis xviii. 9, 10.

^u Genesis iii. 16.

Isaiah vii. 14^x: and what follows (ver. 32,) is a distinct allusion to another passage in the same prophet, namely ix. 6, 7.

He shall be great, and shall be called the 32
Son of the Highest: and the LORD GOD
shall give unto Him the throne of His Fa-
ther David.

Reminding her thereby of many an ancient
prophecy which had gone before; and teaching
her that the Offspring of her body was to be none
other than the CHRIST.

And He shall reign over the house of 33
Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there
shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the Angel, How 34
shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

The Blessed Virgin clearly understood that this
promise was made to her in her Virgin estate.

And the Angel answered and said unto 35
her, The HOLY GHOST shall come upon thee,
and the Power of the Highest shall over-
shadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing
which shall be born of thee shall be called
the SON of GOD.

By which words, it is worth observing that the

^x Compare St. Matthew i. 21 and 23.

Angel Gabriel declared to the Virgin the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

There was this contrast between the Old and the New Creation; that whereas, in the first, God "*spake* and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast;"—in the second, He wrought secretly and silently,—“coming down,” (as the Psalmist speaks⁷, with reference to the days of MESSIAH,) “like the rain into a fleece of wool, even as the drops that water the Earth.”

One of the very earliest of the Fathers, (Ignatius, second Bishop of Antioch), says of this,—that it was “a crying mystery wrought in the silence of God:”—a memorable saying, which the Church has never been able to forget.

- 36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Mary asked for no sign, yet a sign (the most fitting imaginable!) is given her;—given in love, not in anger as in the case of Zacharias.

Elizabeth was the Blessed Virgin's “cousin.” Hence her wondrous son also was the Kinsman of CHRIST.

- 37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

There is an allusion here to the words of

⁷ Ps. lxxii. 6.

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1.]

ON ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

Genesis xviii. 14. The case of Elizabeth resembled that of Sarah. See the note on ver. 25.

And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the LORD ; be it unto me according to thy word.

And the Angel departed from her.

She submits to it, rather as a mysterious dispensation which she could not tell how to comprehend, than glories in it as a privilege. Her answer befits the Mother of One who was declared to be "meek and lowly ;" owning herself but the Hand-maid of Him who was to be her Son.

Observe the wondrous contrast with what took place 'in the beginning.' At the Fall of Man, that old serpent, Satan, held parley with a Woman, and deceived her by the Spirit of Pride. In order to the Restoration of our Nature, an Archangel discourses with another Woman, and persuades her through her Humility.

And here, it may be well worth remarking (with Bishop Taylor), that 'the holy Virgin came to her great perfection and height of piety, by a few, and those, modest and unattractive, exercises and actions. St. Paul travelled over the world ; preached to the Gentiles and disputed against the Jews ; wrote Epistles ; suffered dangers, injuries, affronts, and persecutions to the height of wonder ; whereby he won for himself a crown. But the holy Virgin attained perfection by the means of a quiet and silent piety, by internal actions of love,

devotion, and contemplation : and instructs us that the silent affections, the splendours of an internal devotion, the union of love, humility, and obedience, the daily offices of prayer and praises sung to God, acts of faith and fear, of patience and meekness, of hope and reverence, repentance and charity, and those graces which walk in a veil and silence ; make great ascents to God, and as sure progress to favour and a crown, as the more ostentatious and laborious exercises of a more public religion.'

- 39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda ;

Thirty-eight cities of Judah "in the mountains," are enumerated in the Book of Joshua (xv. 48 to 60): but Tradition has always pointed out "Kirjath-Arba, which is Hebron^s," as the dwelling-place of the venerable pair to whom Mary hastened.

- 40 and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

She seems to have taken the holy pair by surprise, through the fervent haste with which she performed her journey. (The grace of the Holy Spirit knows nothing of slow endeavours!) Surely the mountains of that "hill country,"—the forest,

^s Joshua xv. 54.

and every tree therein,—broke forth into singing, and Earth was joyful; for the LORD had redeemed Jacob, and comforted His people^a. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings^b!”

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the Babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the HOLY GHOST. 41

These holy women, meeting to compare and unite their joys, and then made prophetic and inspired, must needs have discoursed like Angels; for (as a pious Bishop has remarked) all the faculties of Nature were turned into Grace. It is not easy to imagine the rapture of this blessed meeting. Never, but in Heaven, was there more joy and ecstasy!

And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. 42

Observe the “*loud voice*.” Verily, if she had not spoken as she did, the very stones must have cried out!

Notice also, that she repeats the Angel’s salutation; see ver. 28.

Rightly does Elisabeth call our SAVIOUR CHRIST, “the fruit of thy womb:” for she spake of One

^a Isaiah xlv. 23, and xlix. 13.

^b Isaiah lii. 7.

“who took Man’s nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance^c.”

43 And whence *is* this to me, that the Mother
44 of my LORD should come to me? For, lo,
as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded
in mine ears, the Babe leaped in my womb
for joy.

It has been said,—“Grace introduces things to which Nature is a stranger.” The Forerunner, yet unborn, bears testimony to his yet unborn LORD;—a significant circumstance, surely; as indicative of the coming of a Kingdom where mysteries are hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto Babes^d!

We shall behold our SAVIOUR in like manner coming to His servant, (the Greater to the Less!) for Holy Baptism. See note on St. Matt. iii. 13.

45 And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the LORD.

Every word of this address^e is clearly prophetic,—for which the declaration in ver. 41 prepares us. Elizabeth sees the whole extent of the mystery. Not only does she declare the present wonder, that Mary is the Mother of the Redeemer; and the future issue, that all things shall be fulfilled which have been foretold her; but she is

^c Article II. ^d St. Matt. xi. 25. ^e Ver. 42 to 45.

able also to declare the state of heart in which her kinswoman received the Angel Gabriel's message: Past, and Present, and Future open to her prophetic sight.

Thereupon was poured forth the Divine 'Magnificat,'—whose echoes yet fill the Churches of Christendom. The Hymn of the Blessed Virgin is manifestly constructed upon the same model as that strain of thankfulness which Hannah gave utterance to, on a similar occasion^f; and with which indeed it should be compared throughout. The germ of both heavenly compositions is to be found in a yet more ancient Song,—namely, that of Sarah, contained in Genesis xxi. 6.

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify ⁴⁶
the LORD, and my spirit hath rejoiced in ⁴⁷
GOD my SAVIOUR.

Now, "the fruit of the SPIRIT is Love, Joy, Peace &c."

Observe how she drops, in her exceeding exultation, the thought of self. Her joy is not in herself, but *in GOD her SAVIOUR*.

For He hath regarded the low estate of ⁴⁸
His handmaiden: for, behold, from hence-
forth all generations shall call me blessed.

She speaks not of her *poverty*,—and yet, she was very poor; but (after the manner of a Hebrew mother) her words have reference to the reproach

^f 1 Samuel ii. 1 to 10.

^g Galat. v. 22.

of *childlessness* which God had removed from her. Compare ver. 25. What a profound and glorious meaning do the common words of rejoicing among the Mothers of Israel^b, assume on the lips of the Virgin Mother of our LORD!—the “*Blessed Virgin*” let us call her,—and so, fulfil her prophecy.

- 49 For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His Name.

“That Soul,” as Bede remarks, “can alone duly magnify the LORD, for whom He deigns to do mighty things.”

- 50 And His Mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation.

To quote the same writer, once more,—“As if she had said, Not only *for me* hath He that is mighty done great things; but in every nation, he that feareth God is accepted of Him.”

This is almost a quotation from Psalm ciii. 17.

- 51 He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

That is, Those who, in the imaginations of their hearts, are proud,—He hath scattered.

- 52 He hath put down the mighty from *their*

^b See Leah's words,—Genesis xxix. 32: and Hannah's,—1 Sam. i. 11.

seats, and exalted them of low degree. He 53
hath filled the hungry with good things ;
and the rich He hath sent empty away.

With verses 51, 52, 53, compare the corresponding parts of Hannah's Song,—namely, 1 Sam. ii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

The following places of Scripture will also be found worth referring to, in illustration of the three last verses, viz., Job v. 11 : Psalm cxiii. 7 : Ezekiel xvii. 24 : xxi. 26.

Some of the wonders to be achieved by the Introduction of the Gospel are here glanced at. First, is described the dethronement and casting down of the Devil, and of all his evil host¹,—together with the exaltation of “the poor of this world, rich in faith,” to be “heirs of the Kingdom.” Next, it is prophesied how they who hunger after Eternal Life with their whole soul², shall be fulfilled, when CHRIST shall appear in glory ; while they who, rejoicing in their self-righteousness, think themselves rich, shall in the end be sent empty away.

He hath holpen His servant Israel, in re- 54
membrance of *His* Mercy ;

This verse seems intended to recal Psalm xcvi. 3.

¹ Compare St. Luke x. 18.

² St. James ii. 5.

³ Compare St. Luke xv. 16, 17, 23 (the case of the Gentile world) : St. Matthew xv. 26, 27, &c.

55 as He spake to our Fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever.

The allusion in this verse to the last words of the prophet Micah (vii. 20) seems unmistakeable.

The Blessed Virgin speaks, of course, of the true spiritual Israel. "For," as St. Paul explains, "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel¹:" but "the Israel of God^m" are "such as are of a clean heartⁿ." "*They which are of Faith, the same are the children of Abraham^o.*" And this promise is not narrowed by any limits; but to the very end of time there shall never lack believers,—whereby Abraham shall have a "seed, for ever."

It is a divine thing that the Blessed Virgin should have thus glanced back to the beginning, from the end; and by this allusion to God's promise made to Abraham^p, should have virtually admitted, and in the very highest sense, "that there had not failed aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel. All had come to pass^q."

If any do enquire how it happens that this Hymn, poured forth in expression of the Blessed Virgin's Joy and Thankfulness, should have become a portion of the Church's Daily Service,—let them know that it does not contain one word of exultation but what every humble Christian

¹ Romans ix. 6.

^m Galat. vi. 16.

ⁿ Psalm lxxiii. 1.

^o Galat. iii. 7.

^p Genesis xii. 3, xvii. 7, &c. ^q Joshua xxi. 45, and xxiii. 14.

may make his own. When the Eternal Word was made flesh, it was not, of course, the Blessed Virgin in particular, but mankind in general, which He designed to honour. The purpose of the Son of God, when He honoured the Blessed Virgin so far as in, and from, her to become Man, was to advance Human Nature by assuming it into the Unity of His Divine Person; so that, being born of her, He might procure not only hers, but our common Salvation. Every member of the great Human Family may therefore sing the 'Magnificat;' and when he bears his part in that divine Anthem, should learn to make the Blessed Virgin's raptures a private and a personal concern:—"My soul doth magnify the LORD, and my Spirit rejoiceth in God my SAVIOUR; because He did regard the low estate of us poor mortal Men,—His afflicted servants. For behold, in consequence of the Incarnation of the Son of God, all generations of mankind, aye, and every order of the Angelic Host, shall for evermore pronounce us 'Blessed:' for the Mighty One did mighty things for us, when He united Himself to our fallen Nature: wherefore Holy is He; and Blessed for evermore be His Holy Name!"

And Mary abode with her about three 56 months, and returned to her own house.

During those three months Prayer and Meditation rather than converse, was surely the resource of this pair of holy Matrons: for unspeakable was

the blessedness to which they had been respect called. And now, when Elizabeth was about to become a Mother, they parted ; and we are informed that they ever met again.

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that
should be delivered ; and she brought
58 a son. And her neighbours and her country
heard how the LORD had shewed great
59 upon her ; and they rejoiced with her.
it came to pass, that on the eighth day
came to circumcise the child ; and
called him Zacharias, after the name of
father.

Rather, "they were for calling him,"—"wanted to call him." Compare St. Matthew i

60 And his Mother answered and said,
61 so ; but he shall be called John. And
said unto her, There is none of thy kindred
62 that is called by this name. And they
signs to his Father, how he would have
called.

They "made signs" to Zacharias, because he was now *deaf* as well as dumb. See the note on verse 20.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John.

they marvelled all. And his mouth was 64 opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

As Unbelief had bound him, so Faith now set him free. And, (as an ancient writer remarks,) it was but reasonable that when the Voice of the Word came forth,—see St. John i. 23,—the tongue of his Father should have been loosed likewise.

And fear came on all that dwelt round 65 about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa. And all they that heard *them* 66 laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the Hand of the LORD was with him.

And his father Zacharias was filled with 67 the HOLY GHOST, and prophesied, saying,

The first purpose in which he employed the recovered gift of speech seems to have been the pouring out of that Inspired Hymn,—the 'Benedictus,'—which Holy Church has since adopted as a part of her daily utterance. Well may she have done so! for every word here, prophetically spoken, has reference to the Spiritual Reign of MESSIAH; and the blessings commemorated, belong not to the nation of the Jews only, but, in the full extent of their signification, to all the people of God.

- 68 Blessed *be* the LORD GOD of Israel;
He hath visited and redeemed His people

See how his prophetic speech glances on to last page of the Gospel! And yet, it is not to be supposed that the inspired speaker had any conception of the sublime mystery which his words unfolded. He opened his lips to praise the LORD of Israel for having at last “visited,”—that is, “looked graciously upon,”—His people; wrought for them the long-promised deliverance from their enemies: but he knew not the nature of that deliverance, though he was divinely guided to call it by its proper name,—*Redemption*. See Ephes. i. 7: Coloss. i. 14: Rev. v. 9.

- 69 and hath raised up an Horn of Salvation for us in the house of His servant David

Or, as it stands in the Prayer-book, “a *mountain of Salvation*,” for “a horn” is the emblem of strength, with certain animals, it is the instrument—of strength. Hence such expressions are found in Jeremiah xlvi. 25, Psalm lxxv. 4, cxii. 9, &c. Compare 1 Sam. ii. 10, and Psalm xviii. 2: but especially Psalm cxxxii. 17.

Note also, that here and elsewhere, *Kingdom* power is chiefly intended; whence “horns” usually stand for “Kings” in the Book of Daniel and other parts of Scripture^r.

^r Daniel vii. 7, 8. Zech. i. 18. Revel. xiii. 1.

(as He spake by the mouth of His holy 70 Prophets, which have been since the World began :)

For the whole volume of the Old Testament is but one long prophecy of CHRIST: "Yea, and all the Prophets, from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days*."

To speak more truly, it was God, (as we learn from this place,) who spoke *by their mouth*. Compare the language of Acts i. 16, and see the note on St. Matt. i. 22. Our own Hooker has said on this subject,—“They neither spake nor wrote any word of their own, but uttered syllable by syllable as the SPIRIT put it into their mouths; no otherwise than as the harp or the lute doth give a sound according to the discretion of *his* hands that holdeth and striketh it with skill.” . . . It is remarkable that the very word for a Prophet, in Hebrew, is thought by the learned to imply *one who speaks as another moves him*.

This appeal to God's "holy Prophets of old," is introduced parenthetically: verses 69 and 71 must be taken together.

that we should be saved from our ene- 71
mies, and from the hand of all that hate us ;
to perform the Mercy *promised* to our Fa- 72
thers, and to remember His holy covenant ;

* Acts iii. 24. Compare Acts x. 43.

According to the mind of the SPIRIT, the reference in this place, is, of course, to ghostly, not to bodily enemies. CHRIST,—the Horn spoken of in ver. 69,—is declared, in verse 71, to be "*Salvation from our enemies,*" &c. And thereby, in the verse which follows, it is prophetically foretold that the LORD GOD of Israel was about "*to shew mercy to our Fathers,* and to remember His holy covenant" with them.

73 the oath which He sware to our Father
 74 Abraham, that He would grant unto us,
 that we being delivered out of the hand of
 our enemies might serve Him without fear,
 75 in holiness and righteousness before Him,
 all the days of our life.

Here, the HOLY SPIRIT is His own interpreter. The reference is to God's great oath to Abraham, contained in Genesis xxii. 16 to 18,—and alluded to in Hebrews vi. 13, 14. Compare the language of Psalm cv. 8 to 10.

It seems then, that those famous words,—"*I will bless thee, and . . . multiply thy seed as the stars of Heaven*,"—were fulfilled, in their highest sense, when it was "granted unto" men, (that is, *Power was given them*,") to serve God in Holiness and Righteousness * all the days of their life. For consider, that this was brought about by the

† Gen. xxii. 17. * Compare Rev. xi. 3. * Compare Eph. iv. 24.

out-pouring and gift of the HOLY GHOST ; whereby GOD procured to the Father of the Faithful, in CHRIST, a spiritual seed, numerous as the stars of Heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore. Compare Galatians iii. 14.

It appears further, that the words,—“Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies,”—besides their obvious, historical sense, which was fulfilled in the days of King David,—received their perfect fulfilment in the days of the Gospel ; when, by our SAVIOUR'S Advent, the Human Race were “delivered out of the hand of their enemies,”—Sin and Death. See Rom. vi. 18, 22. 1 Cor. xv. 24 to 26 ; also 55 to 57. Titus ii. 14. 2 St. Peter i. 4. 1 St. John v. 4, 5.—Take notice, by the way, that *these*, (which Zacharias mentions,) were the two great heads of Blessing which Eliezer seems to have recounted to Laban and Bethuel, when they sent away Rebekah to become Isaac's wife. See Genesis xxiv. 60.

And thus, it is declared that the entire fulfilment of all the glorious promises which God had once made to the Fathers, was now at length about to be performed *to them* ;—for, as it is elsewhere said by CHRIST Himself,—“all,” (that is, all the Fathers,—for He was speaking of *them*,—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,) “live unto Him.”

“Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised. *There hath not failed one word of all*

His good promise which He promised by the hand of Moses His Servant^a." In such terms could the wise King of Israel express his sense of God's Faithfulness, Constancy, and Love. Where shall *we* find language adequate to the expression of ours,—we, "on whom the ends of the World are come^a?"

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the LORD to prepare His ways;

The Father turns, in his prophetic rapture, to address his infant child: foretelling that he should "be," (for *that* is the meaning of "being *called*,") "the prophet of the Most High" God^b. We have here, besides, an allusion to Isaiah xl. 3; so that the Gospel itself is briefly summed up in this inspired Hymn.

77 to give knowledge of Salvation unto His
78 people by the remission of their sins, through
the tender mercy of our God; whereby the
79 Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to
give light to them that sit in Darkness and
in the shadow of Death, to guide our feet
into the way of Peace.

"Dayspring" is here a name of CHRIST; whether it should be translated the "East,"—or

^a 1 Kings viii. 56.

^b 1 Cor. x. 11.

^c Compare ver. 32.

the "Sun-rising^c,"—or the "Branch," as in Zech. iii. 8. There is here an evident allusion to Isaiah ix. 1, (quoted in St. Matth. iv. 16): but the *reason* of the expression "the shadow of Death" will best appear by a comparison with Psalm xxiii. 4; where, as Hammond beautifully points out, it is implied that the sunlight lingers longest on the hills,—the valleys being all the while veiled in gloom, and wearing soonest a funereal shadow.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in 80 spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

The former of these two statements, we shall presently find repeated with respect to the MESSIAS. See ch. ii. 40.—The 'deserts' here spoken of do not necessarily imply such a howling wilderness as that of Jordan. In Judæa every tract of waste, uncultivated country was called *a desert*; whether its barren surface produced nothing but "reeds shaken by the wind^d," or whether there happened to be "much grass in the place^e." What is meant therefore probably, is, that the youthful Nazarite was brought up in solitude and retirement,—remote from all the influences of the Town. There, he increased in stature, and waxed strong in spirit; and, by "enduring hardness^f," prepared himself for the wondrous office to which the good

^c Compare Malachi iv. 2.

^d St. Matth. xi. 7.

^e Compare St. Matth. xiv. 18, 15 with St. John vi. 10.

^f 2 Tim. ii. 3.

Providence of GOD had designed him from his Mother's womb.

For, instead of raiment, he wore a hairy garment and a leathern girdle. Moreover, GOD fed him with locusts; and "satisfied" him, from day to day, "with honey out of the stony rock^c." And thus, the Baptist grew to manhood; (for we hear no more of him until he had attained the age of thirty years;) an Orphan, doubtless, from his earliest youth. But be sure that 'when his Father and his Mother had forsaken him, then the LORD took him up^d.'

The Prayer.

WE beseech Thee, O LORD, pour Thy Grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son JESUS CHRIST by the message of an Angel, so, by His Cross and Passion, we may be brought unto the Glory of His Resurrection; through the same JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

^c Psalm lxxxi. 16. Compare St. Matth. iii. 4.

^d Psalm xxvii. 10.

A

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE SECOND CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

1 *Augustus taxeth all the Roman empire.* 6 *The nativity of CHRIST.*
8 *One angel relateth it to the shepherds: 13 many sing praises to
GOD for it.* 21 *CHRIST is Circumcised.* 22 *Mary purified.* 28
*Simeon and Anna prophesy of CHRIST: 40 who increaseth in wis-
dom, 46 questioneth in the temple with the doctors, 51 and is obe-
dient to His parents.*

II. AND it came to pass in those days, 1
that there went out a decree from Cæsar
augustus, that all the world should be
taxed.

A decree for a general enrolment and num-
ring of names, rather than for a Census of prop-
erty, seems to be here spoken of. And the expres-
sion, "all the world," probably does not mean all
the Roman Empire, but only the whole of Pales-
tine.

(*And this taxing was first made when Cy- 2
nius was governor of Syria.*)

Volumes have been written on this verse of
scripture. A person named *Varus* was President

of Syria at the time here spoken of. Cyrenius (or Quirinus) did not succeed to the office till about eleven years after: but, (what is remarkable,) on coming to his Presidentship, he certainly did conduct a census. To reconcile the statement of the Evangelist with the known History of the period, has been felt to be a task of great difficulty.

But, it is to be observed that St. Luke *does not say* that Cyrenius was *President* of Syria at the time of the 'taxing.' He merely says that he was, then, *governor* of the province; and this, Cyrenius may very well have been, although the Presidentship was in other hands. St. Luke's authority on a point of history is, of course, more trustworthy than that of any uninspired writer; and when he asserts, (as here he seems to do,) that 'the taxing' at the time of the Nativity proved the first [of two] taxings which were made while Cyrenius governed Syria,—what difficulty need we feel in accepting the blessed Writer's assurance on the subject?—These remarks shall suffice: but the reader is referred to the note on St. Luke iii. 1: also to the notes on St. Matt. i. 16, and St. Luke iii. 36.

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

This seems to imply the careful record which every Jewish family preserved of its descent;

whereby they were enabled, on an occasion like the present, to repair to the city from which the founder of their line had originally come.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, 4 out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem ;

Bethlehem was the true 'City of David:' for his father, Jesse, was of that city*. It appears also from a comparison of verses 11 and 15, that the Shepherds knew it by that name. But Jerusalem, as the Seat of David's Royalty, was now, almost exclusively, so called.

(because he was of the house and lineage of David :)

As St. Luke himself shews in the next chapter, —making use, it may be, of the genealogy which the records of Bethlehem furnished. See also St. Matthew's first chapter.

to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, 5 being great with child.

The Blessed Virgin went up to be taxed, as well as her wedded husband. She was therefore, herself, 'of the house and lineage of David.' See the note on St. Matt. i. 16.

* 1 Sam. xvi. 1 and 4. Compare St. John vii. 42.

- 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

The Bible may be regarded as a Book which removes the veil from History, and reveals *the reason* of it. The Providence of God is there discovered to us, overruling the actions of mankind, and adapting them to ends and purposes of which their authors were little conscious. Thus, the present 'taxing,' whether dictated by the ambition, or the curiosity, or the avarice of the Roman Emperor,—is shewn to have furnished an occasion for drawing this holy pair from their remote home in Nazareth of Galilee, to Bethlehem of Judæa; the village which the finger of Prophecy had long before pointed out as destined to be the place of MESSIAH'S birth. The season of the taxing is found moreover to have corresponded exactly with the date of the Nativity. Thus, the official return of the Bethlehemites, stored up among the Roman Archives, will have become documentary evidence of the most unquestionable kind, concerning the very foundation of the Faith. So entirely was Augustus ministering to the Divine pleasure; while, in the exercise of Imperial power, he followed the dictates of his own unfettered will.

- 7 And she brought forth her first-born Son,
"First-born,"—because none had been born before Him. The word is not used to imply that any

were born *after*. See the first note on St. Matth. . 25.

and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger :

It has been said,—“No man will have cause to complain of his coarse robe, if he remembers the swaddling-clothes of this Holy Child; nor to be disquieted at his hard bed, when he considers Jesus laid in a manger.”

Since this blessed Mother, after she had brought forth her first-born Son, swathed Him herself, and with her own hands deposited His infant limbs in a manger, as St. Luke seems clearly to imply;—it is reasonable to infer that His Nativity was, as His sinless Conception had been,—out of the course of Nature, and miraculous; and that the holy Mother, by a painless birth, had experienced the reversal of the sorrowful sentence passed on our Mother Eve,—recorded in Gen. iii. 16.

What is, at least, quite certain,—hereby was reversed the calamity which our first Mother had brought upon the Human Race. As, by a woman, Death had been conveyed to all mankind,—so was a woman now made the blessed Instrument whereby He who is our Life came into the world.

because there was no room for them in the Inn.

“No room for them in the Inn!” No room

found for *Him* who filleth all things. And is not so still? Do we not find room for all other things; yet no room is found for CHRIST?

- 8 And there were in the same countrey Shepherds, abiding in the field, keep watch over their flock by night.

By the invitation of these poor shepherds Bethlehem, we are taught that none are fit to come to CHRIST but those who are poor in spirit, despisers of the world, guileless, simple-hearted. And with reference to the pastoral Office, a pious writer has said concerning those who watch their flock as well by night as by day,—‘these Shepherds who first converse with Angels, shall finally enter into the presence of the LORD.’

- 9 And, lo, the Angel of the LORD came upon them, and the glory of the LORD shined round about them: and they were afraid.

“Came upon them,” here means stood suddenly before them,—as in St. Luke xx. 1. Acts iv. 1: xii. 7, &c.

- 10 And the Angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST the LORD.

ON ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

the first persons in the world who are apprized of the actual Advent of the MESSIAH, are the shepherds of Bethlehem who keep watch over their flock by night. A singularly honoured occasion, truly; to have numbered of old among them who pursued it, Jacob^b, Moses^c, and David^d; eminent types of CHRIST:—to have furnished the LORD, moreover, with an appellation in which He delighted^e;—and an image under which He appeared to some of His most solemn and impressive teaching^f!

And this *shall* be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Compare verses 7 and 16. This seems to shew that on the day, or rather, *on the very night* of the Nativity, this wondrous vision of Angels was revealed to the Shepherds.

And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the high-land and on Earth Peace, good will toward men.

Gen. xxx. 31 : xxxi. 38—41. Such also was the occupation of Jacob's sons;—see Gen. xxxvii. 13 and xlvii. 3.

Exod. iii. 1.

^d 1 Sam. xvi. 11 : xvii. 15.

^e t. John x. 11—16.

^f t. Matthew xxv. 32, 33 : xviii. 12 : St. Luke xv. 3—7, &c.

This, then, was the first "Christmas-Carol;"—where Angels were the Choristers, and Salvation was the theme, and Heaven and Earth bowed down to listen. What a jubilant Hymn must this have been, on the redemption of the whole Human Race, if one sinner's repentance can suffice to fill the courts of Heaven with joy!

A single glorious Angel having communicated the joyous tidings,—and so, in a measure, prepared the minds of these simple swains for what might follow,—'a multitude of the heavenly host'^r are suddenly revealed to their wondering sight; and the heavenly strain which follows, breaks on their ravished ears. It was the birth-day of the New Creation^h. A new corner-stone was being laid. Well, therefore, may the Morning-Stars have sung together, and all the Sons of God have shouted for joyⁱ!

How much is left in Holy Scripture for the heart of man to realize! How brief and simple are its sublimest statements! How calm and unadorned its most wonderful descriptions! Consider such places as the following:—St. Matthew iv. 23, xvii. 2: St. Mark i. 13, xvi. 19. St. Luke ii. 51, 52, x. 18, xxii. 43, xxiv. 27 and 51, &c. &c. &c. See the note on St. Matth. iii. 5, 6.

15 And it came to pass, as the Angels were

^r See Daniel vii. 10. Hebrews xii. 22. Rev. v. 11, &c.

^h See the end of the note on St. Matthew iii. 17.

ⁱ Job xxxviii. 7.

gone away from them into Heaven, the Shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the LORD hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found 16 Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Yet, even there, as He lay,—wrapped in swaddling bands, and reclining in that manger,—as God, He filled Creation. For “the Son of Man” which “came down from Heaven,” was “*in Heaven*.” So Cowper, in a well-known Hymn :

As much, when in the manger laid,
Almighty Ruler of the sky,
As when the six days' work He made,
And filled the morning-stars with joy.

But the remark had been made 1450 years before, by Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria.

In consequence of the repeated statement that a *manger* cradled the Infant SAVIOUR¹, painters have loved to represent Him as reclining between the ox and the ass: and the prophecy in Isaiah i. 3, has been (somewhat fancifully, perhaps,) connected with the circumstance. “*The Manger*,” (for so it should be rendered,) does in fact here denote that part of the home-stead which was set

* St. John iii. 13.

¹ verses 7, 12, 16.

apart for the cattle; and it seems a fitting thing that the second Adam should thus have been among the dumb creatures in the hour of His Nativity, no less than during the hour of His Temptation. See St. Mark i. 13.

- 17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

They could not contain their rapture, for God had filled their hearts to overflowing. “My cup *runneth over*,” saith the Psalmist^m.

- 18 And all they that heard *it*, wondered at those things which were told them by the
19 shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

The indications afforded in the Gospel of this Blessed Woman’s character, are exceedingly few. The present statement, (which is found partly to recur in ver. 51,) is one of the most remarkable,—namely, that she possessed “the ornament of a meek and *quiet* spirit;” which treasured up every intimation of God’s Love, and brooded over the recollection of His many and unspeakable mercies, in the recesses of her own pure heart.

- 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that

^m Psalm xxiii. 5.

they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

These 'holy and humble Men of heart,'—Shepherds of Bethlehem,—were therefore the foremost who were chosen to do homage to the Infant SAVIOUR; therein taking precedence even of the Royal and the Wise^a! To 'bless the LORD,'—to 'praise Him and magnify Him for ever,' is found to have been instinctively their occupation, on their return.

And when eight days were accomplished 21 for the circumcising of the Child,

He who came to fulfil the Law^o, submits like every other descendant of Abraham to be "circumcised on the eighth day;" 'so teaching us to be strict in our duties, and sparing in the right of privilege and dispensation.' 'He sheds His blood now, in drops; giving an earnest of those rivers which He did afterwards pour out for the cleansing all Human Nature, and extinguishing the wrath of God.' And thereupon was bestowed that Holy Name at which "every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth^p."

His name was called JESUS, which was

^a See St. Matthew ii. 1, &c.

^o St. Matthew v. 17.

^p Philippians ii. 10.

so named of the Angel before He was conceived in the womb.

To have a name bestowed by God before the birth, is recorded to have occurred altogether in only four cases; that of Ishmael and Isaac, in the Old Testament^q,—that of John Baptist and our Blessed LORD in the New. Of these persons, Ishmael was named *after* conception; Isaac and St. John, like our SAVIOUR, were named *before*.

- 22 And when the days of her Purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present *Him* to the LORD :

This was at the end of forty days^r; whence the Feast of “the Purification of St. Mary the Virgin,” (which our Church wisely prefers to call “the Presentation of CHRIST in the Temple^s,”) is celebrated on the 2nd of February.

The incident which follows, occupies sixteen verses of the Gospel; and is encompassed, as a great writer points out, “with a greater variety of circumstance and detail than any other of the recorded events of our SAVIOUR’s Infancy.”

- 23 (as it is written in the Law of the LORD,

^q Genesis xvi. 11, and xvii. 19.

^r Leviticus xii. 2, 4.

^s See the Collect in the Book of Common Prayer.

]

ON ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

very male that openeth the womb shall be
called holy to the LORD ;)

Reference is made to Exodus xxxiv. 19.

and to offer a sacrifice according to that 24
which is said in the Law of the LORD, A pair
turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

The Blessed Mother made the offering appointed
Leviticus xii. 8 for a poor person, unable to
sacrifice to the more costly offering which the Law
prescribed to those who could afford it,—namely,
a lamb of the first year^t.

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusa- 25
salem, whose name *was* Simeon ; and the same
man *was* just and devout, waiting for the
consolation of Israel : and the Holy Ghost
rested upon him.

‘The Consolation of Israel’ denotes the per-
sonal Advent of our SAVIOUR CHRIST,—to which
they among the Jews were at this time looking
anxiously forward. Compare the language of ver.

St. Mark xv. 43. St. Matt. xi. 8. St. John
9, 20. St. Luke iii. 15.

And it was revealed unto him by the HOLY 26
GHOST, that he should not see death, before
he had seen the LORD'S CHRIST.

^t Levit. xii. 6.

Before he *saw* Death, it was promised to Holy Simeon that he should *see* the LORD's Anointed,—whom an Apostolic Father calls "Life in Death." This announcement to Simeon may be regarded as the earliest streak of dawn,—the first harbinger of the coming day of the Gospel.

- 27 And he came by the SPIRIT into the Temple: and when the parents brought in the child JESUS, to do for Him after the custom
28 of the law, then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,
29 LORD, now lettest Thou Thy servant de-
30 part in peace, according to Thy Word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,

How like to those words of Israel to Joseph,—
"Now let me die, since I have seen thy face."

Not only had Simeon's eyes "seen," but "his hands had handled:" yea, he had embraced and circumscribed in his arms, Him that filled all the World. Simeon, however, is bent on bearing testimony to God's faithfulness in keeping His promise; and so well satisfied is he with it, 'that straightway he desires to live no longer; foreseeing that he should never more find comfort in any other object this world could minister.'

- 31 which Thou hast prepared before the face

* Gen. xlv. 30.

of all people ; a light to lighten the Gentiles, 32
and the glory of Thy people Israel.

The prophetic intimation, contained in this last verse, of the scope and purpose of Messiah's coming*, is what has so endeared this brief, burning Hymn of holy Simeon to the heart of all Christendom. Holy Church, by the eye of faith, sees daily, in her second Lesson, *that* Salvation which Simeon beheld with his bodily eyes ; and she pours out her thanksgiving in his own prophetic words.

We have repeated this inspired Song so often, that our Spirits are scarcely stirred any longer by its sublimity : but with what ecstatic fervour must it have flowed from the lips of that favoured Servant of God,—conscious, while he uttered it, that he embraced in his arms the Desire of all nations,—Him, whom all Creation groaned for,—the Incarnate JEHOVAH !

And Joseph and His Mother marvelled at 33
those things which were spoken of Him.

And Simeon blessed them, and said unto 34
Mary His Mother, Behold this *Child* is set
for the fall and rising again of many in Is-
rael ; and for a sign which shall be spoken
against ;

CHRIST was to prove the occasion of *falling* to

* With which compare Isaiah xlii. 6 : xlix. 6 and lx. 1—3.

as many of the Jewish nation as should reject Him: but of *rising* "to become the Sons of God," to as many as should "believe on His name." The prophet Isaiah had declared as much, when he said of MESSIAH,—“He shall be for a *Sanctuary* ;” (adding in the same breath,)—“but for a *stone of stumbling*, and for a *rock of offence*.”

35 (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,)

Simeon is supposed to allude to the day of the Crucifixion; when the Mother, pierced with many sorrows, was a witness of the Cross and Passion, and precious Death of her Divine Son^a.

that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

It seems to be implied that the doctrine of CHRIST, no less than CHRIST Himself,—who had been likened, on this very occasion of His appearance, to a *Refiner's fire*^b,—was destined to prove a great test of individual character; a wondrous means of revealing what was in the hearts of mankind. “For the preaching of the Cross,” says St. Paul, “is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God^c.” So St. Peter^d,—“Unto you,

^a St. John i. 12. ^b Isaiah viii. 14. ^c St. John xix. 25.

^b Malachi iii. 2. See below, the note on ver. 38.

^c 1 Cor. i. 18: and see all the rest of the chapter; also ii. 14. Compare 2 Cor. ii. 15, and St. John ix. 39.

^d 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.

therefore, which believe, He is precious; but unto them which be disobedient . . . a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient." St. Paul describes the Gospel, as, "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart^e." While our LORD says plainly,—“He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day^f.”

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, 36 the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser :

St. Paul, in like manner, declares of himself that he was of the tribe of Benjamin^g; which shews how carefully, even to a late period, individuals of the Jewish nation preserved the record of their descent. But the case of Anna is the more extraordinary; since Aser (that is ‘Asher’) was one of the ten tribes which the King of Assyria led away captive into Assyria,—and which had never returned. See 2 Kings xvii. 6.

she was of a great age, and had lived with 37 an husband seven years from her virginity; and she *was* a Widow of about fourscore

^e Hebrews iv. 12.

^f St. John xii. 48.

^g Rom. xi. 1, and Phil. iii. 5.

and four years, which departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fastings and Prayers night and day.

She had been a widow for 84 years,—and was therefore upwards of a hundred years old. Her wedded life had been of but seven years duration, and she had ever since dedicated herself to the service of God. She was therefore one of those “widows indeed,” (as St. Paul speaks,) who are entitled to honour; and, as such, she won for herself this glorious mention in the Book of Life. “Now, she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day^h.”

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the LORD.

‘The returns of prayer, and the blessings of piety,’ says an old writer, ‘are certain; and though not dispensed according to our narrow expectations, yet shall they so come,—at such times and in such measures,—as shall crown the piety, and satisfy the desires, and reward the expectation. It was in the Temple, the same place where she had for so many years poured out her heart to God, that God poured forth His heart to her; sent His SON from His bosom; and there she received His benediction.’

^h 1 Tim. v. 5.

Contemptuous things are sometimes said of a congregation consisting of an old man and woman, —a poor man and his wife. Yet *this* was the very Congregation here assembled,—and CHRIST was among them!

and spake of Him to all them that looked for Redemption in Jerusalem.

It was thus then that the LORD, even the Messenger of the Covenant, suddenly came to His Temple,—as the prophecy of Malachi had foretold (iii. 1). How secretly and silently it was done! Consider in like manner the singular fulfilment of Hosea xi. 1 (in St. Matthew ii. 15); of Jerem. xxxi. 15 (in St. Matt. ii. 18): of Isaiah xi. 1, &c. (in St. Matt. ii. 23): of Isaiah liii. 4 (in St. Matt. viii. 17). Consider even the unlooked for completion of Zechariah ix. 9 (in St. Matt. xxi. 5), and of Malachi iv. 5 (in St. Luke i. 13 to 17). Surely these unexpected fulfilments of ancient prophecies should make *us* very thoughtful. How know we but what unfulfilled prophecy may take *us* equally by surprise, and find *us* equally unprepared? See for example St. Matt. xxiv. 42,—a prophetic warning which is repeated in xxv. 13, &c. &c.

See the note on St. Matthew iv. 14.

And when they had performed all things according to the Law of the LORD, they re-

turned into Galilee, to their own cit-
reth.

But first they went down into Egypt. Matthew had before explained¹. It is the of the sacred writers, when they pass event in silence, thus to supply no hint omission.

40 And the Child grew, and waxed st
Spirit, filled with Wisdom : and th
of God was upon Him.

See the note on ver. 52.

41 Now His parents went to Jerusale
year at the Feast of the Passover.

According to the requirement of th
Law,—Exodus xxiii. 15, 17 : xxxiv. 18, 2
xvi. 1, 16.

42 And when He was twelve years c
went up to Jerusalem after the cu
the Feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the
they returned, the Child JESUS tar
hind in Jerusalem ; and Joseph and
ther knew not *of it*.

44 But they, supposing Him to have

¹ St. Matthew ii. 13—15.

the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him 45 not,

For whosoever seeks Jesus, (says a pious Bishop,) must seek Him in the offices of Religion, in the Temple; not amongst the engagement and pursuits of worldly interests.

they turned back again to Jerusalem, seek- 46 ing Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the Temple.

They had gone one day's journey, and had to return: on the third day they found Him.

It has been piously and beautifully suggested by the author last quoted, that Joseph and the Blessed Virgin, after a long and fruitless search,—“almost despairing, faint and sick with travel and fear, with desire and tedious expectations, at last came into the Temple *to pray to God for conduct and success*; knowing and believing assuredly that if they could find God, they should not long miss to find the Holy Jesus. And their faith,” he adds, “deceived them not; for they sought God, and found Him that was God and man, in the midst and circle of the Doctors.” Certain it is that *we* also, if we would find CHRIST, must seek Him where He is ever to be found,—in His Holy Temple.

sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Whereby, as the same writer has piously remarked, He consigned this truth to His Disciples: that they who mean to be doctors, and teach others, must first learn of those whom God and public order hath set over us, in the mysteries of Religion.

- 47 And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

This mention of "His *answers*" proved that the learned Rabbies were not slow to question *Him* in turn: while the amazement which they testified at the proofs He gave of His understanding, seems to imply that He was induced to discourse to them likewise. So "filled with Wisdom," was He,—as we read in ver. 40: such "increase" had there already been. See ver. 52.

It is written in a certain place,—“I have more understanding than My teachers, for Thy testimonies are My study^k.”

- 48 And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His Mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy Father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.
- 49 And He said unto them, How is it that

^k Psalm cxix. 99.

ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My FATHER'S business?

Our Blessed LORD'S reply to His Mother's mournful remonstrance is clearly directed against the language in which that remonstrance was conveyed. She had said,—“*Thy Father* and I have sought Thee.” The Eternal SON makes answer that He had been where He ought to be,—*in His FATHER'S House*; (for so the words should be translated:) and therefore asks, How it came to pass that they had *sought* Him? . . . Which, by the way, are the first words recorded to have been spoken by our Saviour CHRIST.

And they understood not the saying which 50 He spake unto them. And He went down 51 with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them :

From this time forward, we hear no more of Joseph. He is thought to have been an old man; and to have died soon after. Observe, that he is not mentioned in St. Mark vi. 8, or in St. John ii. 12.—For a few words about Nazareth, the scene of our LORD'S Infancy and Youth, see the note on St. Luke iv. 16.

but His Mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

See the note on ver. 19.

And JESUS increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and Man.

We are indebted to St. Luke's Gospel, for only glimpse of the sacred person of our with which we are favoured, from the time of His return to Nazareth, (recorded in ver. 39,) until the period of His Baptism. What is first said of Him generally, (in ver. 43,) is found to have been equally applicable to the Baptist, at the time of his life. Compare chap. i. 80. But, Blessed LORD it is added, that He was 'filled with Wisdom;' and it is specially noted, in the present verse, that He *increased* in wisdom : and He *increased* in stature. St. Luke also mentions (ver. 51) that our Saviour lived in subjection to His reputed parents. To these slight intimations must be added what is suggested, if it be not implied, by the inquiry in St. Mark vi. 3,—“*Is this the Carpenter?*”—and we have been presented with the sum of all that has been explained concerning the early years of the Holy Man.

The Prayer.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, we humbly beseech Thy Majesty, that, as Thy only-begotten SON was this day presented in the Temple in substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto Thee with pure and clean hearts by the same Thy SON .
CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE THIRD CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

The preaching and baptism of John : 15 his testimony of CHRIST. 20 Herod imprisoneth John. 21 CHRIST baptized, receiveth testimony from Heaven. 23 The age, and genealogy of CHRIST from Joseph upwards.

I. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Decapolis and of the region of Trachonitis, and Annas and Caiaphas the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high-priests,

for all these conspiring notes of time does the Evangelist guide us to the date of John's coming: a mighty event, truly, to be fixed by any concurrent circumstances. Learned men, however, in modern days, have perceived a difficulty here, which seems never to have struck the Fathers in the Faith as any difficulty at all. "The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar," dates from August A.D. 28 to the same

month in A.D. 29. But there is good reason for fixing the Birth of CHRIST to an earlier period than the spring of B.C. 4^a. Thus our LORD would have been *more* than 32 years of age at His Baptism: whereas St. Luke says that He then “began to be *about thirty* ;” and the inspired Writer doubtless *meant* to say what he *said* ; and no other thing.

This certainly occasions a difficulty : for it does not seem a very likely thing that St. Luke should be here fixing *the year of the Crucifixion*,—as pious men were once contented to believe. On the other hand, it is ten thousand times more improbable, or rather it is simply incredible, that this Blessed Writer, (to whom so many events beyond mortal ken were revealed), should have fallen into a mistake (!!!) concerning one of the most ordinary facts in the History of his own time. What remains then, but to suggest that, as St. John reckoned the hours of the day in a peculiar manner ^b, so St. Luke reckoned the regnal years of Tiberius from some unusual epoch,—two years earlier than the period commonly assigned to the beginning of his reign? There is nothing at all *improbable* in this suggestion. The years of Augustus Cæsar are variously counted from *five* different epochs. But it certainly is a strange thing that St. Luke should have reckoned the reign of Tiberius, from an epoch, (as far as we

^a See the end of the note on St. Matthew, ii. 20.

^b See the note on St. John i. 39.

et know) *peculiar to himself*. And this shall suffice on a subject concerning which volumes have been written.

It is humbly suggested that a few difficulties of this class may have been suffered to find place in Holy Writ in order to exercise the faith of persons who, while they feel such intellectual trials very keenly, are but little affected by those which imperil the salvation of the ordinary class of mankind. This remark seems applicable, besides, to such texts as St. Luke ii. 2, and ver. 36 of the present chapter.

And does it not appear as if the HOLY SPIRIT would by this means humble our pride, and convince us of our own ignorance? Some Heavenly doctrine is propounded; and we declare, "It is high: I cannot attain unto it^c." This is only reasonable. But a plain historical fact,—a fact of the driest and most ordinary kind,—is next stated; and the result is just the same. It is found to defy all the ingenuity, and all the learning, and all the experience, of all the world! . . . See the note on St. Matthew i. 16: especially the remarks at the end.

Concerning the Herod and the Philip here mentioned, see the note on St. Mark vi. 17. Upon the deposition of Archelaus, (their brother, —mentioned in St. Matt. ii. 22), Pontius Pilate was sent from Rome as Governor (or *Procurator*)

^c Psalm cxxxix. 6.

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

of Judæa. It may be right, however, to say at this place, that the Philip here mentioned is not the Philip we read of below, in ver. 19, (with the note ;) but another brother of the others there mentioned. Herod [Antipas] and Philip were sons of Herod the Great by the same wife—Cleopatra of Jerusalem.

And the Word of God came unto John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias in the Wilderness.

The same mode of expression is found in the Old Testament. "The Word of God came to Shemaiah^d," and "to Nathan^e." We also read of "the Word of the LORD that came to Hosea^f," and "to Micah^g." Compare also Isaiah i. 2, 4, 11, 13: ii. 1, &c. But the most striking of these communications is one of "the things which belong unto the LORD our God."

Yet, if you would know the substance of the *message* which the Word of God brought to John the Baptist, you may in part gather it from the subsequent statements of the Baptist himself, for example, St. John i. 33: also ver. 31.

3 And he came into all the country of Jordan, preaching the Baptism of Repentance
4 for the remission of sins; as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the

^d 1 Kings xii. 22.

^e 1 Chron. xvii. 1.

^f Hosea i. 1.

^g Micah i. 1.

^h Deut. xii.

phet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth; and all flesh shall see the Salvation of GOD.

This citation from "the book of the words of Isaiah,"—xl. 3 to 5,—is, in part, common to all the four Evangelists¹: but it is given most fully by St. Luke,—to whose Gospel the words "Every Valley," &c., to the end, are peculiar. They are beautifully descriptive of the progress and effects of the Gospel in the world. What so effectually lifts up the lowly and meek, and abases the proud;—casting down the swelling imaginations of the heart, and every high thing which exalteth itself against GOD? By this, "straight paths are made for our feet^k," and the rugged way is made plain for us to walk in.

Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers,

That is, "Offspring of vipers,"—implying that they inherited the wickedness of their sires. See the first note on St. Matth. xii. 34.

¹ St. Matt. iii. 3: St. Mark i. 3: St. John i. 23.

^k Prov. iv. 26, as quoted in Hebrews xii. 13.

who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

That is, to seek, by applying to me for Baptism, to escape the righteous vengeance of God. Wherefore he proceeds:

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of Repentance,

Prove your repentance sincere, by a change of life: for "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit¹." See the notes on St. Matthew xii. 33, 34.

and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* Father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Presume not upon God's promises made to Abraham, and to his seed: overlooking the power of the Almighty to fulfil His words in more than one mysterious way. See the note on St. Matt. iii. 9: and take notice that he had already called them the 'offspring' (or seed) '*of vipers,*'—in ver. 7.

The tendency of the heart to rely on the promises of God, as if they were unconditional; instead of conforming the life to His precepts, which really are absolute,—has been pointed out in a note on St. Luke iv. 12.

In connexion with this subject, read Jeremiah vii.

¹ St. Matt. vii. 17.

And now also the axe is laid unto the 9
root of the trees : every tree therefore which
bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down,
and cast into the fire.

See the note on St. Matthew iii. 10.

And the people asked him, saying, What 10
shall we do then ? He answereth and saith 11
unto them, He that hath two coats, let him
impart to him that hath none ; and he that
hath meat, let him do likewise.

This amounts to an exhortation to Brotherly
Love ; or, as is commonly called in Holy Scrip-
ture, *Charity*. " But whoso hath this world's
good, and seeth his brother have need, and shut-
teth up his bowels of compassion from him,—how
dwelleth the Love of God in *him* ? "

Then came also publicans to be baptized, 12
and said unto him, Master, what shall we
do ? And he said unto them, Exact no 13
more than that which is appointed you.

These were the *tax-gatherers*, or persons whose
business it was to collect *tribute*. The lawless
rapacity of this class of officials is revealed by the
reply which the Baptist makes to them. Con-
cerning the lesson taught by that reply, see the
following note.

* 1 St. John iii. 17.

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be content with your wages.

This reply of the Baptist to the soldiers surely supplies a sufficient answer to those well-intentioned, but misguided persons, who maintain the unlawfulness of bearing arms. In reply to the question,—“And what shall we do?” he does not bid the men abandon their profession; but merely requires of them the performance of “their duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call them.” See the last note on St. Luke vii. 9. The same remark applies equally to what was said to the Publicans,—in ver. 13.

The men who asked this question were probably not regular soldiery; but an armed force, bound on one of those military expeditions which the feuds of Herod’s successors made so common: and the answer they obtained shews, plainly enough, the sins to which they were most addicted.

15 And as the people were in expectation,
and all men mused in their hearts of John,
16 whether he were the CHRIST, or not; John
answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed
baptize you with water; but One mightier
than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes

am not worthy to unloose ; He shall baptise you with the HOLY GHOST and with fire :

He contrasts his Baptism with *that* which CHRIST should hereafter bestow : not a mere outward washing of the body with water, but an inward purifying,—a searching spiritual influence, like that of fire. But his words had a *literal* fulfilment and intention also : see the note on St. Matt. iii. 11.

whose fan *is* in His hand, and He will roughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner ; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable.

To make a separation between the righteous and the wicked,—even as a winnowing-fan separates the chaff from the wheat,—is the office constantly claimed to Himself, under different figures, our Blessed LORD. See, for example, St. Matt. xiii. 30 ; also 47, 48. Again, see St. Matt. xxv.

33,—where the sheep and the goats supply the LORD with a familiar image.

Delightful it is to discover Almighty God employing *the same* figures in the Old Testament as in the New. Thus, the threshing-floor and the fan gain notice in Isaiah xli. 15, 16,—and Jerem.

li. 7 and li. 2 :—while the sheep and the goats are found to recur in Ezek. xxxiv. 17. And what

wonder? Was not the same Inspiring SPIRIT the Divine Author of both Testaments?

Take notice therefore, that the Heavenly "Husbandman", (for so He is styled by the Eternal Son in St. John xv. 1), has His Vineyard and His Corn-fields;—His flocks and His herds;—His wine-press, and His barns, and His threshing-floor:—His Labourers, and His Servants, and His Shepherds:—all of which, in turn, supply Him with materials for His Heavenly teaching. See the note on St. Matt. iii. 12.

18 And many other things in his exhortation
19 preached he unto the people. But Herod
the Tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for
Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for
20 all the evils which Herod had done, added
yet this above all, that he shut up John in
prison.

The scene of his captivity was the castle of Machærus,—a fortress at the very borders of Herod's dominions.

But the whole narrative is an anticipation; for, as will be seen from a comparison of St. John ii. 13 with iii. 24, the Baptist was not cast into prison until a period subsequent to the First Passover. It would seem as if St. Luke were anxious to exhibit the history of John at one view, and to connect his bold preaching with the imprisonment in which it issued.





THE HOLY GHOST DESCENDED IN A BODILY SHAPE LIKE A DOVE UPON HIM.

St. Luke iii. 22.

And probably this, which is a very favourite method with the HOLY SPIRIT, is not without its teaching. By coupling the remote cause with its ultimate consequence;—the course pursued, with the results it eventually led to;—(dropping every intermediate fact, and all irrelevant circumstances;)—the Inspired Writers forcibly remind us how *He* must regard our Lives and Actions and Characters, who seeth, as well as “declareth, *from the end from the beginning*.”

Concerning the incident here alluded to, rather than described, see the notes on St. Mark vi. 17—20. It shall suffice, in this place, to mention that the Herod spoken of, was Herod Antipas,—son of *that* Herod who murdered the Holy Innocents. His lawful wife was a daughter of Aretas, King of Petra in Arabia: Herodias, (a granddaughter of Herod the Great, and therefore niece of Herod Antipas), had married Philip,—another of her uncles; whom she forsook in order to live in adultery with the person here mentioned. The story of the Herods is one long history of adultery, incest, and murder.

Now when all the people were baptized, 21 came to pass, that JESUS also being baptized, and praying, the Heaven was opened, and the HOLY GHOST descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him; and a Voice

“ Isaiah xlv. 10.

came from Heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved SON ; in Thee I am well pleased.

St. Luke notices the Baptism of our LORD with brevity: but he mentions two circumstances of exceeding interest and preciousness. He is the only Evangelist who relates that our LORD was "*praying*," after His Baptism, when the visible descent of the SPIRIT took place,—and the Voice was heard from Heaven, proclaiming His Divine Sonship: and it is worthy of observation that our SAVIOUR is stated to have been in the act of prayer on all the three occasions when the said Heavenly Voice was heard. Besides the present we see the account of the Transfiguration,—where "*as He prayed*, the fashion of His countenance was altered;" and that third occasion recorded by St. John, (xii. 28) when the request of the Saviour was audibly answered from Heaven.

Further,—St. Luke alone it also is, who mentions with precision that the "HOLY GHOST descended in a *bodily shape* like a dove upon Him." But these express words, it might have been pretended with some show of reason, that no bodily form was seen;—whereby a most instructive circumstance would have been lost. See the note on St. Matt. iii. 16, 17.

So many remarks on this wondrous incident have been already offered in the notes on St. Matthew's Gospel (iii. 13 to 17), and St. Mark (i. 9

° St. Luke ix. 29.

1), that the Reader is referred to those places for further information.

And JESUS Himself began to be about 23 thirty years of age,

Our Lord, at this time, may have completed twenty-nine years of His earthly life. He therefore "began to be about *thirty* years of age;"—which was the age of Joseph, when he stood before Pharaoh^p; and of David, "when he began to reign^q." These were eminent types of CHRIST.

being (as was supposed) the Son of Joseph, Men supposed Him to be naturally sprung from Joseph of Nazareth,—who was indeed *legally* His father, being the Blessed Virgin's wedded Husband. See the note on St. Matt. i. 16.

The genealogy which follows, is manifestly that of *Joseph*; and may have been actually obtained by the Evangelist from the archives of the census itself.

which was *the son* of Heli,

But in St. Matthew's Gospel, (i. 16) it is said,—*Jacob* begat Joseph." These two statements are conciled by a venerable tradition derived from the descendants of the holy family. It declares Heli to have been *legally* the Father of the Blessed Virgin's husband;—while his *natural* parent was

^p Gen. xli. 46.

^q 2 Sam. v. 4.

Jacob. The two lines of descent, given respectively by St. Matthew and St. Luke, converge in the persons of Matthan, (who is mentioned in St. Matt. i. 15;) and Matthat, (whose name will be found in the next ensuing verse of the present chapter of St. Luke's Gospel.) These men became successively the husbands of the same heiress (Estha),—by whom each had issue: whereby the first became naturally,—the second, legally,—the grandfather of Joseph.

- 24 which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Janna, which was
 25 *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which was *the son* of
 26 Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge, which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semei, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the*
 27 *son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son* of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel,

All the eighteen names from Heli (in ver. 23) to Rhesa, inclusive, are recorded no where but in this place. *How*, or in what sense, Rhesa “was *the son* of Zorobabel,” does not appear. His name is not found in 1 Chron. iii. 19, 20,—where the children of Zorobabel are enumerated.

which was *the son* of Salathiel,

The same statement occurs in Ezra (iii. 2 ; v. 2) and in Haggai (i. 1, 12 ; ii. 2). Moreover, it is found repeated in St. Matthew's Gospel,—i. 12, where see the second note. But, from 1 Chron. ii. 17 to 24, it would appear that, in strictness, Zorobabel was the son of *Pedaiah*,—Salathiel's mother. Naturally, therefore, Salathiel will have been his uncle ; and only legally, his parent.

The two genealogies according to St. Matthew and St. Luke, having met at this place,—and having both exhibited the glorious names of Salathiel and Zorobabel among the ancestors of our Blessed LORD, again diverge,—to meet again in the person of David the King.

which was *the son* of Neri,

Neri was his actual Father. Compare the statement in St. Matt. i. 12, and see the note there.

which was *the son* of Melchi, which was 28
the son of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam,
which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was
the son of Er, which was *the son* of Jose, 29
which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the*
son of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat,
which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the* 30
son of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda,
which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the*
son of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim,

31 which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of Nathan, which was *the son* of David,

Here the two genealogies again converge,—see the last note but one. The “Nathan” here mentioned is, obviously, a person wholly distinct from the prophet mentioned in 2 Sam. xii. He was the elder brother of Solomon,—whose descendants St. Matthew has recorded. See 2 Sam. v. 14, and 1 Chron. iii. 5.

32 which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson, which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham,

These well-known names are common to both the genealogies. With that of “Abraham,” St. Matthew’s genealogy begins.

Twenty worthies remain, of which only *one* is found to occasion the least difficulty.

which was *the son* of Thara, which was
35 *the son* of Nachor, which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was

*he son of Phalec, which was the son of He-
 ær, which was the son of Sala, which was 36
 he son of Cainan,*

This insertion of the name of a second Cainan, besides the Cainan in ver. 37), is one of the hardest things to explain and account for, in the Holy Gospels; for the name does not occur in Gen. xi. 2, between the names of Arphaxad and Salah,—here we should, of course, expect to find it; nor indeed elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. It is found however in a Greek Translation of the Pentateuch, which was made before the time of our Lord; and which, (because it was commonly read in the Synagogues, and therefore familiarly known to the people,) the Evangelists and Apostles are found to have freely used and quoted.

The humble student of the Gospels will do well to believe, on the testimony of St. Luke, that there actually *was* such a person as Cainan,—the son of Arphaxad and father of Sala; while at the same time he may cheerfully admit that, as yet, he sees not how the fact is to be reconciled in a satisfactory manner with the particulars (of age and of descent) which Moses was divinely moved to record. It does not, of course, prove, that when he has occasion to reason concerning the early generations of mankind, he need in the least degree distrust the statements which the Hebrew text supplies. The ‘Spirit of Truth’ by whom Moses

† St. John xvi. 13.

and St. Luke were alike inspired, may well be deemed his sufficient guarantee on this head.

The case, after all, admits of easy illustration. Two things are indeed stated which seem to be inconsistent; but the same might be said, with at least equal truth, of the assertion in St. Matt. i. 6 that "Joram begat Ozias,"—and the circumstantial statement in 2 Kings xiv. 21 that Azariah, (that is Ozias or Uzziah), was the son of Amaziah. These two statements *seem* wholly incompatible, and inconsistent; but they are proved *not to be so*. Thus again, as we have already seen, Ezra the priest and Haggai the prophet concur with St. Luke, (see above ver. 27), in describing Zorobabel, their contemporary, as the son of Salathiel; and St. Matthew even says "Salathiel begat Zorobabel" (i. 12): but the same Ezra explains that Zorobabel was *the son of Padoiah**. These statements appear to be contradictory, but they are not really so. They only seem contradictory, at first, because we do not at first understand them. . . . Let us remember, when difficulties of this kind try us to the uttermost, (and they were doubtless *intended* to be a trial,) that they are not nearly so serious as those which must have assailed the faithful in Israel when they reasoned on the prophecies which had gone before concerning the Advent of CHRIST. See also the note on another difficult text,—namely, chap. ii. 2.

* 1 Chron. iii. 19.

It will appear, therefore, that either Evangelist, in his respective genealogy, has displayed in *one particular* his acquaintance with the else-unrevealed details of Old Testament History:—St. Matthew, by recording Caleb's marriage with Rahab;—St. Luke, by vindicating for the second Cainan a place among the ancestors of the Messiah.

which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech, which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of 37 Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Enos, which 38 was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

While St. Matthew, therefore, contents himself with deriving the descent of MESSIAH from *Abraham*,—the Father of the Jewish people¹, and the patriarch to whom the promises were originally given; St. Luke traces back MESSIAH's line to Adam,—the Father of the whole human race. The former Evangelist wrote his Gospel especially for the use of his own nation: it was sufficient therefore that he should shew that the SAVIOUR was "Abraham's seed."² But the latter Evangelist, like the great Apostle whom he accompanied, addressed himself to Jew and Gentile, alike. Accordingly, he ex-

¹ St. John viii. 33, 39, &c.

² St. Matt. i. 1, 2.

hibits the SAVIOUR as the promised "Seed of the Woman," who should hereafter bruise the Serpent's head²; and in whom all the great human family has an equal interest,—as children (by adoption) of the same Almighty FATHER, and heirs (by promise) of the same eternal Kingdom.

Seth was the son of Adam;—for Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth⁷." But Adam was the son of God;—for "in the day that God created man,—in the likeness of God made He him²."

It cannot be by accident that the number of the names in this genealogy,—first and last,—should be exactly *seventy-seven*.

The Prayer.

ALMIGHTY God, Who hast given us Thy only-begotten SON to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; grant that we being regenerate, and made Thy children by Adoption and Grace, may daily be renewed by Thy HOLY SPIRIT; through the same our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same SPIRIT, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

² Gen. iii. 15.

⁷ Gen. v. 3.

² Gen. v. 1. Compare i. 26, 27.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

1 The Temptation and Fasting of CHRIST. 13 He overcometh the Devil: 14 beginneth to preach. 16 The people of Nazareth admire His gracious words. 38 He cureth one possessed of a devil, 38 Peter's mother in law, 40 and divers other sick persons. 41 The devils acknowledge CHRIST, and are reproved for it. 43 He preacheth through the cities.

CONCERNING the Temptation of CHRIST,—the great event with which the present chapter commences,—the Reader is referred to a long note at the beginning of St. Matthew iv.—What has been here said, shall not be repeated in this place.

“Behold,” says one of the ancients, “He is among the wrestlers, who, as God, awards the prizes. He is among the crowned, who crowns the heads of the Saints.”

IV. AND JESUS being full of the HOLY GHOST returned from Jordan,

It is necessary to bear in mind that the last event which obtained notice, was the Baptism of our LORD in the river Jordan: with obvious re-

ference to which, He is now described as "being full of the *HOLY GHOST*." His Temptation follows. "And thus," says Leighton, "shalt thou be sure to be assaulted, when thou hast received the greatest enlargements from Heaven: either at the Sacrament,—or in Prayer,—or in any other way. Then look for an onset. This arch-pirate lets the empty ships pass, but lays wait for them when they return richest laden." See the notes on the last half of St. Mark i. 12: also the notes on St. Matthew iv. 1.

and was led by the *SPIRIT* into the Wilderness,

Concerning our *LORD*'s conflict with the Power of Darkness, much has been already remarked in the notes on St. Matth. chap. iv.: and something more will be found in the note on St. Mark i. 1. This great event lies on the very threshold of the sacred History in the three first Gospels; and each, our *LORD*'s approach to it is described in terms of the same import. "Sweet is it," says Leighton, "in all things, to be carried: not to do of ourselves any way; but that, of each step, may be said,—He was *led by the SPIRIT!* led to be tempted, on purpose that he might return with the glory of the victory."

"The Apostle doth fitly style our *LORD JESUS* 'the Captain' or Leader 'of our Salvation'."

^a See St. Luke iii. 22.

^b Hebrews ii. 10.

was meet He should be made 'perfect by sufferings^c.' He therefore leads the way; putting on us nothing that He hath not first encountered."

Being forty days tempted of the Devil. 2

For the space of forty days was our Blessed LORD tempted; but the three marvellous scenes which St. Matthew and St. Luke describe, belong to *the last day*: and these, because they are the only part of the Temptation which concerns us, are the only part recorded. Over all the rest, a veil of mysterious silence has been drawn. See the first note on St. Mark i. 13.

And in those days He did eat nothing: and when they were ended, He afterward hungered.

It has been already pointed out, (in the note on St. Matthew iv. 2,) that Moses and Elijah had observed a similar miraculous fast, before Him. Those two mighty personages,—who appeared together in Glory on the Mount of Transfiguration^d,—symbolize respectively the Law and the Prophets: between which, and the Gospel, this forty-days fast of their great Antitype, served to shew that there was an harmonious correspondence and agreement.

And it must be obvious to remark, that in imitation of this mighty transaction, the Church

^c Hebrews ii. 10.

^d St. Matthew xvii. 3.

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

of CHRIST observes her Lent-fast of forty not straining her weak powers therein, rivalry of her LORD; but maintaining a distance, and seeking only to tread faith His footsteps,—although planting a we most uncertain foot.

- 3 And the Devil said unto Him, If T the SON of GOD, command this stone be made bread.

Upon this Temptation, see the notes Matthew iv. 3.

It was all his object to discover whether disguise of the frail and fainting form before there might be concealed the MESSIAH, sire of all nations,—his own foretold Van Hence, his repeated address,—“*If thou SON of GOD.*”

Take notice how the Devil treats those he is permitted to tempt. He sees that the *Bread*: he offers them a *Stone!*

- 4 And JESUS answered him, saying written, That man shall not live by alone, but by every word of God.

It was out of mere condescension towards us, that our SAVIOUR thus a the Tempter: for He met his suggestion guage which any one of ourselves might

make use of under the like circumstances. And marvellous it is to contemplate the wisdom which thus knew how to select out of the heavenly Armoury a weapon which should suffice at once for the mysterious requirements of the Incarnate God, and for those of creatures weak and sinful as ourselves. The quotation is from Deut. viii. 3.

This place of Scripture, upon our SAVIOUR'S lips, informs us that for all our needs,—for those alike of our higher, and those of our lower nature,—“we are to hold ourselves dependent entirely on the promised protection and providence of God; a protection” (to use the words of a great writer), “which is ever to be sought agreeably to His revealed Word and Will. It is a reply therefore to every infernal suggestion that we should either despair of God's goodness, or distrust His power,—that we should seek the satisfaction of our lower wants by unlawful or unhallowed means, or impatiently refuse to abide the issue of our honest endeavours,—thus, with the SAVIOUR of Mankind, to make answer to the Tempter,—It is written, *Man shall not live by bread alone.*”

It is obvious to notice the breadth which is thus given to that petition in the LORD'S Prayer,—“Give us this day *our daily bread.*” See note on St. Matt. vi. 11.

On the present verse, more will be found in the note on St. Matt. iv. 4.

And the Devil, taking Him up into an 5

high mountain, shewed unto Him all the Kingdoms of the World in a moment of time.

Foiled in his attempt to seduce the Second Adam by the snare of carnal appetite,—the Enemy tries next the lure of Worldly Ambition. Satan “takes” our LORD “up into an high mountain,”—bearing Him, it may be, through the air, by the permission of Him with whom he had to do. See the note on St. Matthew iv. 5.

He there discovers to the Incarnate SON a most wondrous sight,—namely, “all the Kingdoms of the World,” and, (as St. Matthew adds), “*the glory of them.*” Moreover, the better to dazzle human imagination, and overset the judgment, he performs this act of Temptation “*in a moment of time:*” like a warrior who collects the force of many strokes into a single mighty blow. All the majesty of the four great Empires,—their united strength and splendour,—their fame and glory,—and whatever else it is unsafe for Man to set his heart on, or even to behold; but which nevertheless, he loves and longs for;—*all* is made to sweep before the calm gaze of the second Adam, in unspeakable magnificence and beauty! See a few words more on the subject in the note to St Matthew iv. 8.

It has been finely pointed out, by an ancient Bishop, how fitting it is that all the Kingdoms of the World, and the glory of them, should be dis-

played "*in a moment of time.*" "For here it is not so much the rapid glance of sight which is signified, as the frailty of mortal power which is declared. For in a moment all this passes away; and oftentimes the glory of this World has vanished before it has arrived."

Another says,—“A moment of Time! For the Present is but a moment in comparison of Eternity.”

And the Devil said unto Him, All this **6** power will I give Thee, and the glory of them :

That is,—of these Kingdoms. See the place in St. Matthew iv. 8.

for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it.

Was this, in *any* respect, a true boast? For instance,—Has God *really* delivered Earthly Power and Glory into the hands of Satan?

Certainly *not altogether*; for “there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God^e.” Again,—Pomp, and State, and Magnificence,—*Glory*, as it may be called,—dwells chiefly in Kings’ Courts. Now, Kings are the LORD’S Anointed; clothed with His authority; and, (doubt it not!) regarded by Him with special favour,—as images of Himself. In what limited

• Romans xiii. 1.

sense, then, did Satan speak truly, when he said, "All this power . . . and glory . . . is delivered unto *me*?" For the falsity of the words which follow, shall be pointed out in the next note.

That Satan had been permitted by God to take up his abode in this part of God's Creation, which we inhabit,—we know. The marvellous extent to which he had usurped dominion over the bodies of men,—is frequently set before us^f. St. Paul speaks of him, in one place, as "the Prince of the power of the Air^g." In another, he calls him *the god*^h,—and our SAVIOUR styles him *the Prince, of this World*ⁱ: seems to say that the Earth is *his House*^k: or rather, (being a Prince,) his *Palace*^l: that he occupied it, once, like *a strong man armed*^m: and that he required *binding*, before his goods could be spoiled. St. John (probably) says that "the whole World lieth in the hands," or "under the power, of the Wicked Oneⁿ:" and our LORD Himself scarcely says less, in Acts xxvi. 18. Now, when to all this, is added the well known fact that God permits Satan to tempt His servants^o in order thereby to make proof of their faithfulness; and when it is remembered that the splen-

^f St. Luke xiii. 16, in particular, may be consulted.

^g Ephes. ii. 2.

^h 2 Cor. iv. 4.

ⁱ St. John xii. 31: xiv. 30: xvi. 11.

^k St. Matthew xii. 29.

^l St. Luke xi. 21.

^m For his employment here below, see Job i. 7: ii. 2. Also 1 St. Peter v. 8.

ⁿ 1 St. John v. 19.

^o Job i. 12: ii. 6. 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 St. Peter ii. 9, &c.

hours of this World,—riches, and honour, and glory,—the very things, remember, against which our SAVIOUR so earnestly, and so faithfully, cautions us,—are the lures with which the Enemy of souls most successfully baits his hook:—may we not presume that we have discovered his meaning?—ascertained the limited sense in which he could dare to say that all the good things of Earth had been delivered over to *him*?

If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine.

Yes,—*If CHRIST would worship him*: but not else.

The boast which goes before, was worthy of the Father of Lies;—a splendid Lie,—yet full of weakness. “That is delivered unto me.” By *whom* “delivered?” Thou confessest, then, that there is a Greater One than thyself in Creation,—whose vassal thou art! And “To whomsoever I will, I give it.” *That* is false,—as the words which follow prove. See the note on St. Matthew iv. 9.

An old African Bishop asks,—“And dost thou, whose lot is the unquenchable fire, dare to promise to the LORD of all, that which is *His own*? Dost thou think to have *Him* for thy worshipper, from dread of whom the whole Creation trembles?” He might have added,—And dost thou offer *earthly* “Kingdoms,” “power,” and “glory,”

to Him whose "is *the Kingdom, and th*
and *the Glory*?"

8 And JESUS answered and said un
Get thee behind Me, Satan :

"Thus, when anything moves to deba
draw off the heart from God, it is to be b
with indignation. And thus, in all confi
tinue fighting in thy LORD's strength :
over, resist still, and the Enemy shall
here."

for it is written, Thou shalt wors
LORD thy GOD, and Him only sha
serve.

Written—in Deuteronomy vi. 13. See
on St. Matthew iv. 10. Our LORD *mi*
said to the Tempter,—Thou shalt wors
but then, how would his example have av
He used words which, under similar circu
of Temptation, might be used by the hun
His servants. See the note on St. Matth

This Temptation was the last of the
actual order; and accordingly, it stands
St. Matthew's Gospel. "Our SAVIOUR wa
thus to bear many assaults," says a gc
"and thus to force and beat off the Ter
the Word, both for our Instruction and c
fort: who otherwise, for Himself, could

▷ St. Matth. vi. 13.

ately have repelled him, and sent him back at first. But indeed, 'He pleased not Himself'⁹ in anything: had an eye to *us*, in all He did and suffered; and did all in reference to *our* advantage. O how should we love Him!"

And he brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple,

See the note on St. Matthew iv. 5.

and said unto Him, If Thou be the SON of God, cast Thyself down from hence:

The Tempter next assails our LORD on the side of *Vain-glory*, or *Spiritual Pride*. He will find himself powerless as before against the Holy One. "The Prince of this World cometh," said our SAVIOUR once to His Disciples, "and *hath nothing on Me*." See the first note on St. Matthew iv. 6.

for it is written, He shall give His Angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.

The Devil can quote Scripture in support of his vilest purposes. It is no sufficient recommendation therefore,—either of counsel, suggested from without; or of doubts, arising from within,—that if *this* thing, or *that* thing, it may be said, with some show of truth, "It is written."

⁹ Romans xv. 3.

⁷ St. John xiv. 30.

Better, however, in all such cases, to follow our SAVIOUR's method. He contests not the place of Scripture quoted; but He meets it with another. He *might* have disputed the text,—exposing the subtilty of its misapplication; and condemning the wickedness which could misquote,—(see the second note on St. Matthew iv. 6,) in order to mislead: but He teaches us ‘a more excellent way.’ “And this downright, sure method,” says Leighton, “beats off the sophister with another quotation,—clearly and plainly carrying that truth which *he* opposes and *we* adhere to. So, though thou canst not clear the sense of an obscure Scripture, thou shalt always find a sufficient guard in another that is clearer.”

- 12 And JESUS answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy GOD.

Not that our SAVIOUR takes to Himself (as He might have done,) the awful title,—“The LORD thy GOD.” He simply quotes the command which Satan was tempting Him to transgress. See the notes on St. Matthew iv. 7.

You perceive that, whereas the Adversary quoted *a Promise*; (which, moreover, he exhibited disjointed from its context, and in a garbled form^a;) our SAVIOUR opposes him with *a Precept*. The *Promise*, absolutely stated, is gratifying, because

^a See the note on St. Matt. iv. 6.

it involves no duties. The *Precept*, on the contrary, points to continued obedience, and prescribes a long, and therefore painful course of virtuous action.—Thereby, a great lesson is unmistakeably conveyed to us all. True indeed it is that God's promises to His creatures, when attentively examined, are all found to be conditional: equally true is it that His precepts are all, as delivered by Him, absolute:—yet is it the nature of blind spiritual Presumption to rely on God's Promises, as if no condition were annexed to their fulfilment: to substitute Reliance for Obedience; and to represent to itself God's decrees respecting Man, as absolute and unconditional,—rather than as dependent wholly upon the foreseen decisions of that human Will which the same Almighty Being created free to choose between good and evil.

This temptation of our SAVIOUR therefore which, in St. Luke's Gospel occupies the third place, may be regarded as the great type of Religious Presumption, and Spiritual Pride. Satan seeks to persuade the Incarnate SON that the Divine support is absolutely certain; is wholly unconditional, and stands pledged to Him irrevocably. . . . Of how many proud souls, (who yet fancied themselves humble and meek), has the same insinuation proved the downfall! How many persons among ourselves, at the present day, are the dupes of a Religious system which, by thus exhibiting only a partial and distorted view of the Truth, favours

the same pernicious error, and most u
view !

- 13 And when the Devil had ende
Temptation, he departed from E
season.

When the Devil had ended all the T
or rather "*every kind of Temptation,*"
is what the Evangelist says,)—he "
from the Holy One. Yet, not as he
began the conflict, *strong*; he depart
weak: he assailed his Enemy, *free*; h
from Him, *bound*^t. And this is m
noted.

Further,—even from the Holy One
parted only "for a season!" We mu
always be prepared for new onsets; ne
ing ourselves safe from them, so long a
days of our warfare, last. See howev
fortable words quoted on this subject
on St. Matthew iv. 11.

St. Luke, who will hereafter give us
account of the Agony in the Garden^u,
Evangelist who hints that the Tempt
from our LORD but "*for a season*:"
words should properly be translated,) "
son." Satan's next assault was reserv
close of that Ministry which was no
begin. Refer to, and by all means c

^t See St. Matt. xii. 29.

^u St. Luke xxii. 4

Luke xxii. 53 : St. John xiv. 30 : together with that hint of approaching triumph,—St. John xii. 31. As, in the Wilderness, by every allurements of *Pleasure*,—so, in the Garden, and on the Cross, by every avenue of *Pain*,—did the Devil seek to shake the second Adam from His steadfastness. And *this* also may teach us what we have to expect; at one time, the seductions,—at another, the threats,—of an evil World. “And who is sufficient for these things*?”

And **JESUS** returned in the Power of the 14
SPIRIT into Galilee :

He came “*in the power* of the SPIRIT :” for is He not the Great Captain of our Salvation? and had He not just vanquished the Enemy of our Race? The phrase just quoted, recalls the language of verse 1, and is said with manifest reference to His Baptism,—when He was once more “anointed” (as St. Peter speaks,) “with the HOLY GHOST and *with power*.”—Read verse 18; and notice how aptly the prophecy and its fulfilment suit each other.

Take notice, that *the occasion* of this departure into Galilee is recorded in St. Matthew iv. 12, and St. Mark i. 14,—where see the notes.

and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about. And He taught 15 in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

* 2 Cor. ii. 16.

† Acts x. 38. See Acts iv. 27 : and compare St. Luke i. 35.

16 And He came to Nazareth, where
 been brought up :

He is desirous to communicate the love of Himself to those among whom He brought up,—the inhabitants of the city where the first twenty-nine years of His earthly life had been passed.—Good men, in ancient times, delighted to find living counsel in every man; the Book of Life, suggest that CHRIST has taught us to benefit and instruct first our brethren,—then, to extend our kindness to our friends.

A modern Traveller describes the scene at the home of our SAVIOUR as very interesting. Having walked to the top of the hill of Nazareth,—“Here,” he says, “quite unexpected and glorious prospect opened to the view. The sky was perfectly clear and serene; and I shall never forget the impression I received, as the magnificent panorama burst suddenly upon me. To the east lay the magnificent plain of Esdraelon; to the west was seen the round top of Tabor overtopping intervening hills, with portions of the little hills of Gilboa, and the opposite mountain of Carmel. Then came the long line of Carmel. In the west, lay the Mediterranean gulf; to the east, the morning-sun: seen, first, far in the distance; then, the left of Carmel; then, interrupted by the mountain; and again appearing on

Below, on the north, was spread out another of the beautiful plains of Northern Palestine . . .

“In the Village below, the SAVIOUR of the World had passed His Childhood : and there are certain features of Nature which meet our eyes now, just as they once met His. He must often have visited the fountain near which we had pitched our tent : His feet must frequently have wandered over the adjacent hills : and His eyes doubtless have gazed on the splendid prospect from this very spot. Here the Prince of Peace looked down upon the great plain where the din of battles so oft had rolled, and the garments of the warrior been dyed in blood : and He looked out, too, upon that Sea, over which the swift ships were to bear the tidings of His Salvation to Nations and to Continents then unknown !”

and, as His custom was, He went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

We know, from Acts xiii. 15, that other persons were allowed to address the people in the Synagogue, besides the Priest. From this place, we learn that other persons might “read” publicly, also. Observe the hint in the text as to what the “custom” of the SAVIOUR of the World was, in the days of His humiliation.

It appears from the Acts of the Holy Apostles,

that the Law^a and the Prophets^a were read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day: at the end of which, “a word of exhortation” to the people, was delivered. See Acts xiii. 15.

- 17 And there was delivered unto Him the Book of the Prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the Book, He found the place
 18 where it was written, The SPIRIT of the LORD is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set
 19 liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD.

Our LORD, unrolling the Book of His Prophets (a roll, like those which are used in the Jewish Synagogues at this day,) fixed upon the words which are found in the beginning of the 6th chapter; either making choice of that passage because He designed to preach from it; or, (which seems more likely,) because it was the portion of Scripture appointed to be read, in regular course on that day. But there was a Divine Providence in the matter, be sure. See above the note on verse 14.

Observe, that, instead of “the poor,”—it is

^a Acts xv. 21.

^a Acts xiii. 27.

the original, "*the meek*:" a beautiful comment on St. Matthew v. 3, as compared with St. Luke vi. 20. See St. Matthew xi. 5.—Observe also, that instead of "recovery of sight to the blind," the Hebrew, (as our Bibles shew us), has "the opening of the prison to them that are bound." A remarkable comment of the SPIRIT! Compare Psalm cxlvi. 7, 8.—See also Acts xxvi. 18.

And He closed the Book, and He gave it ²⁰ again to the Minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the Synagogue were fastened on Him.

How minute is all this, and exactly descriptive of the scene:—the closing of the Book,—the giving it to the Attendant or Servant,—the resuming of His seat; and then, the fixed gaze of all within the synagogue. Doubt not that there was something unearthly in His manner: that His Divinity flashed through the poor fleshly garment in which it was enshrined, and "could not be hid!"—Consider ver. 22, below; and see the last note on St. Matthew vii.

And He began to say unto them, This ²¹ day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

That is,—the Prophet spake in *My* Person, and by *My* SPIRIT, when he committed these words to writing, more than seven hundred years ago: and

behold, at last, I am come into the World,—I of whom Isaiah wrote; and the words which you have been listening to, find their fulfilment, at *this present day*,—and they are fulfilled *in Me*.—See above, the note on ver. 14.

O to have heard the Discourse which followed! —“the gracious words,” in order to drink the sound of which, Angels must have thronged the place, unseen.

22 And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's Son?

They spoke as men who remembered His “manner of life from His youth;”—remembered Joseph the Carpenter, (see St. John i. 4, 5); and the lowly Maiden, our LORD'S Mother, whom they looked upon as Joseph's wife; together with many others of their kindred. Compare what was said on another similar occasion:—St. Mark vi. 2, 3.

It has been already pointed out, (in the note on ver. 20,) that there must have been something wondrous heavenly in the manner of our SAVIOUR, to account for passages like the present, which so frequently recur in the Gospels. But *who* so dull as not to perceive that, on the occasion here recorded, there was more than usual wonder in His sayings? They beheld,—to all appearance,—their humble townsman suddenly claiming to be the

ON ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

ct of a well-known prophecy! But, in re-
it was the eternal SON, emptied of His Glory
d, yet still the same Almighty One, by whose
: the Prophets had spoken,—turning to the
en record of *His* Servant's words, (words
d had proceeded from *Himself*), and con-
nding to become their Interpreter! How
the heart of every one have burned within
at so wondrous a spectacle!

nd He said unto them, Ye will surely ²³
unto Me this proverb, Physician, heal
elf; whatsoever we have heard done in
ernaum, do also here in Thy country.

r LORD spake this, knowing the secret
ghts of His auditory. From His word we learn
notwithstanding the admiration and delight
d His Discourse had occasioned, the people
reasoning within themselves as follows:—
has wrought wonders at Capernaum. Why
He not work them here? Is not this
h's son? Why does He not improve His
lowly condition, and that of all His family?
sician, heal Thyself! We demand this thing
ee, as a sign; and then, we will believe
”

te however, by the way, that as yet we have
of only *one* miracle which had been wrought
pernaum; namely, the healing of the noble-
s son^b.

^b St. John iv. 46 to 54.

- 24 And He said, Verily I say unto you, **N**
Prophet is accepted in his own country.

In *this* way, then, our SAVIOUR answers **t**
thoughts of His auditory. It is observable **t**
first, He meets the proverb which they w
thinking of, with another ;—the tendency of *th*
having been to require miracles at His hands,
proverb which *He* cites assigns the reason why
will not work any ; namely, because by no disp
of miraculous power could He win credit with
men of Nazareth, among whom he had b
brought up.

He appeals, next, to Holy Scripture ; and **i**
ceeds to vindicate the strict conformity of
present conduct with that which God had
served towards His chosen people of old. For
shews that Miracles were not vouchsafed ancies
to the persons, by whom,—or at the seasons
which,—they might have been most expected :
simply according to the good will and pleasur
ALMIGHTY GOD.

- 25 But I tell you of a truth, many wide
were in Israel in the days of Elias, when
heaven was shut up three years and
months, when great famine was through
all the land ;

Observe, by the way, that the “six mont
are not noticed in the Old Testament Histor

the event here referred to. See 1 Kings xvii. 1, and xviii. 1. St. James, however,—v. 17,—mentions the time with the same exactness as our **LORD**.

but unto none of them was Elias sent, 26 save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

See the affecting History of Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath, in 1 Kings xvii. 8, &c.

What awful interest, by the way, attaches to every passage in the Old Testament thus appealed to, by our **LORD**! The Finger of Him, by whose inspiring Spirit the Bible was given, laid upon a particular History, surely invests it evermore with special delight and wonder!

And many lepers were in Israel in the 27 time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

For the history of Naaman's cure, by Elisha the Prophet, see 2 Kings v.

The teaching of these two narratives, on the present occasion, was clearly this:—As Elijah was not sent to one of the widows of Israel,—but to a Gentile woman, the lone widow of Sarepta; and as Elisha was commissioned to work no cures on the lepers of Israel, but on a Gentile soldier,—

Naaman the Syrian: so should it create no surprize in the men of Nazareth if a preference were shewn to Strangers, on the present occasion also; if our SAVIOUR wrought wonders in Capernaum, and refused to work any among *them*.

- 28 And all they in the Synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

The very men who so lately "bare Him witness, and wondered at His gracious words (ver. 22)!" They were filled with wrath at the hint which the latter part of His Discourse conveyed. Such language always inflamed the Jews to madness,—as in Acts xxii. 21, 22. This Jealousy had been set forth in Prophecy,—see Deuteronomy xxxii. 21; and was displayed by our LORD, in Parable,—see St. Luke xv. 28.

- 29 and rose up, and thrust Him out of the City; and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their City was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.

On the South-west part of the town of Nazareth, the hill breaks off in a perpendicular wall,—forty or fifty feet in height. *That* must have been the spot to which these murderers sought to conduct their Fellow-townsmen.

How wondrous an illustration, by the way, was thus afforded to the aptness of the proverb which OUR LORD had just before cited against them!

What evidence could prevail with hearts which were thus evilly disposed? See the note on verse 24.

But He, passing through the midst of 80 them, went His way ;

Compare the other occasions when the Holy One was obliged to do the like:—St. John viii. 59: x. 39: xii. 36. And notice, that we are again reminded of the union of the Divine and Human Nature, in the person of our LORD. He had been speaking, as God, in the Synagogue,—verses 18 to 21. As Man, He here saves His life by flight. Not but what He must be thought to have saved His Life, by miracle; but the act of escape was human,—like that which He afterwards enjoined on His Disciples. See St. Matthew x. 23.

and came down to Capernaum, a City of 31 Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days. And they were astonished at His 32 Doctrine: for his Word was with power.

See the last note on St. Matthew vii. :—and observe that not only was the SAVIOUR'S *Word* with power; but He proceeded to confirm it “by signs following.” A mighty *work* ensues, which is related also by St. Mark,—i. 23 to 26: where see the notes.

And in the Synagogue there was a man 33

which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and
84 cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us
alone ;

For aught that appears to the contrary, the afflicted man was at first a silent and orderly member of the congregation. At the presence of the Holy JESUS, however, the unclean spirit within him cannot contain his trouble. The very presence of CHRIST is torture to devils. See all the notes on St. Matthew viii. 29.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark i. 24, for many observations on the present verse, which cannot be here repeated.

what have we to do with Thee, *Thou* JESUS of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art: the Holy One of God.

Ever after the Temptation of our SAVIOUR in the Wilderness by Satan, (the chief of the fallen Angels),—the devils are found to have known CHRIST. It was no longer, “*If Thou be the Son of God,*” (as in verses 3 and 9,)—but, “*I know Thee who Thou art!*” . . . Compare verse 41 . . . The tidings that their great Enemy had, in some mysterious way, at last appeared, must have spread like lightning through all the host of fallen Spirits.

Not that it is to be supposed that they knew the *real Nature* of Him with whom they had to do ;

“for” (as we are expressly told,) “had they known, they would not have crucified the LORD of Glory^c :” but they were convinced that, in *some* sense, He was the SON of GOD. Of the Reality of His Humanity, there could be *no* doubt.

“*JESUS of Nazareth,*” was the title by which, afterwards, the SAVIOUR of the World became commonly called, and was best known. It is a strange thing, that this name,—(which fulfilled prophecy, and shewed how effectually the mystery of the Nativity had been hid from the ken of evil spirits,)—should be so soon found in the mouth of a devil. We have met with the appellation only once before; namely, in St. John i. 45: where see the note.

And JESUS rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

Our LORD rejects his testimony. Doubt not but what the confession in the former verse was either the cry of abject fear; or (what seems more likely) the subtle device of Satan to terrify mankind;—to mar the progressive character of our SAVIOUR’S teaching;—and cast suspicion and discredit on the Truth itself. See the note on St. Mark i. 25.

And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

^c 1 Cor. ii. 8.

But by "throwing him in the midst", and "tearing him", (as St. Mark records,) the unclean Spirit did the man all the harm he could. See the note on St. Mark i. 26.

There may be a comfortable message to be concealed under these repeated notices of the violence of the Evil Spirit in the hour of its ejection. See particularly St. Mark ix. 25 to 27. It has been remarked by a thoughtful writer, "something similar is evermore finding place of and Satan vexes with temptations and with buffetings none so much as those who are in the act of being delivered from his dominion for ever."

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

Take notice, then, that this miracle of healing was wrought on the Sabbath-day. An ancient Bishop discourses as follows on the subject;—"The work of Divine healing commenced on the Sabbath: CHRIST signifying thereby that He began anew where the Old Creation ceased,—in order that He might declare at the very beginning that the SON of GOD was not under the Law, but above the Law. Rightly, also, He began on the Sabbath, that He might shew Himself the Creator,

who interweaves His works one with another, and follows up that which He had before begun. Just as a Builder, determining to reconstruct a House, begins to pull down the old one, not from the foundation, but from the top, so as to apply His hand first to that part where He had before left off."

And the fame of Him went out into every 37 place of the country round about.

And He arose out of the Synagogue, and 38 entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought Him for her.

See the note on St. Mark i. 30.—Concerning "Simon's wife's Mother," see the note on St. Matthew viii. 14.

And He stood over her, and rebuked the 39 fever; and it left her:

"*Rebuked the fever*":—just as, before, He had rebuked the unclean Spirit^d; and as, on a later occasion, "He rebuked the winds and the sea^e." Speaking words to it, doubtless,—as to a subject creature. See the note on St. Matthew viii. 9.

and immediately she arose, and ministered into them.

^d See ver. 35.

^e St. Mark iv. 39.

The first use she made of her recovered strength, was to employ it in her Master's service. And does she not become a pattern therein to Christians; who on their restoration to spiritual health, should employ their powers in ministering to CHRIST, in the person of the poorest members of His mystical body? See the note on St. Mark v. 32.

The Reader is referred to St. Mark's more fuller account of this miracle; and to the same upon St. Mark i. 31.

- 40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them.

See the note on St. Mark i. 32. "Observe His Divine power and Goodness," (writes Leighton), "shining forth in the miraculous cure of *all* diseases. And whatsoever be thy spiritual maladies, though never so many and so desperate, yet come. Never any came to Him, and went away uncured."

- 41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art CHRIST the SON OF GOD. And He rebuking *them* suffered them not to speak: for they knew that He was CHRIST.

See above, the note on ver. 34.



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HE LAID HIS HANDS ON EVERY ONE OF THEM, AND HEALED THEM.

St. Luke iv. 40.



And when it was day, He departed and 42
went into a desert place :

He withdrew at this early hour into a lonely place, *for the purpose of Prayer*,—as St. Mark is careful to inform us. See St. Mark i. 85.

and the people sought Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them. And He said unto 43 them, I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also ; for therefore am I sent.

Simon Peter, and the others, came in quest of their Great Benefactor. See how St. Mark notices this same circumstance:—i. 36 to 38.

And He preached in the Synagogues of 44 Galilee.

This was our LORD's first great Ministerial Journey. How briefly described ! And should not this very circumstance induce us to dwell upon it, in thought, the longer ? The humble endeavour to do so, will be rendered easier by a reference to the parallel places,—namely St. Matthew iv. 23 to 25 ; and St. Mark i. 39.

The SAVIOUR of the World might, indeed, by abiding in the same place, have drawn all men unto Himself,—as an ancient Bishop remarks : but He did not do so ; because He would give *us* an example to go about, and seek those who are perishing ; as the Shepherd, his lost sheep.

The Prayer.

LORD, we beseech Thee, grant Thy p
grace to withstand the temptatio
the World, the Flesh, and the Devil,
with pure hearts and minds to follow
the only GOD; through JESUS CHRIS
LORD. Amen.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

CHRIST teacheth the people out of Peter's ship : 4 in a miraculous taking of fishes, sheweth how He will make him and his partners fishers of men : 12 cleanseth the Leper : 16 prayeth in the Wilderness : 18 healeth one sick of the palsy : 27 calleth Matthew the publican : 29 eateth with sinners, as being the Physician of souls : 34 foretelleth the fastings and afflictions of the Apostles after His Ascension : 36 and likeneth fainthearted and weak Disciples to old bottles and worn garments.

7. AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the Word GOD, He stood by the Lake of Genesareth :

otherwise called the "Sea of Galilee," and the Lake of Tiberias." See the note on St. Mark 1.—One of the ancients remarks,—“When the Lord had performed many and various kinds of miracles, the multitude began to heed neither time nor place in their desire to be healed. The evening came,—they followed; a lake is before them,—they still press on.”

and saw two ships standing by the Lake : 2

but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

The miracle which follows, and which our LORD wrought on the occasion of the call of Simon and Andrew, James and John, to their Apostleship, is peculiar to the present Gospel: but the call of those Disciples is found also in St. Matthew iv. 18 to 22, and St. Mark i. 16 to 20. The accounts should, of course, be carefully compared. The result will be, surprise to find the same incident so very diversely narrated: but, in fact, St. Luke supplies everything which the two earlier Evangelists had omitted; and repeats scarcely anything which they had said.

See the notes on St. Matthew iv. 18.

- 3 And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

A convenient position,—in which our LORD is found to have delivered the parables contained in St. Matthew xiii. See the note on St. Mark iv. 1. He entered the Ship, and was upon the Sea, in order the better to fish for the men upon the shore: but He had His eye, specially, on the two noble pair of Brethren—whom He had already drawn to His side indeed, but not yet called to Apostleship.

Now when He had left speaking, He said ⁴ into Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

The Divine Speaker, "when He had left speaking," proceeded to confirm the Word *by signs following*. Compare what is said in the note prefixed to St. Matt. viii.—Observe, that the Second Adam was now about to exercise "dominion *over the fish of the Sea,*"—which was the first grant of empire which God gave to Man^a. "Thou hast put all things under His feet," says the Psalmist; (divinely applying to the Second Adam what was originally spoken of the First:)—"the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea^b."

And Simon answering said unto Him, ⁵ Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless, at Thy Word I will let down the net.

It is written,— "Sorrow may endure for a night, but Joy cometh in the morning^c."

Compare what is said concerning these same fishermen on another similar occasion,—St. John xi. 3 and 5, when *the second* miraculous draught of fishes took place: and doubt not, that on both occasions, the net was lowered in perfect faith.

^a See Genesis i. 26. ^b Psalm viii. 6, 8: quoted in Hebrews . 6 to 8.

^c Psalm xxx. 5.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes :

The net was lowered 'at CHRIST's Word:' and see the result! Obedience ever inherits a blessing. Compare the note on St. John ii. 7.

Consider further the mere worldly advantage of having *Him* for a guest and inmate! The Holy One who so multiplied the store at Cana, where He had been kindly entertained,—now showers down plenty upon the man from whose boat He had been teaching. The net breaks,—the ship sinks,—beneath the largeness of His bounty.

Was it not so with Obed-Edom, in whose house the Ark (the Symbol of His presence,) continued three months^d? Fared it not so with the Widow of Zarephath^e, and the Shunammite^f,—with whom Elijah and Elisha, (His chosen servants,) respectively, sojourned? Doubt not that so it ever is! Laban was blessed for his son-in-law Jacob's sake^g; and Potiphar, for his servant Joseph's^h: while God gave St. Paul all the 276 souls which sailed with himⁱ. A cup of cold water given, for the love of CHRIST, to the meanest of CHRIST'S Servants, shall in no wise lose its reward.

and their net brake.

Contrast this with what is said in St. John xxi.

^d 2 Samuel vi. 10 to 12.

^e 2 Kings iv. 8 to 17.

^f Gen. xxxix. 5.

^g 1 Kings xvii. 9 to 24.

^h Gen. xxx. 27.

ⁱ Acts xxvii. 24 and 37.

11,—“and for all there was so many, *yet was not the net broken* :” in which words of “the Disciple whom Jesus loved,” there seems to be a reference to the present place in St. Luke's Gospel.

“Their net *brake*,” yet the fish escaped not. Here was a double miracle,—as will be found pointed out in the latter part of the note on St. Mark i. 31.

Observe the last words of St. Matthew iv. 21,—and see the note there.

And they beckoned unto *their* partners, ⁷ which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them.

“*They* beckoned unto *their* partners :” for Andrew was in the ship, as well as Simon,—although his name is not mentioned.

Why did they *beckon* and not *call*? An ancient writer was of opinion that Peter used a sign, being unable to speak for astonishment. See ver. 9. They had doubtless never taken such a draught before.

And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

Every part of this miracle is *full* of wonder,—*full* of prophetic meaning. The entire incident may be regarded as a parable, or a prophecy, in action: so particularly related,—only because every particular has a deep symbolic import.—There were ‘two ships,’ as there were two

Churches, the Gentile and the Jewish; pursuing with one mind the same occupation; and both, we read, were filled. A great draught of fishes was however, only *then* captured, when the Net was let down at CHRIST'S Word:—the toil of the long dark night had been fruitless.—And did it not fare so in the Church's history?—The net was broken in consequence,—as at this day the Church is rent and torn by reason of our unhappy divisions: whereby, not only her Discipline gives way, but her unity is destroyed, and the safety of the souls within her is endangered; and yet they are not therefore lost. The ships moreover begin to sink; but they sink not,—for CHRIST is in them.

In all these respects, this miracle is to be compared with another prophetic incident,—namely, *the second* miraculous draught of fishes, related by St. John in the last chapter of his Gospel; and having obvious reference to the final destiny of the same Church, whose earthly progress is here depicted. On *this* occasion CHRIST sits on the unquiet waters;—on *that*, He is found, after His Resurrection, standing on the fixed, motionless shore. *Here*, the net is cast on either side; is drawn up into the ships; and is found to have taken fishes of every kind,—good and bad, large and small:—*there*, the net is cast “*on the right side;*” is drawn *to land*; and is found to be “full of *great* fishes” only. The number of them is moreover specified,—an hundred and fifty and

three; as if in allusion to *the number* of God's elect¹. *Here*, again, the net breaks; but *there*,—‘for all there were so many, yet *was not* the net broken.’ Observe, lastly, that on this first occasion, it was promised to St. Peter that he should “catch men;” that is, win Disciples, make converts, to CHRIST. On the second, he is commanded to “feed the sheep” of GOD;—that is, to tend the people already gathered into His pasture,—those who have already become ‘the sheep of His hand.’ . . . It is wrong,—at least it is dangerous and unwise,—to indulge in fanciful expositions of Holy Scripture; but how so many, and such striking points of contrast can be overlooked or disregarded, it is hard to understand. We may not be able to trace out the analogy of an incident like the present, in perfect detail: but shall we therefore fail to follow it out as far as we are able? Consider whether it is likely,—or rather, whether it is credible,—that so many minute particulars should be recorded without an object. Consider, next, the symbolic meaning attached by the SPIRIT to other events, in themselves strictly historical: as the history of Hagar and Sarah, in Galatians iv. 21 to 31. Lastly, compare these two miracles with the parable of the draw-net in St. Matthew xiii. 47 to 50: and *then*,—dull indeed must he be, and slow of heart, who can read the present narrative without the deepest conviction that it teems with hidden,

¹ See the Burial Service; and consider Rev. vii. 4 to 8, and xiv. 1.

symbolic teaching of the loftiest kind. Such, at least, has been the belief of the wisest and holiest in every age.

- 8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at JESUS' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O LORD.

Thus Peter, while spreading his own net for fish, is himself taken in the net which a Greater Fisherman has spread invisibly for *him*.

Compare the exclamation of the Widow of Zarephath to Elijah.—“What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance^k?”—Simon Peter, in like manner, becomes conscious of his sinfulness when he finds himself in the presence of God. Consider that saying of holy Job:—“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. *Wherefore I abhor myself*^l.” Consider also the following texts:—Judges vi. 22, 23: xiii. 22. Isaiah vi. 5. Daniel x. 16, 17.

Take notice, however, that the present miracle was in a singular manner, an appeal to the Disciples' *Faith*. Some fish they *expected* to catch; even many fish, they *hoped* for. But the draught was excessive, — and ‘their hearts burned within them^m,’—and something whispered Simon Peter, ‘*It is the LORD*ⁿ!’

^k 1 Kings xvii. 18.

^m St. Luke xxiv. 32.

^l Job xlii. 5, 6.

ⁿ Compare St. John xxi. 7

For he was astonished, and all that were 9
with him, at the draught of the fishes which
they had taken :

Andrew, namely; and probably "hired ser-
vants,"—as in the boat which belonged to the sons
of Zebedee. See St. Mark i. 20,—where the
note may be consulted.

and so *was* also James, and John, the 10
sons of Zebedee, which were partners with
Simon.

And JESUS said unto Simon, Fear not ;
from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Rather,—From henceforth thou shalt take in
thy net [not fishes, but] men, alive ! Capture
them, that is, not for death, but *for life*. Thou
shalt draw men by the net of the Gospel, out of
the gloomy and troubled waters of this Life, into
the Region of Eternal Day; (for CHRIST calls
men "out of Darkness," as the same St. Peter
elsewhere says, "into His marvellous Light °:")
where Angels shall gather the good into vessels,
—Angels, who are already expecting their ar-
rival on the shore !—See St. Matthew xiii. 48, 49.

The prophecy here delivered, began to be ful-
filled on the first Christian Day of Pentecost,—
when, after St. Peter's sermon, "the same day,
there were added unto them about *three thousand*
souls P." See the note on St. Matthew iv. 19.

° 1 St. Peter ii. 9.

P Acts ii. 41.

But notwithstanding the prominence given to the fisher's craft, on the present and other occasions, by our LORD Himself;—notwithstanding, also, its aptness to represent the great object of ministerial desire,—namely, to win many souls to CHRIST; for which the servant toils patiently and long, yet knows not what success His Master will give him! :—the heart of Christendom has yet preferred another figure, almost to the exclusion of *this*—pronouncing with one mouth that she loves best to behold in him who has the cure of souls, an image 'of the Good *Shepherd*,'—who gave His Life for the sheep! It is the charge which Simon Peter received after the *second* miraculous draught of fishes,—(to "feed the flock of God,"—His 'sheep' and His 'lambs,'—) which has thrown this earlier promise and appellation into the shade. The elder Covenant, like the Gospel, recognises *both* images. See Ezekiel xxxiv., and xlvii. 9, 10.

- 11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.

He knows nothing of Human Nature who thinks that these men forsook little, when they followed CHRIST. They forsook all they had,—

¶ Compare 1 St. Peter v. 2, with St. John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

¶ St. Paul himself set the example of this preference. See Acts xx. 28. The early Christians however seem to have been very fond of the symbol of a *fish*,—using it oftener perhaps than any other, on their signets. Consider the note on St. John v. 2.

all they loved, and cared for. They even forsook *hemselves*.

And it came to pass, when he was in 12
a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy :
who seeing JESUS, fell on *his* face, and be-
ought Him, saying, LORD, if Thou wilt,
Thou canst make me clean.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St.
Matthew viii. 2, and St. Mark i. 40.

And He put forth *His* hand, and touched 13
him, saying, I will : be thou clean.

Contrast the manner of this cure with that
performed on Miriam. "Moses cried unto the
LORD, saying, *Heal her now*, O God, I beseech
Thee." But our SAVIOUR "spake,—and it was
done." Contrast also the manner of Elijah's
miracles:—1 Kings xvii. 21 : xviii. 36, 37 : St.
James v. 17, 18, (which it is instructive to com-
pare with 1 Kings xvii. 1, and xviii. 42 to 45:) &c.

"I will;"—*that* is the saying of God,—and
of GOD only ; the saying of Him, whose Almighty
Will is the cause of all things. When His ser-
vants wrought Miracles, far different was the
phrase they used. See Genesis xli. 16,—where
Joseph says, "It is not *in me* : GOD shall give
Pharaoh an answer of peace." Compare also
Daniel ii. 30 ; and above all, Acts iii. 6 and 12.

And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

Leprosy,—the most hideous of all disorders, and by man's art known to be incurable,—was the type of Sin. To touch a leper was to incur pollution^t: not because the malady was in itself contagious; but to convince men of the deep defilement of that more terrible malady of the soul, of which Leprosy was the type. Observe, however, that when our LORD would cleanse one who was “*full of leprosy,*” He did it by His *touch*; and it was to teach men that as Sin had no place in Him, so could no defilement pass upon Him either. Disease could not vex the second Adam; who had taken upon Himself our Human Nature, indeed, but *not our fallen Human Nature*. He came into the world to “take our Infirmities and bear our Sicknesses,” as an Evangelist^u,—interpreting, not quoting, the words of a Prophet^x,—has declared: but He bore them like a burthen,—without participation, and without pollution; because “in Him,” as in a Fountain, “was LIFE^y.”

See the first note on St. Mark i. 41.

“This King's *Touch*” (says Leighton) “cures all sorts of Diseases. It did so while He walked in a low, despised condition on Earth; and it does so still by that virtual Divine Power, now

^t Leviticus v. 3.

^u St. Matth. viii. 17.

^x Isaiah liii. 4.

^y St. John i. 4.

that He is in Heaven. And although His Glory there is greater, His Compassion is not less than when He was here; and His compassion always was, and is, directed much more to souls diseased, than to bodies, as they are better and more valuable."

And He charged him to tell no man : but ¹⁴ Go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

This seems to mean that when the priests had admitted the cleansing to be complete, and accepted the offerings prescribed on such occasions by the Law², those offerings would remain for ever, an abiding witness or testimony against them, if they presumed still to deny the claims of JESUS of Nazareth to be the promised MESSIAH.

Or it may mean that the offerings would be a testimony of our SAVIOUR'S observance of the Law.

But so much the more went there a fame ¹⁵ abroad of Him : and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He withdrew Himself ¹⁶ into the Wilderness, and prayed.

On this, an ancient Bishop remarks,—“Our REDEMER performed His Miracles by day, and

² Leviticus xiv. 10, 21, 22.

passed the night in Prayer; hinting to perfect preachers that as they should not entirely desert the active Life from love of contemplation, neither should they despise the joys of contemplation from an excess of activity; but, in silent thought, imbibe that which they might afterwards give back in words to their neighbours."

- 17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem: and the Power of the LORD was *present* to heal them.

To heal *whom*? The Pharisees and Doctors of the Law? Clearly not. The truth is, the whole scene rose up before the Evangelist, while he wrote; so that he used the word "*them*" with reference to the many sick persons who (as he knew) had been brought to our SAVIOUR on this occasion, and were waiting for an opportunity of being healed. Concerning the cures which He may have now wrought on those other persons, we hear nothing. Our attention is called, in the next and following verses, to the case of a poor suffering Paralytic; who, because he came late, was debarred the usual mode of access to the Great Physician. He doubtless thought himself singularly unfortunate, in consequence. He little knew the blessedness which awaited him: little

suspected, that his obstacle was to turn out the very occasion and instrument of God's Glory, and his own greatest good! See the note on St. Matthew ii. 16; and the second note on St. Mark v. 24 and 35.

On that expression, "the Power of the LORD was present to heal,"—see chap. vi. 19.

And, behold, men brought in a bed a 18 man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before Him.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark ii. 3.

And when they could not find by what 19 way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop,

Which was easily done, in a country like Palestine, where there is commonly a flight of steps *outside* the House; and where the roof (or housetop,) is usually flat,—so as to be a convenient place for discourse^a, for walking^b, or for prayer^c; and furnished with a battlement or parapet^d, at the extremity.

- But *how* exactly the four men^e who bore the paralytic, performed the act next described,—see St. Mark ii. 4,—the present writer has never

^a 1 Sam. ix. 25.

^b 2 Sam. xi. 2.

^c Acts x. 9.

^d Deut. xxii. 8.

^e See St. Mark ii. 3.

seen quite accounted for: nor do recent travellers in Palestine explain it satisfactorily. There seems to have been something peculiar in the construction of this particular house.

and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch into the midst before JESUS.

Truly, "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force^f."

Our Countryman, Bede, says beautifully,— "Oftentimes, amid the very sweetnesses of secret prayer, and, as it may be called, the pleasant converse with GOD, a crowd of thoughts, disturbing the clear vision of the mind, shuts out CHRIST from its sight. Let us not, then, remain in the lowest ground, where the crowds are bustling; but aim at the roof of the House,—that is, the sublimity of the Holy Scriptures, and meditate on the Law of the LORD!"

20 And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

What is required of persons to receive Forgiveness of sins? Repentance, whereby they forsake Sin; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God.—Why then was this man forgiven, since, by reason of his helplessness and infirmity, he could give no signs of either Faith or Repentance? Because he promised them both,

^f St. Matthew xi. 12.

y his four sureties,—see St. Mark ii. 3 ;—which promise, as soon as he was able, himself was bound to perform.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark ii. 3 and 5 : also on St. John v. 7.

Take notice that this man had put up no petition : but his palsied body told his need ; while his action was a loud and earnest prayer.

And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies ? Who can forgive sins, but God alone ?

See the note on St. Mark ii. 7.

They wanted “an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace given ;” and our LORD was prepared to grant them all they wanted. Theirs, however, was not the weak Faith, which timidly asks for a sign ; but the obdurate temper which resists every appeal. These men were secretly charging our LORD with Blasphemy, and sneering at His prudence in setting up a claim to powers spiritual and unseen. Whence, it follows,—

But when JESUS perceived their thoughts, 22 he answering said unto them, What reason have ye in your hearts ? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Rise up and walk ?

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

That is,—to utter words which lead to visible consequences, or to utter words which are meant to disturb the visible course of Nature. Our LORD does not compare *the acts* themselves, but the safety of claiming the power to perform them.

The Reader is referred to the notes on Mark's Gospel,—ii. 8 and 9.

- 24 But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon Earth to forgive sins, (I said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and come into thine house.

Because it is easier to deliver a saying, than to perform a miracle, our LORD proceeds to exhibit a stupendous act of Almighty Power. See the notes on St. Mark ii. 10 and 11.

- 25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

Well had it been prophesied of the day of the MESSIAH,—“Strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees &!” . . . See the notes on St. Mark ii. 12.

“That whereon he lay;”—for it was a couch, or pallet, and could hardly be called a bed.—He departed in the direction of his home

& Isaiah xxxv. 3.

but the crowd was excessive,—see ver. 19. The wondering assembly must therefore have fallen back, and made way for the man: *fear* helping to do what amazement would hardly have effected. For the Evangelist proceeds,—

And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

The remarks which have been already made on the call of Levi, (that is, of St. Matthew,) in St. Mark's Gospel,—chap. ii. 14,—are so entirely applicable to this place, that the Reader may be simply referred thither.

Like St. Mark, the present Evangelist hastens on to give an account of the great feast which St. Matthew made, long after, to his Divine Master. See the note above referred to; and compare the note on St. Matthew ix. 9.

And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of Publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30 But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against His Disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with Publicans and Sinners ?

Concerning the Scribes, see the note on St. Mark iii. 22 : and concerning the " Publicans and Sinners," see the note on St. Mark ii. 15.

31 And JESUS answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a Physician ;
 32 but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

See the notes on St. Mark ii. 17.

" A great encouragement to *sinner*s," writes Leighton, " but no encouragement at all to *sin*. He came to call sinners ; but it was to call them to *Repentance*. If thou bring thy sins to JESUS CHRIST, as thy malady and misery, to be cured of them, and delivered from them,—it is well : but to come with them as thy beloved darlings and delight, thinking still to retain *them*, and to receive *Him*, thou mistakest Him grossly, and miserably deludest thyself. The great Redemption He wrought, was, to separate our hearts and Sin. We know Him not, if we take it otherwise. And this says clearly, that though He hath come to us, and stretched forth His hands long among us—few of us are come to Him. Oh, how few have trod on the neck of their beloved sin to come to JESUS CHRIST !"

And they said unto Him, Why do the ³³ Disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees ; but Thine eat and drink ?

See the notes on St. Mark ii. 18.

And He said unto them, Can ye make the ³⁴ children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them ? But the days ³⁵ will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

The reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark ii. 19, 20 ; and should take notice that these words of the ' Bridegroom ' Himself, explain why Holy Church directs her children to interrupt their Lent Fast on Sundays ; and to regard all Sundays and Saints' Days in the Year, as Feasts. ' The children of the Bride-chamber ' cannot fast when the Bridegroom is presented to their notice ; either in His own Person, or glorified in the persons of His Saints.

And He spake also a parable unto them ; ³⁶ No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old ; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

On these words, some remarks have been already offered in the note on St. Mark ii. 21.

Two inconveniences are specified: the new piece causeth a rent in the old garment; and the old garment disliketh the new piece. Having thus briefly pointed out the twofold evil which would have resulted from the course which the Scribes and Pharisees recommended, our Blessed LORD proceeds to discourse of that evil, more in detail: shewing, by two several examples, the mischief of imparting a body of new Doctrines to men who had been brought up in an entirely different system. First, He shews the fatal consequence of such a proceeding.

- 37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall
38 perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

The reader is again referred to the notes on St. Mark's Gospel,—ii. 22. By a further striking saying, which is peculiar to St. Luke, our LORD shews the reluctance with which men, accustomed to the Ceremonial Law, would receive the Gospel of the Kingdom.

- 39 No man also having drunk old *wine* straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

Our LORD's Discourse may be said to conclude

with three short *Parables*. See the first words of ver. 36. It is worth observing that *Doctrine* is here again compared to *Wine*^b: but whereas, in the former instance, *the danger* of hastily imparting new Truths to persons not duly prepared to receive them, was spoken of;—a danger which arises out of the nature of the thing imparted: in this place, allusion is made to *the obstacle* presented by the Receiver himself. Men, by the very law of their constitution, prefer that which is old to that which is new. And to this natural disposition of His creatures, He who 'knew what was in Man,' is content to make His solemn and instructive appeal.

This, therefore, furnishes another reason for the progressive course which our LORD was pursuing towards His Disciples; and of which we have so many notices in the Gospels. Thus, in the last days of His Ministry, He could say, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now¹." He had discoursed of 'earthly things,' and men 'believed not:': how should they believe if He told them of 'heavenly things^k?' He spake the Word to the people, therefore, at all times, '*as they were able to bear it*^l.'

As the Master had acted, so did the Disciple. St. Paul was careful to feed the Christians of Corinth 'with milk, and not with meat,'—because he found them 'not able to bear it^m.' Towards his

^b See the fourth note on St. John ii. 11. ¹ St. John xvi. 12.
^k St. John iii. 12. ^l St. Mark iv. 33. ^m 1 Cor. iii. 12.

Hebrew converts, he was content to pursue like course; remarking that 'strong meat is given to them that are of full age^a.' And do these hints have been set on eternal record for our guidance in the communication of Truth.

The Prayer.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, send down unto us the increase of Faith, and Charity; and, that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to do that which Thou dost command; through the merits of **JESUS CHRIST** our **LORD**. Amen.

^a Hebr. v. 12, 13, 14.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

¹ CHRIST *reprooeth the Pharisees' blindness about the observation of the Sabbath, by Scripture, Reason, and Miracle: 13 chooseth twelve Apostles: 17 healeth the diseased: 20 preacheth to His Disciples before the people, of blessings and curses: 27 how we must love our enemies: 46 and join the obedience of good works to the hearing of the Word: lest in the evil day of temptation we fall, like an house built upon the fuce of the earth, without any foundation.*

VI. AND it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first,

The particular Sabbath which St. Luke here speaks of, is not known: but it was one which fell somewhere about the Passover-season,—for, as we see,) the corn was ripe. See the note on t. Mark ii. 23. It came to pass at such a time,

that He went through the corn fields; and His Disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath days?

And JESUS answering them said, 3

See how kindly he takes their part,—answering

their enemies for them! He is ever thus toward those who put their trust in Him: "hiding them privily *by His presence* from the provoking of men; keeping them secretly in His Tabernacle from the strife of tongues*." He said,—

Have ye not read so much as this, which David did, when himself was an hungry man, and they which were with him; how they went into the House of God, and did eat and drink, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the Priests alone? He said unto them, that The Son of Man also of the Sabbath.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew ii. 23 to 28, concerning this entire transaction. A few more notes will be found in the corresponding place of St. Matthew's Gospel,—to 8. A mighty miracle next comes before

And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him.

See the notes on St. Mark iii. 1 and

* Psalm xxxi. 22.

St. Matthew here supplies what St. Luke omits. See St. Matth. xii. 11 and 12, with the notes thereon.

But He knew their thoughts, and said to 8 the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said JESUS unto 9 them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy *it*? And 10 looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with 11 madness; and communed one with another what they might do to JESUS.

It must suffice once more to refer the Reader to the notes on St. Mark iii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

And it came to pass in those days, that 12 He went out into a mountain to pray; and continued all night in prayer to God.

Compare this remarkable disclosure with what St. Mark says,—chap. i. ver. 35; and take notice that on *that* occasion, our Divine Master prepared Himself by prolonged Prayer for His First great Ministerial Journey^b: on *this*, for the solemn Call

^b Recorded in St. Mark i. 39,—St. Matthew iv. 23,—St. Luke iv. 44.

of His Twelve Apostles, which was to take place on the morrow,—as it is said in the next verse. How are we taught hereby, in what manner to commence any work of piety,—to prepare ourselves for any great undertaking! And how severe a rebuke is it to our short and lifeless devotions, thus to read of *Him* who “continued *all night* in prayer to GOD!” Compare also St. Matthew xiv. 23, or St. Mark vi. 46.

But did the SON of GOD *require* the aid and support of Prayer? This form of putting the question is apt to mislead us: for thereby the attention is called away from the *whole Person* of CHRIST, to His *Divine Nature*,—in respect of which, He was One with the FATHER; and therefore, Himself the Source of all Spiritual Strength. But doubtless, as the *Son of Man*,—as THE WORD ‘made flesh,’—our SAVIOUR prayed for supplies of Grace, and obtained them in answer to His Prayers. Consider St. Luke xxii. 42, 44; and St. Matthew xxvii. 46. We may never overlook the entire reality of our LORD’s Human Nature: never so maintain the Truth of His Godhead, as to shew ourselves forgetful of the Truth of His Manhood. When we think of His Humanity, let us conceive of it as of the sinless Humanity of Adam *before the Fall*; and we shall not err.

If any do prefer, in the Prayers of CHRIST, the Head, chiefly to behold a living Pattern, and perpetual Reproof to ourselves, His Members,—we

object not. For our imitation, doubtless, in great part, these mysterious scenes were set on eternal record. But our LORD'S Prayers may not be regarded as an *unreal* thing; offered up, as well as recorded, for *Man's* sake,—rather than for *His own*.

And when it was day, He called *unto Him* 13 His Disciples: and of them He chose Twelve, whom also He named Apostles:

“*He chose:*”—but in Acts x. 41, the Apostles are said to have been “*chosen by God.*” And,—“*He called:*”—but in St. John xvii. 6, 9, 12, they are said to have been *given to Him by the FATHER*. Is it not true, that after Guidance has been effectually sought by earnest Prayer to God, the work on which we are about to engage becomes not *ours*, but *His*?

“*Twelve,*”—for the reason mentioned in the first note on St. Mark iii. 14. These “*He ordained,*” (St. Mark says) “*that He might send them forth to preach.*” Hence their title of “*Apostle,*”—a word which denotes “*One sent forth;*” and is translated *Messenger* in Philippians ii. 25.—Compare Haggai i. 13, and Malachi ii. 7.

The successors of the *Apostles* are called *Bishops*; and those titles were at first indifferently used, as appears by a comparison of Philippians ii. 25 with 1 Timothy iii. 1; but, in process of time, the term “*Apostles*” became restricted to the Twelve. Let

• St. Mark iii. 14.

it be noted however that these great Ambassadors of CHRIST had a special dignity of their own:—(1st.) as being *immediately called* by CHRIST Himself:—(2ndly) as being *infallibly guided*:—(3rdly) as being *universally charged*; (that is, having a general commission to do all things pertaining to the Ministry of Salvation, in all places, and towards all persons:)—(4thly) as being *miraculously gifted* with the skill of speaking all languages,—with the knowledge of all secrets,—with the power of confirming their doctrine by signs and miracles,—and of imparting the like spiritual gifts to others by the Imposition of their hands. In all these respects, they had not, and could not have, Successors. Descent, (or, as it is called, *Succession*,) supplies in the present day the place of the first: *their own Writings*, of the second: *a several See*, of the third: *Schools and Universities*, of the last.

But then, besides these special and peculiar *Gifts*, they had a solemn *Office*; namely, they were Church Governors, appointed to order and settle the affairs of CHRIST'S Spiritual Kingdom; and therein, (beside the preaching of the Gospel and baptizing, common to them with other Ministers,) to ordain a succession of the great Governors of the Church. In *this* respect, (in respect of their *Office*, namely,) they had,—they must needs have had,—Successors; and to those Successors we give the name of *Bishops*.

¹⁴ Simon, (whom He also named Peter,)

and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and 15 Thomas, James the *son* of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* 16 of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

These twelve great names will be found remarked upon, at some length, in the notes on St. Mark's Gospel,—iii. 16 to 19: whither the Reader is referred.—“Surely,” (says Leighton,) “of all that ever lived on earth, the most blessed was this handful and small company which our LORD chose for His constant attendants,—to see His Divine Miracles,—to enjoy His sweetest society,—and to hear His Divine Doctrine. What a holy flame of Love must have burned in their hearts,—who were always so near the Sun of Righteousness!”

And He came down with them, and stood 17 in the plain,

Not “*the plain*,” but “a plain (that is, *a level spot* :” for our LORD was upon a Mountain. What follows, is St. Luke's shorter version of the “Sermon on the Mount,” (as the Discourse in St. Matthew v., vi., and vii., is called): and this is much to be noted, for it reminds us that the statements in St. Matthew and St. Luke are to be attentively compared throughout.

and the company of His Disciples, and a

great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear Him, 18 and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and 19 they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him: for there went virtue out of Him, and healed *them* all.

Concerning the places enumerated above, in verse 17, the Reader may consult the notes on St. Matthew iv. 24, 25; and St. Mark iii. 8.—On the statement in ver. 19, he is requested to read the notes on St. Mark v. 31. The Sermon on the Mount begins at this place.

20 And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed *be ye* poor: for your's is the Kingdom of God.

We have sometimes seen it pointed out that since, in St. Matthew, (v. 3), we find "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*,"—not Poverty of Estate, but Lowliness of Heart, has here the promise of a Blessing.

But let no one be so cruel as to rob the poor man of his Inheritance, (as this most precious promise may be called,) by seeking thus to explain it away. "I hold it for a most infallible rule, in Expositions of Sacred Scripture," (says Hooker,) "that where a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst." Now, 'a

literal construction will stand' *here*;—is in strict keeping with our LORD's other recorded sayings; (as, St. Luke xviii. 24, 25: St. Matthew xix. 23, 24;)—and is *required* by what follows in ver. 24. It is not hard to see how conducive to Holiness is a lowly Estate; how many helps it affords to the practice of Piety; from how many snares it defends a man. *Then* only are the "poor" in their possessions not "blessed," when they are covetous in their dispositions: *not* "rich in Faith." But Poverty cheerfully submitted to and patiently endured, is doubtless full of Blessedness,—will certainly inherit a blessing. Consider, by all means, 2 Cor. vi. 10: and St. James ii. 5,—where there seems to be a reference to the present place. See also the note on St. Matt. v. 3.

Blessed *are ye* that hunger now: for ye 21 shall be filled.

An excellent living Writer supposes that among the multitude addressed by our LORD, there may have been many who were actually suffering Hunger, in consequence of their long attendance on His footsteps: and he refers to St. Matth. xiv. 15, and xv. 32. So that the paraphrase of our LORD's words would run thus:—"Blessed are ye, whose Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness leads you patiently to endure bodily Hunger, while you follow Me: for ye shall be filled with Bread from Heaven^d."

^d St. John vi. 32 to 35.

Blessed *are ye* that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

“In the eye of Heaven,” says an ancient Bishop “Blessedness begins at the point which, in human estimation, is reckoned the extreme of Misery. See St. John xvi. 20 to 22.—Of our Blessed Lord it is stated twice, that He hungered^e; and twice that He thirsted^f; three times it is said that He “wept^g.” It is not once recorded that He *smiled*

22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you *from the company*, and shall reproach you, and call out your name as evil, for the Son of Man sake.

“Separate you;”—that is, from their Religious Assemblies; as in St. John ix. 22, 34: xii. See especially St. John xvi. 2.

“Your Name:”—that is, the name of “Christian^h.” See St. Matthew xxiv. 9.—St. Peter (who heard our LORD pronounce the words in text,)—alludes to them in his first Epistle:—14, and 16. So also may St. James be thought to do, in ver. 7 of his second chapter; when previous allusion to St. Luke vi. 20, (already citedⁱ), is considered.

^e St. Matthew iv. 2: xxi. 18.

^f St. John iv. 6, 7: xii.

^g St. Luke xix. 41. St. John xi. 35. Hebrews v. 7.

^h Which was a *very* early appellation. See Acts xi. xxvi. 28.

ⁱ See above, the end of the note on ver. 20.

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy : 23
for, behold, your reward is great in Heaven :
for in the like manner did their fathers unto
the Prophets.

But woe unto you that are rich ! 24

It is obvious that Poverty and Riches, in the literal sense of those words, are here spoken of: see above, on ver. 20. And consider St. Mark x. 23, 24: and St. James v. 1. But our LORD does not, of course, denounce "Woe" on persons simply because they are rich, (as He denounces it on the Pharisees, in St. Matthew xxiii. 13 to 16). Nor does He denounce *woe*, at all; but rather says, "*Alas!* for you that are rich: " (which is the force of "Woe" in St. Matthew xxiv. 19;)

for ye have received your consolation.

"For ye that, trusting in your riches, and accounting them sufficient for your Happiness, neglect the spiritual treasures which I offer you, —may be assured that you have received all your enjoyment in this world, and have no ground for expecting any in the world to come." Verses 22 and 23 may be compared with St. Matthew v. 11, 12; where see the notes. In connexion with verse 24, recollect the words of Abraham addressed to Lazarus,—St. Luke xvi. 25.

Woe unto you that are full ! for ye shall 25
hunger.

"For ye that are full of earthly good things,

are in imminent peril of not desiring anything better. And all such shall one day find the want of both heavenly and earthly goods."

The Parable of Lazarus is again brought to our remembrance by these solemn sayings. Consider how the Rich Man, who had "fared sumptuously every day," being in torments, prayed that a drop of water might be sent to "cool his tongue^k!"

Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

"Alas; for as many of you as spend all your lives in careless and ungodly mirth. For the portion of all such is the place of torment."

26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Thus "Woe" has been four times denounced,—corresponding with the four proclamations of "Blessed" which preceded. What was "said to them of old time,"—and which St. Matthew gives next, (v. 21 to 43),—is in a great measure suppressed by St. Luke: with reference however to all that he omits, he proceeds with the word "But:"

27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

^k St. Luke xvi. 24.

In conformity with which precept of her LORD, the Church, in her liturgy, directs us to pray for "our enemies, persecutors and slanderers." Compare the words of the text; with St. Matthew v. 44, and see the note there.

We are not to think that the Prophets,—as David, throughout the Book of Psalms,—violate the spirit of this precept. Their imprecations are against *GOD'S* enemies; not against their own. Those awful words in Psalm cix., for instance, which shock the carnal ear, (ver. 6 to 13), prove to have been words "*which the HOLY GHOST by the mouth of David, spake concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took JESUS*!" If, therefore, David "devoteth his enemies to destruction," (as it is said in the heading of Psalm lxi.)—he is found, throughout, to speak prophetically, in the person of CHRIST^m. Or again, they are his own enemies, only because they are the enemies of God, and His Church: whether "flesh and bloodⁿ,"—(as when David prays to be delivered "out of the hand of the *wicked*, out of the hand of the *unrighteous* and *cruel man*^o:"") or the *Spiritual* Enemies of Man's Salvation.

And unto him that smiteth thee on the 29 *one* cheek, offer also the other; and him that

¹ Acts i. 16: and see ver. 20.

^m Compare verse 4 of that Psalm, with St. John xv. 25:—ver. 9, with St. John ii. 17, and Romans xv. 3:—ver. 21, with St. John xix. 29:—ver. 25, with Acts i. 20. ⁿ Ephes. vi. 12.

^o Ps. lxxi. 4.

30 taketh away thy cloke, forbid not to take
 30 coat also. Give to every man that aske
 thee ; and of him that taketh away thy
 31 ask *them* not again. And as ye would
 men should do to you, do ye also to
 likewise.

Concerning verses 29 and 30, the Reader
 referred to the notes on St. Matthew v. 41 and
 Compare verse 31 with St. Matthew vii. 12
 see the note there.

32 For if ye love them which love you,
 thank have ye? for sinners also love
 33 that love them. And if ye do good to
 which do good to you, what thank have
 34 for sinners also do even the same. If
 ye lend to *them* of whom ye hope to receive,
 what thank have ye? for sinners also
 to sinners, to receive as much again.

Verses 32 to 34 should be compared
 St. Matthew v. 46, 47,—where see the
 St. Matthew, instead of “sinners,” says
 “licans;” concerning whom see the note
 Mark ii. 15.—“What thank have ye?” (for
 St. Matthew^p gives “What *reward* have
 signifies,—What favour can ye expect
 hands of God?)

35 But love ye your enemies, and do

^p St. Matthew v. 46.

and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the Children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye ³⁶ herefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

These verses are illustrated by St. Matthew v. 4, 45, and 48; and should be compared with them.

It will be perceived that the entire contents of St. Matthew vi. are omitted in this part of St. Luke's Gospel. It is because St. Luke intended to supply the sayings which St. Matthew there records, later,—when the same Divine Speaker repeated the self-same sayings, or the like of them. This method of the Evangelists tends to the enriching of the Gospel Treasury, and is full of instruction and delight.

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: ³⁷ condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good ³⁸ measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

Compare verses 37 and 38 with St. Matthew ii. 1 and 2; (where see the notes;) and observe

how useful the later Gospel is in completing the sense of the earlier one. But our LORD does not say "*shall men give.*" His words "[they] shall give," probably signify only "shall be given:" just as "[they] require," in St. Luke xii. 20, is Englished,—"*shall be required.*" Where the vest is large and loose, as in the East it is, corn may be carried in the bosom. See Ps. lxxix. 12, and xxxv. 13.

- 39 And He spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both
40 fall into the ditch? The Disciple is not above his Master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.

That is,—Greater Virtue cannot be expected in the Disciple than was displayed by the Master. Strictly to resemble his Master, is the praise of a perfect Disciple.

But besides this,—No keenness of spiritual discernment can be looked for in the blind. Whence it follows,—

- 41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy Brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Consider the conduct of Judah, when he passed sentence on Tamar,—Genesis xxxviii. 24: and, still more remarkably, of David, when 'Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb caused him to be his own

idge¹. How many men come under the censure of the present passage!

Take notice in how marked a manner, Sin is here (verses 39 to 42,) spoken of as something which blinds the eye; and blocks up the door at which Knowledge chiefly enters. Surely an apt figure! since *To see GOD*, is the blessing promised to the pure in heart²: while correct *spiritual discernment* is often spoken of as the privilege of the just³. Little sins are *motes*,—which slightly impair the faculty of vision: great sins are *beams*,—which entirely destroy it. He therefore that lives in Sin walks in Darkness. Consider the constancy of the Sacred Imagery, by a reference to such places as the following,—St. Matth. vi. 22, 23, (where see the notes); xv. 14: St. John iii. 19, 20: ix. 39 to 41: 2 Cor. iv. 4: 2 St. Peter i. 9: St. John ii. 9 and 11, &c.

Either how canst thou say to thy Brother, 42 Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

The Reader is requested to read the remarks

¹ 2 Sam. xii. See the heading of that Chapter.

² St. Matth. v. 8,—with which compare 1 St. John iii. 2, 3.

³ St. John vii. 17. Ps. xix. 8. Ecclesiasticus xxi. 11.

already offered on this verse, in the notes on St. Matthew vii. 5. Our LORD is shewing that *he* "is not a good man who, although he reproves others for their faults, does bad actions himself." He proceeds therefore to say,—‘For there is no good tree which bringeth forth bad fruit.’ or, as it is here rendered,—

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit ; neither doth a corrupt tree bring
44 forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather
45 they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good ; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil : for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 And why call ye Me, LORD, LORD, and do not the things which I say ?

For if God be our absolute LORD,—we, His vassals,—*He* has a right to require our service : *we* are bound to do what He commands. To cry ‘LORD, LORD,’—and not ‘to do the things which He says,’—is to deny, even while we confess Him.

Concerning verses 43 and 44, see the notes on St. Matthew vii. 18 and 16. Verse 45 recurs in St. Matthew xii. 35. Compare verse 46 with St. Matthew vii. 21,—and see the notes there.

Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth 47
 My sayings, and doeth them, I will shew
 you to whom he is like: he is like a man 48
 which built an house, and digged deep, and
 laid the foundation on a rock: and when the
 flood arose, the stream beat vehemently
 upon that house, and could not shake it:
 for it was founded upon a rock.

But he that heareth, and doeth not, is 49
 like a man that without a foundation built
 an house upon the earth; against which the
 stream did beat vehemently, and immedi-
 ately it fell; and the ruin of that house was
 great.

Take notice, that there was nothing to dis-
 tinguish these two Houses outwardly. Both
 were fair to view. The difference lay entirely in
 the foundation on which they were respectively
 built;—the one, piled up on the soft and yielding
 earth, or rather on the shifting and unsteady
 sand; (which was no foundation at all): the other,
 based on the solid rock.

The three preceding verses have been discussed
 at such length in the notes on St. Matthew,—vii.
 24 to 27,—that it shall suffice to refer the Reader
 back to the earlier Gospel. But it may be worth
 pointing out that the short clause in ver. 48, pe-
 culiar to St. Luke,—“*and digged deep,*”—derives
 singular illustration from what is the practice to

this day, in Palestine. A recent Traveller, describing the house of stone in which he lodged, at Nazareth says, that the owner, "in order to lay the foundations, had dug down to the solid rock,—as is usual throughout the country,—on this occasion, *to the depth of thirty feet.*"

And thus ends the 'Sermon on the Mount:—for a short review of which, the Reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew vii. 27. "Others may grow stale," (exclaims pious Leighton,) "but this Sermon, never so often read over, is always new. Oh, how full of Divine Doctrine! How plain, and yet how high and excellent; delighting the soul, as a bright Day,—clear all along! Our SAVIOUR begins with that great point which all are concerned in, and all naturally someway desirous to know,—the Doctrine of Blessedness: and the rest of His Discourse follows out the same argument, directing the way to Happiness in the graces of Purity, Meekness, Mercy."

The Prayer.

LORD, we pray Thee that Thy Grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE SEVENTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

1 CHRIST findeth a greater Faith in the Centurion, a Gentile, than in any of the Jews : 10 healeth his Servant being absent : 11 raiseth from Death the Widow's Son at Nain : 19 answereth John's messengers with the declaration of His Miracles : 24 testifieth to the people what opinion He held of John : 30 inveigheth against the Jews, who with neither the manners of John nor of JESUS could be won : 36 and sheweth by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how He is a friend to sinners, not to maintain them in sins, but to forgive them their sins, upon their Faith and Repentance.

VII. Now when He had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum.

THIS was after the 'Sermon in the Mount,'—contained in the preceding Chapter. The Reader referred to the note on St. Matthew viii. 1, and the beginning of the note on verse 2.

And a certain Centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

The narrative which follows, is to be compared carefully, throughout, with the corresponding nar-

rative in St. Matthew's Gospel,—viii. 5 to 13. It will be seen, first of all, that the notice of the love which the Roman Soldier bore towards his Slave is peculiar to this Gospel.

The Centurion was a Proselyte to the Jewish Religion. The Religion of Heathen Rome had failed, (as well it might!), to supply the wants of such a spirit as his. He had been guided to embrace the purest system of all which existed in his day; and "the Father of Mercies and God of all comfort"^a left him not without further light; but first guided him to the knowledge, and now brought him into the very presence of Him, who is the LIGHT Itself.

The Centurion's Servant was "ready to die:" the daughter of Jairus was just dead^b: the widow of Nain's Son was on the way to burial^c: Lazarus had been lying in the grave four days^d. Almighty Power is no less required to dispel the beginnings of Illness, than to raise a dead corpse to life.

3 And when he heard of JESUS, he sent unto Him the Elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his Servant.

The Roman Centurion sent *Jewish* Elders to CHRIST, probably because he conceived that it would be more acceptable to Him to be addressed by persons of His own Nation;—as well as a

^a 2 Cor. i. 3.

^b St. Matthew ix. 18.

^c See below, ver. 12.

^d St. John xi. 39.

more respectful proceeding to approach One of such surpassing sanctity through the Ministers of Religion. As for coming in person,—he stood so low in his own estimation, that he thought himself unworthy to draw near. A further explanation why his choice may have fallen on these particular persons is supplied by the circumstance stated in the 5th verse;—namely, because he had himself built the Synagogue of Capernaum,—in which they probably ministered.

And when they came to JESUS, they besought Him instantly, saying, 'That he was worthy for whom He should do this: For he loveth our Nation, and he hath built us a Synagogue.

It is marvellous how much of individual *character* is revealed by these short Bible narratives. Not only had the Centurion a '*Faith* which could move mountains,' but a burning *Love* was his also. It was not to obtain his own, but his Servant's cure,—the cure of a *sick Slave*,—that he had laboriously contrived this solemn embassy of Jewish Elders; and in the next verse, we shall find that he further sent to CHRIST a deputation of his "friends." We scarcely need the assurance (in ver. 2) that the Centurion *loved* the servant for whom he was prepared to do so much! It further appears that he had proved the strength of his love towards the Jewish people by the

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

munificent act recorded in verse 5. two incidents put together, remind Centurion was one of those noble look out beyond themselves, for opp Liberality : or, (if you will,) one of sistent characters, which, in their zeal public benefit, do not overlook the claims of their own household.

Observe then, that here was no dead but a living Faith. This man was those who delight in watching *their* and in *describing* and *talking about* whole care was *to act* up to the light joyed. He shewed his Faith *by his* take notice, that "Faith, if it have n dead, being alone^e."

He was besides, a man of most deep —see the first note on ver. 6 ; and language of that, as well as the ensui

- 6 Then JESUS went with them.
He was now not far from the Centurion sent friends to Him, : Him, LORD, trouble not Thyself :

This then, was the message which sent to CHRIST, when he beheld the footsteps "not far from the house." further reveals the beautiful circumstance the Centurion could not endure that what might be the issue of this sec

* St. James ii. 17, 18.

on; but hastened forth from his door to deliver the message with his own lips! . . . At first he sent "the Elders of the Jews:" presently, he sent friends:" at last, he came himself. A sense of undesert,—a deep feeling of his own unworthiness, ("neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee!")—was what had delayed his personal approach so long. But the coldness of his self-distrust thawed away at last, under the power of his mingled Zeal, and Love: for his faith, (which burned the brighter as the Object it approached his dwelling), had long since reminded him that he had asked an unnecessary favour in requesting that our LORD would "come and heal his servant'." "Trouble not Thyself," therefore says:

for I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof: wherefore neither ought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my Servant shall be healed.

The Centurion desired to hear words like those which the same Great Physician had addressed some time before to the Father of a child who lay sick in the same city,—“Go thy way; thy son shall live.”—See the first note on St. Matt. viii. 8. Himself a soldier, he did but wish to hear 'the word of command,' (as it were), uttered: *certainly* so what must be the consequence.

¹ St. Luke vii. 3.

² St. John iv. 50.

- 8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my Servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

For the correct understanding of these words, see the note on St. Matthew viii. 9. The Centurion knew that Diseases were all, in like manner, subject to the command of Him with whom He spoke. So indeed they are; and "so also," (says Leighton,) "He rebukes the Diseases of the Soul, and they are gone. Oh, if we did but believe this, and put Him to it! For Faith doth, in a manner, command Him,—as He doth all other things."

Contrast this Centurion's Faith, with that of another Gentile Soldier,—Naaman the Syrian:—2 Kings v. 11, 12.

- 9 When JESUS heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him,

In this way the Evangelists, every now and then, lift the curtain slightly from the scenes they describe. You discover, from these last words, what it was which the Centurion saw "not far from the house,"—and which induced him to leave the chamber where his servant lay a-dying:—our SAVIOUR drew near, attended, not only by the Elders of the Jews, but also by *a multitude of*

persons. It was, in fact, a part of that mighty company, which, after the Sermon on the Mount, followed our LORD down the Mountain side. See St. Matthew viii. 1.

Concerning the statement that our SAVIOUR 'marvelled,' see the first note on St. Matt. viii. 0. See also St. Mark iii. 5, and St. Luke viii. 23.

I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

A Roman *soldier*, then, was the first-fruits of the Gentile world!—Consider that Moses^h, Joshua, and David were warrior-saints in the Old Testament: two Centurions,—(for Cornelius of Cæarea was also a Centurionⁱ),—are patterns of faith and Prayer, in the New. And observe that our LORD does not require the Centurion of Capernaum to forsake his calling. The profession of arms is honourable in GOD's sight; and 'a devout soldier^k' may be not so rare a character as some suppose. See the note on St. Luke ii. 14.

And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the Servant whole that had been sick.

Our LORD had said to the Centurion—"Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done

^h Compare Exod. ii. 12 with Acts vii. 22, 24 and 25. See also Exod. ii. 17 and 19.

ⁱ Acts x. 1.

^k Acts x. 7.

unto thee!" This we learn from St. Matthew viii. 13. But observe,—the Centurion *did not go*. He needed not 'the evidence of his senses' (as the phrase is,) that *as* CHRIST had spoken, *so* had it been done. He left that pitiful method of conviction for others. "*They that were sent, returned; and found the servant whole.*"

11 And it came to pass the day after,

"The day after" the healing of the Centurion's Servant; which probably took place on the same day as the Delivery of the Sermon on the Mount. See St. Matth. viii. 5. Our SAVIOUR will therefore have been journeying southward; and when on the confines of Galilee and Samaria, a little to the South of Mount Tabor, it will have come to pass,—

that He went into a City called Nain; and many of His Disciples went with Him, and much people.

"*Many of His Disciples,*"—"much people." It was pointed out above, (in one of the notes on ver. 9,) *what* multitude this was. The 'Sermon on the Mount' had been pronounced, probably, only yesterday: the concourse of persons who had listened to it, had not therefore yet dispersed.—Take notice, further, that the crowd here described, encountered another lesser crowd,—(as it is said in the next verse),—emerging from the city-gate. It was in the presence of that

vast assembly, therefore, that the second recorded miracle of raising the Dead took place.

The MS. Journal of a Friend¹,—recently from the Holy Land,—furnishes the following extract. —“ A few interesting spots retain names very similar to those by which they are mentioned in Scripture. On descending the Northern slope of the little hill of Hermon, we came to a Village; and, on inquiring its name from one of the natives who met us, were told it was *Nein*. Oh! how the word sounded on our ears. We knew it was *Nain*; but to hear it so called by one living there, was inexpressibly delightful A few poor and for the most part roofless houses, and a spring of clear and living water, is all that we found there.

“ Here then it was that the ever Blessed One met a poor sorrowing Widow, who was following her only Son to the grave. *There* is the Road, down which no doubt the sad and mournful company were passing. Beyond too, may be easily traced the path along which the Divine SAVIOUR approached. A few graves at the lower part of the hill still mark an ancient burying-place On this exact spot, I felt it was, that the Lord of Life vanquished Death Could I do other than wonder and adore?”

It is interesting to find that on this little village, the Christian pilgrim has had his eye fixed from the earliest time. It was duly recognised

¹ Already quoted in the note on St. John ii. 1.

by the Crusaders also, when they visited the Holy Land.

Take notice how miracle is here linked on to miracle. The stupendous act of power which follows, was wrought unsolicited ; — unlike the former miracle, which was in answer to prayer. And we are thereby reminded of the mighty Blessings which many a time have overtaken ourselves, unsought,—exceeding not only our hopes, but even our very desires !

The Reader will find a remark on the verse next ensuing, in the note on St. Luke viii. 42 ;— and in the last note on St. Matthew ix. 25. It shall be only further pointed out in explanation of what follows, that the Ancients buried their dead *outside* the walls of their cities.

- 12 Now when He came nigh to the gate of the City, behold, there was a dead Man carried out, the only Son of his Mother, and she was a Widow ; and much people of the City was with her.

What a picture of desolation is here given in a few words ; “ A dead man,—the only son,—of a widowed Mother.”—Consider Jeremiah vi. 26 : Zechariah xii. 10 : Amos viii. 10 :—and the many places in Scripture where a Widow’s sorrow is made the very type of grief.

As an ancient Bishop of Nyssa, in Cappadocia, feelingly remarks :—“ St. Luke has told us the

sum of her misery in a few words. The Mother was a Widow : with no further hope of having children ; nor with any upon whom she might look in the place of him that was dead. To him alone she had given suck. He alone made her home cheerful. All that is sweet and precious to a Mother, was he alone to her! A *Young Man,*"—(as it is said in ver. 14.) : "that is, in the flower of his age ; just ripening into manhood ; just entering upon the time of marriage : the scion of his race ; the branch of succession ; the sight of his Mother's Eyes ; the staff of her declining years!" Doubtless, it was a case singularly calculated to excite compassion. Not only was 'much people of the City' with her : but, as it follows,—

And when the LORD saw her, He had 13 compassion on her,

Take notice how the *Human* feeling of Compassion attends the exercise of *Divine* Power, which is to follow. See the note on St. Luke viii. 23.

and said unto her, Weep not.

By those words teaching *us* also, (be sure,) not to be sorry, as men without Hope, for them 'which sleep in JESUS^m.' For what was He who spake, but 'the Resurrection and the Lifeⁿ?' Of whom it has been said that He shall hereafter, "wipe away all tears^o?"

^m 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.

ⁿ St. John xi. 25.

^o Revel. vii. 17 : xxi. 4.

- 14 And He came and touched the bier : and they that bare *him* stood still.

‘Life had met Death: wherefore the bier stopped.’ So says an old Arabian Bishop: adding,—‘It was not thus that Elijah raised the Widow’s Son,—“*stretching himself upon the dead three times*”^p:’ nor Elisha,—when he applied mouth, eyes, and hands, to the same parts of the dead^q: nor Peter,—when he prayed for Tabitha^r. But this was none other but “God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were”^s.’ Whence it follows,—

And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

Which was also His Word to the Daughter of Jairus: St. Mark v. 41. The Youth was lying decked for burial,—enclosed in no coffin, but exposed; as is usual in the East. Starting into Life therefore, at the Divine Summons, it is added,—

- 5 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his Mother.

What words can describe such a scene as followed? . . . Well may it be said of our LORD that “*He delivered him to his Mother*”^t: for the Young

^p 1 Kings xvii. 21.

^q 2 Kings iv. 34.

^r Acts ix. 40.

^s Romans iv. 17.

^t Compare 1 Kings xvii. 23. 2 Kings iv. 36. St. Luke ix. 42.

Man had been snatched, like a Captive, from the hand of Death ; rescued from the power of the Grave. ' The last Enemy that shall be destroyed^u,' already receives a death-blow, therefore ; and the Conqueror has a right to divide the spoil with whom He will.

And there came a fear on all : and they 16 glorified God, saying, That a great Prophet is risen up among us ; and, That God hath visited His People.

Which words are almost a quotation from the Hymn called *Benedictus* : St. Luke i. 68, 69.— Take notice that " there came a *fear* on all : " traces of which feeling are often discoverable in the accounts of our SAVIOUR'S Miracles. See St. Luke v. 26 : viii. 37. St. Mark iv. 41.

And this rumour of Him went forth 17 throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.

And the Disciples of John shewed him 18 of all these things. And John calling *unto* 19 *him* two of his Disciples sent *them* to JESUS, saying, Art Thou He that should come ? or look we for another ?

The memorable transaction here described has been already discussed, at considerable length, in the notes on St. Matthew's Gospel,—xi. 3: whither

^u 1 Cor. xv. 26.

the Reader is referred. The Baptist was at this time a prisoner in Herod's castle of Machærus.

- 20 When the men were come unto Him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?
- 21 And in the same hour He cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind He
- 22 gave sight. Then JESUS answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised,
- 23 to the poor the Gospel is preached. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.

Concerning these last words, see the note on St. Matthew xi. 6.

As our LORD so often declared of men, that they should be "*known by their fruits*"^v—so does He, in the preceding verses, and in many other places^w, appeal to His own Works as the evidence of His being the MESSIAH.

For, "in that day," (it had been foretold by the prophet,) "shall the deaf hear *the words of the Book*, and the eyes of the blind shall see

^v St. Matth. vii. 16, 20, &c.

^w St. John v. 36: x. 25, 38: xiv. 11: xv. 24, &c.

out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also," (it was added,) "shall increase their joy in the LORD, and *the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel*." Accordingly, it was now the crowning work of all, that, "*to the poor the Gospel is preached.*" And, as we know, *they at least, "heard Him gladly."* Compare what St. James says on this subject,—ii. 5. That which made this feature in our LORD'S Ministry so remarkable, was the contemptuous manner in which the Jewish Doctors had been wont to treat the humbler sort of people,—as appears from St. John vii. 49: ix. 34. By "*Poverty,*" however, doubtless the same thing is intended, in this, as in other places of the Gospel;—namely, *that condition of heart which is usually found to belong to persons endued with a very slender portion of this World's goods.*

The reader will find more on this subject, in the note on St. Matthew xi. 5.

And when the Messengers of John were ²⁴ departed, He began to speak unto the people concerning John: What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to ²⁵ see? A Man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in Kings' courts. But what went ye out for to see? A Pro- ²⁶

* Isaiah xxix. 18, 19.

† St. Mark xii. 37.

phet? Yea; I say unto you, and much more
27 than a Prophet. This is *he*, of whom it is
written, Behold, I send My Messenger be-
fore Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way
28 before Thee. For I say unto you, Among
those that are born of women there is not a
greater Prophet than John the Baptist: but
he that is least in the Kingdom of God is
greater than he.

These verses will be found to recur in St. Mat-
thew xi. 7 to 11; where they have been discussed
at some length. The Reader is therefore referred
to the notes on the earlier Gospel.—Our SAVIOUR
is here reminding the people of the reverence in
which they once held the Man whose inquiry had
been just recited in their ears. It was no fami-
liar sight which had drawn so many thousands
of them into the Wilderness: no spectacle to be
found in the Courts of Kings, which had led
them into the Waste. But they had gone to
behold a mighty Prophet;—and such an one our
LORD assures them they had actually seen: for
a greater, (He declares,) had never been born of
woman.

Take notice, that He who spake the words
recorded by the prophet Malachi,—iii. 1,—(quoted
above in ver. 27,) was certainly JEHOVAH, the
LORD of Hosts. Just as certain is it, from St.
Matthew iii. 3, that CHRIST is the LORD before

whose face John Baptist prepared the way. CHRIST is therefore JEHOVAH.

And all the people that heard *Him*, and 29 the Publicans, justified God, being baptized with the Baptism of John.

They "*justified God*," that is, acknowledged His Justice, Mercy, Truth, and Goodness:—with reference to which, as it seems, our LORD declares,—(in verse 35,) that "*Wisdom is justified of all her Children.*" This verse and the next are peculiar to St. Luke. They have been thought by some to contain the sayings of CHRIST; but it is more likely that these are the words of the Evangelist. For the historical fact here alluded to, see St. Luke iii. 12.

But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected 30 the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

That is,—"*they frustrated the Counsel of God towards themselves: made His merciful intentions and gracious purpose, manifested in the ministry of John, of no effect, through their Pride and Obstinacy.*" This is spoken only generally, however. Many of the Pharisees *had* come to John for Baptism,—as appears from St. Matthew iii. 7.

And the LORD said, Whereunto then shall 31 I liken the men of this generation? and to

- 32 what are they like? They are like untamed
 children sitting in the marketplace, and
 calling one to another, and saying, We have
 piped unto you, and ye have not danced,
 we have mourned to you, and ye have not
 33 wept. For John the Baptist came neither
 eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say,
 34 He hath a devil. The Son of Man is come
 eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a
 gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend
 of publicans and sinners!

Our LORD merely means that He did not observe such fasts as St. John observed, and imposed upon his Disciples. The foul imputations to which He thereby exposed Himself, are discovered from no other place of Holy Scripture, besides the present.

Again,—that the SAVIOUR Himself was repeatedly charged with ‘having a devil,’ we know from St. John vii. 20 : viii. 48, 52 : x. 20. But in this place only is it also recorded that the same thing was said of His Forerunner.

For some observations on the four last verses, the Reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew xi. 16 to 19. John Baptist is regarded as a type of the Law, which brought men to CHRIST, and prepared His way accordingly. There were natures which neither the Severity of the Law, nor the Graciousness of the Gospel, could win over.

Yet had CHRIST His faithful children,—His true Disciples,—under either Dispensation. As it follows,—(speaking of Himself,—under the name of WISDOM,)—

But Wisdom is justified of all Her Children. 35

See above, on ver. 29: also, the note on St. Matthew xi. 19.

The Reader is requested further, to take notice, that our LORD'S Discourse did not end with these words. To know what He added, see St. Matthew xi. 20 to the end of the chapter. It will be perceived that He concluded with a gracious invitation to all "that labour and are heavy laden; and I" (saith He,) "will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light*."

The effect of this blessed address on at least *one* among the multitude,—will be discovered from the narrative which follows.

And one of the Pharisees desired Him 36 that He would eat with him. And He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

"One of the Pharisees"—mentioned in ver. 30,

* St. Matthew xi. 28 to 30.

perhaps. And he may have proffered this act of Hospitality in consequence of the intimation in ver. 34 that the Son of Man had "come eating and drinking." His name is given in ver. 40.

A memorable transaction follows, full of affecting interest and beauty; and concerning which, not a little of a controversial character has been written. Some persons have thought that the Woman who is here related to have anointed our LORD, was Mary the Sister of Lazarus. But this is a pure assumption; and the conjecture is an unfair one; for there is not the least ground for supposing that the blessed creature of whom the SAVIOUR declared that she had "chosen that good part which should not be taken away from her,"—was at any time such an one as is here meant by "a sinner." Others have even thought that St. Luke in this place describes the incident which took place at Bethany, and which is described by the other three Evangelists^b: but *that* is simply *impossible*. Our Translators, (as the heading of the present Chapter shews,) were of opinion that "Mary Magdalene," who is mentioned in the beginning of the next Chapter, was the Woman here spoken of: concerning which conjecture, (for it is no more than a conjecture,) all that can be said is, that it is *possibly* correct.

37 And, behold, a Woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that JESUS sat

^a St. Luke x. 42.

^b St. Matt. xxvi. 6, 7. St. Mark xiv. 3. St. John xii. 3.

at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His 88 feet behind *him* weeping,

To understand how this was done, it must be borne in mind that, anciently, persons *reclined* at meals. Placed in a recumbent posture,—their feet also resting upon the couch or sofa whereon themselves lay,—any one desirous of approaching them closely, would perforce stand behind them; and might easily perform the act of Love and Humility which is next described.

and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

The singular resemblance of the present transaction to *that* recorded in connexion with the Supper at Bethany, immediately before the Last Passover^c, cannot fail to strike every Reader. Let us beware, however, of inquiring concerning it, (with the Traitor,) —“To what purpose is this waste^d?”; but rather rejoice in the repeated record of an incident which cannot but be full of divine teaching, and deep significancy.

It is well said by an excellent living writer, (contrasting the two incidents,)—“what brought *this* Woman with the alabaster box of ointment to JESUS, was the earnest yearning after the forgive-

^c See the references above, in note (b). ^d St. Matth. xxvi. 8.

ness of her sins; and she, in her deep shame and abasement of soul before Him, presumed not to approach Him nearer than to anoint His feet only, standing the while behind Him. Kissing those feet with her lips, and wiping them with the hair of her head, she realized, as it were in an outward act, the bidding of St. Paul,—‘as ye have yielded your members servants to Uncleaness, and to Iniquity unto Iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to Righteousness unto Holiness.’” She used the “long hair,” which was “a glory to her,” in order to wipe her Lord’s feet; as if confessing that our best gifts “only find their true place, when acknowledging their subjection and doing service to Him.”

9 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, 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.

The discernment of spirits was accounted the mark of a true Prophet^f; and such knowledge was recognised as the very note of MESSIAH^g,—as the Confession of Nathanael^h, and of the Woman of Samariaⁱ, shew. Consider also the blasphemy of the soldiers, when they had blind-folded our LORD, —St. Matthew xxvi. 67, 68.

^e Romans vi. 19.

^f Consider 1 Kings xiv. 6: 2 Kings i. 3: v. 26.

^g Isaiah xi. 3, 4. Compare St. John ii. 25.

^h St. John i. 49.

ⁱ St. John iv. 29.

This Pharisee was murmuring against the Great Physician, for conveying Life and Health;—and against one diseased, yea, at the point to die, for coming to Him for cure. Little did he advert to the fact that here was a Physician standing between *two* diseased persons: differing, however, chiefly in *this*,—that the Pharisee's was the more dangerous case of the two!

OUR SAVIOUR proceeds forthwith to convince His entertainer that He *is* a Prophet,—by shewing him that He knows "*what manner of man this is*" that entertaineth Him. "The Pharisee . . . spake within himself;" and yet was answered;—for it follows:—

And JESUS answering said unto him, Si- 40
mon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.
And he saith, Master, say on.

There was a certain Creditor which had 41
two Debtors: the one owed five hundred
pence, and the other fifty. And when they 42
had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them
both. Tell me therefore, which of them will
love Him most?

Simon answered and said, I suppose that 43
he, to whom He forgave most. And He said
unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

In this parable, (says a grave and learned Bi-
shop,)—"We are the debtors; and our debts are

sins ; and the creditor is GOD. The Remission of our sins is the frank forgiving of our debts ; and for *that*, we are obliged to return our love." *Frankly* to forgive, is "to forgive out of mere grace and favour."

Simon had "rightly judged,"—not that he who sins most largely, will, when forgiven, love the most ; but that he who most keenly feels the burden of his guilt,—and who therefore has the liveliest sense of his need of *Forgiveness*,—will repay with most love the Being who removes his burden. For it has been truly pointed out that he "to whom little is forgiven," "is not necessarily he who has sinned little ; but he who is lacking in any strong conviction of the exceeding sinfulness of Sin ;" he who is unconscious of his need of a SAVIOUR. The warning therefore becomes personal, to Simon : reveals him to himself. And here, he who reads these blessed pages in the right spirit, will pause to consider on how many other occasions our LORD did the like ; shewed that He was yearning after a human soul, by the practical and personal turn which He gave to His Discourse. Consider, for example, the answer which the Lawyer obtained to his memorable question,—“ And who is my neighbour^k ?”

In this place, accordingly, our LORD goes on to apply the parable which He had just delivered, to the case of His entertainer and the sinful Woman ;—who even now, it would appear, was hiding her

^k St. Luke x. 29. See verses 36 and 37.

shame by bending over His feet to kiss them. The proportion of fifty to five hundred, doubtless, in the ears of the Pharisee, expressed the relative position in which himself and that poor creature actually stood towards God. But on the lips of the Divine Speaker, those numbers rather represented their respective *sense of undesert*: their respective *consciousness of Sin*.

And He turned to the Woman, and said ⁴⁴ unto Simon, Seest thou this Woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: ⁴⁵ but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head ⁴⁶ with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment.

Take notice how He is pleased thus graciously to enumerate and dwell upon every particular of her homage. She may have thought herself unnoticed; certainly, unheeded. But no expression of her love had escaped the eyes of Him with whom she had to do!

And the next thing which strikes us, is the want of respectful consideration with which the SAVIOUR had evidently been treated by this Pharisee. Water for the feet, was, (and to this day,

is,) a common oriental attention¹: while a Salutation with the lips^m, and wherewithal to anoint the headⁿ,—would, (as it seems,) have been only becoming courtesies on an occasion like the present. All these, however easily procurable, had been withheld: whereas the feet, washed at the fountain of tears, had been made, by this guilty woman, the object of extraordinary honour. On them, also, (instead of on the forehead,) had she bestowed her many kisses: and fragrant ointment, instead of common oil, had been employed to testify the depth of *her* joy at His presence!

- 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

This seems to mean,—It is clear, from her conduct, that she has been forgiven *many* sins: for you see that she loves *much*. Whereas, he to whom little is forgiven,—that is, “to whom, according to his own views of himself, little is forgiven, because he regards his sins as few,—the same loveth little” . . . The sentence is certainly a hard one: but it must be explained by the light of the foregoing Parable; which shews that Forgiveness comes first, and Love follows after.

¹ Genesis xviii. 4: xix. 2: xxiv. 32: xliii. 24, &c.

^m Gen. xxix. 18: xxxiii. 4: xlv. 15. Exodus xviii. 7. St. Matthew xxvi. 49.

ⁿ Ruth iii. 3. Psalm xxiii. 5. Daniel x. 3. St. Matthew vi. 17.

And He said unto her, Thy sins are for- 48
given.

An act of Absolution which cannot be regarded as any encouragement to *Sin*, yet, as the strongest encouragement imaginable to Sinners: and so it is remarked in the heading of the present Chapter. Here was one sunk very deep in pollution. Her history, indeed, we know not: but we know concerning her that Sin had been her choice, and Shame her portion, until the present hour. We know further, that in the end, there was sincere Repentance on her side: entire Forgiveness on the part of God. Which things are "written for our learning: that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope^o."

And they that sat at meat with Him be- 49
gan to say within themselves, Who is this
that forgiveth sins also?

Which reminds us of what had occurred in the case of the cure of the Paralytic,—borne of four. See St. Luke v. 20, 21. See also the note on St. Mark ii. 7. They regarded Him as a mere Man; and, What Man, (say they,) can pretend to forgive Sin? Take notice, therefore, that while *they* murmured in Unbelief,—*she*, in the fulness of her Faith, came to Him *as* GOD, to obtain forgiveness of her sins. Whence it follows,—

^o Romans xv. 4.

50 And He said to the Woman, Thy Faith hath saved thee ; go in Peace.

See the note on St. Mark v. 34.

Faith, then, had been the root,—and *Love*, (as our LORD Himself has just reminded us,) the Flower ; or rather, *the Fruit* : “ Faith *which worketh by Love*.” And this corresponds with the beautiful picture of spiritual growth which St. Peter has drawn, in the first chapter of his second Epistle,—verse 5 to 7.

Compare the words which our LORD addressed to the Woman of Canaan,—St. Matthew xv. 28 ; and take notice that as *there* it was Earnestness and Humility, so *here* it is Penitence and Love which meets the eye ; but our SAVIOUR, in both cases, commends *the Faith* of the applicant. We see only *the Branches* ; He,—*the Root*.

The Prayer.

O GOD, Who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man’s understanding ; pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire ; through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

P Galat. v. 6.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE EIGHTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

3 *Women minister unto CHRIST of their substance.* 4 *CHRIST, after He had preached from place to place, attended with His Apostles, propoundeth the Parable of the Sower, 16 and of the candle : 21 declareth who are His Mother, and Brethren : 22 rebuketh the winds : 26 casteth the legion of Devils out of the man into the herd of swine : 37 is rejected of the Gadarenes : 43 healeth the woman of her bloody issue, 49 and raiseth from death Jairus' Daughter.*

VIII. AND it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God : and the Twelve *were* with Him,

One of the ancients, who was also a Countryman of our own, remarks on this, that—"like the Eagle enticing its young ones to fly, our LORD, step by step, raises up His Disciples to heavenly things. He first of all teaches in the synagogues, and performs Miracles. Next, He chooses twelve, whom He names Apostles ; He afterwards takes them with Him, as He preaches throughout the cities and villages." Lastly,—He sends them forth alone, as we read in St. Matthew x. 1 to 5.

2 and certain Women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

The same statement is repeated in St. Mark xvi. 9. This Mary came from Magdala,—the city mentioned in St. Matthew xv. 39; and it is probably meant that she had been a person of most unholy life, in whom *many* evil spirits had once taken up their habitation. Consider St. Luke xi. 26.

and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others,
8 which ministered unto Him of their substance.

These holy women enjoyed the blessed privilege of waiting on our SAVIOUR'S footsteps, and supplying His earthly needs. One connected even with Herod's Court was among them. Compare St. Matthew xxvii. 55, 56.

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to Him out of every city, He spake by a Parable :

The parable of 'the Sower' follows,—which is found related in all the three Gospels. The Reader is referred chiefly to the notes on the same parable in St. Mark's Gospel,—(chap. iv. 3 to 9, and 14 to 20),—for many remarks, which could not be repeated in this place. See also

St. Matthew's Gospel,—xiii. 1 to 9, and 18 to 23; and the notes there: especially the note on ver. 2.

This parable was delivered to a multitude standing on the shore, by our SAVIOUR as He sat in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. See the note on St. Mark iv. 1.

A Sower went out to sow his seed: 5

A familiar image, truly; yet, how ennobled by the use which our SAVIOUR here makes of it!

To know how large an amount of teaching lies concealed in that word,—‘seed,’ see the note on St. Mark iv. 14: also on St. Matthew xiii. 8. Take notice further, that as by the image of a corn of wheat, our LORD here teaches us *how to live*; so does His great Apostle, from the same source, instruct us *how to die*. Consider 1 Corinthians xv. 35 to 49.

Observe, that the Sower goes forth to sow “*his seed*.” Now, the Sower is our SAVIOUR CHRIST: “who receives not the word, as borrowed,” (says an Arabian Bishop,) “for He is by nature the WORD of the living God.” If the term be extended to the Ministers of CHRIST, then let them beware how they sow any other seed than *His!*

See more in the note on St. Mark iv. 3.

and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down,

The certain fate of seed cast upon the highway!

Yet St. Luke alone it is, who notices this circumstance. We learn from the language of all the three Gospels that the seed is less endangered by carelessness from within, than by hostility from without. It is less the chance tread of passenger thoughts coming and going, than the active malice of the Devil, which is to be dreaded.

One of the ancients points out that our Lord says not,—“he sowed some by the way side;” but that “some *fell*” there. For he who soweth, soweth with good intent. It depends upon the hearer, where the seed shall *fall*.

6 and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock ; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

“An unchanged, unsoftened heart, like an evil soil, disappoints the fruit. Though sown by a weak hand, yea, possibly a foul one, yet, if received into a clean and honest heart, it will fructify much.”

The *way-side* is interpreted to mean a heart trodden and hardened by the continual passage of evil thoughts. The *rock* denotes the hardness of *self-will*: a nature unsubdued, unyielding, unbroken.

Venerable Bede observes, that “the *moisture* at the root of the seed is the same as what is called in another parable the oil, to trim the lamps of

the Virgins^a; that is, Love and stedfastness in Virtue."

See more in the note on St. Mark iv. 6.

And some fell among thorns; and the 7
thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

The seed did not fall so much among thorns that were full grown, as in ground where the roots of these had not been carefully weeded out. Hence, (as a thoughtful modern writer continues,) "they grew together,—only the thorns overtopped the good seed: shut them out from the air and light; and drew away the moisture which should have nourished them. . . . It is not here, as in the first case, that there was no soil; nor yet, as in the second case, that there was a shallow soil. What was deficient was *careful husbandry*."

See more in the note on St. Mark iv. 7.

And other fell on good ground, and 8
sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold.

"Whence then is the difference? Not from the seed. *That* is the same to all. Not from the Sower, neither; for though these be divers, and of different abilities, yet, it depends little or nothing on *that*. Indeed, he is the fittest to preach who is himself most like his message; and comes forth, not only with a handful of seed in his hand, but with store of it in his heart,—the word *dwell*-

^a St. Matth. xxv. 3, 5, 8.

ing richly in him^b. Yet, the seed he sows, being this Word of Life, depends not on his qualifications in any kind; either of common gifts, or special grace. People mistake this greatly; and it is a carnal conceit to hang on the advantages of the Minister, or to eye that much." . . . The words are Archbishop Leighton's.

"A hundredfold!" Such increase attends a good man's sowing. Thus it fared with Isaac when he sowed in the land of the Philistines, "and the LORD blessed him,"—as we read in Genesis xxvi. 12.

See more in the note on St. Mark iv. 8.

And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And His Disciples asked Him, saying, What might this Parable be?

Some remarks will be found on what precedes in the notes on St. Mark iv. 9 and 10,—to which the Reader is referred.

10 And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God:

See the note on St. Matthew xiii. 11; and observe what follows in that Gospel,—with the notes thereon.

^b Coloss. iii. 16.

but to others in Parables : that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Observe *the reason* assigned for this in St. Matthew xiii. 13. St. Luke omits the quotation from Isaiah which is found in St. Matthew xiii. 14, 15, and St. Mark iv. 12.

Now the Parable is this : The Seed is the 11 Word of God.

Those by the way side are they that hear ; 12 then cometh the Devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Concerning this portion of the Divine exposition of the Parable of the Sower, the Reader is referred to what has been already offered in the notes on St. Mark iv. 14 and 15.

They on the rock *are they*, which, when 13 they hear, receive the word with joy ; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

“O rocky hearts !” exclaims pious Leighton, “How shallow, shallow, are the impressions of Divine things upon you ! Religion goes never further than the upper surface of your hearts. You have but few deep thoughts of God, and of

JESUS CHRIST, and of the things of the world to come. All are but slight and transient glances!

"The seed goes not deep. It springs up indeed, but anything blasts and withers it. There is little room in some. If trials arise, either the heat of *persecution* without, or of *temptation* within, this sudden spring-seed can stand before neither."

See more in the note on St. Mark iv. 16, 17.

- 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

This parable, as St. Luke gives it, abounds in singular touches which are peculiar to his Gospel. See the notes on ver. 15. In this place, it will be seen that he alone preserves the statement that characters of a certain class, "when they have heard, *go forth*, and are choked with cares," &c. The expression seems to indicate the restlessness of such characters; as contrasted with "the *patient abiding* of the meek."

What a lively picture is here presented to us of those thickening cares, which at first interfere with growth in Holiness,—and at last, unless they be cut away, destroy the spiritual life altogether!

Some hearts then, are a highway,—some, a rock,—some, thorny ground. By such terms, at least, the reception which men give to the Word, when,

like seed, it is sown in their ears,—may be fitly represented. “*Take heed, therefore, how ye hear^c;*” saith the SPIRIT. And, verily, it cannot be so easy a matter to hear aright! See more in the note on St. Mark iv. 19.

But that on the good ground are they, 15 which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep *it*,

“In an honest and good heart:”—the words are found only in the present Gospel, and are highly expressive of the character which becomes fruitful in good works. As for captious inquiries concerning Human Goodness, we know indeed that “there is none good but one, that is God^d:” and yet Scripture, Reason, and Experience, convince us that some natures afford a better soil for the growth of Spiritual seed, than others.

St. Luke also alone it is who says that these persons “*keep*” the Word: that is, they *hold it fast*. Our LORD declares of such that they shall “never see Death^e.” In the language of our Advent Collect, they “inwardly digest” the Word; and by patience and comfort of it, they “embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed Hope of Everlasting Life^f.”

See more in the note on St. Mark iv. 20.

^c St. Luke viii. 18.

^d St. Matthew xix. 17.

^e St. John viii. 51.

^f Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent.

and bring forth fruit with patience.

“*With Patience* :”—a memorable word ! This must be “*patient continuance* in well doing ; perseverance unto the end. Consider the pla referred to on the subject of the great Christ grace of *Patience*, in the note on St. Matt. iv. 7.

“ ‘ He that hath ears to hear,’ as our SAVIOUR closes, ‘ let him hear.’ The LORD apply our hearts to this work ; and though discouragements should arise without, or within, and little present fruit appear, but corruption is rather stronger and greater, yet, watch and pray. Wait on ; it shall be better. This fruit is to be brought forth “*with patience*.” And this Seed, this Word, the LORD calls by that very name, the “ Word of *Patience*.” Keep it, hide it in thy heart, and due time it shall spring up. And this *Patience* shall be but for a little while. The day of Harvest is at hand, when all who have been in any measure fruitful in Grace, shall be gathered in to Glory.”

- 16 No man, when he hath lighted a Candle covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed ; but setteth it on a Candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

“ Having spoken of the effect of the Word upon

• Romans ii. 7.

• Rev. iii. 10.

the hearers, He now tells His Disciples what they must do as *teachers* of the Word." See the note on St. Mark iv. 21, and on St. Matthew v. 15.

For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

"How ye hear." In St. Mark, iv. 24, it is—"What ye hear" . . . "Even that which he seemeth to have,"—is peculiar to this Gospel. The phrase marks the unreality of the possession so neglected; and may be compared, or rather, contrasted, with the language of St. Luke xvi. 12.

Then came to Him *His* Mother and His Brethren, and could not come at Him for the press.

Concerning the 'Brethren of our LORD,' see the note on St. Matthew xiii. 55. How mighty must the crowd have been to have occasioned such an incident as this!

And it was told Him *by certain* which said, Thy Mother and Thy Brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee. And He an-

swered and said unto them, My Mother and My Brethren are these which hear the Word of God, and do it.

This was surely said for the comfort of as many as should come after: and it is well worthy of remark how our Blessed LORD, in countless ways, contrived that "as many as are afar offⁱ,"—even we, at this distant day,—should be made to feel that advantages of the highest order are ours; privileges, equal to any which were enjoyed by Kinsmen and Disciples in the Days of the Son of Man. These verses occur in St. Mark's Gospel,—iii. 31 to 35; where see the notes.

- 22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that He went into a ship with His Disciples: and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the Lake. And they launched forth.

This was done, as St. Matthew relates, (viii. 18,) "when JESUS saw great multitudes about Him." The blessed company were about to cross over from the Western to the Eastern side of the Lake, in the direction of Decapolis.

- 23 But as they sailed He fell asleep:

Jonah was a memorable type of CHRIST: and we read of *him* also, that in the midst of the mighty storm, "he was fast asleep^k."

ⁱ Acts ii. 39.

^k Jonah i. 5.

As *man*, our SAVIOUR slept: as *GOD*, He stilled the storm. In some such manner we are often reminded at once, of the Divine and the Human nature of our LORD. Thus, immediately after cleansing the leper, He is related to have "withdrawn Himself into the Wilderness, and *prayed*¹:" when He performed the stupendous miracle at Capernaum, on the Centurion's servant, He is said to have " *marvelled*^m:" and when He was about to call Lazarus out of the grave, it is stated that "*JESUS wept*ⁿ."

See the notes on St. Mark iii. 5: vii. 34: St. Luke iv. 30: vii. 13.

and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

"There *came down* a storm of wind." This is what happens in the case of mountain-lakes; and is observed to take place to this day on the Sea of Galilee. See the note on St. Mark, i. 16.

And they came to Him, and awoke Him, 24 saying, Master, master, we perish. Then He arose, and rebuked the Wind and the raging of the Water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

Our LORD rebuked both the Wind and the Sea^o; accordingly, the one ceased, the other

¹ St. Luke v. 16.

ⁿ St. John xi. 35.

^m St. Luke vii. 9.

^o St. Mark iv. 39

grew calm. *First*, the Wind was silenced; *then*, the Sea: because *that* was a *cause*, this, an *effect*. Even from so minute a circumstance as this, one may gather a lesson!

“The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods have lifted up their waves. The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters; yea than the mighty waves of the sea ^p.”

- 25 And He said unto them, Where is your Faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of Man is this! for He commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him.

They forgot that this was He of whom the Psalmist had said, “Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known ^q!”

- 26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

Our LORD had now reached the Eastern shore of the Lake. We are about to behold Him performing a mighty act, illustrative of the very purpose of His coming: for, “For this purpose the SON of GOD was manifested, *that He might destroy the works of the Devil* ^r.”

^p Ps. xciii. 3, 4.

^q Psalm lxxvii. 19.

^r 1 St. John iii. 8.

And when He went forth to land, there 27
met Him out of the City a certain man,

So St. Mark says^a, but we learn from St. Matthew, viii. 28, that there were *two* persons : of whom it seems that *one* was so exceedingly fierce, and proved so very conspicuous, that St. Mark and St. Luke have confined themselves to *his* history.

which had Devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs.

Concerning this, see the last note on the second half of St. Matt. viii. 28.

When he saw JESUS, he cried out, and 28
fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with Thee, JESUS, *thou* SON of GOD Most High? I beseech Thee, torment me not.

The very presence of CHRIST is torture to the evil Spirits. Compare what happened in the synagogue of Capernaum, St. Luke iv. 33, 34: and note the behaviour of the deaf and dumb Spirit when "*he saw*" CHRIST^t. This reminds us that Heaven *would not be Heaven* to the unholy.

^a St. Mark v. 2.

^t St. Mark ix. 20.

29 (For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.

It is called an "*unclean spirit*." Is it possible that such possession was the result of sensual indulgence and unclean living? that unbridled lust laid men open to these incursions of the Powers of Darkness? See the notes on St. Mark v. 1.

For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the Devil into the wilderness.)

This is even more particularly described by St. Mark, v. 4, 5.—The result of this violence is mentioned by St. Matthew, namely, "*that no man might pass by that way*."

30 And JESUS asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

"Legion!" a name suggestive not only of numbers, but of organized strength, and tried courage; distinction of ranks, and unity of purpose. As there was "*a multitude of the heavenly host*;" as also there were more than "*twelve legions of Angels*" ready to do the bidding of the Incarnate SON;—so does Satan's Kingdom dis-

^u St. Matth. viii. 28.

^x St. Luke ii. 13.

^y St. Matt. xxvi. 53.

over military resources also. Himself "the Prince of the devils:" under him, "Principalities and Powers," and other ranks of inferior spirits; which have different degrees of strength^b, depending perhaps on their different degrees of wickedness^c. Our LORD describes the Enemy as "a strong man armed," and speaks of his *armour*^d. Hence, the Christian, who has to contend with him, or his agents, is furnished with "weapons of warfare," also; "the whole armour of God;" girdle, and breast-plate,—shield, and helmet, and sword^e. See the notes on St. Luke xi. 22.

The reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew xii. 43 to 45.

And they besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep.

Rather, into the "bottomless pit;" for the word here used is "the *abyss*,"—which probably this place denotes the pit of Hell.

St. John the Divine beheld (in the Spirit) "an angel come down from Heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. and he laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan; and bound

^b St. Matt. ix. 34.

^c Eph. i. 21 and vi. 12; Rom.

i. 38; Col. ii. 15.

^d St. Matt. xvii. 21.

^e St. Matt. xii. 45.

^f St. Luke xi. 21, 22.

^g 2 Cor. x. 4.

^h Ephes. vi. 14 to 17.

him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more^g." These are mysterious words, which we cannot presume to explain: but, taken in connexion with the text, they seem to imply that the bottomless pit is reserved for the Apostate Angels; and that it was the prayer of this Legion of Spirits that CHRIST would not anticipate their sentence, by sending them thither "before the time^h." Compare St. Jude, ver. 6.

- 32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them.

See the notes on St. Mark v. 12.

- 33 And He suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the Lake, and were choked.

See the note on St. Mark v. 13.

- 34 When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the
35 city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to

^g Rev. xx. 1 to 3.

^h St. Matt. viii. 29.

JESUS, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of JESUS, clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

Take notice, then, how complete the recovery had been; that he who, an hour ago, had been a frantic demoniac, was already converted into a meek disciple of the LAMB. All this is implied by the statement, that he was now to be seen "sitting at the feet of JESUS;" for this was the attitude of a Disciple. It was thus that Scholars received the instructions of their Master. See Deut. xxxiii. 3. 2 Kings iv. 38. St. Luke x. 39. Acts xxii. 3. Compare Ezekiel viii. 1: xiv. 1: xx. 1: xxxiii. 31.

They also which saw *it* told them by 36 what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multi- 37 tude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought Him to depart from them;

They forgot that they had been delivered from a scourge which had rendered it unsafe for any man "to pass by that way¹." They overlooked the blessing which had befallen two^k of their own most afflicted citizens; whereby they had been restored to their families and to themselves. Above all, they gave no heed to the actual presence of

¹ St. Matthew viii. 28.

^k See above, the first note on ver. 27.

CHRIST their **SAVIOUR**. They could think only of the swine that had been lost. They were confounded at the amazing History they had heard; and wished for nothing so much as the departure of One who had, in reality, shewn Himself their Friend, and greatest Benefactor.

How hard it is to recognize the Hand of God in anything which interrupts our present enjoyment; brings us loss; and, in any way, interferes with our worldly prosperity! We overlook the actual blessings which mingle with the most afflicting dispensation. We do not consider how near we may have been brought, by chastisement, to the sacred person of our **LORD**. We simply are impatient and afraid. We desire nothing so much as to be as, and what, we were.

for they were taken with great fear: and He went up into the Ship, and returned back again.

He took them at their word. He granted their prayer: yet, surely, in wrath, or in sorrow, rather than in Mercy! See the note on St. Matth. vii. 8.

38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought Him that he might be with Him;

See the notes on St. Mark v. 18.

39 but **JESUS** sent him away, saying, Return

to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee.

Sometimes our LORD invited men to follow Him, and they resisted His invitation¹. *Here*, when one expressed a wish to follow, he is not allowed to do so.—In like manner, the SAVIOUR sometimes enjoined silence on those whom He healed^m. *Here*, He commands the very opposite course . . . Doubtless, He makes trial of each in a peculiar way; has different demands for different persons; and shews to every one the path which will conduct *him* most safely to the Land of Everlasting Rest. See the note on St. Matthew xi. 5, and on St. Mark v. 19.

And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things JESUS had done unto him.

And it came to pass, that, when JESUS⁴⁰ was returned, the people *gladly* received Him: for they were all waiting for Him.

He beheld them, as He approached the Western shore of the Lake, drawn up to receive Him. Compare St. Mark v. 21, and the note there.

And, behold, there came a man named⁴¹ Jairus, and he was a Ruler of the Synagogue:

¹ St. Luke ix. 59: xviii. 22.

^m St. Matt. viii. 4: ix. 30: xii. 16. St. Luke viii. 56.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark v. 22.

and he fell down at JESUS' feet, and besought Him that He would come into his
42 house: for he had one only Daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.

“One *only* Daughter.”—So, at Nain, and after the Transfiguration, it was an *only* Son^a: and at Bethany, an *only* Brother. The Great Physician knows who stand in the greatest need!

But as He went, the people thronged Him,
43 And a Woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

St. Luke “the Physician^o” does not add, (as St. Mark does, in this place^p),—“*but rather grew worse.*”

Concerning the words of the text, see the note on St. Mark v. 26.

44 came behind *Him*, and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

^a St. Luke vii. 12, and St. Luke ix. 38.

^o Coloss. iv. 14.

^p St. Mark v. 26.

“The *garment* of CHRIST,” says an ancient writer, “represented the mystery of His *Incarnation*.” It is probable that he meant thereby to imply, that “he that will be saved” “must believe rightly the Incarnation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.” See the notes on St. Mark v. 27.

Concerning “*the border* of His Garment,” see the note on St. Matthew viii. 20.

And JESUS said, Who touched Me? 45

Not as though He *needed* the information; for this was He who said to Nathanael, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, *I saw thee*.” . . . Compare the language of Elisha to Gehazi,—2 Kings v. 26.—See the note on the latter part of St. Mark v. 30.

This was not an *encouraging* reception, as men speak. Consider the following texts:—St. Matthew xv. 23 to 26: and St. John i. 38, where see the note.

When all denied, Peter and they that were with Him said, Master, the multitude throng Thee, and press *Thee*, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? And JESUS said, 46 Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.

The poor woman had approached His Sacred

* See that most precious part of our whole Church Service,—the Athanasian Creed.

† St. John i. 48.

garments as men are said to touch relics ; with a blind faith in their mysterious virtue and efficacy. Even *thus*, she obtained a blessing ; for it *was*—Faith. But CHRIST would not so be touched. He will have us know that the Fountain of grace is the living God,—who beholdeth all things in Heaven and Earth ; and who claims of His rational creatures a reasonable worship.

Do but think how full, to overflowing, must have been the House of clay wherein the SAVIOUR of the World condescended to make His habitation ; that the virtue of His Divinity,—like the precious ointment on Aaron's head,—should have thus gone down to the very skirts of His clothing*! Consider St. John v. 26.

Compare St. Luke vi. 19 ; and see the notes on St. Mark v. 31 and 32.

- 47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling ; and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.

Take notice, that in *this* miracle the cure came first. This was vouchsafed as a help and encouragement ; that so, the open confession which the SAVIOUR requires, and which must follow,—

* Psalm cxxxiii. 2.

see Acts viii. 37,—might prove the easier.—It is further remarkable as having been a miracle within a miracle ;—and one, wherein CHRIST wrought without a word, or sign.

And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort : thy Faith hath made thee whole : go in peace.

Our LORD had used the self-same form of address, in the former Chapter, to the “woman which was a sinner :”—vii. 50. Faith is the hand which lays hold on the Blessing.

While He yet spake, there cometh one from the Ruler of the Synagogue's *house*, saying to him, Thy Daughter is dead ; trouble not the Master.

For the fatigue to which our Blessed SAVIOUR was being exposed must have been apparent to all. See the note on St. Mark v. 24.

To raise the dead seemed impossible. Such a wonder had been recorded once of Elijah^t, twice of Elisha^u. But how could such a thing be expected on the present occasion? When the damsel drew her parting breath, the last ray of Hope became extinct also.

But when JESUS heard *it*, He answered

^t 1 Kings xvii. 22.

^u 2 Kings iv. 35, and xiii. 21.

him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

And had not our LORD supplied him with a mighty ground of confidence by the miracle which He had wrought on the way? The note on St. Mark v. 36 may be referred to.

51 And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the
52 mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but He said, Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth.

In the eyes of "the Father of Spirits" she did but sleep; did but wait till He, (who is the Resurrection and the Life,) should come to waken her.

See the notes on St. Mark v. 37, 38, 39.

53 And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing
54 that she was dead. And He put them all out,

The scorner is not suffered to be a witness of CHRIST'S miracles. Thus our LORD illustrated one of His own sayings, by His own example. See St. Matthew vii. 6.

Elijah in like manner^v, and Elisha^x, are found to have been even *alone* when they raised the dead.

^v 1 Kings xvii. 19,—compared with ver. 23. ^x 2 Kings iv. 33.

and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came 55
in, and she arose straightway :

The first few words of verse 55 are found also
1 Kings xvii. 22. The Reader is referred to
notes on St. Mark v. 40, 41, 42.

and He commanded to give her meat.

The King of Heaven and Earth, cares, there-
e, for the meal of a little child!—See the
es on St. Mark v. 43.

And her parents were astonished: but 56
e charged them that they should tell no
in what was done.

The three examples above specified⁷, were so
any confirmations under the Law, of a Resurrec-
n to Life after Death; and we have three to
ual them under the Gospel⁸. One, we have been
eady considering. Another took place at Nain.
Thus CHRIST raised the dead in the chamber,
d in the street; from the bed, and from the
r:" and, not content with this, He proceeded
the grave of Lazarus.—These three miracles
der the Gospel were so many proofs, and pre-
les, of the Last and General Resurrection.

⁷ In the note on ver. 49.

⁸ Concerning which, see the note on St. Matth. ix. 25.

The present miracle seems to have been attended with some features of exceeding solemnity, for three only of the Apostles were deemed worthy to behold it,—the same three who were the chosen witnesses of CHRIST'S greatest Glory^a, as well as of His lowest Humiliation^b. The injunction to 'tell no man what was done,' is fully explained by the temper of mind of the assembled company, recorded in ver. 53.

The Prayer.

ALMIGHTY God, with Whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the LORD, and with Whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we beseech Thee, that it may please Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy Kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting Glory; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

^a St. Matthew xvii. 1, 2.

^b St. Matthew xxvi. 37.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE NINTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

1 CHRIST sendeth His Apostles to work miracles, and to preach.
 7 Herod desired to see CHRIST. 17 CHRIST feedeth five thousand :
 18 enquireth what opinion the World had of Him : foretellet His
 Passion : 23 proposeth to all the pattern of His patience. 28 The
 Transfiguration. 37 He healeth the lunatick : 43 again fore-
 warneth His Disciples of His Passion : 46 commendeth Humility :
 51 biddeth them to shew mildness towards all, without desire of re-
 venge. 57 Divers would follow Him, but upon conditions.

IX. THEN He called His twelve Disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

St. Luke is speaking of the Twelve Apostles, whose names he gave in chap. vi. 14 to 16. Concerning the several catalogues of the Apostles, see the note on St. Mark iii. 15 : and, for some remarks on each of those great Saints, the Reader is referred to the Commentary on St. Mark iii. 16 to 19.

And He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

Hitherto, "as an Eagle . . . fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings^a,"—so had the LORD

^a Deut. xxxii. 11.

dealt with His Apostles. But it is now time that they should make their first Ministerial Journey alone; and He proceeds to deliver to them His parting Charge and Commission. Concerning the four ensuing verses, enough has been already offered in the notes on St. Matthew x. 1 to 15,—to which the Reader is accordingly here referred.

3 And He said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither ^ostaves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have
4 two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence de-
5 part. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel, and healing every where.

St. Mark,—vi. 12, 13,—relates this incident in a very interesting manner: but we must refer to St. Matthew's narrative if we would understand the words which follow. The last-named Evangelist relates that "when JESUS had made an end of commanding His Twelve Disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities^b." In other words, He took His third Great Ministerial Journey, and He took it *alone*.

^b St. Matth. xi. 1.

Now Herod the Tetrarch heard of all that 7 was done by Him : and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead ; and of some, that Elias 8 had appeared ; and of others, that one of the old Prophets was risen again.

“John” was said to have “*risen from the dead* ;” because the Baptist had been killed and was buried : “Elias,” to have “*appeared*,” — for Elijah was translated, and had never seen death. Elijah, we know, was *expected* to appear before the Advent of CHRIST. Hence the inquiry in St. John i. 21, and in St. Matthew xvii. 11 :—hence also the suspicion which we shall find expressed lower down, in verse 19 ;—and hence the scoff of the populace as our SAVIOUR hung upon the Cross, —“Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save Him^c.”

And Herod said, John have I beheaded : 9 but who is this, of whom I hear such things ? And he desired to see Him.

With which remarkable words St. Luke dismisses one of the most striking and instructive histories in the Bible. He will be found, in an earlier part of his Gospel, (namely, in chap. iii. 19, 20,) to have narrated the imprisonment of the Baptist. In this place therefore he passes over

^c St. Matth. xxvii. 49.

what St. Matthew^d, and especially St. Mark^e, have described so much in detail.

From the combined narrative of the three Evangelists we obtain a striking picture of the downward progress of one who has entered on a career of crime. At first, sensible of the beauty of Holiness, though recommended by its very sternest preacher, and conscious of the power and authority with which John spoke, Herod had not only gladly listened, but even largely obeyed him. Next, influenced by a criminal passion, he shuts up the Saint in prison. Even so, however, he is careful to secure the personal safety of his captive; and he makes provision that the disciples of John may have free access to their Master. At last "when a convenient day was come," Herod is found capable of giving orders that the Baptist should be put to death. He would surely have recoiled with horror, could he but have seen the end from the beginning!

A tortured conscience is the consequence; and the murderer can discern nothing less than the Baptist restored to life in the wondrous histories which at this time reached him concerning our LORD. "And he desired to see Him." But it was the curiosity not of Faith, but of Unbelief; of a heart hardening, if not already hardened, against holy impressions. The report of our SAVIOUR'S heavenly Discourses, — His Acts of Love, — His Miracles of Mercy, — wrought none of those blessed

^d St. Matthew xiv. 3 to 12.

^e St. Mark vi. 17 to 29.

effects on Herod, which they produced on guileless and innocent hearts. He longed to see CHRIST, "because he had heard many things of Him; and *he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him*." His interview with the SAVIOUR accordingly set the seal upon his iniquity; and became the means of handing down his name to the latest age of the Church, in connexion with that of Pontius Pilate, as the murderer of 'the Prince of Life.'

The Reader who desires more on this subject, may be referred to the notes on St. Matthew xiv. 1 to 10; and on St. Mark vi. 17 to 29.

And the Apostles, when they were returned, told Him all that they had done. And He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

This will be found more particularly related in St. Mark's Gospel,—chap. vi. 30 to 32; where see the notes. Travellers describe such 'a desert place,'—that is, a barren tract of uncultivated ground,—at the north-eastern extremity of the Lake, not far from which stood Bethsaida-Julias.

And the people, when they knew *it*, followed Him: and He received them, and spake unto them of the Kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. And when the day began to wear away, then

¹ St. Luke xxiii. 8. ² See Acts iii. 15 and consider Acts iv. 27.

came the Twelve, and said unto Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

The Reader is again referred to the notes on St. Mark's Gospel,—vi. 33 to 36. The second Evangelist will be found, as before, to be more full and particular in this place than either St. Matthew or St. Luke.

Did not the Disciples, in effect, doubt their Lord's power, when they made the request here recorded? "Yea, they spake against God. They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold," He hath done many mighty works: "can He give bread also, or provide flesh for His people^h?"

- 13 But He said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should
14 go and buy meat for all this people. For they were about five thousand men.

So large is ever the Divine requirement: so slender, and (as it often seems) so wholly inadequate, the human means of satisfying it! Yet will God assuredly enable His servants to perform whatever He has Himself commanded, if there be

^h Psalm lxxviii. 19, 20.

but obedience and a willing mind,—the fruit of Faith.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew xiv. 17,—St. Mark vi. 37,—and St. John vi. 5 to 10.

And He said to His Disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

According to St. Mark, they were distributed in groups of fifty and of a hundred persons: “in which subordinate circumstance,” (remarks a thoughtful writer,) “we behold His wisdom, who is the LORD and lover of order. Thus all confusion was avoided. There was no danger that the weaker, the women and the children, should be passed over; while the stronger and ruder unduly put themselves forward. The Apostles were thus able to pass easily up and down among the multitude; and to minister in orderly succession to the needs of every part.”

Take notice, here, how our LORD condescends to *minute details*: making them a matter of express direction. Many such intimations of the Divine Method occur in the Book of Life. *One* is found in the Sermon on the Mount,—St. Matthew vi. 6, where see the note. The History of this very Miracle supplies another: see St. John vi. 12. A remark which was made at the end of the Commentary on St. Mark v. also, here presents itself.

- 15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

The ancients, who gathered wisdom from every word of Scripture, point out that these men were made to sit down *before* the supply of food appeared; in order to teach us that, with God, "things which be not" are "as though they wereⁱ."

Refer here to the first note on St. Matthew xiv. 19; and the note on St. Mark vi. 40.

- 16 Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to Heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the Disciples to set before the multitude.

Thus, after He had suffered the multitude to feel the pang of hunger, He waited till His Apostles applied to Him concerning their relief;—then, He took the bread at their hands;—next, He restored it, fraught with the power of miraculous increase, back to the Apostles again: and all, in order that they might have the fullest testimony concerning what was done, and continue the more mindful of it. . . . A marvellous miracle, truly! Very different from instantaneous *growth*, was the phenomenon it revealed; for, by *growth*, we mean an unfolding, and progress to maturity, (whether slow or sudden,) according to a certain law: but here was growth without progress; or rather, increase without development.

¹ Romans iv. 17.

The act of *taking the bread* into His hands, seems to have been one of weighty import; for it is distinctly noticed by all the four Evangelists^k. By three of them, also, the *looking up to Heaven* is recorded. The Reader is referred to the second note on St. Matthew xiv. 19; and to the notes on St. Mark vi. 41: also on St. John vi. 11.

And they did eat, and were all filled: and 17 there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

See the notes on St. Matthew xiv. 20, and on St. Mark vi. 42, 43, 44.—Some additional remarks on the mystical character of the whole transaction will be found in the Commentary on St. John's Gospel,—chap. vi. 13.

There remained "*twelve baskets*," because, in conformity with our LORD's injunction, the Twelve Apostles gathered up the fragments that remained^l. Take notice that to eat, and to "*leave thereof*," was a sure sign that there had been abundance^m.

He who reads the Gospel with attention, will be amazed to notice in how many respects, and on how many occasions, the Incarnate SON was engaged in acts strictly symbolical of, or rather closely corresponding with, what had been "*in the beginning*:" thereby indirectly proclaiming His Divine power and Godhead. Beside s t he fiv

^k St. Matthew xiv. 19: St. Mark vi. 41: St. Luke ix. 16: St. John vi. 11.

^l St. John vi. 12.

^m Consider Ruth ii. 14, 18, and 2 Kings iv. 43, 44.

loaves, we here behold Him "*blessing*" the "*two fishes*," and so feeding many thousands of persons. And what is this but the act of Him who, on the fifth day, "*blessed them*, saying, Be fruitful and *multiply*, and fill the waters in the seas^a?" . . . The same verse proceeds,—“ And let *fowl* multiply in the Earth:” reminding us, that, besides *bread* from Heaven, the same Almighty Hand had rained upon His people in the wilderness “*feathered fowls*,” “as thick as dust^b.”

St. Luke having thus brought his narrative down to the eve of the third Passover, omits several incidents, (which are nevertheless set down in due order by St. Matthew and St. Mark^c;) resuming his history with the account of a transaction which took place, also on the Eastern side of the Jordan, in the course of the following year. The method is surely a very marvellous one. Who would suspect that between the 17th and 18th verses of this Gospel so many great events had been omitted;—and that the transition is suddenly made to the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, whither our LORD had conducted His Twelve Apostles?

The Reader who would study this part of the sacred narrative with advantage, is referred to St. Matthew xvi. 1 to 12, or St. Mark viii. 10 to 26; where he is requested to read the notes.

- 18 And it came to pass, as He was alone praying, His Disciples were with Him : and

^a Genesis i. 22.

^b Psalm lxxviii. 25, 28.

^c St. Matthew xiv. 22 to xiv. 12, and St. Mark vi. 45 to viii. 26.

He asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am ?

St. Mark declares that our SAVIOUR made this inquiry "by the way⁹;" so that there might seem to be some contradiction here. But, as an ancient Father gravely remarks, — "This can only be a difficulty *to him who has never prayed by the way.*" . . . The Blessed Company were now in the neighbourhood of the City once called Laish, (afterwards Dan,) near the sources of the Jordan; having journeyed thither from Bethsaida-Julias. In answer to our LORD's inquiry,—

They answering said, John the Baptist; 19 but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again. He 20 said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, the CHRIST of GOD. And He straitly charged them, and com- 21 manded *them* to tell no man that thing; saying, the Son of Man must suffer many 22 things, and be rejected of the Elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Concerning this important portion of Scripture, —the Confession, namely, of St. Peter, and the wondrous promise which it immediately drew from the SAVIOUR of the World, — so much has been already said, that it shall suffice in this place to

⁹ St. Mark viii. 27.

THER' also : as if there were something more than He hath already received at His Right Hand ; that is, He will come from thence to judge the quick and the dead,—to appear as the supreme LORD and Governor of the World, to whom Men and Angels are accountable for their actions. This then is a thing still behind ; and there are, it seems, some Royal Majestic Robes belonging to this high office, which He hath not yet put on."

Take notice that our LORD will come in the glory 'of the Holy Angels' also. They will be present "to bear witness how much they, by the mission of God, have administered to the Salvation of Mankind."

- 27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God.

This is expressed differently by St. Matthew and St. Mark. The former says—"till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom[†]:" the latter,— "till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power[‡]." We must explain this, the shortest statement of all, by those fuller ones : and it will appear that some great event is here alluded to, which certain of the Twelve were to witness before they died ; and which might be described as CHRIST'S coming with power in His own and His FATHER'S Kingdom. This has been thought by some learned men to be the Destruction of Jeru-

[†] St. Matth. xvi. 28.

[‡] St. Mark ix. 1.

salem, which took place about forty years later ; but there can be little doubt, (as already explained in the note on St. Matthew xvi. 28,) that the allusion is to the Transfiguration,—an event which immediately follows, in all the three Gospels².

The connexion of the mysterious announcement in verse 27, with what goes before, has been already pointed out in the note on St. Matthew xvi. 27. The beginning of CHRIST'S Glorious Kingdom had been already set up : not visibly, indeed, (for "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation⁷ ;") nor was its hidden brightness such as mortal eyes could behold, and live. But it had really begun,—begun here on earth ; and in its *true* nature it was *glorious*. "The Glory which Thou gavest Me," (said our LORD, praying to the FATHER,) "I have given them : that they may be One, even as We are One²." On which an excellent living Writer remarks—"It follows that 'the Glory of the Only-Begotten of the FATHER' belongs also, in its degree, to the Church on Earth,—to the Church, in its days of waiting, of warfare, and of trial⁸." The great Apostle proclaims no less when He declares that "the brightness of the Law which shone on Moses' face was no brightness at all in comparison of the Glory of the LORD, which shone upon every baptized Corinthian." For, contrasting the privi-

² St. Matthew xvii. 1 : St. Mark ix. 2 : and St. Luke ix. 28.

⁷ St. Luke xvii. 20.

⁸ St. John xvii. 22.

^a Rev. George Moberly,—in a valuable Sermon, called 'The Transfiguration of Christians.'

leges of every Christian man with those of the Lawgiver of Israel^b, he says,—“ We all, with unveiled face, reflecting like mirrors the glory of the LORD, are being transfigured into the same likeness ;”—that is, “ into CHRIST’S image : going on from Glory to Glory^c ;”—that is, “ from one degree of glory to another. From the Glory of Baptism to the Glory of Salvation : ‘ from the Glory of Faith’ (as one of the Ancients expresses it,) ‘ to the Glory of sight :’ from the dim Glory of Regeneration, to the ‘ Exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory^d’ of the Resurrection.”

Of those glories therefore which will be hereafter beheld by every eye, the Son of Man is about to give His three most highly favoured Disciples a blessed foretaste and earnest ; for He was willing, (says an ancient Father,) “ to assure their very sight, and to shew what kind of Glory that is wherewith He is to come, so far as it was possible for them to learn.” They were to behold ‘ the Kingdom of GOD,’ not as it seems to mortal eyes, but in its true nature, and as it appears *in GOD’S sight*. CHRIST Himself they were also to behold at the same time : not meanly clad, and ‘ marred’ in countenance, as to common eyes He appeared

^b Exodus xxxiv. 34.

^c 2 Cor. iii. 18: the true meaning of which Scripture, it is believed, is given above. The same doctrine may be established from Coloss. i. 27: 1 Thess. ii. 12: and 2 St. Peter i. 3. See Rom. viii. 30: ix. 23: xv. 7. 1 Cor. ii. 7. 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6. Ephes. i. 18. Col. i. 27. 2 Thess. ii. 14. Heb. ii. 10. 1 St. Peter iv. 14: v. 10.

^d 2 Cor. iv. 17.

during the days of His Humiliation; but with shining raiment, 'white as the Light,' and a face that 'did shine as the Sun.' They beheld Him, in short, as it is promised that the just shall behold Him when He shall finally appear^o,—namely, '*as He is*†.'

And it came to pass about an eight days 28 after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

What mountain this was, is not known. Tradition points out Mount Tabor in Galilee, as the scene of the Transfiguration; but there is no other reason for supposing that our SAVIOUR had yet left the Eastern side of the Jordan. It is worth observing that all three Evangelists who have described this great Transaction conspire in mentioning that it took place exactly one week after the former sayings.

It would seem as if, having selected the highly favoured Sons of Zebedee and St. Peter out of the whole body of the Apostles, our SAVIOUR took them apart,—as He is found to have done on another great occasion^g,—to be with Him while He prayed: conducted them up an adjoining mountain; and there occupied Himself in mysterious prayer. It may have been the Evening of the

^o Does not St. Peter allude to the Transfiguration in his First Epistle,—v. 1?

† 1 St. John iii. 2.

^g St. Matth. xxvi. 37, 38.

Day; and deep slumber, (as on the other occasion alluded to,) is found to have overcome the three weary Apostles. They were "heavy with sleep," as the present Evangelist relates¹. Presently they awoke, and beheld their Divine Master engaged in solemn intercourse with the FATHER.

29 And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and his raiment *was white and glistering*.

This was done "*as he prayed*:" which reminds us that at His Baptism also^m, and in the Gardenⁿ, He prayed previously to the coming forth of the glories of the unseen World. . . . "Prayer," (says a good man,) "is the Key to Divine Mysteries, to the discerning of CHRIST in the Law and the Prophets." By Prayer, *we* also gather glory; and become changed; and hold communion with Him who is invisible.

"*The fashion of His Countenance was altered*," —answers to St. Matthew and St. Mark's phrase, "*He was transfigured before them*:" for the change which passed upon the form and features of the Son of Man is the circumstance from which the entire Event derives its name—'The Transfiguration.' What was the nature of this change, has not been revealed. St. Matthew indeed says that "*His Face did shine as the Sun*:" but more

¹ See below, verse 32.

^m St. Luke iii. 21, 22.

ⁿ St. Luke xxii. 41 to 43. ^o St. Matth. xvii. 2. St. Mark ix. 2

^p St. Matthew xvii. 2.

than *that* seems to be implied by the statement of the text. We are reminded rather of St. Paul's repeated assurance that *a change* will pass upon us,—(and doubtless upon our forms and features, no less than upon the constitution of our mortal bodies,)—at our Resurrection from Death⁹. St. Mark's statement that our Lord, after His Resurrection, appeared to two of His Disciples "*in another form*," is also brought to our remembrance: and the belief is suggested that while the three Apostles who witnessed the Transfiguration of the Son of Man remained fully aware that it was *He* whom they beheld, and none other, (for indeed His features remained the same,) yet that the foretaste of Future Glory with which He was now revealed to their mortal eyes, conveyed to His Divine Countenance also a foretaste of the mighty Change which was to pass upon it hereafter: that St. John beheld Him *now*, in short, as afterwards by Revelation he beheld Him,—'His Head and Hair, white as wool, as white as snow; and His Eyes, as a flame of fire; and His Feet, like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; . . . and His Countenance—as *the Sun shineth in his strength*.' An old Writer remarks that "in *His* Transfiguration, we have a most exact pattern of *our* Resurrection." But this statement probably falls short of the Truth. There seems rather to

• 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Phil. iii. 21. Consider 1 St. John iii. 2. Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Coloss. iii. 4. •

† St. Mark xvi. 12.

‡ Revel. i. 14 to 16.

have been as close an exhibition as human eyes could bear of the LORD as He will come in the Day of Judgment,—that is, “in the Glory of His Father with the Holy Angels^t :” a partial revelation of that Glory in which even now He dwells,—“above the brightness of the Sun^a.”

The raiment which became “*white and glistening*,”—or, as St. Mark expresses it, “shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on Earth can white them^v,”—no less than the dazzling lustre of the Face, is an attribute of glorious visitors from the other World: an attribute derived doubtless from their nearness to Him “who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light which no man can approach unto^x.” Thus, of the Angel who rolled away the stone from the Holy Sepulchre, it is declared that “his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow^v.” “The Spouse in the Canticles,” (remarks pious Bishop Andrewes,) “being asked concerning her Beloved’s colours, saith of Him ‘My Beloved is *white* and *red*^z.’ ‘White’ of Himself, as when He was transfigured on the Mount. How comes the ‘red’ then? Not of Himself, but for *us*. That is our natural colour: for we are polluted in our own blood^a; red is the colour of Sin^b. He, in Mount

^t St. Mark viii. 38.

^a Acts xxvi. 13.

^v St. Mark ix. 3.

^x 1 Tim. vi. 16.

^y St. Matth. xxviii. 3. Compare St. Luke xxiv. 4.

^z Song of Solomon v. 10.

^a Lam. iv. 14. Ezek. xvi. 6.

^b Isaiah i. 18.

Golgotha, like unto us; that we, in Mount Tabor, might be like unto Him!"

And, behold, there talked with Him two 30 men, which were Moses and Elias :

As our SAVIOUR was attended by two when He visited Abraham at Mamre^c: as two Angels guarded His Sepulchre, when He had risen^d; and two were His Messengers to the Eleven, at the time of His Ascension^e; so, at His Transfiguration, "behold, there talked with Him *two* men, which were Moses and Elias:"

who appeared in glory, and spake of His 31 decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Every part of this wondrous narrative is exceedingly important and striking. Moses and Elijah, —(as if to represent the Law and the Prophets, and to shew the consent of the Gospel with both,) —"appear *in glory*:" an attribute, as already remarked, of Beings from the unseen World. And they are seen "*talking* with JESUS," — as St. Matthew and St. Mark relate^f. How remarkable a statement! These two mighty Saints, who by Faith had seen the Day of CHRIST afar off, and had been made glad thereby,—Moses and Elijah, are selected out of the whole 'goodly company' which had gone before, thus to 'talk' with the

^c Gen. xviii. 2.

^d St. Luke xxiv. 4.

^e Acts i. 10.

^f St. Matthew xvii. 3, and St. Mark ix. 4.

SAVIOUR of the World; and to behold, not so much His Glory as His Humiliation. O joy unspeakable, no less than privilege beyond all price! How does it exceed our powers, reasoning as living men, even to conceive the amount of their blessedness! How may the types and shadows of the Law be presumed to have fled away before their brightening spiritual vision: the allegorical parts of true History^s, to have teemed with hidden meanings: the dark places of Prophecy, to have grown bright and obvious! . . . But the Sacred Narrative, as usual, is severely brief. It does but inform us that the approaching Sacrifice of CHRIST'S *Death* formed the subject of this discourse; leaving us to infer from the word which St. Luke here employs, *how* "His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" may have been conversed about by these mysterious Speakers. "*His Exodus*" is the expression of the Evangelist; a hint which a pious Writer has thus expanded:—"May we not imagine the Deliverer of Israel addressed by the World's REDEEMER in some such words as these,—'By thy hand I did once vouchsafe to bring forth My people from the afflicting bondage of Egypt; but lo, I am about to turn the multitude of the Gentiles from the Power of Satan unto God. Of old time, I made a path through the Red Sea for My redeemed ones to pass over; but I am about to make a more wonderful way through the waves of Death, whereby to guide them. Yea, though the

^s Alluding to Gal. iv. 21 to 31.

floods shall compass Me about, yet shall My Life be brought up from corruption. Thou rememberest how the chariots and horsemen of Pharaoh, and the mighty host of Egypt, were seen overthrown in the midst of the Sea when the morning appeared: but I am about to triumph over principalities and powers, and overwhelm them in the Lake of Fire. Thou didst lead My people through the Wilderness, and gavest them the Law which had 'the shadow of good things to come;' but now will I Myself be their Guide, and write a new Law in their hearts^b, and teach them to worship Me in Spirit and in Truth. Thou indeed didst bring Israel to the borders of the Promised Land; but *I* am Israel's true Shepherd, and they who follow Me shall pass even from Death unto Life!'"

But Peter and they that were with him **32** were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him. And it came to pass, **33** as they departed from Him, Peter said unto JESUS, Master, it is good for us to be here:

So that the three Apostles did not awake till this mysterious transaction was ended. *Then* indeed they aroused themselves; and it was to be-

^b Heb. viii. 10. See Jer. xxxi. 31 to 33.

¹ Altered from Bishop Horne.—If the Reader is offended at this, or any other attempt in these pages, to supply the omissions of Scripture, he is welcome to reject them. They are always hazardous attempts, and are never put forth without great hesitation. It is thought, however, that they may sometimes be found useful.

hold such a spectacle as men will not look upon until they awake to the glories of the Everlasting Morning. "Perhaps they were oppressed with sleep," (says an ancient Father,) "that after their rest they might behold the Resurrection." Terrified and astonished at the sight^k, (as may well have been the case,) only one of their number is found to have ventured to break the solemn silence; moved thereto, as it would appear, by the departure of the Heavenly visitants, whom he would gladly have detained. Simon Peter, foremost on every occasion in speech or action, proceeds :

and let us make three tabernacles ; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias : not knowing what he said.

It has been excellently remarked that "although St. Peter knew not what he said, yet the solemn record of his words intimates that they were not to fall to the ground, but were spoken divinely^l."

"If," (says Venerable Bede,) "the society of but two Saints seen for a moment with their LORD in glory could confer such a degree of delight that St. Peter wished to stay their departure even by doing them service,—how great a happiness will it be to enjoy the vision of GOD, amid choirs of Angels, for ever!"—See more, on these words of St. Peter, in the note on St. Matthew xvii. 4.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud,

^k St. Mark ix. 6.

^l Rev. I. Williams.

and overshadowed them : and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

For this was He of whom it was said 'Behold, He cometh with clouds^o.' Take notice that this was not a cloud which while it overshadows, darkens the face of the sky; but it was "a *bright* cloud^p;" the token of the Divine Presence^q; a cloud whose very shadow was glory. St. Peter, in a certain place, calls this cloud "the Excellent Glory^r."

And there came a Voice out of the cloud, 35 saying, This is My beloved SON : hear Him.

St. Matthew adds,—“And when the Disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And JESUS came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid^s.”

And when the voice was past, JESUS was 36 found alone.

Refer here to the note on St. Matthew xvii. 8.

All this, then, took place at night. On the next morning, St. Matthew relates that “as they came down from the Mountain, JESUS charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead^t.” It follows,—And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

^o Rev. i. 7.

^p St. Matth. xvii. 5.

^q Exod. xl. 34, 35. 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. ^r 2 St. Pet. i. 17.

^s St. Matth. xvii. 6, 7.

^t St. Matth. xvii. 9. Compare St. Mark ix. 9.

“Questioning one with another what the from the dead should mean^a.” To know the conversation of this blessed Company as they came down ‘the Holy Mount,’ the must refer to the two earlier Gospels^b. S proceeds to shew that a night had been p the Mountain, and that it was now the f day :

- 37 And it came to pass, that on th day, when they were come down fr hill, much people met Him.

St. Luke does not explain that they coming to Him,” drawn by the heavenly lus had not yet quite faded away from H Features!—Concerning this, see the no Mark ix. 15. Indeed, the Gospel of St. M full and particular on the subject of th child, that it should be continually refer him who desires to be reminded of all t of the stupendous miracle which follows‘

- 38 And, behold, a man of the comp: out, saying, Master, I beseech Th upon my son : for he is mine only c

“Mine *only* child :”—how powerful a So was the daughter of Jairus, whom ou raised from the bed of Death, an *only* and the Widow of Nain’s son, whom He

^a St. Mark ix. 10.

^b St. Matthew xvii. 10 to 13, and St. Mark ix. 11 to see the notes. ^c St. Mark ix. 14 to 29. ^d St. L,

the way to Burial, an *only son*°. Lazarus, too,—
 who had lain four days in the grave,—was an *only*
Brother. Such things are written for the special
 consolation of mourners ; whose tears are all noted
 by God, and who lays upon none a heavier burden
 than He will also enable them to bear. Nay, He
 has relief in store for those who need it most, as
 these examples were doubtless meant to teach us.

And, lo, a Spirit taketh him, and he sud- 39
 denly crieth out ; and it teareth him that he 40
 foameth again, and bruising him hardly de-
 parteth from him. And I besought Thy Dis-
 ciples to cast him out ; and they could not.

And JESUS answering said, O faithless and 41
 perverse generation, how long shall I be with
 you, and suffer you ? Bring thy Son hither.
 And as he was yet a coming, the Devil threw 42
 him down, and tare *him*. And JESUS rebuked
 the unclean Spirit, and healed the child ; and
 delivered him again to his Father.

These verses have been already the subject of
 ample comment in the notes on St. Mark ix. 18,
 19, 20 ; and 25, 26, 27.

And they were all amazed at the mighty 43
 power of God. But while they wondered
 every one at all things which JESUS did, He
 said unto His Disciples, Let these sayings 44
 sink down into your ears : for the Son of

° St. Luke vii. 12.

† St. Mark ix. 17, 25.

Man shall be delivered into the hands
 45 men. But they understood not this say
 and it was hid from them, that they
 ceived it not: and they feared to ask
 of that saying.

From a comparison of this, with St. Ma
 and St. Mark's account of the same conver
 it will appear that the saying which the Di
 "understood not," and "feared to ask of,"
 further prophecy which our LORD now del
 namely, that the Jews should "kill Him," a
 on the third day He should "be raised aga

The Reader will find some remarks on t
 going verses in the notes on St. Mark's
 St. Luke is briefest, St. Mark fullest of all
 place; so that the latter should be const
 ferred to, down to verse 50 of the present
 It will be seen that the Blessed Compa
 passing through Galilee, privately, at the t
 our LORD delivered these sayings to the
 —They finally reached Capernaum, which
 scene of the following incidentⁿ.

46 Then there arose a reasoning amon
 which of them should be greatest.

Not *hereafter*, but *now*. They disputed
 of themselves *was* greatest^o."

^k St. Matth. xvii. 23. Compare St. Mark ix. 31.

^l St. Mark ix. 31, 32. ^m St. Matth. xvii. 22: St. M

ⁿ St. Matth. xvii. 24, and St. Mark ix. 33.

^o Compare the language of St. John xiii. 24.

And JESUS, perceiving the thought of their 47 heart, took a child, and set him by Him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall re- 48 ceive this child in My Name receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me: for He that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

This entire incident, related far more in detail both by St. Matthew and St. Mark, has been already fully remarked upon elsewhere^p.

And John answered and said, Master, we 49 saw one casting out Devils in Thy Name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And JESUS said unto him, Forbid 50 *him* not: for he that is not against us is for us.

Concerning this incident also, which seems to have been an interruption of the divine discourse on the part of St. John, see the notes on St. Mark's Gospel^q. The earlier Evangelists will be found to relate how the Discourse proceeded, after our SAVIOUR had replied to the beloved Disciple. St. Luke here breaks off the narrative,—to introduce an incident of somewhat similar character, but which belongs to an altogether subsequent period.

And it came to pass, when the time was 51

^p See St. Matthew xviii. 1 to 5, and the notes there: also St. Mark ix. 33 to 37, and the notes there. ^q See St. Mark ix. 38 to 40.

come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His Face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His Face; and they went, and entered into a Village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him.

The time alluded to is that solemn season, a few months before the last Passover, when our SAVIOR is found to have made the circuit of Samaria. The time had then come, (or rather, was approaching its fulfilment,) 'that He should be received up' in Heaven; and accordingly He set His face like flint^r to repair to the scene of His approach sufferings. The messengers which He sent before gave additional solemnity to His act.

53 And they did not receive Him, because His Face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.

The enmity between the Jews and Samarians was excessive,—as many a passage in the Gospel reminds us^s, and as the present place sufficiently shews. This enmity was considerably aggravated at the Season of the great Jewish festivals; not on Mount Gerizim, but at Jerusalem, where the whole nation testified their determination to perish. Our LORD even 'sends Messengers before His face,' openly 'to make ready' for His approach. This explains why they 'did not receive Him.'

54 And when His Disciples James and J

^r Isaiah l. 7.

^s St. John iv. 9: viii. 48.

saw *this* they said, LORD, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did ?

They allude to the repeated act of Elijah, on a well-known occasion, when Ahaziah, King of Israel, sent soldiers to apprehend him^t. Their inquiry gives a lively notion of the sense they entertained of their LORD's importance, as well as of their own burning zeal and jealousy on His behalf.

But He turned, and rebuked them, and 55 said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to 56 destroy men's lives, but to save *them*.

And they went to another village.

And it came to pass, that, as they went in 57 the way, a certain *man* said unto Him, LORD, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. And JESUS said unto him, Foxes have holes, 58 and birds of the air *have* nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay *His* head.

And He said unto another, Follow Me. 59 But he said, LORD, suffer me first to go and bury my Father. JESUS said unto him, Let 60 the dead bury their dead : but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.

It is surprising to discover that both these incidents are related in succession by St. Matthew,

^t 2 Kings i. 9 to 12.

as having occurred on quite a distinct occasion. The Reader is therefore referred to the remarks which he will find in the earlier Gospel ^u.

- 61 And another also said, LORD, I will follow
Thee ; but let me first go bid them farewell,
62 which are at home at my house. And JESUS
said unto him, No man, having put his hand
to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the
Kingdom of God.

In the proverbial saying thus employed by our LORD, there seems to be an allusion to the call of Elisha,—“who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth,” when “Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.” Whereupon “he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my Father and my Mother, and then I will follow thee ^x.”

Our SAVIOUR’S answer implies that he who enters into the service of the Great ‘Husband-man’, and undertakes to “preach the Kingdom of God ^z,” must not look wistfully back to that World which he professes to have renounced and forsaken. His hand is upon the plough ; and his eyes should look straight forward. He should give his whole heart to his Master’s work.

^u St. Matthew viii. 19 to 22.

^y See the note on St. Luke iii. 17.

^x 1 Kings xix. 19, 20.

^z See above, ver. 60.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE TENTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

1 CHRIST *sendeth out at once Seventy Disciples to work miracles, and to preach: 17 admonisheth them to be humble, and whercin to rejoice: 21 thanketh His FATHER for His grace: 23 magnifieth the happy estate of His Church: 25 teacheth the Lawyer how to attain eternal Life, and to take every one for his neighbour that needeth his mercy: 14 reprehendeth Martha, and commendeth Mary her sister.*

“AFTER these things,”—that is, after making the circuit of Samaria,—our SAVIOUR, journeying towards Jerusalem, proceeded to make the circuit of Galilee also. Preparatory to this, He is found to have sent forth seventy Disciples to prepare His way. This sending forth of the seventy, which is recorded by St. Luke alone, (who is thought to have been one of their number^a;) occupies the first sixteen verses of the present chapter. The parting charge which they received resembles in many respects, and forcibly recalls, the charge which our LORD had already given to the Twelve Apostles on sending them forth. On both occasions it will be observed that He sent His Ambassadors ‘by two and two.’

^a See the note on St. Luke i. 3.

X. AFTER these things the LORD appointed other Seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come.

As the number of the Twelve Apostles appears to have reference to the number of the Patriarchs, so do these Seventy Disciples recal the number of the Elders who were called up into Mount Sinai to behold the wondrous vision of GOD, and to eat and drink in His presence^b; who moreover assisted Moses to govern the people. "An outline of the present ordinance," (remarks one of the Fathers,) "was set forth in the words of Moses; who, at the command of GOD, chose out Seventy upon whom GOD poured out His Spirit^c." How is it possible to avoid recalling in connexion with the mission of the *Twelve* and the *Seventy*, that interesting record, twice found in the Books of Moses, that at Elim the children of Israel found "twelve wells of water and three score and ten palm trees^d?"

2 Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the LORD of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His
3 harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send
4 you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry

^b Exod. xxiv. 1, 9 to 11.
16, 24, 25.

^c Cyril: referring to Numb. xi.
^d Exod. xv. 27, and Numb. xxxiii. 9.

neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

It will be perceived that the same words which our LORD addresses to the Seventy, in ver. 2, are found in His charge to the Twelve, in St. Matthew ix. 37, 38; where see the note. Verse 3, in like manner, recurs in St. Matthew x. 16: where also the note may be consulted. The injunction in ver. 4 is found in St. Matthew x. 9, 10,—with which compare St. Mark vi. 8, 9, and St. Luke ix. 3.

The language of verses 5 and 6 is more full than in the corresponding passage of our LORD'S Charge to the Twelve,—St. Matthew x. 12, 13, where see the notes;—and helps to explain the concise record of the earlier Evangelist. Verse 7 should be compared with St. Matthew x. 11,—where the Commentary may be also referred to.

And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are there in, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatso-

ever city ye enter, and they receive you not,
 go your ways out into the streets of the
 11 same, and say, Even the very dust of your
 city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off
 against you : notwithstanding be ye sure of
 this, that the Kingdom of God is come nigh
 12 unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall
 be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom,
 than for that city.

‘*That Day*’ is the great and terrible Day of the
 LORD,—the Day of Days, which by reason of its
 momentous import, is often spoken of in Scripture
 simply as ‘*the Day*’ Compare these three last
 verses with St. Matthew x. 14, 15,—and see the
 note there. See also the note on St. Mark vi. 11.

13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee,
 Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works had been
 done in Tyre and Sidon which have been
 done in you, they had a great while ago re-
 14 pented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But
 it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon
 15 at the Judgment, than for you. And thou,
 Capernaum, which art exalted to Heaven,
 shalt be thrust down to Hell.

The Reader is requested to refer to the notes
 on St. Matthew xi. 21, 22, 24, (where the same

* As in St. Matth. vii. 22. 1 Cor. iii. 13. 1 Thess. v. 4. 2 Tim.
 i. 12, 18 : iv. 8, &c.

language is found,) for some observations on this striking passage.—The precious assurance contained in the verse which follows^f, will be found already remarked upon in the Commentary on St. Matthew x. 40, where it recurs.

He that heareth you heareth Me ; and he 16
that despiseth you despiseth Me ; and he
that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent
Me.

Before proceeding to read the ensuing portion of the History we are to remember that an interval must have elapsed : whether short or long, cannot be declared with certainty. ^gThe Seventy had had time, at least, to make the discovery that the powers of the unseen World were subject to them, through the prevailing Name of Him who had sent them forth.

And the Seventy returned again with joy, 17
saying, LORD, even the devils are subject
unto us through Thy Name.

“They seemed indeed to rejoice rather that they were made workers of miracles, than that they had become ministers of preaching^g.” Accordingly, in ver. 20, our LORD reminds them of the much higher ground of rejoicing which was theirs. But first, He replies to their address.

And He said unto them, I beheld Satan 18
as lightning fall from Heaven.

^f ver. 16.

^g Cyril.

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

A very striking saying, surely; and (to in the manner of men) one which conveys a of exceeding grandeur concerning the sudden utter fall which Satan had sustained by the (of CHRIST. It has been thought, indeed, the Fall of the Angels 'which kept not the estate^b,' is alluded to in the words before us when it is remembered that Capernaum is : have been 'exalted to Heaven,' (which can mean in respect of its mighty privileges especially when it is considered that, at the of our LORD's Advent, Satan had usurped dominion to a surprising extent over the souls of bodies of men,—of which dominion, (as : observed,) he had now been most undoubtedly, as well as most completely, despoiled seems more reasonable to suppose that the vivid comparison our SAVIOUR did but to convey the sudden and amazing overthrow which His great enemy had sustained : Hands,—an overthrow which had been by the rest of the evil angels, as their submission to the Seventy clearly proved. To the All-Eye of the Incarnate SON, the downfall of was as a thing which might be *gazed upon* accordingly, He says,—'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven.' The expression, (which doubtless intended to recal the language of with reference to Lucifer^k,) further derives interest from the name by which St. Paul d

^b St. Jude ver. 6.

ⁱ in verse 15.

^k Isa. x

the chief of the fallen angels,—namely, ‘*the Prince of the Power of the Air*’¹.

Our LORD proceeds to confirm the powers which He had already conveyed to the Seventy; supplying at the same time a marvellous hint of some secret connexion subsisting between Evil Spirits and the noxious part of the Animal Creation.

Behold, I give unto you power to tread **19** on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the Enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Consider how serpents and scorpions are ever connected in Holy Scripture with what is noxious to man^m. Remember also, the parting promise of our SAVIOUR CHRIST to His Churchⁿ.

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that **20** the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven.

They are not forbidden to rejoice at finding the powers of Satan subject unto them; but a higher ground of rejoicing is pointed out^o.

When Gregory the Great sent Augustine the monk into Britain, A.D. 597, (to plant Christianity afresh in these islands,) he reminded him of this text, and cautioned him against being too much

¹ Ephes. ii. 2.

^m Gen. iii. 1. Rev. xii. 9: xx. 2. Numb. xxi. 6. Acts xxviii. 8. Ps. xci. 13. Rev. ix. 3 to 10, &c.

ⁿ St. Mark xvi. 18.

^o See the notes on St. Matth. ix. 13, and St. John v. 30.

elated by any success with which God might have blessed his endeavours; bidding him keep his eye turned inwardly, in strict self-examination. "And," (said he), "if ever thou rememberest having offended against thy CREATOR, in word or deed, be thou mindful to call the same constantly to mind; that so the memory of thine offence may keep down the proud swelling thoughts of thine heart. Whatever signs thou mayest have been enabled to perform, consider them less as gifts made to thyself than to them, for whose sakes the power was conferred upon thee."

'Names written in Heaven,' and the like mode of speech, is not unusual with the SPIRIT. So He speaks by Moses, in the Law^p: by David in the Psalms^q: by His Prophets Isaiah^r and Daniel^s: by His Apostles St. Paul^t and St. John^u: and so, on many occasions, (as in this place,) speaks the Ancient of Days in His own person^x.

There is an obvious connexion between what goes before and what follows. 'Our LORD knew that through the operation of the HOLY SPIRIT, which He had given to His Apostles, many would be brought over to the faith^v;' and the prospect is here declared to have filled His human soul with mysterious joy: as it follows,—

21 In that hour JESUS rejoiced in Spirit, and

^p Exod. xxxii. 32.

^q Ps. lxix. 28.

^r Is. iv. 3.

^s Dan. xii. 1.

^t Phil. iv. 3: Heb. xii. 23.

^u Rev. xiii. 8: xvii. 8: xx. 12: xxi. 27.

^x Exod. xxxii. 33: Rev. iii. 5.

^v Cyril.

said, I thank Thee, O FATHER, LORD of Heaven and Earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so FATHER; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All 22 things are delivered to Me of My FATHER: and no man knoweth who the SON is, but the FATHER; and who the FATHER is, but the SON, and *he* to whom the SON will reveal *Him*.

These two verses have been already met with, although in quite a different connexion, in St. Matthew's Gospel,—whither the Reader is referred for some remarks concerning them*. The Son of Man here rejoices not that the mysteries of the Gospel were *hid* from any; but that what had been hid from the proud had been revealed to the humble,—to those child-like hearts which are ever found in CHRIST'S little ones.

And He turned Him unto *His* Disciples, 23 and said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, 24 that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

How striking are these words, which are *twice*†

* St. Matth. xi. 25 to 27.

† See St. Matth. xiii. 16, 17,—and the note there.

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

found on the lips of CHRIST Himself,—‘the of all Nations^b!’ . . . He,—‘unto whom all are open, all desires known, and from wh secrets are hid,’—was fully aware of all passionate yearnings which had been felt ancient Prophets,—“unto whom it was re that not unto themselves, but unto us, th minister:” who saw the Day of CHRIST ir but only afar off, and very darkly: of which, fore, they “inquired and searched dilige for, (as St. Peter informs us in a most p passage,) they earnestly desired to know ‘ or what manner of time *the Spirit of CHRIST was in them* did signify, when it testified l hand the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glo shall follow^d” . . . “Wherefore, they are not heard, which feign that the old Fathers di only for transitory promises.”

It is easy to discover a connexion between goes before, and what follows, in verse 25. LORD has been speaking of the names ‘writ Heaven.’ It follows, accordingly,—

25 And, behold, a certain Lawyer stood and tempted Him, saying, Master, shall I do to inherit eternal life?

The same question was afterwards addressed our LORD by ‘a certain Ruler^e,’ and in reply

^b Haggai ii. 7.

^c St. John viii.

^d 1 St. Peter i. 10 to 12.

^e Article vii.

^f St. Matth. xix. 16,—St. Mark x. 17,—St. Luke xviii.

rehearsed to him the precepts of the Second Table. At a yet later period of His Ministry, a Scribe or Lawyer inquired 'Which is the great commandment in the Law?' Our LORD made answer in the words which will be presently found in ver. 27^s.

He said unto him, What is written in the 26 Law? how readeest thou? And he answering 27 said, Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

This Scribe or Lawyer quotes from Deuteronomy vi. 4, 5, and Leviticus xix. 18. The first impression, on reading his reply, is, that he must have been an unusually attentive Student of the Books of Moses to pick out for himself such a summary of their entire teaching; but from the circumstance already noticed,—namely, that our SAVIOUR, on a certain occasion, used the same blended quotations,—it may be thought that this had become an approved method, in the Jewish Schools, of declaring the *essence* of the Law.

And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

“That is to say,—Fulfil My Commandments, keep thyself upright and perfect in them according to My will; then thou shalt live and not die.

^s St. Matth. xxii. 35 to 40. St. Mark xii. 28 to 31,—where see the notes.

Eternal Life is promised with this condition. But such is the frailty of man since the Fall; such his weakness and imbecility, that he cannot walk uprightly in God's Commandments; but daily and hourly falls from his bounden duty, offending the LORD his GOD divers ways^b." All this however the Lawyer understood not. Still less did he suppose that in the parable which he was about to hear, the helplessness of human nature was, in effect, set before him; that *he* was, in truth, the man who fell among thieves, and that the good Samaritan was none other than the Blessed Speaker Himself! It follows:

- 29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto JESUS, And who is my neighbour?
- 30 And JESUS answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

The Traveller in this Parable, who 'went' (or rather, 'was going') down from Jerusalem, had to traverse the wild, rocky road which leads to Jericho, and which preserves to this day its ancient dangerous character as well as its ancient glowing aspect,—being, in some places, a savage mountain pass, well fitted for deeds of violence such as our LORD here describes.

^b Second Homily of the Passion.

And by chance there came down a certain 31
Priest that way : and when he saw him, he
passed by on the other side. And likewise 32
a Levite, when he was at the place, came
and looked *on him*, and passed by on the
other side.

Take notice that these persons *looked* upon the misery which they yet did not even attempt to relieve. The wounded man was doubtless a Jew : one of their own nation, therefore ; and thus, in the highest degree entitled to some display of active sympathy. And yet they shewed him *none*. It seems as if the Levite had even gone a little out of his way in order to look upon the wounded Traveller.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, 33
came where he was : and when he saw him,
he had compassion *on him*, and went to *him*, 34
and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and
wine, and set him on his own beast and
brought him to an inn, and took care of
him. And on the morrow when he departed, 35
he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the
host, and said unto him, Take care of him ;
and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I
come again, I will repay thee.

It should be observed that all this tenderness towards the wounded man proceeded from a *Samaritan*. He belonged to a people with whom the Jews

had no dealingsⁱ; whose name was a very bye-word of reproach and infamy^k; and who were regarded by them as aliens and strangers^l,—almost reckoned with the very heathen^m. On such an one, therefore, the bleeding Traveller had no claim whatever. A reason might, on the contrary, have been easily invented by the Samaritan for passing on, and leaving him to his fate.

But this man had studied in a better school than the great bulk of either nation. He is found to have left no effort untried to mitigate the wounded man's sufferings. Regardless alike of the danger and fatigue, he conveys him to an Inn,—spares from his slender supply of money, as much as the stranger can require for two daysⁿ,—consigns him to the care of the host,—and departs with a loving injunction and a most generous promise.

36 Which now of these three thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

The obvious answer would be,—‘The Samaritan:’ but it seems as if the Lawyer, being a Jew, could not bring himself to admit that a member of that hateful nation was entitled to such praise. He describes *the character* of the man in the Parable, instead:—

ⁱ St. John iv. 9.

^k St. John viii. 48.

^l St. Luke xvii. 18.

^m See the note on St. Matth. x. 6.

ⁿ See St. Matth. xx. 2.

And he said, He that shewed mercy on 37 him. Then said JESUS unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Rather,—‘Go, and shew thou [mercy] likewise.’ In reading which words, (and they are the conclusion of the whole matter,) we cannot but be struck with the remarkable turn which our Blessed LORD had by this time given to the entire discourse. In the beginning, the Lawyer had asked to be informed Who was his ‘neighbour?’ Which class of persons ought he to regard as standing to him in that relation? Instead of satisfying the man’s curiosity in this respect, our LORD has related to him a Parable, which sets before his eyes a touching picture of active humanity on the part of a Samaritan towards a Jew. Now, that the wounded man was *not* looked upon as a ‘neighbour’ by the Priest or the Levite; but that he *was* so regarded, and rightly, by the Samaritan, is obvious. The lesson derived from the Parable by our LORD Himself, is not, however, that ‘every one who needs our mercy is to be taken for our neighbour°.’ Nothing of the kind. But the Blessed Speaker, after drawing from the Lawyer a free admission that, of the three persons concerned with the wounded man, the ‘neighbour’ was ‘he that *shewed mercy* on him,’ closes the conversation by proposing the conduct of the Samaritan,—the active benevolence which he dis-

• See the heading of the Chapter.

played even towards an enemy,—as a model for imitation. Thus, *the practice* of Religion is revealed as the best help to *the understanding* of it. The attention is diverted from considering who is the fit *object* of Love, and guided instead to the *exercise* of Love itself. As in every other part of the Bible, the object proposed is to school *the heart*,—not to inform *the understanding*.

Such a lesson, then, of Love and Mercy,—and nothing more,—must the parable of ‘The Good Samaritan’ have conveyed to the Lawyer to whom it was addressed. Well would it be for us, indeed, were we careful to profit by this, its practical teaching. “But indeed there are very few of us who have yet learned to exert themselves as they might do for the relief of the general misery and destitution which they cannot but see about them. The World is full of it; but is not full of that Heavenly Compassion which it was meant to call forth^p.” It is however the high privilege of the Christian who studies the written record of his Lord’s Discourses to see a prophetic meaning beneath the veil of the letter; and however exquisite, however sufficient, the literal sense of the words spoken, it is not to be doubted that *he* only can be said to profit duly by the divine narrative, who has been guided to a part, at least, of its mystical meaning also.

Human Nature, therefore, is the ‘man’ in this parable:—Human Nature, which having forsaken

^p Rev. C. Marriott.

the seat of Innocence and Holiness,—(the 'Dwelling of Peace,' as the name Jerusalem is explained to mean,)—is going down to the city of the curse^q. The Enemy of our souls, (who 'was a murderer from the beginning^r;) and his evil angels, are those murderous ones under whose power our Nature is represented as having fallen. Stripped of that robe of Original Righteousness^s, by the loss of which our First Parents became aware that they were 'naked^t;'—and grievously wounded besides, in the most vital part,—*what* but a state almost of Death was ours when the Law came to us, and passed us by? It looked upon Man indeed, (as the Priest and the Levite in the Parable looked upon the wounded Traveller;) but the Law, having looked, could do no more than 'pass by on the other side:' for a law had not as yet been given, 'which could give Life^u.'

It was reserved for CHRIST^x, (the good Samaritan of the Parable,) to look upon us, and to feel *compassion*^y: to *draw near*, (as He did by 'the mystery of His Holy Incarnation:')

—to heal the wounds of our Nature with the blessed medi-

^q See Joshua vi. 26.

^r St. John viii. 44.

^s The Reader is requested to consider the following places of Scripture:—St. Luke xv. 22: 2 Cor. v. 3: Gal. iii. 27: Rev. iii. 17, 18: xvi. 15: xix. 8.

^t Gen. iii. 7.

^u Consider Gal. iii. 21.

^x See Rom. viii. 3.

^y Consider the following texts:—St. Matth. ix. 36: xiv. 14: xv. 32: xx. 34. St. Mark i. 41: v. 19: ix. 22. St. Luke vii. 13. Also consider St. Matth. xviii. 27, 33: and St. Luke xv. 20, —remembering *who* is there spoken of.

cine of His Word and Sacraments^a,—(*that* ‘oil and wine’ wherewith the great Physician ‘binds up that which was broken, and strengthens that which was sick^a:’)—‘for our sakes to become poor, that we through His poverty might be rich^b,’—(which was aptly represented when the Traveller set the wounded man on his own beast, and was content to perform the weary journey by his side, on foot:)—to convey Man, thus rescued from Death, to the Church,—(*that* Inn provided for the reception of all ‘strangers and pilgrims,’ travelling towards ‘a better country, that is, an heavenly^c:’)—and *there* to ‘take care of him.’ . . . All this, it was reserved for CHRIST (the Good Samaritan) to perform for Man.

Indeed, “it was natural and proper, in answer to the question ‘And who is my neighbour?’ that our LORD should speak of one whom the Jew would not acknowledge as his neighbour; and should represent such an one as doing, towards a Jew, something like what He was doing Himself towards the Jews, and towards mankind. In fact, our Blessed LORD, though Himself a Jew, and of the Royal Tribe and Family, was an ‘alien to His Mother’s children^d.’ He was called a Samaritan, and treated like an alien and an enemy by His own people the Children of the Jewish Church, in which He had vouchsafed to be born^e.”

^a Rev. xxii. 2.

^b 2 Cor. viii. 9.

^d Ps. lxix. 8.

^a Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Comp. Is. lxi. 1.

^c Heb xi. 13 and 16.

^e Rev. C. Marriott

“Behold,” (said our Blessed LORD,) “I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected^f.” Accordingly, it is said in the parable that “on the morrow, when He departed, He took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him;”—(that is, Continue to deal with the objects of My Love as *I* have dealt with them^g;) “and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.” And what is this, but a mysterious hint, first,—that CHRIST, at His departing, bequeathed to His Church great gifts, (and chiefly the Two Sacraments,)—gifts and graces which were to be exercised for the relief of sick souls, until His coming again? Next,—that when He ‘shall come again in His glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and dead,’ He will not only graciously allow what Love and Zeal have done in His blessed Service, but will give it His mighty sanction also; and, (in the language of the Parable,) ‘repay’ it?

An interesting, and highly suggestive incident follows:—“A servant receives her LORD,—the sick her SAVIOUR,—the creature her Creator. But if any should say, ‘Blessed are they who have been thought worthy to receive CHRIST into their houses,’—grieve not thou: for He says, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me^h.’”

^f St. Luke xiii. 32.

^g See the last words of ver. 34. Consider St. John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

^h Augustine, quoting St. Matthew xxv. 40.

Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.

This must have been at 'Bethany,—the town of Mary and her sister Martha¹.' On the other occasion when our Lord is said to have been entertained at Bethany, it was 'in the house of Simon the leper' that 'they made Him a supper².' Here, the house was Martha's.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His Word.
40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving,

In the language of God's ancient people, disciples were said to 'sit at the feet' of their Teachers: Thus, St. Paul was brought up '*at the feet* of Gamaliel³.' But the phrase doubtless represents what was the habitual posture of the body. Consider what is said of the demoniac of Gadara, in St. Luke viii. 35.—The 'serving' alluded to⁴, implies attendance at the table.

The character of these two sisters reappears on the other occasion already alluded to, when they again come before us. It is there recorded that

¹ St. John xi. 1.

² St. Matth. xxvi. 6, compared with St. John xii. 1, 2.

³ Deut. xxxiii. 3. 2 Kings iv. 38. ^m Acts xxii. 3.

⁴ As in St. Luke iv. 39: xii. 37: xvii. 8: St. John xii. 2: vs vi. 2, and elsewhere.

'Martha served:' but of Mary, that she 'anointed the feet of JESUS, and wiped His feet with her hair^o.'

Very expressive is the language of the original in this place. St. Paul may be thought to have alluded to the entire incident when he declared, in similar language, that it was the object of his precepts to the other sex;—'that they might *attend upon the LORD without distraction*^p.' While Mary was thus blessedly engaged, Martha 'came suddenly upon' the Teacher and His disciple,—

and came to Him, and said, LORD, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

Observe, by the way, the smallness of the household, and the very humble nature of what is passing. She who provides the entertainment, has to prepare it likewise; and she must prepare it *alone*! Yet, who is the guest? The LORD of Heaven and Earth! . . . How should proud hearts bow down before such a spectacle, and forget their pride! Poverty surely inherits a blessing!

'Mary commits her cause to *the Judge*,' (remarks an ancient Father^q), 'and He becomes her *Advocate*.' How many examples there are in the Gospel, of CHRIST thus *taking the part* of them who trust their cause to *Him*^r!

^o St. John xii. 2, 3. ^p 1 Cor. vii. 35. ^q Augustine.

^r As, St. Luke vi. 3, (see the note there:) vii. 39, 40. St.

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

41 And JESUS answered and said
Martha, Martha, thou art car
42 troubled about many things: but
is needful: and Mary hath cho
good part, which shall not be ta
from her.

Mary had chosen *one* thing: M
troubled about *many*. The double re
her name is a note of special earnestnes
† He reads the Gospel to little purpose
here nothing beyond the account of t
—one engrossed with worldly business,
devoted to Religion; of whom one inct
and the other commendation. Martha
saint, no less than her sister; and St.
cord is express, that “JESUS *loved Mart*
is here engaged in the active service c
and doubtless had chosen for herself a v
portion when she determined to minis
human wants of her LORD. Behold, H
neyed, and is weary, and ‘hath not wh
His head^u.’ She has invited Him to he
and He has come to bless ‘her house
presence. Shall she not exert herself i
like this? and by the pains she takes to
Him well, seek to testify the largen

Matth. xxvi. 10, &c. Consider Ps. xxxviii. 15 (x. 14, (16 in Prayer Book.)

[†] Compare St. Luke xxii. 31.

[‡] St. Jc

^u St. Matth. viii. 20, and St. Luke ix. 58.

gratitude, and love, and joy? If Hospitality be ever honourable^x, how much more on an occasion like the present!

Not until she seeks to draw her sister away from CHRIST, therefore, is a syllable addressed to her in the way of reproof. The act of hospitality which so occupies her, cannot but be most acceptable in the eyes of her Divine guest: who says not that she has chosen a *bad* part; but only that Mary has chosen a *better*.

'*Why better?*' (asks Augustine;) '*Because it shall not be taken away from her.* From thee, the burden of business shall one time be taken away; for when thou comest into the heavenly country, thou wilt find no stranger to receive with hospitality. But for thy good it shall be taken away; that what is better may be given thee. Trouble shall be taken away, that rest may be given thee. But in the meantime *thou* art yet at sea; *thy sister* is in port.'

These words prepare us for another remark of the same great writer; namely, that Martha was occupied, as the Church of CHRIST is occupied here below, — in the active service of CHRIST: Mary, as the same Church will be engaged hereafter in Heaven, — in devout adoration of His perfections. — Our Fathers in the Faith delighted in taking a somewhat similar view of the entire transaction, — when they pointed out that these two

^x Rom. xii. 13. 1 Tim. iii. 2. Titus i. 8. Heb. xiii. 2. 1 St. Pet. iv. 9.

sisters respectively symbolize the active contemplative side of the religious life cellent,—yet the contemplative the more of the two; for it is ‘that good part, v not be taken away,’—but rather endure out the ages of Eternity, and become part of the presence of Him who is its object^v. The contemplative life has its own honours and its own rewards. Those who pursue it, are only *then* to be blamed when they would cast blame on the contemplatives such as have chosen the Word of God for their study^v, and CHRIST Himself for their portion.

The Prayer.

O ALMIGHTY God, who alone order the unruly wills and passions of sinful men; Grant unto Thy people that they may love the thing which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou promise; that so, among the successive manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where our souls are to be found; through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. Amen.

^v Compare St. John xvi. 22.

² Ps. cxix. 18, 24, 54, 72, 97, 103, 105, 127, 162,

³ Ps. xvi. 5: lxxiii. 26: cxix. 57: cxliii. 5, &c.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

1 CHRIST teacheth to pray, and that instantly: 11 assuring that GOD so will give us good things. 14 He, casting out a dumb devil, rebuketh the blasphemous Pharisees: 28 and sheweth who are blessed: 29 preacheth to the people, 37 and reprehendeth the outward show of holiness in the Pharisees, Scribes, and Lawyers.

XI. AND it came to pass, that as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His Disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his Disciples.

It was usual, among the Jews, for Masters to give their Scholars a Form of Prayer. St. John Baptist had given his Disciples such a Form,—which would have been preserved to this day, had it concerned us to know what it was.

And He said unto them, When ye pray, 2 say,

The Prayer which follows, had been already delivered by our SAVIOUR to His Disciples, in the Sermon on the Mount: then, unasked; now, in compliance with the request of a Disciple. See

St. Matthew's Gospel, vi. 9 to 13,—and th
there. This repeated delivery of the LORD's
reminds us of the two-fold delivery of Hi
mandments^a. Very significant, surely, is t
cumstance that *the same* Prayer was delive
both occasions. Well may the Church mal
frequent use of it in her Daily Service!

OUR FATHER

We are not taught to say "My Fathe
"Our Father;" partly, to remind us of our *E
hood* in CHRIST,—partly, to remind us of th
of *Common* Prayer. To say "MY FATHER
the peculiar prerogative of the Only-Begott
See St. John v. 18; and the note which i
ately goes before it.

GOD is "our Father," because He
Creator^b:—because, by His Power, our
sustained; by His Providence all our wa
supplied^c:—and because, lastly, we a
adopted Children by Faith in CHRIST JESUS

Which art in Heaven,

These words, at the very beginning
LORD's Prayer, are intended, (like the su
"Lift up your hearts,") to carry our th
from Earth to Heaven; and to remind us
our conversation, as "the Sons of God^e,"
be.

^a See Deut. ix. 10, and x. 4.

^b Deut. xxx

^c St. Matth. vii. 9 to 11.

^d Gal. iii

^e St. John i. 12 and 1 St. John iii. 1, 2.

Hallowed be Thy Name.

This first petition of the LORD'S Prayer, by the form it assumes, seems to testify anxiety on behalf of ALMIGHTY GOD: but, in reality, it is only a supplication offered up for ourselves,—a prayer that GOD'S Name, (which is thrice Holy), may be sanctified *in us*.

And when, both in ourselves and others, *that* Holy Name is hallowed,—what will delay the fulfilment of the petition which stands in the second place?

'Thy Kingdom come.

By this petition, "the Church militant here in earth" anticipates those "great voices in Heaven," which St. John heard, triumphantly "saying, The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our LORD, and of His CHRIST; and He shall reign for ever and ever^f."

But it is, in effect, a prayer for growth in Grace; or the increase of Holiness, both in ourselves and others: "for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you^g." The Kingdom, moreover, *has been* visibly set up on Earth; and "no doubt *is come upon us*^h:" "but as the Blind see not the Light, (in which they nevertheless "live, and move, and have their being,") so may it be with ourselves! We have need continually to pray that God would bring us sensi-

^f Revel. xi. 15.

^g St. Luke xvii. 21.

^h St. Luke xi. 20; and St. Matth. xii. 28.

ply to the Knowledge of His Kingdom; and convince us of its "coming."

Thy Will be done, as in Heaven, so in Earth.

If men sought to do God's Will on Earth, as constantly and faithfully as the holy Angels do His Will in Heaven,—(for they always "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word¹,"—) the coming of His Kingdom would be delayed no longer. Faithfully to do His Will, is indeed to make Heaven begin here on Earth. Heartily to will what *He* willeth, is the nearest imaginable approach to perfection.

The three former petitions are expressive of our solicitude for God's Glory. On our parts, they are petitions for grace "to worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him as we ought to do." The four which follow, have Man for their subject: and in them, we severally enumerate, and pray for the supply of, our own greatest needs.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

By which words, we "pray unto God that He will send us all things that be needful both for *our souls* and bodies." Thus, besides being a prayer for food and raiment,—(with which possessions, we are reminded that we ought to be content^k; and *for* which, we are warned against being over careful^l;)—this petition has an obvious refe-

¹ Psalm ciii. 20. ^k 1 Tim. vi. 8. ^l St. Matth. vi. 24 to 34.

ence to the "true Bread which came down from Heaven;" even to "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by *the Body and Blood of CHRIST*." "For," (as our LORD Himself speaks,) "My Flesh is Meat indeed, and My Blood is Drink indeed^m." And this is, of course, the loftiest meaning of the prayer.

Yet more generally,—for our LORD's use of Deut. viii. 3, (concerning which, see the note on St. Luke iv. 4), forbids any such limited application of that place of Scripture;—we are hereby taught to place our entire dependence, to repose all our hopes and anxieties, on GOD: to refer all our needs, to commit all our schemes, as well as to resign the issue of every thing we undertake, to the disposition of His good Providence.

Lastly, *to do the Will of GOD the FATHER*,—as we learn from St. John iv. 32 and 34, is to "have meat to eat" which the World knows not of. That is, spiritual strength and sustenance is derived to the Church from this source. Moreover,—“It is written, Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GODⁿ.” There is therefore an allusion here to the commands and sanctions contained in *the Book of Life*; concerning which, the Christian prays that he may find therein his daily strength and sustentation.

And thus, although it would seem that, in this

^m St. John vi. 55.

ⁿ St. Matt. iv. 4,—where our LORD quotes Deut. viii. 3.

petition, our Blessed LORD, out of His great passion toward our infirmities, had simply given the foremost place to a supplication in behalf of the temporal wants of His creatures,—it will be felt that even here, abundant provision has been made for the more spiritually minded; enabling them to lift up their hearts above this earthly scene; and to feel, with the Psalmist, even when they use the language of mere bodily craving;—“My soul thirsteth for *Thee* : my flesh longeth for *Thee*!” “My flesh and my heart faileth : but *GOD* is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”

4 And forgive us our Sins ; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.

On this petition, and the memorable plea on which it rests, see the note in St. Matthew's Gospel,—vi. 12 : also the note on verses 14 and 15 of the same chapter.

To enforce the duty of forgiveness of Injuries, our LORD delivered “a Parable of the King that took account of his Servants; and punished him who shewed no mercy to his fellow.” We learn also from St. Matthew's Gospel, that the Blessed Speaker recurred to the present petition immediately after the former delivery of the LORD's Prayer^a : and He is related by St. Mark to have

^p Ps. lxxiii. 1. Compare Ps. lxxxiv. 2.

^q Ps. lxxiii. 26.

^r St. Matthew xviii. 23 to the end. ^s St. Matth. vi. 14, 15.

used exactly similar language concerning this great duty, on a subsequent occasion^t.

And lead us not into Temptation.

We are hereby reminded of the comfortable truth that the Adversary has no power, even to tempt us,—unless God permit him. When the Eternal SON was led into the Wilderness to be tempted by the Devil, He was led *by the SPIRIT*^u. All our Fear, and all our Devotion, ought therefore to be addressed to GOD.

A connexion may be perceived between this petition, and the last. *There*, we prayed to be forgiven for our past transgressions. *Here*, we pray to be saved from the commission of more.

See the note on this petition in St. Matthew vi. 13; where the difference is pointed out between GOD'S *Trial of our Constancy*, and Satan's *Solicitation to Sin*,—which, in the language of Scripture, are alike called 'Temptation.'

But deliver us from Evil.

This may well be the concluding petition of the LORD'S Prayer,—being the Creature's cry to the CREATOR for final deliverance from all that stands in the way of his Eternal Salvation: Evil,—whether from without, or from within. That deliverance from *the Evil One* is implied, cannot, of course, be

^t St. Mark xi. 25, 26. See also Ephes. iv. 32: Coloss. iii. 13: and Ecclesiasticus xxviii. 1 to 7.

^u St. Matth. iv. 1.

doubted; and probably this is the thing *chiefly* meant: in illustration of which hint, the Reader is particularly referred to the notes on St. Luke iv. 6. But more than *that*, if possible, is meant by these words. They are a prayer that God would deliver us, as St. Paul speaks, "from this body of death^x." By such language, (in the words of the same Apostle), shewing that "we ourselves groan within ourselves; waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of the Body^y."

This petition, which is the largest in extent, of any, may be regarded as summing up, and comprehending, all our desires. It enables the Christian, into whatever tribulation he may happen to be cast, to vent the fulness of his grief; and, in the fewest possible words, to pray to God for effectual deliverance,—in Time and in Eternity.

When our LORD first delivered His pattern Prayer, He added a few words enforcing the duty of Forgiveness of Injuries^z. On this occasion, He delivers a Parable enforcing *earnestness*, or rather *importunity* in prayer. It is as if the Divine Speaker had said,—'You ask me for a form of words. It is well. Learn, however, that *that* form must be poured forth heartily; as the expression of the needs of each individual heart. Nor suppose, because your requests are not immediately granted, that therefore they will be denied altogether. Harken to a parable.'

^x Romans vii. 24.

^y Romans viii. 23.

^z St. Matthew vi. 14, 15.

And He said unto them, Which of you 5 shall have a friend; and shall go unto him at midnight,

GOD is that Friend^a. "*At midnight* I will rise to give thanks unto Thee," saith the Psalmist^b. We learn from this place, that *God* is to be addressed with midnight prayers, as well as midnight praises; and the example of Paul and Silas teaches us the same thing. See Acts xvi. 25.

and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

The request, you observe, is for *Bread*; concerning the meaning of which term, see above, the notes on verse 3. Consider, in connexion with these two places, the language of ver. 11; and see the note there.

But why "*three loaves*?" It seems reasonable on more accounts than one, to compare this place with Genesis xviii. 6.

for a friend of mine in his journey is come 6 to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

The type, it may be presumed, of a sudden requirement,—an unexpected want. Thus, in Nathan's 'parable of the Ewe Lamb,' the supposed occasion when the Rich man spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, was when "*there came a Traveller* unto the Rich man^c." . . . Or

^a St. John xv. 14.

^b Ps. cxix. 62.

^c 2 Samuel xii. 4.

does the present parable perhaps exhibit the efficacy of *intercessory* prayer?

An ancient Bishop beautifully puts the case of a stranger seeking Divine Knowledge, *a reason*, at the hands of one who has it not to give. "Not having wherewith to satisfy his hunger, you are compelled to seek in the LORD'S Book: for perhaps what he asks is contained there, but obscure. You are not permitted to ask St. Paul himself, or St. Peter, or any Prophet; for all that family is now resting with their LORD; and the ignorance of the World is very great, that is, it is midnight; and your Friend is urgent from hunger, and not contented with a simple faith. Must he then be abandoned? Go to the LORD Himself, with whom the family is sleeping; 'Knock and Pray.' If He delays to give, it is because He wishes that you should the more earnestly desire what is delayed; lest, by being given at once, it should grow common."

Take notice, in passing, of the *very* humble sphere of Life from which our LORD draws His illustration. It is because—"To the poor the Gospel is preached^d." Well might the Psalmist exclaim, "Who is like unto the LORD, our God, who dwelleth on high; who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and in the Earth^e!"

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and

^d St. Luke vii. 22.

^e Psalm cxiii. 6.

my Children are with me in bed: I cannot rise and give thee.

Rather,—‘My Children, as well as myself, are gone to rest.’ He says “Trouble me not,” and delays, only to kindle the greater desire,—to occasion redoubled earnestness. See the note on the next verse.

An ancient Father refers all this, to these latter lays, when there is “a famine of the Word; and those who once dealt the Gospel throughout the World, as it were Bread, are now in their secret rest with the LORD.” Doubtless the Saints are GOD’S “children^f,” and “the dead in CHRIST,”—those, “which sleep in JESUS^g,”—may well be spoken of as “in their beds^h.” “Let the Saints be joyful with glory,” says the Psalmist, “Let them rejoice *in their beds*ⁱ.”

Consider, how it is only when “an open door^k” is set before us, that we can hope for access to GOD. Hence our SAVIOUR CHRIST calls Himself ‘the door^l,’—because He presents our petitions; and because, offered in His most Holy Name, they become prevailing^m. Hence too, such expressions as we meet with in Acts xiv. 27: 1 Cor. xvi. 9: 2 Cor. ii. 12; and Coloss. iv. 3.—Take notice that ‘the door’ is more than “shut;” it is, (in the original,) “locked:” and so in St. Matthew vi. 6.

^f 1 St. John iii. 1, 2, &c.

^g 1 Thess. iv. 14, 16.

^h Compare Job xvii. 13. Isaiah lvii. 2. 2 Chron. xvi. 14.

ⁱ Ps. cxlix. 5.

^k Rev. iii. 8.

^l St. John x. 9.

^m St. John xiv. 13: xv. 16: xvi. 23.

The thoughtful Reader will recollect a short but striking clause in St. Matthew xxv. 10.

- 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his Friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Whether "three," or more.

What a marvellous lesson is here set before us,—even by the very Being who answereth Prayer! He may see fit to delay granting our petitions: but He would have us persevere; and He will grant them in the end. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence; and the violent take it by forceⁿ." The present warning is by no means singular and solitary. Our Lord caused two blind men, on a certain occasion, thus to cry after Him, and follow Him into the house^o:—the two blind men at Jericho, He healed not, in like manner, until after they had called upon Him so as to incur the displeasure of the multitude^p: but above all, to the Woman of Canaan, He thus acted,—'answering her not a word,' in reply to her prolonged and repeated cries,—even repulsing her when at last she came and worshipped^q. And what other lesson than one of earnestness in Prayer, is taught us by Jacob's wrestling with an Angel until the breaking of the day? Jacob "said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless

ⁿ St. Matthew xi. 12.

^o St. Matthew ix. 27, 28.

^p St. Matthew xx. 30 to 34.

^q St. Matthew xv. 22 to 26.

me And He said As a Prince hast thou power with GOD and with men, and hast prevailed And He blessed him there^r." Whence his name, "Israel": that is, a *Prince of GOD*.

Observe, that the Friend's compliance, is not from friendship, but in consequence of the other's importunity; or rather "shamelessness,"—for so it stands in the original: so that the argument strictly resembles that in the parable of 'The Unjust Judge;' or rather of 'The importunate Widow;' which was spoken "to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint^s." Consider, by all means, St. Luke xviii. 1 to 8.

Now, "God is Love^t". Moreover, "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep^u." Consider therefore with how much greater certainty of success we shall knock at *Heaven's Gate!* "He would not so encourage us to ask were He not willing to bestow. He is more willing to give than we to receive." There is no overcoming of reluctance here; the reluctance, on the contrary, is all our own.

The Divine Speaker proceeds to add a few words without any parable: "no longer in a figure, but plainly."

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

^r Genesis xxxii. 24 to 29

^s 1 St. John iv. 16.

^t St. Luke xviii. 1.

^u Ps. cxxi. 4.

This, and the four following verses, (ver. 9 to ver. 13,) recur, with some small varieties of expression, in our LORD'S Sermon on the Mount,—St. Matth. vii. 7 to 11: where the Reader is requested to consult the notes. To “ask”,—to “seek”,—to “knock,”—seem to imply different degrees of earnestness.

- 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

“Receiveth,”—not perhaps the very thing he asked for; but “that which is most expedient for him;” and therefore *a better thing* than he knew how to ask. He “findeth,”—something: a treasure, doubtless; though perhaps not the very thing he sought. And “the door” is “opened,”—whereby he may “go in and out, and find pasture^x.” See the note on St. Matthew vii. 8.

- 11 If a Son shall ask bread of any of you that is a Father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

The connexion of this with what goes before, is obvious. Notice in the prayer beginning “Our *Father*,” the petition for “*Bread*”; and the subject of the midnight request in verse 5,—where see the note. See what has been already written on St. Matthew vii. 9.

^x St. John x. 9.

Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him
 a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know
 how to give good gifts unto your Children:
 how much more shall *your* Heavenly FATHER
 give the Holy SPIRIT to them that ask Him?

These words have already come before us in the 'Sermon on the Mount',—St. Matthew vii. 10, 11; where see the notes. A similar argument to that used above, is here repeated. There, it was,—If a common Friend, to escape molestation; here, If a human Father, because bound by natural ties, grants the favour required of him,—how much more shall *He* who never sleepeth⁷, and whose Mercy is over all His works⁸; how much more shall thy Heavenly Father, "grant thee thy heart's desire, and fulfil all thy mind"⁹!

And He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

Compare the account of this miracle in St. Matthew's Gospel,—xii. 22, 23; where see the notes.

But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

The reader is referred to the note on St.

⁷ Ps. cxxi. 3, 4.

⁸ Ps. cxlv. 9.

⁹ Psalm xx. 4.

Matthew xii. 24. Also, to a long note on St. Mark iii. 22.

16 And others, tempting *Him*, sought of Him a sign from Heaven.

“This pretended desire of a sign less equivocal,—a sign *from Heaven*, such as Moses exhibited before the Israelites^b,—could only proceed from minds corrupted, as were those of the Pharisees, by the dangerous habit of trifling with the divine Oracles; and making that accurate knowledge they possessed of the external means of Salvation, a mere instrument of pride and worldly advancement.” Compare St. Matthew xii. 38, and the note there.

17 But He, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a House
18 *divided* against a House falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his Kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast
19 out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.

The Reader is referred to all the notes on St. Matthew xii. 25, 26, 27,—where the three preced-

^b Exodus xvi. 4, 15; referred to in Psalm lxxviii. 24, and in St. John vi. 30 to 32.

ing verses will be found discussed at some length. Some remarks on the two first, (verses 17 and 18,) will be also found in the Commentary on St. Mark iii. 26.

But if I with the Finger of God cast out 20 devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you.

In St. Matthew xii. 28, instead of "The *Finger* of God", it is "The *Spirit* of God": a most precious circumstance, since we are thereby reminded of the meaning of the former phrase when it occurs in Scripture.

But *why* is the Spirit of God, spoken of as His *Finger*? Probably, first, because that little member possesses such wondrous activity, and is mainly employed in all the operations of the hands: wherefore, when the Magicians of Pharaoh would ascribe a miracle to the power of God's *Spirit*, they exclaim "This is the *Finger* of God^c."—To the finger, again, chiefly belong all works of Creative energy and skill: wherefore, the Heavens, (concerning which it is said in the Book of Job, "By His *Spirit* He hath garnished" them^d;) are described in Psalm viii. 3, as "the work of His *Fingers*."—Next, it may be because with this member words are consigned to writing: whence the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone, are said to have been "written with the *Finger* of

^c Exodus viii. 19.

^d Job xxvi. 13.

God^e;" with manifest reference to which, St. Paul speaks of an Epistle written "with the *Spirit* of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart^f."—We speak of the Bible, in like manner, as written with the *Finger* of God; by which we do but mean that it is inspired throughout by GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT. Consider Daniel v. 5, which describes how there "came forth *fingers* of a man's hand, and wrote" upon the wall; and "the part of the hand", (as we read in verse 24,) *was sent from GOD*. Remember also how, on a certain occasion, the Incarnate WORD Himself "stooped down, and with *His finger* wrote on the ground^g."

When acts of stupendous Power are attributed to the *Finger* of God, there seems further to be an allusion to the *ease* and *despatch* with which He performs His works.

But the Reader is referred to the note on St. Matthew xii. 28, for some remarks upon the present verse.

21 When a Strong Man armed keepeth his
22 palace, his goods are in peace: but when a Stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, He taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

Our SAVIOUR CHRIST Himself is that 'Stronger

^e Exodus xxxi. 18 : Deut. ix. 10.

^f 2 Cor. iii. 3.

^g St John viii. 6.

than the Strong,'—one of whose types in the Old Testament was *Sampson*. He is a *Warrior*. Consider the following places of Scripture,—Psalm xlv. 3, and 5, (with which compare Rev. vi. 2: also xix. 15 and 21:) Ephes. iv. 8, (quoting Psalm lxxviii. 18): Coloss. ii. 15: 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. To 'divide spoils' is the act of victorious soldiers,—compare Numb. xxxi. 27: Joshua xxii. 8: Judges v. 30: 1 Samuel xxx. 24: Psalm lxxviii. 12: Isaiah xxxiii. 23. Even thus it had been foretold of CHRIST Himself that He should "*divide the spoil with the strong*^h."

See the note on St. Matthew xii. 29: also on St. Mark iii. 27, and the places there referred to.—The Reader is also referred to the note on St. Luke viii. 30.

"All his armour:" rather, "his *complete suit of armour*ⁱ."—"Wherein he trusted:"—how much of dismay and disappointment is revealed in those few words!

He that is not with Me is against Me; 23
and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.

The Reader is referder to the note on St. Matthew xii. 30.

When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a 24
man, he walketh through dry places, seek-

^h Isaiah liii. 12.

ⁱ Compare Ephes. vi. 11, 13; where it is rendered "the whole armour."

ing rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.
 25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished.

These wonderful words will be found remarked upon, at great length, in the notes on St. Matthew xii. 43.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself:

“As if answering to the sevenfold graces of the HOLY SPIRIT, by which the faithful Christian is confirmed and sealed.” See the Hymn in the Ordination Service, beginning “Come HOLY GHOST,” &c.; and consider the following places of Scripture: Rev. i. 4: iii. 1: iv. 5: v. 6. Compare Isaiah xi. 2.

For, in the case before us, “that most Holy Inhabitant has been quenched^k, and grieved^l, and thrust away.”

Consider, in connexion with this, St. John v. 14.

and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.

For, “it is impossible,” says the Apostle, addressing the Hebrews, “to renew again such unto repentance^m :” that is, such as “were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have

^k 1 Thess. v. 19. ^l Ephes. iv. 30. ^m Hebrews vi. 4 to 6.

ted the good Word of God, and the powers of
 e World to come,"—and yet have fallen away to
 ostasy. Most true it is that God gives pardon
 er to the truly repenting Sinner. But *who* will
 ve Repentance itself to him who has put it far
 om him, — when the HOLY SPIRIT, the only
 uthor and Giver of Repentance, is grieved, and
 ovoked to become an Enemy? What if every
 eling on which contrition can be fastened has
 ased to exist,—and every breath of devout affec-
 on has stopped,—and baptismal grace has been
 used, and wasted, and lost,—and the Blood of
 he Covenant, wherewith the man was sanctified,
 ath become to him as an unholy thing, and a
 asting despite is done to “the Spirit of Graceⁿ?”

The entire contents of the present verse will be
 ound remarked upon, at great length, in the notes
 n St. Matthew xii. 45,—to which the Reader is
 eferred.

And it came to pass, as He spake these 27
 hings, a certain Woman of the company
 ifted up her voice and said unto Him,
 Blessed *is* the womb that bare Thee, and
 he paps which Thou hast sucked. But He 28
 aid, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear
 he Word of God, and keep it.

The reader is referred to the note on St. Luke
 iii. 21.—It is obvious to remark on these words
 hat nothing derogatory to the unspeakable honour

ⁿ Hebrews x. 29.

of the Blessed Virgin Mary was intended. The very thought were ridiculous. An Archangel from Heaven had proclaimed her blessedness. The HOLY SPIRIT, (by her own lips,) had pronounced her blessed eternally°. That no Woman since the Creation was ever so honoured,—nor, till the end of the World *will* be,—is too evident to require asserting. In the words of grave Bishop Pearson, —“ We cannot bear too reverend a regard unto ‘the Mother of our LORD,’ so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the LORD Himself.”

And yet, he must be blind indeed who sees not in such passages as the present,—St. Luke viii. 20, 21, — St. Matth. xii. 48 to 50, — the clear condemnation of all those who would unduly exalt our LORD’s Mother^p. There are parts of the Church where the Blessed Virgin is even worshipped; and *that*, openly. But the blasphemous practice is of only modern date; and could never have arisen where the Word of God was held in due honour.

29 And when the people where gathered thick together, He began to say,

In reply to the Pharisees, who had said,—“ Master, we would see a sign from Thee.” See St. Matthew xii. 38, and the note there.

This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it,

° St. Luke i. 28 and 48.

^p St. Luke i. 43.

but the sign of Jonas the Prophet. For as 30
Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so
shall also the Son of Man be to this gen-
eration.

Take notice, that one of the unrecorded facts
in Old Testament History is here revealed to us,
from the lips of CHRIST Himself.

The Queen of the South shall rise up in 31
the Judgment with the men of this genera-
tion, and condemn them : for she came from
the utmost parts of the Earth to hear the
wisdom of Solomon ; and, behold, a Greater
than Solomon *is* here. The men of Nineve 32
shall rise up in the Judgment with this gen-
eration, and shall condemn it : for they re-
pent at the preaching of Jonas ; and, be-
hold, a Greater than Jonas *is* here.

The Reader will find this entire passage fully
remarked upon in the notes on St. Matthew xii.
39, 40, 41, 42. It is very easy to point out one
of the meanings of the words which follow : easy
also, to invent *some* connexion with what goes
before. But how hard is it to declare with cer-
tainty what the SPIRIT intended ! . . . It *seems*
as if our LORD were here proclaiming the open-
ness of His teaching ; and declaring that, just as
openly should His Church, (the " Candlestick"),
bear witness concerning Him, to the end : for
He says :—

33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a bushel; but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

Almost the same words are found in the 'Sermon on the Mount.' See the note on St. Matthew v. 15. They also recur (in quite a different connexion) in St. Mark iv. 21,—where see the note. In what follows, our LORD seems to declare that "whether men should be enlightened by His Doctrine, or not, would depend upon the state of their own minds; according as they should be clear from prejudices or darkened by evil passions." See below on ver. 36; and consider the note on St. John v. 44.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness.

These words also occurred in the 'Sermon on the Mount,' and will be found discussed in the notes on St. Matthew vi. 22, 23.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which
36 is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

“What is here said of the body, is to be applied to the soul. The sense is: If, in consequence of the singleness of thy heart, thy whole mind be enlightened, there will be Light all around thee, to direct thee in all thy ways.”

And as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him: and He went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that He had not first washed before dinner.

The reason is given in St. Mark vii. 3 and 4.

And the LORD said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter;

—‘but within, they are full of extortion and excess⁹:’ even so ye are careful to cultivate a fair outside,—

but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also?

This means,—You ascribe to Divine Tradition those outward cleansings which you extend even to cup and platter. But do you not consider that He who formed the outside, fashioned the inward part also; and must require purity in respect of *both*—Soul as well as Body? “Behold, Thou

⁹ St. Matth. xxiii. 25.

desirest Truth in the inward parts," says the Psalmist. "Make me a clean heart, O God."

- 41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have ; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

This should be translated,—“ But rather bestow in alms the things which are inside” the cup and the platter: (corresponding with the Baptist’s directions, in St. Luke iii. 11.) “Alms” are specified, because the Pharisees were “full of Ravening,”—that is, of *Extortion*. On the doctrine here taught, consider the following places Scripture: Isaiah lviii. 7. Daniel iv. 27. St. Luke xii. 33. And compare the two preceding verses with St. Matth. xxiii. 25, 26,—where see the notes.

Take notice that Woe is next, three times denounced on the Pharisees,—verses 42, 43, and 44: and as often on the Lawyers, verses 46, 47, and 52.

- 42 But woe unto you, Pharisees ! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over Judgment and the Love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

That is,—And yet not to leave the other undone. See the note on St. Matthew xxiii. 23.

The Pharisees *did* give tithe to God, even of ‘all manner of herbs,’—which the Law did not require: but *as* they gave it, it was not Alms. Consider St. Matthew vi. 1 to 4, and the notes there.

Woe unto you, Pharisees ! for ye love the 43
uppermost seats in the synagogues, and
greetings in the markets.

Our LORD reproached them for their pride and
ambition in these respects, on another occasion.
Compare St. Matthew xxiii. 6, which answers to
St. Mark xii. 38, 39 : St. Luke xx. 46. Consider
also St. John v. 44, and the note there,—already
referred to, on ver. 33 of the present chapter.

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, 44
hypocrites ! for ye are as graves which ap-
pear not, and the men that walk over *them*
are not aware of *them*.

This should be compared with St. Matthew
xxiii. 27 : but the sense of the two places is dif-
ferent. *There*, the Pharisees are compared to
“whited sepulchres,” and are reproached for their
inward impurity, combined with a fair exterior.
Here, the skill with which they succeeded in hid-
ing their internal corruption,—so that men sus-
pected not the pollution with which they were in
contact^r,—is the subject of rebuke. See the note
on the last half of St. Matthew viii. 28.

Then answered one of the Lawyers, and 45
said unto Him, Master, thus saying Thou
reproachest us also.

Our countryman Bede remarks on this,—“In
what a grievous state is that conscience, which

^r See Numbers xix. 16.

hearing the Word of God, thinks it a reproach against itself; and, in the account of the punishment of the wicked, perceives its own condemnation!" Take notice, that when our LORD couples the 'Scribes' with the 'Pharisees,' one of the *Lawyers* speaks. The reason may be gathered from the note on St. Mark iii. 22, which see. The learned do not know whether there was *any* difference between a Lawyer and a Scribe; but they suggest that the former may have expounded the Law privately, in Schools: the latter, publicly, in the Synagogues.

The three Woes denounced against the Lawyers follow,—as was pointed out in the note which immediately precedes verse 42.

46 And He said, Woe unto you also, *ye Lawyers!* for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

To 'lade men with burdens,' in the language of Scripture, is, so to interpret the Law that its fulfilment shall prove intolerable. Thus, St. Peter describes the Circumcision of Christians, as "*a yoke upon the neck of the Disciples*:" and, in the Decree of the Council of Jerusalem, it is said to have "seemed good to the HOLY GHOST, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these neces-

* Acts xv. 10.

sary things^t." These false Teachers, as our LORD elsewhere declares, "*said, but did not*:" or, as it is here expressed, "touched not the burdens with one of their fingers." See on St. Matthew xxiii. 4.

Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the Prophets, and your Fathers killed them.

Our LORD does not, of course, denounce woe against them for building the Sepulchres of the Prophets; but for their *hypocrisy*: as appears from St. Matthew xxiii. 29.

Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your Fathers;

Rather,—“Thereby ye bear witness to the deeds of your Fathers, and are consenting thereto;”

for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

That is,—For, by building the Sepulchres of the Prophets, ye bear witness publicly to the guilt of those who slew them; while, by busying yourselves with the graves of the murdered men, ye are perceived by Him Who seeth in secret, to inherit the disposition of those, their murderers. The whole passage, however, is to be compared with St. Matthew xxiii. 29 to 33, where the language is more full;—and see the notes there. Yet, who that reads all that ever was written in explanation of the Words of CHRIST, feels not that

^t Acts xv. 28.

^u St. Matthew xxiii. 3.

there still remains something to be explained? that it is *indeed* "the voice of God" to which he has been listening, "and not of a Man?" . . . He proceeds:—

49 Therefore also said the Wisdom of God,

In St. Matthew xxiii. 34, instead of "The Wisdom of God," it is simply "I." CHRIST therefore is,—(as St. Paul *says* that He is),—"the Wisdom of God^x." This must be because in Him "are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge^y." Accordingly, by this name of WISDOM is the Eternal SON discoursed of throughout the Book of Proverbs. Consider particularly, Proverbs iii. 19 viii. 22 to 31, &c: and see the notes on St. John i. 2 and 3. .

I will send them Prophets and Apostles and *some* of them they shall slay and per
50 secute: that the blood of all the Prophets which was shed from the foundation of the World, may be required of this generation
51 from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the Temple: verily I say unto you, I shall be required of this generation.

The Reader should compare this with St. Matthew xxiii. 34 to 36; where some remarks on these verses will be found.

^x 1 Cor. i. 24.

^y Coloss. ii. 3.

Woe unto you, Lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of Knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

This also recurs, though in a somewhat different form, in St. Matthew xxiii. 13,—where see the note. “The Key of Knowledge,”—because it was their business to unlock the hard places of scripture: in token of which, it was usual to present them with a key, on appointing them to their office. Concerning the Lawyers, see the note on St. Mark iii. 22.

And as He said these things unto them, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things: laying wait for Him and seeking to catch something out of His Mouth, that they might accuse Him.

They harassed Him with questions, as their manner was; of which we have so singular an example in St. Matthew xxii. 15, 23, 34, 46. And this was done in order to provoke Him to “*the multitude of words*,” in which, (says the Wise Man,) “*there wanteth not sin*.” They forgot with whom they had to do: even with Him Who spake as “*never man spake*,” and of Whom it had been said,—“*Full of Grace are Thy Lips*!”

* Proverbs x. 19.

* St. John vii. 46.

^b Psalm xlv. 3.

The Prayer.

O MERCIFUL GOD, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that Thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live ; have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word ; and so fetch them home, blessed LORD, to Thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, JESUS CHRIST our LORD, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, World without end. Amen.

PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON THE TWELFTH CHAPTER OF

St. Luke's Gospel.

1 CHRIST preacheth to His Disciples to avoid hypocrisy, and fearfulness in publishing His doctrine: 18 warneth the people to beware of covetousness, by the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns. 22 We must not be over careful of earthly things, 31 but seek the Kingdom of GOD, 33 give alms, 36 be ready at a knock to open to our LORD whensoever He cometh. 41 CHRIST'S ministers are to see to their charge, 49 and look for persecution. 54 The people must take this time of grace, 58 because it is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation.

XII. IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say unto His Disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Take notice of the immense concourse of persons thus hinted at, in whose presence our Blessed LORD denounced the wickedness of the most powerful of the Jewish sects. The striking saying here recorded, (which will be found remarked upon in the notes on St. Mark viii. 15, and St. Matth.

xvi. 6,) is discovered to have been employed Him on more than one occasion. The reason the warning, (as it seems,) follows :

- 2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; neither hid, that shall be known.

This striking saying, like the last, is found to have been of repeated occurrence*. It has been commented upon in the note on St. Matthew 26,—which is the first of eight verses closely resembling the second, and seven following verses in the present chapter. The entire passage, although very like the present, occurs in quite a different connexion in the earlier Gospel ; being part of the Charge which our LORD delivered to the Twelve.

And here, let it be remarked in passing, that the attentive student of the Gospels on making such a discovery, instead of thinking himself at liberty to proceed at once to what follows, should feel it incumbent upon him to pause rather, to inquire humbly and carefully into the nature of the strange circumstance before him. For this strange circumstance it certainly is, that of the 59 verses which compose the present chapter, less than 35 should prove to have been delivered on quite distinct occasions ; and not in single verses either, but by seven, eight, and even ten verses at a time.

* Namely, St. Matth. x. 26, St. Mark iv. 22 (which is St. Luke viii. 17,) and here.

He must have a very unworthy notion of the dignity of the Gospel who can make light of a fact like this. There have been found persons, indeed, capable of supposing that the later Evangelists made an unskilful use of the materials provided for them by those who wrote first. Some have even thought that they saw traces of error in these Divine narratives. Far be from us such miserable delusions! 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret!' Rather, let us be well persuaded that over and above the advantage to be derived from every passage so repeated, considered in and by itself, there is a further use provided by its repetition; discoverable, however, only by him who will diligently seek for it by minute comparison, exceeding watchfulness, and patient thought. Consider whether these may not be some of the 'hid treasures' of which the SPIRIT speaks in Prov. ii. 4,—and which, to be found, must be 'sought' and 'searched for'^b.

And it may be pointed out, while we are on this subject, first, that although a given expression may seem to be simply repeated on two distinct occasions, yet, on closer inspection, it will be often found that there are minute but important differences between the first and second wording of the place; whereby it is, in fact, made new. Thus St. Luke xii. 2 to 9 might be thought to be quite the same as St. Matth. x. 26 to 33; and yet the two passages are full of small, but

^b See the notes on St. Matth. xiii. 44.

striking differences. St. Luke xii. 2 and St. Matth. x. 26 will be found noticed below. Compare further St. Luke xii. 3 with St. Matth. x. 27.—Next, the great depth and fulness of the Divine sayings is forcibly suggested, as well as the variety of their intention, when we make the discovery that words in substance the same, are found sometimes to recur in a wholly different connexion. Thus, although the saying in St. Luke xii. 2 is the same which is found in St. Matth. x. 26, and again in St. Mark iv. 22*,—how diverse does its purpose seem in those places! In St. Luke, it follows a warning against hypocrisy: in St. Matthew, a warning against fear. In St. Mark, the openness of the Gospel-message seems to be chiefly declared.

And then, lastly, when two passages appear to be in all respects similar, (as St. Luke xii. 22 to 31, and St. Matth. vi. 25 to 33,) it is surely, in itself, a circumstance full of edification that the HOLY SPIRIT should have seen fit thus to inform us that our SAVIOUR repeated the self-same teaching on two distinct occasions; and almost in the self-same words. By some, this will be felt to be a rebuke of such curiosity as was indulged by those polite heathens who ‘spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear *some new thing*.’ While to others, it will seem an indication of the peculiar weight and importance which belongs to certain of the sayings of Him

* Or St. Luke viii. 17.

* Acts xvii. 21.

in whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge^d.

Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

As in St. Matthew's Gospel, so here, an exhortation not to fear Man but God, follows. For this, the presence of the Pharisees may be thought to supply a sufficient reason^e. Take notice that the blessed Speaker addresses the multitude about Him, as His 'friends';—'*My* friends.'

And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him.

"Three times we are commanded to fear, and only one reason is given, but sufficient for a thousand fears,—the power of Him who is able eternally to punish us^f."

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of

^d Col. ii. 3. ^e Consider St. John ix. 22, 34: xii. 42: xix. 38.

^f Compare St. John xv. 14, 15.

^g Bp. Pearson.

your head are all numbered. Fear n therefore: ye are of more value than ma sparrows.

- 8 Also I say unto you, Whosoever sh confess Me before men, him shall the S of Man also confess before the angels
9 God: but he that denieth Me before n shall be denied before the Angels of God.

Words very like those contained in these se verses, as already pointed out, are found in Matth. x. 27 to 33,—whither the Reader is ferred for several remarks concerning them. attention is called, in the meantime, to the s gestions which have been offered above, in long note which precedes verse 3. He will p ceive that verses 2 and 3 are to be read in cl connexion with the warning at the end of ver.

- 10 And whosoever shall speak a word agai the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven hi but unto him that blasphemeth against HOLY GHOST, it shall not be forgiven.

Words very like the present also, our LOR found to have used on quite a different occasi The reader is referred to the Commentary on Mark iii. 28, 29, 30, and on St. Matth. xii. 32.

- 11 And when they bring you unto the sy gogues and unto magistrates, and powe take ye no thought how or what thing

shall answer, or what ye shall say : for the 12 HOLY GHOST shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

These words, (like the preceding,) recur in our LORD'S Commission to the Twelve,—where some remarks will be found concerning them^h. The same saying is also met with in St. Mark xiii. 11, —in quite a different connexion. Lastly, it will be found almost to recur in chap. xxi. 14, 15 of the present Gospel, where see the note. Sayings of repeated occurrence, like these, are surely entitled to particular attention at our hands !

In this place, verses 11, 12 evidently continue the words of caution and encouragement which are found in ver. 4 to 7 : while verses 8 to 10, (which go together,) arise naturally out of what went before.

An unseasonable interruption follows, which introduces a parable peculiar to St. Luke's Gospel.

And one of the company said unto Him, 13^d Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.

If the reader will refer to the three places referred to, in the preceding note, he will perceive that they are immediately followed by a prophecy concerning the treatment which one *Brother* was to experience at the hand of anotherⁱ. Now, since nothing which our LORD is *related* to have said

^h See the note on St. Matth. x. 19, 20.

ⁱ St. Matth. x. 21 : St. Mark xiii. 12 : St. Luke xxi. 16.

on the present occasion can have suggested the interruption of 'one of the Company,' here recorded,—may it not be suspected that He went on now to deliver the same prophetic intimation as on other occasions, and that it was *this* which in some way suggested the request before us?

- 14 And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?

It will be perceived that our LORD's words are moulded on those which are found in Exodus ii. 14: "and *there* Moses was, by anticipation, assuming his office as the lawgiver of a temporal kingdom; which CHRIST disclaims, because His Kingdom was not of this world^j." Or, He may be understood to say,—“I will not be liable to such objections from men, as were then ungratefully made against Moses,—‘Who made thee a prince and a judge over us^k?’”

“Between brothers,” (says Ambrose,) “no judge should intervene, but natural affection should be the umpire to divide the inheritance. And yet, Eternal Life, not riches, is the inheritance which men should wait for.”—Our LORD proceeds to point out *the root* from which this request had sprung; and to warn His hearers against it.

- 15 And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life

^j Williams.

^k Hammond: and so, Tertullian.

onsisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

That is,—‘A man’s life does not depend upon his possessions, however abundant they may be.’ .. Here then, we have another of those many warnings against the sin of Judas, which are found in the Gospel. This will be found pointed out elsewhere¹; but it deserves to be repeated.

And He spake a Parable unto them, 16 saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought 17 within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will 18 pull down my barns, and build greater; and here will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

This was a miserable scheme, indeed! He has no room where to bestow his fruits.’ ‘The Author and Giver of all good things,’ (‘sending rain on the just and on the unjust^m,’) has so blessed him, that he is even perplexed and encumbered with the largeness of the Divine Bounty. ‘What shall I do?’ he asks. Was it not time to think of giving to him that needethⁿ? Would not the empty stomachs of the poor have supplied him with ‘barns large enough’? — as one of the

¹ See the latter part of the note on St. Mark xiv. 25.

ⁿ St. Matth. vi. 45.

^m Ephes. iv. 28.

ancients strikingly asks. But the case of his poor neighbour enters not at all into his thoughts. He is engrossed with greedy schemes about himself:—‘*My barns—my fruits—my goods.*’

- 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

In Greek, it is,—‘many goods for many years: rest, eat, drink, feast!’ He calls his possessions his ‘*goods*,’ observe. Such were the ‘good things’ which Abraham in the Parable reminds the rich man that he had ‘received in his life time.’ Basil remarks of this man that ‘he was permitted to *deliberate* in every thing, and to manifest his purpose, in order that he might receive a sentence such as his inclinations deserved.’ As he had ‘*thought* within himself, *saying*’^p;’ so the counsel of God towards him is represented by what ‘God *said* unto him.’ As it follows:—

- 20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee:

Every word here is terrible. What folly must be his, whom God Himself addresses as—‘Fool!’ Instead of ‘Thy soul shall be required of thee,’ in the original it is, ‘*They shall require* thy soul of thee.’ Either way, the sense is obviously the same; but there seems to be a mysterious hint thrown out by the Speaker that His unseen

^o St. Luke xvi. 25.

^p See above ver. 17.

messengers will be sent to the miserable man, to 'require' the surrender of that life which he counted on enjoying for 'many years'.¹ Moreover, it is in the stillness and darkness of *the night* that he will receive the unwelcome summons ... 'Then,' (asks the same Divine Speaker),—

then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided ?

Not *thine*, surely : 'nor can anything be called ours which we cannot take away with us'.

So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Consider St. Matth. vi. 19 to 21, and the notes on the place, as a commentary on these words. See also 1 Tim. vi. 17 to 19. The blessed Speaker turns His discourse next to the Disciples.

And He said unto His Disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat ; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment. Consider the ravens : for they neither sow nor reap ; which neither have storehouse nor barn ; and God feedeth them : how much more are ye better than the fowls ?

¹ Compare the sense of 'they' in St. Matth. xiii. 48, 49, and St. Mark ix. 44, and St. Luke xvi. 9. Consider also that mysterious 'he' in Deut. xxxiv. 6.

' Ambrose.

25 And which of you with taking thought
 26 can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then
 be not able to do that thing which is least,
 why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they
 toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto
 you, that Solomon in all his glory was not
 28 arrayed like one of these. If then God so
 clothe the grass, which is to day in the field,
 and to morrow is cast into the oven; how
 much more *will He clothe* you, O ye of little
 faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or
 what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubt-
 30 ful mind. For all these things do the na-
 tions of the world seek after: and your Fa-
 ther knoweth that ye have need of these
 31 things. But rather seek ye the Kingdom
 of God; and all these things shall be added
 unto you.

These ten verses are found, with slight verbal differences in our LORD'S 'Sermon on the Mount'. The circumstance has been already pointed out, and commented upon at some length, in the note on verse 2 of the present chapter. See particularly towards the end of the note.

As, in the Old Testament, men are sent to the ant for a lesson of wisdom^t, so in the New are

^s St. Matth. vi. 25 to 33.

^t Prov. vi. 6.

they sent to the ravens for a lesson of reliance on God ^a. 'Doubtful mind,' in ver. 29, means 'distracted,' 'over-anxious.'

Take notice that, in ver. 30, it is not said 'God knoweth,'—but '*your Father* knoweth.'

Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Fa- 32
ther's good pleasure to give you the King-
dom.

The Good Shepherd calls His flock 'little,'—partly, perhaps, because though 'many be called, few are chosen.' Partly, because 'the poor in spirit,' to whom belongs 'the Kingdom of Heaven ^z,' are as 'little ones' in His sight ^y.

Sell that ye have, and give alms ; provide 33
yourselves bags^c which wax not old, a treasure in the Heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there 34
will your heart be also.

The plain and frequent Exhortations to Alms-giving in the Gospel are much to be noted. This duty occupies a prominent position in the Sermon on the Mount ^z. 'Go, and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven,' was what our LORD required of the rich young Ruler ^a.—'Bag' here means 'purse.'

^a Compare Job xxxviii. 41 : Ps. cxlvii. 9. ^z St. Matth. v. 2.

^y Consider St. Matth. x. 42, and the note there. See 1 Cor. i. 26.

^c St. Matth. vi. 1 to 4.

^a St. Matth. xix. 21.

The two preceding verses may be usefully compared with St. Matthew vi. 19, 20, and 21 ; where several remarks will be found which apply entirely to the verses before us. It is observable that in St. Matthew's Gospel, as well as in this place, our LORD goes on to speak of 'Light.'—The four verses which follow are the Gospel which is read at the Ordination of Deacons. In their actual form, they are peculiar to St. Luke's Gospel : but St. Matthew gives us instead the Parable of the wise and foolish Virgins^d.

35 Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning ;

The loins are 'girded about' for activity,—and the lamp is kept 'burning,' by him who expects another's return. The mystical meaning of the passage seems therefore to be that men should be prompt and eager in working out their own Salvation,—always ready to do the work of the LORD ; and further that they should set a bright example,—the inner life being sustained by the influence of God's Holy Spirit. For consider what follows the exhortation, 'Let your Light shine before men,'—namely, '*that they may see your good works*.'

"But if a man has both of these, whosoever he be, nothing remains for him but that he should place his whole expectation on the Coming of the REDEEMER. Therefore it is added^f,"

^d St. Matth. xxv. 1 to 13.

^e St. Matth. v. 16.

^f Gregory.

and ye yourselves like unto men that **36**
wait for their lord, when he will return
from the wedding; that when he cometh
and knocketh, they may open unto him im-
mediately.

“CHRIST returns to all from the heavenly Wed-
ding at the end of the World, when He has taken
to Himself His Bride, the Church: to each indi-
vidual He comes, when He stands suddenly before
a man at the hour of Death^s.” He ‘knocketh,’
by pain and sickness; and those who are watch-
ing for their LORD are found to open the door.
‘Even so, come LORD JESUS^h,’ say they. And
these are blessed; as it follows,—

Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord **37**
when he cometh shall find watching: verily
I say unto you, that he shall gird himself,
and make them to sit down to meat, and
will come forth and serve them.

He will ‘gird Himself,’ as one who serveth.
He will ‘make them sit down,’—for it will be the
land of Everlasting Rest.

It is written in another place,—‘Behold, I
stand at the door and knock: if any man hear
My voice, and open the door, I will come in to
him and *will sup with him, and he with Me*ⁱ.’
Thus, both in St. Luke’s Gospel and in the Book
of Revelation the joys of the Life to come are

^s Theophylact.

^h Rev. xxii. 20.

ⁱ Rev. iii. 20.

likened to a Feast,—where those blessed ones who ‘hunger and thirst after Righteousness^k’ ‘shall hunger no more neither thirst any more^l’; but ‘be filled.’

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken
40 through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

“For yourselves know perfectly,” (writes St. Paul to the Thessalonians,) “that the Day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night^m.” St. Peter in like manner says,—‘the Day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night.’ This latter allusion to the present (or St. Matthew’s parallelⁿ) passage is of peculiar interest, since the saying recorded in ver. 41 shews that the man who made it was deeply impressed by the entire discourse to which we also are permitted here to listen.

41 Then Peter said unto Him, LORD, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the LORD said, Who then is that

^k St. Matth. v. 6.

^m 1 Thess. v. 2.

^l Rev. vii. 16.

ⁿ St. Matth. xxiv. 43, 44.

faithful and wise steward, whom *his* LORD shall make ruler over His Household, to give *them* *their* portion of meat in due season? Blessed *is* that servant, whom his LORD when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that He will make him ruler over all that He hath. But if that servant say in his heart, My LORD delayeth His coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the LORD of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *Him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

There is some doubt among learned men, about the meaning of 'cut him asunder,' here and in St. Matthew °. The margin suggests 'cut him off,'—that is, sever or sunder him from his office. Others remark that a double or deceitful man is fairly punished if he be 'cut in twain.' Perhaps the true meaning is, 'will terribly scourge;'—a sense which is supported by the words which follow, and which are an allusion to the law contained in Deut. xxv. 2.

And that servant, which knew his LORD's 47

° St. Matth. xxiv. 51.

will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with 48 many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required : and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

On a comparison of what precedes, (ver. 39 to 46), with the place in St. Matthew's Gospel, where, on a subsequent occasion, similar words are found to have been used, (chap. xxiv. 43 to 51,) the difficulty of the passage becomes apparent. It would be safer to pass by in silence language the true force of which we seem to understand so imperfectly. But the reader will expect a few words of comment.

It seems then that St. Peter, who (with the rest of the Apostles) had been attentively drinking in every word of our LORD's discourse, on perceiving that the parabolic language of verses 35 to 38 had ceased, inquired (in ver. 41) on behalf of his fellow-Apostles, whether the warning which those verses contain had been addressed to themselves specially, or whether it was of general application? To this question, however, our LORD returns no *direct* answer. He proceeds with what He was before saying, and does not seem so much to ask in turn, as to exclaim,—How rare are the qualities

required in that servant whom his lord sets as a steward over his household ! Blessed is the man who proves faithful to such a trust ; and miserable he who is found to abuse it !

Thus, St. Peter's question, though not formally answered, was virtually replied to : for it is manifest that what St. Paul said of himself, (with reference perhaps to this very place,) might with at least equal truth have been asserted by Simon Peter and the rest of the Twelve, of themselves : ' Let a man so account of us as of . . . stewards of the mysteries of GOD P.' A famous ancient Bishop remarks accordingly, that ' although unwearied watchfulness is required of all men, yet does CHRIST here enjoin upon His *Bishops* specially the expectation of His Coming : for *this* is what is meant by the faithful and wise servant set over the Household, to whom is entrusted the care of providing for the people committed to him †.'

But, (as our LORD proceeds to shew,) *all* are stewards in their degree : some indeed have been entrusted with five talents, and some with two ; but *all* have received their *one* talent. It is remarkable that the Parable of ' the Talents ' follows, in St. Matthew's Gospel,—chap. xxv. That is,—all men know *something* of their Divine Master's will,

† 1 Cor. iv. 1,—and see the next verse. See also Titus i. 7. Consider further whether there is not an allusion to St. Luke xii. 42 and 48 in 1 St. Peter iv. 10.

‡ Hilary. Consider the language of the Ordination Service,—
: Ye are called . . . to be . . . Stewards of the LORD ; to teach, and to premonish, to feed and provide for the LORD's family, &c. .

—though some know less, some more. And corresponding thereto will be the penalty incurred by the disobedient. See above, ver. 47 and 48.

Such seems to be the general purport of what is here delivered. The entire discourse is remarkable, as usual, for its *practical* bearing. Simon Peter seems to ask whether the singular blessedness of the servant whom his Lord shall find watching, applies to the chief Pastor alone, or to the flock at large? He is reminded in reply that unto chief Pastors *most is committed*: but he is also warned that ‘unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.’ This seems to be the force of ver. 47, 48.

In conclusion, the reader is earnestly implored not to accept the clumsy suggestion that St. Luke is here stringing together sayings of our LORD which were delivered on different occasions, but which have no actual connexion. Do not men, when they say such things, ‘therefore err because they know not the Scriptures, neither the Power of God?’ Doubtless on this occasion our SAVIOUR said all that He is on this occasion recorded to have said; and at the close of His Ministry, when sayings very like these recur^a, doubtless He delivered sayings very like these over again.

For take notice that when, sitting on the Mount

^a St. Luke xii. 48.

^a See St. Matth. xxiv. 42 to 44: St. Mark xiii. 33 to 35: St. Luke xxi. 34 to 36.

of Olives, our SAVIOUR repeated in the audience of St. Peter, the very words which are here found from ver. 39 to ver. 46, (*with the exception of St. Peter's question in ver. 41,—‘ LORD, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?’*) the Blessed Speaker, as if with reference to the occasion we are now considering, adds the very answer which St. Peter had once wished for, which the Apostle no longer presumed to ask,—‘ *And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch †.*’

There seems to be a change of subject in what follows next.

I am come to send fire on the earth ; and 49
what will I, if it be already kindled ?

Rather,—‘ And what will I?’ (that is, ‘ What is My desire?’) ‘ Would that it were already kindled!’ . . . It seems to be here declared that the consequence of CHRIST’S Coming into the world would be to kindle the fire of persecution, —‘ not Peace,’ (as He goes on to say,) ‘ but Division.’

Is it not singular that St. Peter, (the attentive hearer of this discourse,) after alluding to CHRIST’S speedy coming to Judgment^u,—and men’s duty as *Stewards*^x,—should proceed in his Epistle to speak of ‘ *the fiery trial*’ which was to try the Church^y?

† St. Mark xiii. 37.

^u Compare 1 St. Peter iv. 5 and 7 with ver. 35 to 40, above.

^x Compare 1 St. Peter iv. 10 with ver. 42 and 48, above.

^y Compare 1 St. Pet. iv. 12 with ver. 49 to 53, above. See also 1 Pet. i. 7.

50 But I have a Baptism to be baptized with:
and how am I straitened till it be accom-
plished !

He speaks of that Baptism *of Blood* which was in reserve for Him, and to which He also alluded when addressing the sons of Zebedee*. He looks forward to that tremendous hour with eagerness, —yet does the anticipation fill His human soul with distress. For the sense of 'straitened,' in this place, compare Phil. i. 23.

51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace
on earth ? I tell you, Nay ; but rather di-
52 vision : for from henceforth there shall be
five in one house divided, three against two,
53 and two against three. The father shall be
divided against the son, and the son against
the father ; the mother against the daughter,
and the daughter against the mother ; the
mother in law against her daughter in law,
and the daughter in law against her mother
in law.

See above, on ver. 49 ; and compare this place with St. Matth. x. 33 to 36, — where the note should be consulted. The prophet Micah, who is there actually quoted, is here very clearly referred to^a. It has been ingeniously pointed out^b that

St. Matth. xx. 22, 23 : St. Mark x. 38, 39, where see the notes.
^a Micah vii. 6.

^b By Ambrose.

nly *five* persons are mentioned in ver. 53,—since he ‘mother’ and the ‘mother in law’ are one and the same person.

The Blessed Speaker is found next to turn His Discourse to the people.

And He said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this Time?

He reminds them of the skill and shrewdness with which they were enabled to foretell natural phenomena^c; and declares that it required no greater discernment to recognise His Advent, which the Prophets by so many signs had foretold. He said the same thing to the Pharisees and Sadducees, when they came desiring of Him ‘a sign from Heaven^d.’ But, (as He declared on another occasion,) “the children of this World are in their generation wiser than the children of Light^e.”

He proceeds to shew them that they might learn wisdom in so vital a matter even from the prudence with which they conducted themselves in the concerns of daily life:—

^c Compare St. Matth. xvi. 2, 3: xxiv. 32: St. John iv. 35.

^d See St. Matth. xvi. 1 to 3, and the last part of the note on the latter verse.

^e St. Luke xvi. 8.

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right ?

That is, 'what is right to be done,'—'the right thing to do.' A saying follows which we have already met with at the end of the Sermon on the Mount^f; and which was there introduced in order to enforce the duty of speedy reconciliation with one's neighbour. Here, the injunction is clearly of a different tendency; and the remark which was offered above, on verse 2, again presents itself. In the original, what follows is connected with what went before.

58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the
59 officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

Our SAVIOUR seems to say,—In a merely temporal manner, you are careful to act thus prudently. While the Day of Mercy yet lasts, should you not discover the like anxiety to avail yourselves of it? through Me, to obtain deliverance from the wrath of God, before it be too late?

^f See St. Matth. v. 25, 26, and the note.



