

A
COMMENTARY
ON THE
GOSPELS OF MATTHEW AND MARK,

CRITICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND HOMILETICAL,
EMBODYING FOR POPULAR USE AND EDIFICATION
THE RESULTS OF GERMAN AND ENGLISH EXEGETICAL
LITERATURE, AND DESIGNED TO MEET THE DIFFICULTIES OF
MODERN SKEPTICISM.

WITH
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION,

TREATING OF THE
GENUINENESS, AUTHENTICITY, HISTORIC VERITY, AND
INSPIRATION OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS, AND OF THE
HARMONY AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

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TO THE

Rev. Adam Poe, D.D.,

UNDER WHOSE MINISTRY THE AUTHOR WAS BROUGHT INTO THE LIBERTY
OF THE GOSPEL

AND

WHO PROPOSED HIM TO THE OHIO ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AS ITS FIRST MISSIONARY AMONG THE
GERMAN POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES,

This Work

IS DEDICATED AS A TOKEN OF GRATEFUL AFFECTION AND ESTEEM.

PREFACE.

WHEN the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1852, expressed a desire that I should prepare a Commentary on the New Testament in the German language, I hesitated for several years to undertake so responsible a work. An evangelical Commentary of an unsectarian character — embodying in a popular form the results of those exegetical works which were written exclusively for the theological scholar, and designed to meet the attacks of the destructive criticism of the rationalistic schools — I knew, indeed, to be a generally and deeply felt want of German Protestants. But the attempt to supply what is needed was a task from which I shrank for six years, partly because of the pressure of other duties, partly in the hope that an abler hand would be induced to undertake it. This hope not being realized, and the demand for such a work becoming more and more urgent from different quarters, I was at last induced to make the attempt, and about two years ago I finished the first volume, comprising a General Introduction to the study of the New Testament and an Exposition of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. The work met with much favor from the religious press of Germany as well as of this country, and several eminent American divines, who examined it, advised its publication in the English language.

To this encouraging call I have yielded, from the following considerations: First, I have been deeply impressed that a popular Commentary should enter thoroughly into the solution of important critical difficulties, and bring out of the text the doctrines taught by Christ and his apostles as fully as is done in the works of systematic divinity. Very much of theology that ought to be known, and is actually craved both by ministers who have not had the advantage of a classical and theological training, and by laymen in general, is never read by them, because the information sought is scattered over works not within their reach, or written exclusively for the classical scholar. Moreover, it is time that we habituate ourselves, more generally, to learn theology in the order in which it has pleased God to teach it in his written Word, and to examine each doctrine in the light of the context in which it stands in the Inspired Volume. But

this is not done when we base our system of belief primarily and chiefly upon the Church creed, and turn to the Scriptures only in quest of proof texts. A second consideration is the growing need of a more intimate acquaintance with the theological works of Germany. English and German theology have their peculiar merits and defects. Each can improve and enrich the other. It is true that the national character of the English and German people and their Church-developments are so different that mere translations of the theological works of the one can never satisfy the wants of the other. But for this very reason there is the more need of efforts to assimilate the theological thought of the prominent standard-bearers of Evangelical Protestantism. By these means only can be produced that life-communion which will work out a theology leading to greater unity of faith among the different evangelical denominations. Moreover, the conflict with infidelity and skepticism is far from being ended. The rejecters of Divine Revelation have changed their method of attack. To meet them on their new ground we must not disdain the weapons afforded by the rich arsenal of the evangelical theology of Germany, which has grappled with this new phase of unbelief, and achieved the most decisive victory. To prepare, therefore, a Commentary especially designed to meet the attacks of rationalistic criticism — giving on the one hand the results of the exegetical researches and philosophic discipline of the Germans, and on the other, the practical character and logical clearness which distinguish the Christian mind of England and America — appeared to me to be a work needed just now by the English as well as by the German Churches of this country.

So much for the reasons which induced me to add another Commentary to those already in existence. In the attempt to reproduce the German original in English, I encountered far greater difficulties than I had anticipated; and hence the delay of the English edition, which was to leave the press early last Summer. The translation, which, from lack of time and a fear of not being equal to the task, I had engaged to be made, failed to do justice to the German original to such an extent that I felt myself compelled to think the whole work over in English, and endeavor to preserve, as far as possible, the strength and beauty of those passages that I quoted from Stier and Lange, whose style I confess myself to have found often too difficult to reproduce in good English.* I discovered also that the comments of Trench on the Parables and Miracles, of which I gave a digest in German, would lose too much by re-translation, and I therefore judged it better to quote them directly and more fully. Moreover,

points that needed much consideration in German, I became convinced would be of less interest to the English reader; and so different is the mode of thought in the two nationalities and the genius of their respective languages that one and the same argument, to make the proper impression, requires often to be stated in a different form or from a different stand-point. In addition to this, the work in English has the advantage of such emendations as a revision generally calls forth, and of additions arising from the consultation of works which I had not at hand, when writing the German original.† The greatest modification in the English edition will be found in the General Introduction. In German it is an Introduction to the whole New Testament. But as it is of a prominently apologetical character, I judged it better in the English edition to give only an Introduction to the *Gospel records*, these being the foundation upon which our faith rests, and against which the attacks of modern criticism are chiefly directed.

[* The quotations that are made from Stier's *Words of the Lord Jesus*, after the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, the reader will find more direct and more full than those in the forepart of the work. This is owing to my not having been in possession, before that time, of Rev. William B. Pope's translation of that work, published at Edinburgh.]

[† It gives me pleasure here to acknowledge my great indebtedness to the Rev. Dr. G. E. Day, of the Lane Theological Seminary, for his kind loan, both from the Seminary Library and from his own private collection, of important English and German works, without the help of which I should have been greatly embarrassed.]

Some remarks may be expected on the manner in which the author has drawn upon the labors of others. To write in our day a Commentary on the Holy Scriptures is a widely different task from that of the older commentators. When Biblical literature was yet in its infancy, a Commentary was, to a great extent, the original work of *one* man, but this is in our day no more the case. In the last three centuries the critical study of the Holy Scriptures has been cultivated by scholars of every land and every denomination, each succeeding writer using, with more or less additions, corrections, and modifications, the labors of his predecessors, so that exegetical research has not only reached a high degree of perfection, but its results — being made up by so many

contributions as to lose to a great extent their originality — have become the common property of the Church. This last remark, however, does not apply to the exegetical labors of the present school of evangelical divines of Germany which originated with Dr. Olshausen, and whose brightest star appears to us to be the recently-departed Dr. Rudolph Stier, a man of unsurpassed spirituality, raised up by Divine Providence to expound the Scriptures for the unlearned as well as the learned. His immortal work, "The Words of the Lord Jesus," has, indeed, been translated in England, and deserves to be studied by every theological student who has the means to procure it; but forming eight volumes large octavo, and containing much that moves in modes of thought exclusively German, and that will, therefore, neither interest nor profit the American mind, this precious work will find its way to the study of but few American pastors. And yet it contains doctrinal truths, practical suggestions, and spiritual unfoldings of incalculable value, which, instead of being appreciated only by a few theological scholars, ought to be made the common property of the Church. The deep conviction of this need was, indeed, my first and strongest inducement to undertake this work. But to return to the question of the comparative amount of originality in our modern English Commentaries, we beg leave to say that even Alford, the professed object of whose Commentary on the Greek New Testament is to enrich exegetical literature with new researches and results, is for the greatest portion of his notes indebted to German works, even where he does not quote them; and a comparison of the modern popular Commentaries, so far at least as the Gospels are concerned — with perhaps only one exception, that of Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander — will show that their authors have considered it their privilege to abridge, amplify, or modify the researches of their predecessors or cotemporaries. Of the same privilege I have availed myself, though to a larger extent and in a somewhat different mode. Where I found an author, as for instance Trench on the Parables and Miracles, to have said the very best that in my opinion could be said, I have taken the liberty, if no copy-right was infringed thereby, to appropriate his whole comment, giving him proper credit. Nevertheless, I do not think the work deserves on that account to be called a compilation. My aim, at least, has been not simply to select by critical examination, and for a distinct scope, what appeared to me the best in the exegetical works within my reach, but to mold, with a unity of design, the variegated materials into an organic whole. Nor have I confined myself in the most difficult passages to what others have said, but ventured to give my own

opinions and to strike out a new path; as, for instance, in the exposition of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. It should also be borne in mind that the amount of quotations is in proportion to the specific aim of this Commentary to combine — to a greater extent than has been attempted before — the edifying element with the discussion of critical, apologetical, and theological questions, and to make these questions intelligible and interesting to the general reader. Had I designed the work only, either for the theological student or for the layman, it would have been reduced to half its size. The largest quotations, taken from other authors, I have made in the Introduction. My object was to preserve, for the instruction and edification of the Church, *those* portions of the different works on the genuineness, authenticity, and historic verity of the Gospel records, which after accurate comparison I found to contain the very best that has been written on one or the other point — and to bring the different testimonies within one focus and into a new relation to *each* other. Such a preservation and combination of arguments — incapable of material improvement — I judge to be far preferable to any attempt to bring out the old arguments in a new dress merely for the sake of imparting to them the appearance of originality. The authors quoted, I am confident, will not complain, because what is quoted from them is only a very small portion of the subject they treat of, and will induce those readers that have the leisure to pursue their studies further, to procure those works as far as their means may permit. Besides, the large quotations in the Introduction — with the exception of some extracts from Dr. Schaff's works and from Norton's "Credibility of the Gospels" — are taken from foreign authors, whose works have for the most part not even been republished in this country.

Though the *materials* of the Introduction have been borrowed to a large extent, I claim to have used them in such a manner as to build up a new and entirely-original argument, and one which I think is imperatively demanded by the change of base on the part of the rejecters of Divine revelation. With regard to the prominently-apologetical character of the Introduction, I beg leave to make a few remarks. Minute and extended as it is, some readers may be disappointed in not finding some of the strongest evidences of the Divine character of the Christian religion. But it must be borne in mind that the Introduction treats only of the *documents* of revelation, not of revelation itself, and that, for this reason, only so much of the General Evidences of Christianity, as stands in a close connection with the documents themselves, could

consistently find a place here. Knowing from my own inward experience that the Sacred Scriptures prove their Divine character to every devout and earnest seeker of truth, and that a living faith in Jesus Christ and his Holy Word is not the work of a logical demonstration to the understanding, but that of an attestation of the Holy Ghost to the conscience and heart, it was for some time a matter of grave and anxious doubt, whether it would be proper and profitable in a work, written for the laity as much as for the ministry, to state in full the various and subtle objections which modern criticism has raised; but on mature reflection I became satisfied that the spirit of the age and the scope of the Commentary required a thoroughly apologetical introduction to the Gospel records. We live in a period when men of inquiring minds are compelled to follow one of three courses — either the rash and skeptical one of renouncing every thing which is not perfectly understood, or the equally easy one of yielding themselves up to blind credence, or, undaunted by the undeniable difficulties which revelation presents, not to rest short of a satisfactory solution. It is not sufficient in our day to state, in general, something like this: "Copies of the Gospels and Epistles were preserved in the Christian Churches. When the author produced his book it was immediately transcribed, and copies were put in circulation among purchasers; others were deposited in the archives of the various Churches. The multiplied copies were checks upon each other's correctness. Of the Gospels and Epistles numerous copies were circulated in Europe, Asia, and Africa within a century after their publication. It was, therefore, impossible that any counterfeit, or any great alteration should come into existence. The very perfect agreement — with the exception of slight mistakes in copying — of all manuscript copies throughout the world, places beyond all doubt the genuineness of all the four Gospels." This is, indeed, a very complete and reliable summary of the argument. Nevertheless, almost every item of it has been impugned by infidel writers, and their objections are widely disseminated among the masses. Ought not, therefore, the refutation of these objections to be made generally accessible, instead of being locked up in learned works on the "*Canon*," which no layman and but few ministers possess? Would not the information they contain be eagerly and generally read, if embodied in a popular Commentary? And would not the simple Christian thus be enabled to answer satisfactorily the cavils of skeptics by which he is often embarrassed?

Having satisfied my mind on this point, I entered upon the argument with the conviction that in order to make it answer the wants of our day it must be strictly historical, free from all dogmatical premises, compelling the opponent, by facts which he admits, to confess the unreasonableness of his doubts; in short, changing the defense of the record of revelation into an attack upon its rejecters by requiring the skeptic to account for the historical facts of Divine revelation, and especially *for the personality of Jesus Christ* — a problem which no human ingenuity or learning is able to solve on any known natural principle. (See General Introduction, §§ 28, 29.) On this point Dr. Ullmann, in the introductory chapter to his celebrated work, "The Sinlessness of Jesus — an Evidence for Christianity," observes: "In modern times it has become more and more obvious how incalculably important for the proof of historical Christianity is a clear and positive knowledge of the character of its Founder. For the life and character of Jesus is the central point of the whole Christian system. From this all rays of light and all operations of moral power proceed; and to it all must be traced back, so long as Christianity shall have, on the one hand, a sure historical basis, and on the other, an inward moral excellence. . . . The position that we occupy, in an age in which doubt and disbelief so greatly prevail, is such that in the vindication of Christianity we must go far beneath the surface, and lay the foundation in what appears self-evident and is in need of no external proof. This deepest foundation we find only in *the person of the Founder of Christianity*." Thus, in apologetics as well as in systematic theology and Christian experience, *Christ is all and in all*. While the Gospels, if examined by the acknowledged laws of historical criticism, are proved to be trustworthy historical records, the Christ described by the Evangelists could not possibly have been conceived by them, if they had not seen and heard what they record of him; and if so, his personality is historically proved, as no other is, and it necessarily involves the fundamental fact of the Christian religion, that He was God manifest in the flesh. Being such, his testimony of the Old Testament and his commission to the apostles impress a Divine stamp upon the facts of revelation, recorded both in the Old and in the New Testament.

With regard to the *plan of the Commentary*, we beg leave to point out its peculiarities: 1. As the present division into chapters is unauthorized and arbitrary, the text has been arranged in sections, each of which forms a coherent whole by itself, be it a narrative or a discourse. Where a discourse is

too extended to form conveniently one uninterrupted section, the section has its logical subdivisions. Likewise, where different short narratives — none of them large enough to form a section by itself — succeed each other, as in Mark, so many of them as can be brought under one appropriate head, with proper subdivisions, form one section, of course, without altering in any way their succession in the text. This arrangement will aid the reader much in understanding the connection existing between the successive portions of a Gospel, like that of Mark, and in perceiving the design of the Evangelist.

2. Wherever it is necessary, the text of a section is preceded by general remarks, the object of which is to clear up peculiar critical or chronological difficulties, or to give explanations which could not be attached to any particular part of the text.

3. The merely linguistical and archaeological notes, parallel passages, and different readings, not affecting the doctrinal exposition of the text, are printed in smaller type at the bottom of the page, in order to leave the exegesis proper uninterrupted.

4. The exegetical notes proper follow the text, the different points to be commented upon being marked by the verse, etc.

5. My design, with regard to the *Homiletical Suggestions*, in the German edition has been partly to aid young ministers in their preparations for the pulpit, partly to enable those who may not go through the exegetical process to make a practical improvement of the text. They are on this account, in German, added to the exegetical notes *in all cases*, except where the exegesis and the practical application of a section naturally coincide, as, for instance, in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount and in the Parables. But in the English edition I have retained but a small portion, partly because I considered them neither needed by, nor adapted to, the American public, and because they would lose too much in the translation; partly because in the second half of the Gospel of Matthew I found the exegesis to be too much interwoven with practical application, and too extensive to make the addition of separate practical reflections convenient. In place of the *German Homiletical Suggestions* I substituted, where I could, condensed sketches from the Homilist, a work of classic character; and the lack of Homiletical Suggestions in Matthew I found a convenient opportunity to supply in the parallel passages of Mark.

One more remark. The title of the German original is: *A Commentary on the New Testament. Vol. I. The Gospels of Matthew and Mark, with a General Introduction*, etc. It is my intention, by Divine permission, to devote the rest of my life to the continuation of this work; and I shall endeavor to adapt it at once to the English as well as the German reader. The plan of the Commentary, however, will be, of course, modified by the peculiarity of each book, as will be perceived by the treatment of the Gospel of Mark.

That the Divine blessing may rest upon this effort which has sprung from the ardent desire to contribute something toward promoting a more thorough study of the New Testament by the laity as well as by the ministry, and to lead sincere inquirers after truth to the Savior, is the devout prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

CINCINNATI, APRIL 4, 1864.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL RECORDS.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

THE GENUINENESS OR INTEGRITY OF THE SACRED TEXT.

§ 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF THE TEXT.

§ 2. The Change of the Original Text with regard to its Outward Appearance

§ 3. Some General Remarks on the Existing Manuscripts of the New Testament

§ 4. A Consideration of the Variety of Readings presented by the Manuscripts of the New Testament

CHAPTER II.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF SUCCESS IN AN ESSENTIAL MUTILATION OR CORRUPTION OF THE GOSPEL RECORD.

§ 5. Argument from the Agreement of the Respective Copies of the Four Gospels

§ 6. Argument drawn from Other Considerations



PART II.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS.

§ 7. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

CHAPTER I.

THE OUTWARD HISTORICAL TESTIMONIES.

§ 8. The Testimony of the Apostolical Fathers

§ 9. The Testimony of the Fathers in the Sub-Apostolical Age, from A.D. 120-170

§ 10. The Formation of a Canon of the Universally-acknowledged Books of the New Testament at the Close of the Second Century

§ 11. The Early Versions of the New Testament

§ 12. The Testimony of Heretical and Apocryphal Writings

§ 13. The Testimony of Heathen Adversaries

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERNAL EVIDENCES.

§ 14. The Peculiar Dialect of Greek in which the Evangelists have written

§ 15. Some other Characteristics of the Style in which the Gospels are written

§ 16. The Frequent Allusions of the Evangelists to the History of their Times

§ 17. The Relation of the Four Gospels to Each Other and to the Acts of the Apostles

§ 18. The Authenticity of the Gospels — a Postulate of Reason, as it alone accounts for the Existence of the Christian Church, and for some of Paul's Epistles, whose Authenticity is universally admitted

§ 19. The Absurdity of the Mythical Theory

PART III.

THE HISTORIC VERITY OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS.

§ 20. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

CHAPTER I.

A CONSIDERATION OF THE OBJECTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN RAISED AGAINST THE CREDIBILITY OF THE EVANGELISTS.

§ 21. The Alleged Discrepancies or Contradictions in the Four Gospels

§ 22. The Assumption that Miracles are Impossible and Unsusceptible of Proof

§ 23. The Alleged Lack of Sufficient Testimony by Profane Writers

CHAPTER II.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE EVANGELISTS.

§ 24. The Evangelists were in a Condition to inform themselves accurately and thoroughly concerning the Things which they record

§ 25. The Evangelists exhibit in their Narratives no Symptoms of Mental Derangement which might have made them Victims of Delusion

§ 26. The Evangelists can not be charged with having had any Motive or Design to impose upon the World a report of what, if it did not take place, they must have known to be false

CHAPTER III.

THE DIVINE SEAL STAMPED UPON THE GOSPEL HISTORY BY ITS SUBJECT — THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

§ 27. The Verity of the Gospel History best accredited by the Personality of Jesus Christ

§ 28. The admitted outer Conditions of the Life of Jesus — leaving its astounding Results, as well as the unlimited Scope of the Mind of Jesus and the perfect Symmetry of his Character, utterly inexplicable, without the admission of a Supernatural and Divine Element

§ 29. The Sinlessness of Jesus — the Idea of which could not have been conceived by the Evangelists, if they had not seen it actualized in his Life — incontestably proving that he was not a mere Man

§ 30. The Miracles wrought on and performed by Jesus, the Natural and Necessary Outflow of his historically-proved Personality, and, at the same time, the Ground and Warrant of all other true Miracles preceding and succeeding his Appearance on Earth

PART IV.

THE ATTACKS OF MODERN CRITICISM ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS.

§ 31. The Relation which the Authenticity and Credibility of the Gospel Records bear to their Inspiration

§ 32. The Peculiar Agreement and Disagreement of the first three Evangelists in their Narratives, and the Various Explanations of this Singular Phenomenon

§ 33. A Consideration of the Inspired Character of the Synoptical Gospels on the Ground of their being chiefly the Result of the Oral Teaching of the Apostles

PART V.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

§ 34. The Condition of the World, Jewish, Greek, and Roman, at the Advent of Christ

§ 35. The Chronology and Harmony of the Gospel Narratives

A. The Date of the Birth of Christ

B. The Duration of our Lord's Ministry and the Date of his Death

C. A Synoptical Table of the Gospel History

D. A Table for finding any Passage in the Synopsis of the Gospel History

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
TO THE
GOSPEL RECORDS.

PART I.

THE GENUINENESS OR INTEGRITY OF THE SACRED TEXT.

§ 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IT is to be regretted that nearly all English writers on the Evidences are in the habit of using the words "genuine" and "authentic" as synonyms, and sometimes even of attaching to the word "authentic" the popular sense of "true" or "credible," by which the whole argumentation is obscured. A book is to be called genuine, if it has remained in all material points the same as it was when it proceeded from its author. It is authentic, if it has proceeded at all from the person whose name it bears, or, where the name of the author was not assigned with certainty at the time of its origin, if it originated at the time and under the circumstances it professes to have done. A book may be genuine and authentic, and yet its contents may lack credibility.

We propose, in the order named, to inquire into the genuineness, the authenticity, and the credibility of the Gospel records, and then to consider their inspired character. The object of this part is to show that the text of the four canonical Gospels has been preserved in its integrity — is genuine or uncorrupted. What we have to say on this point applies to all the books of the New Testament, and will, therefore, not be repeated in the special Introductions to the other books. The investigation into the genuineness or integrity of the inspired writings is legitimate and of great importance. For though we may have the most satisfactory proofs that they proceeded at first from the apostles or evangelists whose names they bear, they may have been

so altered since that time as to convey to us very false information with regard to their original contents. It is admitted on all hands that the original manuscripts disappeared at a very early time, owing to the frailty of the material on which the apostles wrote, and to the frequent use which was made of them by being read in the Churches and constantly transcribed, and that, in common with all other ancient writings, the original text of the New Testament has been exposed to the accidents to which all works preserved by transcription are liable. We will, therefore, consider, first, the history of the text, as the German writers call it — that is, the changes to which the original was unavoidably subjected in the process of transcription — and then prove that all these changes have not impaired the integrity of the original.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF THE TEXT.

§ 2. THE CHANGE OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT WITH REGARD TO ITS OUTWARD APPEARANCE.

INASMUCH as our present mode of publishing books is very different from that of ancient times, we can not but expect that the outward appearance of the original text underwent great changes by being transcribed from century to century, and a consideration of these external changes claims our attention first. The following points are of general interest:

1. The authors of the New Testament used the charta — ὁ χάρτης, 2 John, 12 — paper made of layers of the papyrus, a plant that was very common in Egypt. Of this paper there were, in the apostles' times, several kinds in use, differing from each other in strength and durability. Of the existing manuscripts, however, none are written on papyrus, but on vellum or on paper of later origin. Vellum was the most durable, but also the most costly material. Not more than six manuscript fragments on vellum are known to be extant. All manuscripts on paper are of a much later date, those on cotton paper being posterior to the seventh century, and those on linen still later.

2. As to the external form of the manuscripts, the ancients made use of rolls in their writings; yet as this form was unhandy in several respects, the custom arose to write on large sheets, which were folded up like maps in an atlas, four, five, six, or eight fold, of different sizes. This is the form of all manuscripts extant.

3. The Greek manuscripts were mostly written without division of words, in capital letters — which, in the time of Jerome, were called *uncials* — till the ninth century, when the so-called cursive handwriting — that is, writing with small letters, and capitals only at the head of certain words — came into use, as requiring less space and being better adapted for fast writing. The separation of words from each other by a point or empty space did not become general before the ninth century.

4. Punctuation marks were seldom used by the ancients. The numerous mistakes of the fathers, or their uncertainty, how particular passages were to be read and understood, clearly prove that there was no regular or accustomed system of punctuation in use in the fourth century. Toward the middle of the fifth century Euthalius, of Alexandria, wrote the Pauline epistles, and afterward the Gospels, stichometrically; that is, in lines regulated by the sense, so that each terminated where some pause was to be made; when the line was not filled, the remainder was, at first, left empty, but afterward, in order to save space, it was filled up, and a point was made to indicate the pause. The lines of the books were generally numbered and the number marked at the end. Although some full points are to be found in the Codex Alexandrinus, the Codex Vaticanus, and the Codex Bezae — as they also are in inscriptions four hundred years before the Christian era — yet there is abundant evidence that our present system of Greek punctuation was not fully adopted before the ninth century.

5. The same remarks apply to the *accents*, *spiritus* — breathings — and the so-called *iota subscriptum*. The *accents* were gradually introduced. Some of the oldest manuscripts have them, others not, and it is only toward the end of the tenth century that they became general. The rough breathing — *spiritus asper* — was anciently a full letter in the form of the Latin H, and so it is found on monuments — e. gr., *Hoi= ὄι*. Afterward the first half of the letter (I-) was used for the rough breathing, and the other half (-I) for the smooth breathing, and from these two signs the modern form of breathings („ „) arose. According to the oldest manuscripts, it seems that the writers of the New Testament did not use these two signs, at least not uniformly. The *iota subscriptum* was anciently written as a letter in the line — *iota postscriptum* — afterward entirely omitted, but came into general use as *iota subscriptum* with the introduction of the cursive characters. Whether a word was originally meant for ἀντῆ, ἀντή, or αὕτη, must be determined by the context alone.

6. Our present division of the sacred text into chapters and verses is of still more recent date. The first general division was made in the thirteenth century, in all probability, by the Cardinal Hugo Carensis, and the latter by Robert Stephanus in 1551, after a variety of other divisions had been in partial use before. Tertullian already speaks of *capitula* in portions of the New Testament Scriptures. But this division did neither extend over all the books of the New Testament, nor was it in general use, as far as it went. In early use was the division into κεφάλαια, portions much smaller than our chapters and larger

than our verses. The Gospel of Matthew had 355 such κεφάλαια, that of Mark 234, that of Luke 342, that of John 231, altogether 1,162. This division was introduced by Ammonius, of Alexandria, in his Gospel Harmony — τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων ἐναγγέλιον — and afterward completed by Eusebius. A later division was that into τίτλοι — *tituli* — introduced in the fifth century. The Gospel of Matthew was divided into 68, that of Mark into 48, that of Luke into 83, and that of John into 18 such tituli. Our present division has, of course, no claims whatever to the authority of the text, and being, in a number of instances, certainly faulty, the reader must take care not to be misled by it; yet, as it is in universal use, and is of great advantage for the purpose of reference, it is not expedient to make a change. Besides the older divisions, which we have named, selections of the New Testament Scriptures — *pericopae* — were made for the public reading on each Sunday in the ecclesiastical year. The time and manner of their introduction are uncertain. Those from the Acts and the Epistles were probably first introduced by Euthalius; but those from the Gospels were undoubtedly earlier, at least in the Latin Church. These selections were often bound up separately, in their regular order, and are also of moment in Biblical criticism.

7. The inscriptions or titles of the various books of the New Testament, it is generally admitted, were not originally written by the apostles, but were subsequently added as the seal which the Church stamped upon them in settling the canon. The subscriptions annexed to some of the Epistles are manifestly spurious. They are altogether wanting in some ancient manuscripts of the best note, and in others they are greatly varied. Some contain false assertions.

§ 3. SOME GENERAL REMARKS ON THE EXISTING MANUSCRIPTS.

1. The autographs — manuscripts of the New Testament, which were written either by the apostles themselves or by amanuenses under their immediate inspection, (Rom. xvi, 22; Gal. vi, 11; 2 Thess. iii, 17; 1 Cor. xvi, 21,) have long since perished, and we have no information whatever concerning their history. It has been thought that Ignatius and Tertullian appealed to them. Ignatius in his letter to the Philadelphians says, that he heard some say: "If I do not find it ἐν τῶις ἀρχαίοις, I do not believe it in the Gospel;" but. τὰ ἀρχαῖα can here mean only the Old Testament writings,

since the context shows, that the objection quoted came from Judaizers, who were unwilling to believe any thing in the Gospels that was not contained in the Old Testament. Tertullian appeals to the *autenticae literae* of the apostles as being read at his time in the Churches at Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, etc. From this passage it might seem as if the autographs were referred to; but from another passage in the same author it plainly appears, that not autographs, but correct copies of them, *in the original language*, made and preserved by the respective Churches, were meant. If the autographs had existed at that time, the Church fathers would certainly have appealed to them in their controversies with the heretics on the genuineness of disputed passages.

2. No existing manuscript of the New Testament can be traced higher than the fourth century. The number of manuscripts that have thus far become known is about seven hundred. They belong to different centuries, from the fifth, perhaps the fourth, down to the sixteenth, and are accordingly written in different characters, the oldest in *uncials*, by far the most in cursive letters, partly without, partly with divisions into words and sections, with or without accents, and with punctuation marks of different kinds. These very points, the shape of the letters, the material, and orthography furnish the principal data for determining the time and country, when and where the manuscripts were made. Sometimes other internal data are furnished by the manuscripts, giving, in a few instances, the name of the copyist and the year when the manuscript was made, or containing menologies, in which the festival days of the saints are mentioned, on which certain portions of Scripture are to be read in the Churches. As these menologies often designate such days as were celebrated in honor of certain saints from otherwise known dates, in certain countries, they furnish important data for determining the time and place when and where the manuscript was made.

3. Very few manuscripts contain the whole either of the Old or of the New Testament. By far the greater part — five hundred — have only the four Gospels, because they were most frequently read in the Churches; two hundred the Acts and catholic epistles; three hundred the Pauline epistles, and one hundred the Apocalypse. Almost all of them, especially the more ancient manuscripts, are imperfect, either from the injuries of time or from neglect. All manuscripts, the most ancient not excepted, have erasures and corrections; which, however, were not always effected so dextrously, but that the original writing may sometimes be seen.

4. Before the invention of paper, the great scarcity of parchment in different places induced many persons to obliterate the works of ancient writers, in order to write in their place another work. Such manuscripts are termed *Codices Palimpsesti* or *Rescripti*. In general, a Codex Rescriptus is easily known, as it rarely happens that the former writing is so completely erased as not to exhibit some traces; in a few instances both writings are legible. Very valuable discoveries have been made in these rewritten manuscripts.

5. Besides the manuscripts which contain the whole New Testament, or certain books of it in full, there are others which contain only the selections or *pericopae*; they are called *Codices Ecclesiastici* or *Lectionaria*. These selections were often produced with some remarks respecting the day on which they were to be read, and such remarks have, in some instances, crept into the text.

6. Some manuscripts have not only the Greek text, but are accompanied with a version, which is either interlined or in a parallel column; these are called *Codices Bilingues*. The greatest number is in Greek and Latin; and the Latin version is, in general, one of those which existed before the time of Jerome.

7. A comparative description of the different manuscripts, and an account of the various critical methods adopted to arrange them in certain classes or families, can be of interest and profit only to the professional scholar, but does not lie within our scope, and is to be sought in the special works on Biblical Text Criticism. Yet a few words of explanation may be expected by the general reader on the critical references of various readings, which he will find in the foot-notes of the text in the author's Commentary. The manuscripts in *uncials* have, since Wetstein, been designated with the capital letters of the Latin alphabet, and where these do not suffice, with the Greek capitals; those in cursive characters — minuscules — with the common Arabic ciphers. But as the manuscripts of both kinds — the uncial and cursive — are divided into four classes, namely, into codices, containing the Gospels, the Acts and catholic epistles, the Pauline epistles, and the Apocalypse, both the capital letters and ciphers commence in them four times anew. Thus, a codex, that contains the whole New Testament, comes up in the four classes with the capital or cipher peculiar to each class. As these two marks, capitals and ciphers, often vary in the different classes in the same manuscripts, and as new documents are

constantly coming into the lists, it is necessary to notice, when they are simply quoted with their capitals or ciphers, to which book of the New Testament the quotations refer, in order to find them in the lists of the codices.

§ 4. A CONSIDERATION OF THE VARIETY OF READINGS PRESENTED BY THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Alarming as it may appear to the simple, pious Christian, to be told of fifty thousand up to one hundred and fifty thousand different readings, as they have been variously estimated, in the books of the New Testament, and much as infidels have boasted of this discovery, a slight examination of the matter will not only completely remove all apprehensions, but furnish us with the most conclusive proof that Divine Providence has provided the very best security for the integrity of the documents, upon which our faith rests.

In the first place, the number of various readings, great as it appears, is really less, in proportion, than that of the various readings extant in most classic authors, when compared with the quantity of text examined, and the number of manuscripts and other authorities collated in each particular case. Nineteen out of twenty, at least, are to be dismissed at once from consideration, because they are found in so few authorities, and their origin is so easily explained, that no critic would regard them as having any claim to be inserted in the text. Of those which remain, a very great majority are entirely unimportant. They consist in transpositions or omissions of letters, the use of different grammatical forms, the exchange of synonymous words and transpositions of words in sentences; and a very small number affects the sense at all. Only six passages have been discovered where a vital doctrine is affected by the different readings; but even in these instances the doctrine itself is not periled, because it is plainly taught in other passages.

The great value of the immense amount of labor, which has been expended for nearly a century upon the received text of the New Testament, consists not so much in the emendations of that text, as in establishing the fact, that the original text has been transmitted to us with remarkable integrity, that far the greater part of the variations among different copies are of no authority or of no importance, and that some of them are so trifling as not to admit of being made apparent in a translation.

The condition of the text, then, is such as we have to expect from the human agents through whom the documents were transmitted to posterity. The copyist was naturally exposed to mistakes of the eye by the unbroken current uncials — capitals; thus letters of similar form were interchanged, some words were omitted, others written twice, others transposed, and sometimes whole sentences were erroneously divided. Those who copied from dictation — a common practice — were liable to errors by confounding sounds. Mistakes were also made, at a later period, by writing out abbreviations. Again, some words had been left out, and then were set as glosses in the margin; the copyist wishing to restore the original text, inserted the gloss or glosses in the text, but often in the wrong place. Errors of this kind are more frequent in the manuscripts of the New Testament than in those of other ancient writings, because the former were more frequently copied than the latter, and there were, therefore, more intermediate links between the autographs and the later copies. Other corruptions of the text arose from the efforts to correct it or make it plainer by removing the peculiarities of the New Testament diction, or by the reception of glosses into the text, which had at first been written in the margin to explain a difficulty, especially in the synoptical Gospels. The higher the authority of these writings rose, the more natural became the desire of the later copyist to amend a supposed error of an earlier one.

To have prevented such variations of the original text would have required such a continuous miracle on the part of God, as would not have been in accordance with God's dealings with man, nor consistent with the freedom of human agency. "They," says Dr. Hill, in his Lectures on Divinity, "who seem to think that the all-ruling providence of God should have preserved every copy of the original from any kind of vitiation, forget the extent of the miracle which they ask, when they demand, that all who ever were employed in copying the New Testament should at all times have been effectually guarded by the Spirit of God from negligence, and their works kept safe from the injuries of time. They forget, moreover, that the very circumstance to which they object has, in the wisdom of God, been highly favorable to the cause of truth. The infidel has enjoyed his triumph and has exposed his ignorance. Men of erudition have been encouraged to apply their talents to a subject which opens so large a field for their exercise. Their research and their discoveries have demonstrated the futility of the objection, and have shown that the great body of the people in every country, who are incapable of such research, may safely rest in the

Scriptures as they are, and that the most scrupulous critics, by the inexhaustible sources of correction which lie open to them, may attain nearer to an absolute certainty with regard to the true reading of the books of the New Testament, than of any other ancient book in any language. If they require more, their demand is unreasonable; for the religion of Jesus does not profess to satisfy the careless, or to overpower the obstinate, but rests its pretensions upon evidence sufficient to bring conviction to those who with honest hearts inquire after the truth, and are willing to exercise their reason in attempting to discover it."

The Church was at all times enabled to ascertain, in all essential points, the true text of the New Testament writings, by means of the great number of old manuscripts of the very ancient versions, which were made from copies much nearer the original manuscripts than any that we have, and of the many quotations with which the works of the Christian fathers and other early writers abound. For a full description of these means, as well as for the rules in using them, the canons of criticism, which have been investigated and digested by many learned men, we must again refer the reader to the elaborate works that have been written on this subject. We will only add, that it may please Divine Providence to bring to light ancient documents, not yet discovered, an instance of which we have had but a few years ago in the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus, by Tischendorf. However that may be, with the apparatus and the clearly-ascertained principles of criticism which we possess now, we may confidently indulge the hope of recovering the original purity of the text, where it is yet obscured. With regard to the duty of the critical examination of the correctness of the *received* text, the eminent English commentator, Dr. Ellicott, makes, in the recently-published "Aids to Faith," the following remarks, which must commend themselves to every candid mind: "Let the interpreter be seduced by no timidity or prejudices from ascertaining the true text. Let him not fall back upon the too often repeated statement, that, as readings affect no great points of doctrine, the subject may be left in abeyance. It is, indeed, most true, that different readings of such a character as 1 Tim. iii, 16, or interpolations such as 1 John v, 7, are few and exceptional. It is, indeed, a cause for devout thankfulness, that out of the vast number of various readings so few affect vital questions; still it is indisputably a fact, that but few pages of the New Testament can be turned over without our finding points of the greatest interest affected by very trivial variations of reading. On the presence or absence of an article in John v, 1, the whole chronology of our Lord's

ministerial life may be said almost entirely to depend. A very slight alteration in Mark vii, 31, would indicate a fact of deep historical interest, and is of very great significance in reference alike to commands subsequently given to the apostles to preach the Gospel, and to former prohibitions. (Matt. x, 5.) The absence of two words in Eph. i — now rendered somewhat more probable by the testimony of the Codex Sinaiticus — gives a fresh aspect to an important Epistle, disposes at once of several *prima facie* difficulties, and, further, must be taken greatly into account in the adjustment of some subordinate, but interesting questions with which the Epistle has been thought to stand in connection. (Col. iv, 16.) The presence or absence of a few words in Matt. xxviii, 9, affects considerably our ability to remove one of the many seeming discrepancies in the narratives of the first hours of the morn of the resurrection. We could multiply such examples; but perhaps enough has been said. There are, indeed, several grounds for thinking that there is an improved feeling on the whole subject; and there seem some reasons for hoping that, though no authoritative revision is likely to take place, nor, at present, perhaps, even to be desired, yet that the time is coming when there will be a considerable agreement on many of the results of modern criticism."

CHAPTER II.

IMPOSSIBILITY OF SUCCESS IN AN ESSENTIAL MUTILATION OR CORRUPTION OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS.

WE have seen that there is nothing in the various readings to shake our faith in the integrity of the sacred text. On the contrary, the very disagreement of the manuscripts shows that there could have been no collusion; but that the manuscripts were written, independently of each other, by persons separated by distance of time, remoteness of place, and diversity of opinion. This extensive independency of manuscripts on each other is the effectual check of willful alteration; which, whenever attempted, must have been immediately corrected by the agreement of copies from various and distant regions out of the reach of the interpolator. We are aware that we here enter upon an argumentation, where the question of genuineness coincides with that of authenticity. This, however, does not militate against the distinction which we have made between the two terms. We may use an argument for the genuineness of the Gospel records, though it may also apply to their

authenticity, and in doing so we furnish the reader with a natural transition and proper introduction to Part II.

The arguments which prove the Gospel records to have remained uncorrupted have been set forth with peculiar force and clearness by Prof. A. Norton, in his "Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels," a work truly classic, but so learned and expensive as to be found only in the library of the professional scholar, and unadapted for general circulation in the orthodox Churches on account of the theological stand-point which the author occupies as a Unitarian. Yet the manner in which he presents the arguments on the uncorrupted preservation of the Gospel records is unsurpassed, and we can do our readers no better service than to give them in his own language, though in a *condensed* form and separated from those arguments that bear only on the authenticity of the records, which the author does not sufficiently distinguish from genuineness in the strict sense in which we have defined this word.

§ 5. ARGUMENT FROM THE AGREEMENT OF THE RESPECTIVE COPIES OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

That the Gospels have not been corrupted, but have remained essentially the same as they were originally composed, appears, in the first place, from the agreement among our present manuscript copies. These were written in different countries, and at different periods. They have been found in places widely remote from each other; in Asia, in Africa, and from one extremity of Europe to the other. Besides these manuscripts of the Greek text there are many manuscripts of ancient versions of the Gospels in different languages of each of the three great divisions of the world just mentioned. There are, likewise, many manuscripts of the works of the Christian Fathers abounding in quotations from the Gospels; and especially manuscripts of ancient commentaries on the Gospels, such as those of Origen, who lived in the third century, and of Chrysostom, who lived in the fourth; in which we find the sacred text quoted, as the different portions of it are successively the subjects of remark.

Now, all these different copies of the Gospels, or parts of the Gospels, so numerous, so various in their character, so unconnected, offering themselves to notice in parts of the world so remote from each other, concur in giving us

essentially the same text. They vary, indeed, more or less from each other; but their variations have arisen from the common accidents of transcription; or, as regards the versions, partly from errors of translation; or in respect to the quotations by the Fathers, from the circumstance, that in ancient as in modern times the language of Scripture was often cited without regard to verbal accuracy, in cases where no particular verbal accuracy was required. The agreement among the extant copies of any one of the Gospels, or of portions of it, is essential; the disagreements are accidental and trifling, originating in causes which, from the nature of things, we know must have been in operation. The same work every-where appears; and, by comparing together different copies, we are able to ascertain the original text to a great degree of exactness. But as these professed copies thus correspond with each other, it follows that they must all be derived from one original manuscript, and that such manuscript has been faithfully copied.

Let us now consider the supposition that one transcriber, in one part of the world, would have made certain alterations in his copy, and inserted certain narratives which he had collected; and another, in another place, would have made different alterations, and inserted different narratives. Such copies, upon the supposition that this imagined license continued, would, when again transcribed, have been again changed and enlarged. Copies would have been continually multiplying, diverging more and more from the original and from each other. No generally-received text would have existed; none, therefore, could have been preserved and handed down. Instead of that agreement among the copies of each Gospel which now exists, we should have found every-where manuscripts, presenting us with different collections of narratives and sayings, and differing, at the same time, in their arrangement of the same facts and in their general style of expression. The copies of these writings would have presented the same phenomena as those of some of the apocryphal books, as, for instance, that called the Gospel of the Infancy, which appears in several different forms, this collection of fables having been remodeled by one after another according to his fancy. It is, moreover, to be taken into consideration, that the transcriber of a manuscript, making such alterations as the hypothesis supposes, could by doing so not corrupt the work itself. His copy could have had no influence upon the numerous cotemporary copies in which the true text might be preserved, or into which different alterations might be introduced. It is quite otherwise since the invention of printing. He who now

introduces a corruption into the printed edition of a work, introduces it into all the copies of that edition; and if it be the only edition, into all the copies of that work.

It is evident, from the preceding statements, that the existing copies of each of the Gospels have been derived from some common exemplar, faithfully followed by transcribers. But it may be said that this exemplar was not the original work, as it proceeded from the hand of the Evangelist; that the lineage of our present copies is not to be traced so high; but that, at some period, the course of corruption which has been described was arrested, and a standard text was selected and determined upon, which has served as an archetype for all existing copies, but that this text, thus fixed as the standard, had already suffered greatly from the corruptions of transcribers, and was very different from the original. According to Eichhorn, the Church selected, at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, out of the many Gospels then extant, four, which had the greatest marks of credibility and the necessary completeness for common use, and labored to procure their general reception among Christians, with the suppression of all other Gospels. In order properly to judge of this supposition, let us first inquire whether, at the time named, "the Church" had the power to do what is ascribed to her. There was no single ecclesiastical government which extended over Christians, or over a majority of Christians, or over any considerable portion of their number. They had no regular modes of acting in concert, nor any effectual means whatever of combining together for a common purpose. Neither the whole body, nor a majority of Christians, ever met by delegation to devise common measures. Such an event did not take place till a hundred and twenty years after the end of the second century, when Christianity had become the established religion of the Roman Empire, and the first general council, that of Nice, was called together by the Emperor Constantine. At the time of which we are speaking, the Christians were disturbed and unsettled by frequent cruel persecutions. Exclusively of those generally considered as heretics, they were alienated from each other by differences of religious opinion; for it was before the end of the second century that Victor, Bishop of Rome, had excommunicated the Eastern Churches. This was the state of the Church at the end of the second century, and yet it is supposed that she came to an agreement to select four out of the many manuscript Gospels then in existence, all of which had been exposed to the license of transcribers. Of these four no traces are said to be discovered

before that time; but it was determined to adopt them for common use, to the prejudice, it would seem, of others longer known. There was, as it is supposed, a universal and silent compliance with this proposal. Copies of the four new manuscripts and translations of them were at once circulated through the world. All others ceased to be transcribed, and suddenly disappeared from common notice. Copyers were at the same time checked in their former practice of licentious alteration. Thus a revolution was effected in regard to the most important sacred books of the Christians, and at the same time better habits were introduced among the transcribers of those books.

Now, who can suppose that any such series of events took place at the end of the second century? It is intrinsically incredible. Let us consider for a moment what an effort would be required and what resistance must be overcome in order to bring into general use among a single nation of Christians at the present day, not other Gospels, but simply a new and better translation of our present Gospels. In the case under consideration, allowing the supposed change to have been possible, it must have met with great opposition; it must have provoked much discussion; there must have been a great deal written about it at the time; it must have been often referred to afterward, especially in the religious controversies which took place; it would have been one of the most important events in the history of Christians, and the account of the transaction must have been preserved. That there are no traces of it whatever is alone conclusive evidence that it never took place.

Lastly: our present Gospels, it is conceded, were in common use among Christians about the end of the second century. The number of manuscripts then in existence bore some proportion to the number of Christians. The number of Christians can be safely set down at three millions. As few possessions could have been valued by a Christian so highly as a copy of the records of that Gospel, for which he was exposing himself to the severest sacrifices, and as a common copy of the Gospels could not have been very expensive, to judge from a remark of Juvenal respecting the cost of books in ancient times, there can be little doubt that copies of the Gospels were owned by a large portion of Christians; and, in supposing one copy for every fifty Christians, the estimate is probably much within the truth. This proportion would give us sixty thousand copies of the Gospels for three millions of Christians. But whether more or less, if there had been important discrepancies among the large number of copies, in common use and dispersed over the

world, no series of events could either have destroyed the evidence of these discrepancies or could have produced the present agreement among existing copies, derived, as they are, from those in use at the period in question. The agreement, then, at the end of the second century, among the numerous copies of the respective Gospels, proves that an archetype of each Gospel had been faithfully followed by the transcribers. This archetype, as we have seen, there is no ground for imagining to have been any other than the original work of the author of that Gospel. It follows, therefore, that in the interval between the composition of these works and the end of the second century, their text did not suffer, as has been fancied, from the licentiousness of transcribers.

§ 6. ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

1. It would have been inconsistent with the common sentiments and practice of mankind for transcribers to make such alterations and additions as have been imagined in the sacred books which they were copying. Such license has never been attributed to the transcribers of the ancient classics, and what we apprehend so little concerning other writings, is still less to be apprehended concerning the Gospels, on account of their sacred character. Let us adduce a few testimonies in proof of this fact and in refutation of the assertion made by Eichhorn, that, "before the invention of printing, in transcribing a manuscript, the most arbitrary alterations were considered as allowable, since they affected only an article of private property, written for the use of an individual."

Justin Martyr, in the dialogue which he represents himself as having held with Trypho, an unbelieving Jew, charges the Jews with having expunged certain passages of the Old Testament relating to Christ. To this Trypho answers that the charge seems to him incredible. Justin replies, "It does seem incredible; for to mutilate the Scriptures would be a more fearful crime than the worship of the golden calf, or than the sacrifice of children to demons, or than slaying the prophets themselves." Is it credible that, when such sentiments existed with regard to the heinousness of attempting an adulteration of the Old Testament writings, the Christian Churches would suffer a tampering with their own sacred books?

Some of the heretics in the second century made, or were charged with making, alterations in the Christian Scriptures, in order to accommodate them

to their own opinions. Of such corruptions of Scripture Dionysius, who was Bishop of Corinth about the year 170, thus speaks: "I have written epistles at the desire of the brethren. But the apostles of the devil have filled them with darnel, taking out some things and adding others. Against such a woe is denounced. It is not wonderful, therefore, that some have undertaken to corrupt the Scriptures of the Lord, since they have corrupted writings not to be compared with them." The meaning of Dionysius is, that the persons spoken of having shown their readiness to commit such a crime, it was not strange that they should even corrupt the Scriptures, these being works of much higher authority than his epistles, and from the falsification of which more advantage was to be gained. From the manner in which Dionysius denounces the guilt of some "apostles of the devil," in corrupting the Scriptures, we may confidently infer that the Christian Churches were not guilty of such a practice. And yet this very passage of Dionysius is quoted by Eichhorn in support of his supposition. Equally groundless is his appeal to a saying of Celsus. "Celsus," says he, "objects to the Christians that they had changed their Gospels three and four times and oftener, as if they were deprived of their senses." If the charge of Celsus were correctly represented, the first obvious answer would be, that such a charge is as little to be credited, upon the mere assertion of Celsus, as various other calumnies of that writer against the Christians, which no one at the present day believes. But Celsus does not say what he is represented as saying. He does not bring the charge against the Christians generally, but against *some* Christians. His words are preserved in the work composed by Origen, in reply to Celsus; and, correctly rendered, are as follows: "Afterward Celsus says, that some believers, like men driven by drunkenness to commit violence on themselves, have altered the Gospel history, since its first composition, three times, four times, and oftener, and have refashioned it, so as to be able to deny the objections made against it." To this the whole reply of Origen is as follows: "I know of none who have altered the Gospel history, except the followers of Marcion, of Valentinus, and I think also those of Lucan. But this affords no ground for reproach against the religion itself, but against those who have dared to corrupt the Gospels. And as it is no reproach against philosophy that there are Sophists, or Epicureans, or Peripatetics, or any others, who hold false opinions, so also it is no reproach against true Christianity that there are those who have altered the Gospels and introduced heresies foreign from the teaching of Jesus." It is evident that Origen regarded the words of Celsus not as a grave charge against the whole body of Christians, but as a mere declamatory

accusation, which he was not called upon to repel by any elaborate reply. Celsus compares the conduct of those whom he charges with altering the Gospels to that of men impelled by drunkenness to commit violence on themselves. To this comparison no objection is to be made; for the question, whether the early Christians altered the Gospels, really resolves itself into the question, whether they acted like men intoxicated to the evident ruin of their cause.

To return, then, to the positive testimonies against the supposition of a corruption of the Gospel records having been suffered by the Christian Churches, "we have not received," says Irenaeus, (*contra Haer.*, l. ii, c. 1,) "the knowledge of the way of our salvation by any others than those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which Gospel they first preached, and afterward, by the will of God, transmitted to us in writing, that it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith." He immediately proceeds to speak particularly of the composition of the four Gospels, referring them to the authors to whom they are commonly ascribed. These books he afterward represents as the most important books of Scripture, (*Ib.*, l. iii, c. 11, § 8,) and the Scriptures he calls "oracles of God." (*Ib.*, l. i, c. 8, § 1.) He says, "We know that the Scriptures are perfect, as dictated by the Logos of God and his Spirit." (*Ib.*, l. ii, c. 28, § 2.)

Clement, of Alexandria, also calls the Scriptures divinely inspired, and speaks of the four Gospels, in contradistinction from all other accounts of Christ, as having been handed down to the Christians of his age. (*Stromat.*, l. iii, § 13.) Tertullian manifests the same reverence for the Scriptures, and especially for the Gospels, as his contemporaries, Irenaeus and Clement. He, like them, quotes the Gospels as works of decisive authority, in the same manner as any modern theologian might do. He wrote much against the heretic Marcion, whom he charges with having rejected the other Gospels, and having mutilated the Gospel of Luke, to conform it to his system. This leads him to make some statements which have a direct bearing on the present subject. "I affirm," says Tertullian, "that not only in the Churches founded by apostles, but in all which have fellowship with them, *that* Gospel of Luke, which we so steadfastly defend, has been received from its first publication." "The same authority," he adds, "of the apostolical Churches will support the other Gospels, which, in like manner, we have from them, conformably to their copies." (*Adv. Marcion*, l. iv, § 5.) "They," he says, "who were resolved to teach otherwise

than the truth, were under a necessity of new modeling the records of the doctrine." "As they could not have succeeded in corrupting the doctrine without corrupting its records, so we could not have preserved and transmitted the doctrine in its integrity, but by preserving the integrity of its records." (De Praescr. Haeret., § 28.)

The passages quoted show the state of opinion and feeling among Christians during the first two centuries, and it is clear that those who entertained these sentiments would neither make nor permit intentional alterations in the Gospels.

2. About the close of the second century, different Christian writers express strong censure of the mutilations and changes which they charge some heretics, particularly Marcion, with having made in the Gospels and other books of the New Testament. Some passages to this effect have been quoted; it is unnecessary to adduce others, because the fact is well known and universally admitted. But if our Gospels had not existed in their present form till the close of the second century, if before that time their text had been fluctuating, and assuming in different copies a different form, such as transcribers might choose to give it, those by whom they were used could not have ventured to speak with such confidence of the alterations of the heretics.

3. We happen to have, in the words of a single writer, decisive evidence that no such differences as would imply a mutilation or corruption of the text ever existed in the manuscripts of the canonical Gospels. Origen was born A.D. 185, and flourished during the first half of the third century. He was particularly skilled in the criticism of the Scriptures. He had the means of consulting various manuscripts of the Gospels, of which he made a critical use, noticing their various readings. His notices are principally found in his Commentaries on the Gospels. If transcribers had indulged in such licentious alterations as have been supposed, he could not have been ignorant of them. But the various readings he adduces give a convincing proof that the manuscripts of his time differed, to say the least, as little from each other as the manuscripts now extant, and, consequently, that before his time there was the same care to preserve the original text as there has been since. This conviction is not weakened by a passage in his writings, which may seem at first view to favor the opposite opinion. Origen expresses his doubts in the genuineness of the words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xix, 19,) and says: "But if it were not

that in many other passages there is a difference among copies, so that all those of the Gospel of Matthew do not agree together, and so also as it regards the other Gospels, it might well seem irreverent in any one to suspect that the precept has been inserted here without its having been mentioned by the Savior. But it is evident that there exists much difference among copies; partly from the carelessness of some transcribers, partly from the rashness of others in altering improperly what they find written, and partly from those revisers who add or strike out according to their own judgment." (Com. in Matt., tom. xv, § 14.) In this passage there is no reference to the intentional corruptions of the heretics, in which case another Greek word would have been used for "altering" and for "revisers;" it refers only to the well-known, common causes of error in the transcription of manuscripts. We learn from it that transcribers were sometimes careless; that they sometimes improperly altered from conjecture a reading in the copy before them, which they fancied to be erroneous; and that those whose business was to revise manuscripts after transcription, for the purpose of correcting errors, did sometimes, in the want of proper critical apparatus, rely too much upon their mere judgment concerning what was probably the true text. His language in speaking of the difference among the manuscripts is even not as strong as that used by some modern critics concerning the disagreement among our present copies, which we know does not involve any essential mutilation or corruption. The passage of Origen, then, shows, on the one hand, that he did not regard the Gospels as having been exposed to any other causes of error than those common in the transcription of manuscripts; on the other hand, that he had no disposition to keep out of view or to extenuate the differences among the copies extant in his time. We may, therefore, be satisfied that none of more importance existed than what we find noticed by him.

We may reason in a similar manner from all the notices in ancient writers relating to the text of the Gospels. Nothing can be alleged from their writings to prove any greater difference among the copies extant in their time than what is found among those which we now possess. It may here be proper to refer to an objection which Eichhorn makes. He says: "Clement, of Alexandria, at the end of the second century, speaks of those who corrupted the Gospels, and ascribes it to them; that at Matthew v, 10, instead of the words, '*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*', there was found in some manuscripts, '*for they shall be perfect*'; and in others, '*for they shall have a place where they shall not*'

be persecuted." This statement is erroneous. Clement does not speak of those who corrupted, but of those who paraphrased the Gospels; nor does he give the words alleged by him, as various readings in manuscripts of the Gospels. Quoting the original text incorrectly, from memory, in these words, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for they shall be called the sons of God," he adds, "or as some, who have paraphrased the Gospels, express it: Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for they shall be perfect; and blessed are they who are persecuted for my sake, for they shall attain a place where they shall not be persecuted." Clement evidently expresses no indignation against those of whom he speaks, as he would have done if the passages quoted had assumed three such different forms in the manuscripts which he had seen; for that would prove a general license of corruption in his time.

4. If our present Gospels had been the result of successive additions, made by different hands to a common basis, there would have been a marked diversity of style in different portions of the same Gospel, so that these works would have been very unlike what they are now. We should have perceived clear traces of different writers, having greater or less command of expression, and accustomed to a different use of language. But when we examine the Gospels, there is nothing which discovers marks of their having been subjected to such a process of interpolation. On the contrary, there is decisive evidence that each is the work of an individual, and has been preserved, as it was written by him. The dialect, the style, and the modes of narration in the Gospels, generally, have a very marked and peculiar character. Each Gospel, also, is distinguished from the others by individual peculiarities in the use of language, and other characteristics exclusively its own.

5. In those cases in which we have good reason to suspect an ancient writing of being spurious altogether, or of having received spurious additions, the fact is almost always betrayed by something in the character of the writing itself. Spurious works and interpolations in authentic works are discovered by something not congruous to the character of the pretended author, by a style different from his own, by an implied reference to opinions or events of a later age, or by some other bearing and purpose not consistent with the time when they are pretended to have been written. Traces of the times when they were really composed are almost always apparent. This must have been the case with the Gospels if they had been subjected to alterations and additions from

different editors and transcribers with different views and feelings, more or less affected by opinions and circumstances which had sprung up in their own times. But no traces of a later age than that which we assign for their composition appear in the Gospels.

PART II.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS.

§ 7. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

BY the *authenticity* of the Gospels we understand that *they were written by the men whose names they bear, who were partly eye-witnesses, partly persons cotemporaneous with the events narrated.* To declare the Gospels authentic in this sense has been pronounced by infidels to be "an assumption originating from the titles which the Biblical books bear in our canon." We grant that little reliance can be placed on these titles or headings, but it is absurd to say that these headings originated the belief that the books were written by the men whose names they bear; for before the titles were attached, the belief must have existed. There is not the slightest pretense for insinuating that there was ever any doubt as to the authorship of any one of the historical books of the New Testament; which are as uniformly ascribed to the writers whose names they bear as the "Return of the Ten Thousand" to Xenophon, or the "Lives of the Caesars" to Suetonius. There is, indeed, *far* more and stronger testimony concerning the authenticity of the four Gospels than exists with respect to the works of almost any classical writer; for it is a rare occurrence for classical works to be distinctly quoted, or for their authors to be mentioned by name within a century of the time of their publication.

CHAPTER I.

THE OUTWARD HISTORICAL TESTIMONIES.

§ 8. THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

BY the Apostolical Fathers we understand those early Christian writers who lived wholly or in part in the very age of the apostles, and were more or less conversant with them. These are: *Clement*, of Rome, mentioned (Phil. iv, 3) as a fellow-laborer of Paul, afterward Bishop of Rome; *Barnabas*, of

Cyprus, frequently mentioned in the New Testament as a co-laborer of Paul; *Ignatius*, Bishop of Antioch in Syria, where he is said to have been ordained by Peter; *Polycarp*, a disciple of John, ordained by him Bishop of Smyrna, where he died a martyr; *Papias*, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, the companion of Polycarp, (he belongs, however, rather to the sub-apostolic age, as we shall show at another place.) Of these Apostolical Fathers we have only a few writings and fragments preserved. *Hermas*, the author of "the *Shepherd*," is generally reckoned among the Apostolical Fathers, and assumed to have been saluted by Paul, (Rom. xvi, 14;) but it is more probable that "the *Shepherd*" had a later origin.

The learned Dr. Lardner has carefully collated all the passages in which these writers have made any allusion to the canonical books of the New Testament. Their allusions to the Epistles are far more numerous and direct than those to the Gospels. The latter have been subjected by Eichhorn and others to a very rigid scrutiny, for the purpose of destroying the evidence they furnish that our Gospels were known to the Apostolical Fathers. It is said, that "by far the greater part of them are so general in the allusions they are supposed to make to passages occurring in the Gospels, that no weight can be attached to them." To this it might be sufficient to reply, that the very peculiarity of these allusions, instead of invalidating the evidence, furnishes a very strong argument in favor of the existence of the Gospels in their day. "When does an author," says Dr. W. L. Alexander, in his *Christ and Christianity*, "feel himself at liberty to deal in general allusions to other writings, and, instead of formally citing them, to invigorate his own style, or point his own sentences, by a few words borrowed from them, or a passing hint at something they contain? Is it not when he may safely take for granted the familiarity of his readers with the authors he thus passingly lauds? and does not this feature in the writings of any author invariably prompt the inference, that he has assumed the fact of such familiarity? . . . What confirms this inference is, that exactly in the same way of general allusion and partial citation do these Apostolic Fathers frequently make use of the writings of the Old Testament and of the Epistles of the New."

It is true, that with the exception of what Papias affirms concerning the authorship of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and with the exception of the direct appeals to Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, Ephesians, and Philippians, by Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, the Apostolical Fathers bear no formal testimony of the existence of the canonical books of the New Testament; but

their indirect testimony is sufficiently strong to satisfy every reasonable demand, and it is even of more value than a direct one would be, inasmuch as it is beyond all suspicion of design. How fully it accords with the very nature of their position is very clearly set forth by Westcott, in his excellent work on the Canon of the New Testament, from which we shall draw most of what we have to say *in this whole chapter.*

"That the Apostolical Fathers," he says, "do not appeal to the Apostolic Writings more frequently and more distinctly, springs from the very nature of their position. Those who had heard the living voice of apostles were unlikely to appeal to their written words. It is an instinct which always makes us prefer any personal connection to the more remote relationship of books. Thus Papias tells us that he sought to learn, from every quarter, the traditions of those who had conversed with the elders, thinking that he should not profit so much by the narratives of books as by the living and abiding voice of the Lord's disciples. So, again, Irenaeus in earnest language tells with what joy he listened to the words of Polycarp, when he told of his intercourse with those who had seen the Lord; and how those who had been with Christ spoke of his mighty works and teachings."

With regard to the references of the Fathers to the books of the New Testament, in general, Westcott remarks: "The words of Scripture are inwrought into the texture of the books, and not parceled out into formal quotations. They are not arranged with argumentative effect, but used as the natural expression of Christian truths. Now, this use of the Holy Scripture shows at least that they were even then widely known, and so guarded by a host of witnesses — that their language was transferred into the common dialect — that it was as familiar to those first Christians as to us, who use it as unconsciously as they did in writing or conversation. If the quotations of the Old Testament in the Apostolic Fathers were uniformly explicit and exact, this mode of argument would lose much of its force. With the exception of Barnabas, it does not appear that they have made a single reference by name to any one of the books of the Old Testament. Clement uses the general formula, 'It is written,' or, even more frequently, 'God saith,' or, simply, 'One saith.' The two quotations from the Old Testament in Ignatius are simply preceded by 'It is written.' Exactness of quotation was foreign to the spirit of their writing."

Respecting the coincidences between the Apostolic Fathers and the canonical Gospels, in particular, Mr. Westcott says: "From the nature of the case, casual coincidences of language can not be brought forward in the same manner to prove the use of a history as of a letter. The same facts and words, especially if they be recent and striking, may be preserved in several narratives. References in the sub-apostolic age to the discourses or actions of our Lord, as we find them recorded in the Gospels, show that what they relate was then so far held to be true; but it does not necessarily follow that they were already in use, and the precise source of the passage in question. On the contrary, the mode in which Clement refers to our Lord's teaching, 'the Lord said,' not 'saith,' seems to imply that he referred to tradition, and not to any written accounts, for words most closely resembling those which are still found in our Gospels. The testimony of the Apostolic Fathers is to the substance, and not to the authenticity of the Gospels. And in this respect they have an important work to do. They witness that the great outlines of the life and teachings of our Lord were familiarly known to all from the first: they prove that Christianity rests truly on a historic basis. The 'Gospel' which the Fathers announce includes all the articles of the ancient creeds. 'Christ,' we read, 'our God, the eternal Word, the Lord and Creator of the world, who was with the Father before time began, at the end humbled himself, and came down from heaven, and was manifested in the flesh, and was born of the Virgin Mary, of the race of David, according to the flesh; and a star of exceeding brightness appeared at his birth. Afterward, he was baptized by John, to fulfill all righteousness; and then, speaking his Father's message, he invited not the righteous, but sinners, to come to him. At length, under Herod and Pontius Pilate, he was crucified, and vinegar and gall was offered him to drink. But on the first day of the week he rose from the dead, the first-fruits of the grave; and many prophets were raised by him for whom they had waited. After his resurrection he ate with his disciples, and showed them that he was not an incorporeal spirit. And he ascended into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the Father, and thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.' Such, in their own words, is the testimony of the earliest Fathers to the life of the Savior. Round these facts their doctrines are grouped; on the truth of the incarnation, and the passion, and the resurrection of Christ, their hopes were grounded."

Mr. Westcott, in conclusion, makes the following remarks on the age of the Apostolic Fathers: "If the extent of the evidence of the Apostolic Fathers

to the books of the New Testament is exactly what might be expected from men who had seen the Apostles, who had heard them, and who had treasured up their writings as the genuine records of their teaching, the character of their evidence is equally in accordance with their peculiar position. It will be readily seen that we can not expect to find the New Testament quoted in the first age as authoritative, in the same manner as the Old Testament. There could not, indeed, be any occasion for an appeal to the testimony of the Gospels, when the history of the faith was still within the memory of many; and most of the epistles were of little use in controversy, for the earliest heretics denied the apostleship of St. Paul. The Old Testament, on the contrary, was common ground; and the ancient system of Biblical interpretation furnished the Christian with ready arms. When these failed it was enough for him to appeal to the death and resurrection of Christ, which were at once the sum and the proof of his faith. . . . The successors of the apostles did not, we admit, recognize that the written histories of the Lord, and the scattered epistles of his first disciples, would form a sure and sufficient source and test of doctrine, when the current tradition had grown indistinct or corrupt. Conscious of a life in the Christian body, and realizing the power of its Head, as later ages can not do, they did not feel that the apostles were providentially charged to express once for all in their *writings* the essential forms of Christianity, even as the prophets had fore-shadowed them. . . . But they had certainly an indistinct sense that their work was essentially different from that of their predecessors. They attributed to them power and wisdom to which they themselves made no claim. Each one of those teachers, who stood nearest to the writers of the New Testament, plainly contrasted his writings with theirs, and definitely placed himself on a lower level."

The direct testimony of Papias to the authorship of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark is as follows: "Now, Matthew composed the oracles in Hebrew, and each one interpreted them as he was able. Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote accurately whatever he remembered, though he did not (record) in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him; but subsequently, as I said, (attached himself to) Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the (immediate) wants (of his hearers); and not as making a connected narration of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error, as he wrote down some particulars just as he recalled them to mind. For he took heed to one thing — to omit none

of the facts that he heard, and to state nothing falsely in (his narrative of) them."
([Euseb. H. E.) The opinions are divided on the question, whether Papias was really a disciple of the apostle John, or only of a certain John the Presbyter, whom he calls a disciple of our Lord. We shall examine this question and the testimony of Papias in the special Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew, inasmuch as it is connected with other questions, while the authenticity of all the four Gospels can be proved independently of the testimony of Papias.

§ 9. THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS IN THE SUB-APOSTOLIC AGE, FROM A.D. 120-170.

In this age the Church had to maintain its ground amid systematic persecution, organized heresies, and philosophic controversy. The apostolic tradition was insufficient to silence or condemn false teachers who had been trained in the schools of Athens or Alexandria, but new champions were raised up to meet the emergency; and some of these did not scruple to maintain the doctrines of Christianity in the garb of philosophers. As Christianity was shown to be the true completion of Judaism before the Church was divided from the Synagogue, so it was well that it should be clearly set forth as the center to which old philosophers converged before it was declared to supersede them. This, then, was one great work of the time, that apologists should proclaim Christianity to be the Divine answer to the questionings of heathendom, as well as the antitype to the law and to the hope of the prophets. To a great extent the task was independent of the direct use of Scripture. Those who discharged it had to deal not so much with the words as with the thoughts of the apostles, not so much with the records as with the facts of Christ's life. Even the later apologists abstained from quoting Scripture in their addresses to heathens; and the practice was still more alien from the object and position of the earliest. The arguments of philosophy and history were brought forward first, that men might be better prepared for the light of revelation. The literature of this age included almost every form of prose composition — letters, chronicles, essays, apologies, visions, tales; but although it was thus varied, the fragments of it which are left scarcely do more than witness to its extent. Omitting what can be gathered from the scanty fragments of the Athenian Apologists, Quadratus and Aristides, from the letter to Diognetus, from the Jewish Apologists, from Dionysius, Hermas, Hegesippus, etc., we will confine ourselves to the

all-sufficient testimony of Justin Martyr, to whom the first rank must be assigned among the apologetical writers of the second century. He was of Greek descent, but his family had been settled for two generations in the Roman colony of Flavia Neapolis, near the site of the ancient Sichem, where he was born at the close of the first century. He died as martyr in the year 166. After he had, as a heathen, successively sought after truth in the various philosophical systems, he became, in the thirtieth year of his life, a convert to Christianity, which, while continuing to wear his philosopher's cloak, he enthusiastically defended by writings and discussions.

Eusebius has given a list of such books of his as had come to his own knowledge. Of the writings which bear his name now, two, *Apologies* and the *Dialogue with Trypho*, are genuine beyond all doubt. They exhibit a mass of references to the Gospel narratives. The first thing that must strike any one who examines a complete collection of the passages in question is the general coincidence in range and contents with our Gospels. Nothing, for instance, furnished wider scope for apocryphal narratives than the history of the infancy of our Lord; yet Justin's account of the infancy is as free from legendary admixture as it is full of incidents recorded by the Evangelists. He does not appear to have known any thing more than they knew. The style and language of the quotations which he makes from Christ's teaching agree no less exactly with those of the Evangelist. He quotes frequently from memory; he interweaves the words which we find separately given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; he condenses, combines, transposes the language of our Lord as they have recorded it; he makes use of phrases characteristic of different Gospels; yet, with very few exceptions, he preserves through all these changes the marked peculiarities of the New Testament phraseology, without the admixture of any foreign element. We have observed that the quotations from the Gospel history in the early Fathers are almost uniformly anonymous; the words of Christ were as a living voice in the Church, apart from any written record. Justin likewise habitually represents Christ as speaking, and not the Evangelist as relating, his discourses; but he is the first who distinctly refers to what he calls "*The Memoirs of the Apostles*," in which he found written "all things concerning Jesus Christ."

The peculiar objects which he had in view in his extant writings did not suggest, even if they did not exclude, any minute description of these records. It would have added nothing to the vivid picture of Christianity which he drew

for the heathen to have quoted with exact precision the testimony of this or that apostle, even if such a mode of quotation had been usual. One thing they might require to know, and that he tells them that the words of Christ were still the text of Christian instruction, that the "Memoirs of the Apostles" were still read, together with the writings of the prophets, in their weekly services, (Ap., i, 87.) So, on the other hand, the great difficulty in a controversy with a Jew was to show that the humiliation and death of Christ were reconcilable with the Messianic prophecies. The chief facts were here confessed; and in other points it was enough for the apologist to assert, generally, that the Memoirs which he quoted rested upon apostolic authority, (Dial., c. 103.) The manner in which Justin alludes to the Memoirs of the Apostles in his first Apology, and in his Dialogue with Trypho, confirms what has just been said. If his mode of reference were not modified by the nature of his subject, it would surely have been the same in both. As it is, there is a marked difference, and exactly such as might have been expected. In the Apology, which contains nearly fifty allusions to the Gospel history, he speaks only twice of the apostolic authorship of his Memoirs, and in one other place mentions them generally, (Ap., i, 86; 87; 33.) In the Dialogue, which contains about seventy allusions, he quotes them ten times as "the Memoirs of the Apostles," and in five other places as "the Memoirs."

This difference is still more striking if examined closely. Every quotation of our Lord's words in the Apology is simply introduced by the phrases, "Thus Christ said," or "taught," or "exhorted." His words were their own witness. For the public events of his life Justin refers to the Enrollment of Quirinius, and the Acts of Pilate. He quotes the "Gospels" only when he must speak of things beyond the range of common history. Standing before a Roman emperor as the apologist of the Christians, he confines himself, as far as possible, to common ground; and if he is compelled for illustration to quote the books of the Christians, he takes care to show that they were recognized by the Church, and no private documents of his own. Thus, in speaking of the Annunciation, he says: "And the angel of God, sent to the Virgin at that season, announced to her glad tidings, saying, Behold thou shalt conceive of the Holy Spirit, and bear a son, and he shall be called the Son of the Highest; and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins, as those who have written memoirs of all things concerning our Savior Jesus Christ taught us, whom we believed, since also the prophetic Spirit said that this would come to pass."

(Ap., i, 33.) So, again, when explaining the celebration of the Eucharist, he adds: "The apostles, in the Memoirs made by them, which are called Gospels, have handed down that it was thus enjoined on them." (Ap., i, 66.) And once more, when describing the Christian service, he notices that "the Memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read as long as the time admits." (Ap., i, 67.)

There is no further mention of the Memoirs in the Apology. In the Dialogue the case was somewhat different. Trypho was himself acquainted with the Gospel, (Dial., c. 10,) and Justin's language becomes proportionally more exact. The words of our Lord are still quoted very often, simply as His words, without any acknowledgment of a written record; but from time to time, when reference is made to words of more special moment, so to speak, it is added that they are so "written in the Gospel." In one passage the contrast between the substance of Christ's teaching and the record of it is brought out very clearly. After speaking of the death of John the Baptist, Justin adds: "Wherefore also our Christ when on earth told those who said that Elias must come before Christ: 'Elias indeed will come, and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elias has come already, and they knew him not, but did to him whatsoever they listed.' And it is written, 'Then understood the disciples that he spake to them concerning John the Baptist.'" (Dial., c. 49; Matt. xvii, 13.) In another place it appears that Justin refers particularly to one out of the Memoirs. "The mention of the fact," he says, "that Christ changed the name of Peter, one of the apostles, and that the event has been written in his (Peter's) Memoirs, together with His having changed the name of two other brethren, who were sons of Zebedee, to that of Boanerges, tended to signify that He was the stone through whom the surname Israel was given to Jacob, and Joshua to Hoshea." (Dial., c. 106; Mark iii, 16, 17.) Now, the surname given to James and John is only found at present in one of our Gospels, and there it is mentioned in immediate connection with the change of Peter's name. That Gospel is the Gospel of Mark, which, by the universal voice of antiquity, was referred to the authority of Peter. That Justin found in his Memoirs facts at present peculiar to Luke's narrative, is equally clear. "And Jesus, as he gave up his spirit upon the cross," he writes, "said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, as I learned from the Memoirs."

But this is not all: in his Apology, Justin speaks of the Memoirs generally as written by the apostles. In the Dialogue his words are more precise: "In the

Memoirs, which I say were composed by the apostles and those who followed them, [it is written] that sweat as drops (of blood) streamed down (from Jesus), as He was praying and saying, Let this cup, if it be possible, pass away from me." The description, it will be seen, precedes the quotation of a passage found in Luke, the follower of an apostle, and not an apostle himself. Some such fact as this is needed to explain why Justin distinguishes at this particular time the authorship of the records which he used. And no short account would apply more exactly to our present Gospels than that which he gives. Two of them were written by apostles, two by their followers. There were many apocryphal gospels, but it is not known that any one of them bore the name of a follower of the apostles. The application of Justin's words to our Gospels seems indeed absolutely necessary when they are compared with those of Tertullian, who says, (Adv. Marcion, iv, 2:) "We lay down as a principle, first, that the Evangelic Instrument has apostles for its authors, on whom this charge of publishing the Gospel was imposed by the Lord himself: that if [it includes the writings of] apostolic men also, still they were not alone, but [wrote] with [the help of] apostles and after [the teachings of] apostles. . . . In fine, John and Matthew out of the number of the apostles implant faith in us, Luke and Mark out of the number of their followers refresh it." This, then, is the sum of what Justin says of the Memoirs of the apostles. They were many, and yet one: they were called gospels: they contained a record of all things concerning Jesus Christ: they were admitted by Christians generally: they were read in their public services: they were of apostolic authority, though not exclusively of apostolic authorship: they were composed in part by apostles, and in part by their followers. And further than this, we gather that they related facts only mentioned at present by one or other of the Evangelists: that thus they were intimately connected with each one of the synoptic Gospels: that they contained nothing, as far as Justin expressly quotes them, which our Gospels do not now substantially contain. Up to this point of our inquiry the identification of his Memoirs with our Gospels seems to be as reasonable as it is natural. But on the other hand, it is said that there are objections to this identification; namely, that Justin no where mentions the Evangelists by name: that the text of his quotations differs materially from that of the Gospels: that he introduces apocryphal additions into his narrative. And each of these statements must be examined before the right weight can be assigned to these general coincidences between the books in subject, language, and character of which we have hitherto spoken.

It has been already shown that there were peculiar circumstances in Justin's case which rendered any definite quotation of the Evangelists unlikely and unsuitable, even if such a mode of quotation had been common at the time. But in fact, when he referred to written records of Christ's life and words he made an advance beyond which the later Apologists rarely proceeded. Tatian, his scholar, has several allusions to passages contained in the Gospels of Matthew and John, but they are all anonymous. Athenagoras quotes the words of our Lord, as they stand in Matthew, four times, and appears to allude to passages in Mark and John, but he no where mentions the name of an Evangelist. Theophilus, in his books to Autolycus, cites five or six precepts from "the Gospel," or the "Evangelic Voice," and once only mentions John as "a man moved by the Holy Spirit," quoting the prologue to his Gospel; though he elsewhere classes the Evangelists with the prophets as all inspired by the same Spirit. In Hermias and Minucius Felix there appears to be no reference at all to the Gospels. The usage of Tertullian is very remarkable. In his other books he quotes the Gospels continually, and, though rarely, mentions every Evangelist by name; but in his *Apology*, while he gives a general view of Christ's life and teaching, and speaks of the Scriptures as the food and the comfort of the Christian, he no where cites the Gospels, and scarcely exhibits any coincidence of language with them. Clement of Alexandria, as is well known, investigated the relation of the synoptic Gospels to that of John, and his use of the words of Scripture is constant and extensive; and yet in his "*Exhortation to Gentiles*," while he quotes every Gospel, and all, except Mark, repeatedly, he only mentions John by name, and that but once. (*Protrep.*, § 59.) Cyprian, in his address to Demetrian, quotes words of our Lord as given by Matthew and John, but says nothing of the source from which he derived them. At a still later time Lactantius blamed Cyprian for quoting Scripture in a controversy with a heathen; and though he shows in his *Institutions* an intimate acquaintance with the writings of the Evangelists, he mentions John only by name, quoting the beginning of his Gospel. Arnobius, again, makes no allusion to the Gospels; and Eusebius, to whose zeal we owe most of what is known of the history of the New Testament, though he quotes the Gospels eighteen times in his "*Introduction to Christian Evidences*," (*Praeparatio Evangelica*), yet always does so without referring to the Evangelist of whose writings he made use.

It has been further objected, that Justin's citations differ considerably from the corresponding passages in the Gospels. But they differ simply from his having sometimes combined two passages from different Gospels into one, or from his having given the substance of the passage rather than the exact words; for both of which practices he has the example of the apostle Paul in his citations from the Old Testament. Such modes of dealing with books are common to writers of all ages; and, as Justin exhibits the same practice in reference to the Old Testament, and to profane writers, it is groundless to urge the trifling discrepancies which exist between his quotations and the received text of the Evangelists as any evidence that it was not from them he quoted.*

[*All the quotations of Justin have been subjected to a thorough critical examination by Mr. Westcott in his "Canon," a work not published in this country, to which we are indebted for all our historical testimonies.]

The last — and, if it could be substantiated, the most weighty — objection to our identifying Justin's Memoirs of the Apostles with our four Gospels is the allegation, that he introduced apocryphal additions into his narrative. Some of his quotations, it is said, exhibit coincidences with fragments of heretical gospels. That quotations made by memory from the written Gospels should exhibit some points of partial resemblance to apocryphal gospels is very natural. For these apocryphal gospels were not mere creations of the imagination, but narratives based on the original oral Gospel, of which the written Gospel was the authoritative record. The same cause might, therefore, very naturally lead to the introduction of a common word, a characteristic phrase, or a supplementary trait. But it is further objected that Justin's quotations differ not only in language, but also in substance, from our Gospels; that he attributes sayings to our Lord which they do not contain, and narrates events which are either not mentioned by the Evangelists, or recorded by them with serious variations from his account. It is enough to answer, that he never does so when he proposes to quote the Apostolic Memoirs. Like other early Fathers, he was familiar by tradition with the words of our Lord which are not embodied in the Gospel. Like them, he may have been acquainted with details of His life treasured up by such as the Elder of Ephesus, who might have heard John. But whatever use he makes of this knowledge, he never refers to the

Apostolic Memoirs for any thing which is not substantially found in our Gospels.

Justin's account of the baptism, which might seem an exception to this statement, really confirms and explains it. It is well known that there was a belief long current, that the heavenly voice addressed our Lord in the words of the Psalm, which have ever been applied to him: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Augustine mentions the reading as current in his time; and the words are found at present in the Cambridge MS., (D,) and in the old Latin version. Justin might then have found them in the MS. of Luke, which he used; but the form of his reference is remarkable. When speaking of the temptation he says: "For the devil, of whom I just now spoke, as soon as he [Christ] went up from the River Jordan, — when the voice had been addressed to him, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,' — is described in the Memoirs of the Apostles as having come to him and tempted him, so far as to say to him, Worship me." The definite quotation is of that which is confessedly a part of the Evangelic text; it is evident, from the construction of the sentence, that Justin gives no authority for the disputed clause.

This apparent mixture of two narratives is still more remarkable in the mode in which Justin introduces the famous legend of the fire kindled in Jordan when Christ descended into the water: "When Jesus came to the Jordan, where John was baptizing, when he descended to the water, both a fire was kindled in the Jordan, and the apostles of Christ himself recorded that the Holy Spirit as a dove lighted upon him." Here the contrast is complete. The witness of the apostles is claimed for that which our Gospels relate; but Justin affirms, on his own authority, a fact which, however significant in the symbolism of the East, is yet without any support from the canonical history.

Justin lived at the period of transition from a traditional to a written Gospel, and his testimony is exactly fitted to the position which he held. He refers to books, but more frequently he appears to bring forward words which were currently circulated rather than what he had privately read. In both respects his witness to our Gospels is most important. For it has been shown that his definite quotations from the Memoirs are so exactly accordant with the text of the Synoptists, as it stands now, or as it was read at the close of the second century, that there can be no doubt that he was familiar with their writings as well as with the contents of them. And the wide and minute agreement of what

he says of the life and teaching of our Lord with what they record of it, proves that his knowledge of the Gospel history was derived from a tradition they had molded and controlled, if not from the habitual and exclusive use of the books themselves.

He states that the Memoirs of the Apostles were read in the weekly services of the Church on the same footing as the writings of the prophets; or, in other words, that they enjoyed the rank of Scripture. And since he speaks of their ecclesiastical use without any restriction, it is natural to believe that he alludes to definite books which were generally held in such esteem, and had acquired a firm place in the common life of Christians. He could not at any rate have been ignorant of the custom of the Churches of Italy and Asia; and if his description were true of any it must have been true of those. Is it then possible to suppose, that within twenty or thirty years after his death, these Gospels should have been replaced by others similar and yet distinct? that he should speak of one set of books, as if they were permanently incorporated into the Christian services, and that those who might have been his scholars should speak exactly in the same terms of another collection, as if they had had no rivals within the orthodox pale? that the substitution should have been effected in such a manner that no record of it has been preserved, while smaller analogous reforms have been duly chronicled? The complication of historical difficulties is overwhelming; and the alternative is that which has already been justified on critical grounds, the belief that when Justin spoke of apostolic memoirs or gospels, he meant the Gospels which were enumerated in the early anonymous canon, and whose mutual relations were eloquently expounded by Irenaeus.

This, then, appears to be established, both by external and internal evidence, that Justin's "gospels" can be identified with those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. His references to John are uncertain; but this, as has been already remarked, follows from the character of the fourth Gospel. It was unlikely that he should quote its peculiar teaching in apologetic writings addressed to Jews and heathen; and at the same time he exhibits types of language and doctrine which, if not immediately drawn from John, yet mark the presence of his influence and the recognition of his authority.

In addition to the Gospels, the Apocalypse is the only book of the New Testament to which Justin alludes by name. Even that is not quoted, but

appealed to generally, as a proof of the existence of prophetic power in the Christian Church. But it can not be concluded from his silence that Justin was either unacquainted with the Acts and the Epistles, or unwilling to make use of them. His controversy against Marcion is decisive as to his knowledge of the greater part of the books, and various Pauline forms of expression and teaching show that the apostle of the Gentiles had helped to mold his faith and words.

§ 10. THE FORMATION OF A CANON OF THE UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AT THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

The Latin fragment on the Canon, first published by Muratori, was discovered in the Ambrosian Library at Milan in a MS. of great antiquity, which purported to contain the writings of Chrysostom. It is mutilated both at the beginning and end; and is disfigured throughout by gross inaccuracies and barbarisms, due in part to the ignorance of the transcriber, and in part to the translator of the original text; for there can be little doubt that it is a version from the Greek. But, notwithstanding these defects, it is of the greatest interest and importance. It claims to have been written by a cotemporary of Pius, and can not, on that supposition, be placed much later than 170 A.D. Internal evidence fully confirms its claims to this high antiquity; and it may be regarded, on the whole, as a summary of the opinion of the Western Church on the canon shortly after the middle of the second century. The fragment commences with the last words of a sentence which evidently referred to the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of Luke, it is then said, stands third in order, (in the Christian canon,) having been written by "Luke the physician," the companion of Paul, who, not being an eye-witness, based his narrative on such information as he could obtain, beginning from the birth of John. The fourth place is given to the Gospel of John. Though there is no trace of any reference to Matthew, it is impossible not to believe that it occupied the first place among the four Gospels of the anonymous writer. Assuming this, it is of importance to notice that he regards our canonical Gospels as essentially one in purpose, contents, and inspiration. He draws no distinction between those which were written from personal knowledge, and those which rested on the teaching of others. He alludes to no doubt as to their authority, no limit as to their reception, no difference as to their usefulness. "Though various points are taught in each of

the Gospels, it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since, in all of them, all things are declared by one informing Spirit concerning the nativity, the passion, the resurrection, the conversation [of our Lord] with his disciples, and His double advent, at first in humility, and afterward in royal power as He will yet appear." This first recognition of the distinctness and unity of the Gospels, of their origin from human care and Divine guidance, is as complete as any later testimony. The Fragment lends no support to the theory which supposes that they were gradually separated from the mass of similar books. Their peculiar position is clear and marked; and there is not the slightest hint that it was gained after a doubtful struggle or only at a late date. Admit that our Gospels were regarded from the first as authoritative records of Christ's life, and then this new testimony explains and confirms the fragmentary notices which alone witness to the earlier belief; deny it, and the language of one who had probably conversed with Polycarp at Rome becomes an unintelligible riddle.

Irenaeus was the disciple of Polycarp. About the year 177 he succeeded Photinus, who suffered martyrdom in his ninetieth year, in the bishopric of Lyons. He himself died as a martyr about 202 A.D. In his old age he recalled the teaching of Polycarp, the disciple of John, and his treatise against heresies contains several references to others who were closely connected with the apostolic age. He says: "Now, Matthew published his treatise on the Gospel among the Hebrews, in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome, and founding the Church there. But after their death, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also wrote down what Peter had preached, and delivered it to us. And Luke also, the follower of Paul, wrote out in a book the Gospel which was preached by that apostle. Afterward John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, he, too, published a Gospel while he was living at Ephesus, in Asia." (Adv. Haeres., iii, 1.) And again: "These things are in accordance with the Gospels, in which Christ is enshrined. For that of John relates his princely birth and glorious lineage from the Father, saying, 'In the beginning was the Word,' etc. And that of Luke, as being more of a sacerdotal character, begins with the priest Zacharias burning incense to God. . . . Matthew declares his human birth, saying, 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ,' etc. Mark, as partaking more of the prophetic spirit, begins by saying, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,'" etc. (Ib., iii, 11, § 11.) He speaks of the Scriptures as a whole, without distinction of the Old or New Testaments, as "perfect, inasmuch as they were uttered by the Word of God

and his Spirit." (Adv. Haer., ii, 28, 2.) Though he has not given us a professed catalogue of the books of the New Testament, we learn from his treatise that he received, as authentic and canonical Scriptures, not only the four Gospels, but also the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Romans, the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, the two Epistles to Timothy, the Epistle to Titus, the two Epistles of Peter, and the First and Second Epistles of John. Can it be supposed, with reason, that forgeries came into use in the time of Irenaeus, which he must have been able to detect by his own knowledge? that they were received without suspicion or reserve in the Church over which he presided? Is it possible that he decided otherwise than his first master, when he speaks of the tradition of the apostles by which the canon of the Scripture was determined? (Adv. Haer., iv, 33, 8.) He appeals to the known succession of teachers in the churches of Rome, Smyrna, and Ephesus, who held fast, up to his own time, the doctrine which they had received from the first age; and is it possible that he used writings, as authentic and authoritative, which were not recognized by those who must have had unquestionable means of deciding on their apostolic origin?

A cotemporary of Irenaeus was Clement of Alexandria; he was trained in the school of Pantaenus, who was personally connected with some immediate disciples of the apostles. He distinguishes the Gospel from the other writings of the New Testament, which he calls ὁ ἀπόστολος, and sometimes ἀπόστολοι, but combines them "as Scriptures of the Lord," with the Law and the Prophets, and as "ratified by the authority of one Almighty Power."

Tertullian, a presbyter of the Church of Carthage, was born 160, and died about the year 220. He became a Montanist about the year 200. But his testimony to the authority of the canonical Scriptures is exactly the same before and after he embraced the tenets of Montanus. He uniformly recognizes the four Gospels as written by the Evangelists to whom we ascribe them; distinguishing Matthew and John as apostles, and Mark and Luke as apostolical men, and asserting the authority of their writings as inspired books, acknowledged by the Christian Church from their original date. (Adv. Marcion, I, c. iv, 2.) He notices particularly the introduction of the word *Testament* for the earlier word "*Instrument*," as applied to the dispensation and the record, (Adv. Marc. IV, 1,) and appeals to the New Testament, as made up of "the Gospels" and "Apostles." (Adv. Prax., 15.) This comprehensive testimony

extends to the four Gospels, the Acts, 1 Peter, 1 John, thirteen Epistles of Paul, and the Apocalypse.

All the Fathers, at the close of the second century, from opposite quarters of Christendom, agree in appealing to the testimony of antiquity as proving the authenticity of the Gospels, and other books which they used as Christian Scriptures. The appeal was made at a time when it was easy to try its worth. The links which connected them with the apostolic age were few and well known; and, if they had not been continuous, it would have been easy to expose the break. But their appeal was never gainsayed. We need, therefore, not descend to later testimonies.

Let us, in conclusion, bear in mind that the admitted universal reception of the Gospels, toward the close of the second century, conveys to us the testimony of a communion not only fully qualified to arrive at a sound judgment on the authenticity of the Gospels, but also deeply interested in ascertaining the truth upon the question at issue, inasmuch as the early Christians, by believing the Gospels to be the authentic productions of the men whose names they bear, exposed themselves to the fiercest persecutions — from which it follows that they must have come to them with an evidence of their authenticity such as could not be gainsayed.

§ 11. THE EARLY VERSIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Two versions only claim to be noticed in this first period — the original versions of the East and West — the Peshito, and the old Latin, which, though variously revised, remain, after sixteen centuries, the authorized liturgical versions of the Syrian and Roman Churches.

THE PESHITO.

Almost universal opinion assigns the Peshito, or "simple" Syriac, (Aramaic,) version to the most remote Christian antiquity. The Syriac Christians of Malabar even now claim for it the right to be considered as an Eastern original of the New Testament; and though their tradition is wholly unsupported by external evidence, it is not, to a certain extent, without all plausibility. The dialect of the Peshito, even as it stands now, represents in part, at least, that form of Aramaic which was current in Palestine. In this respect it is like the

Latin Vulgate, which, though revised, is marked by the provincialisms of Africa. Both versions appear to have had their origin in districts where their languages were spoken in impure dialects, and afterward to have been corrected and brought nearer to the classical standard. In the absence of an adequate supply of critical materials it is impossible to construct the history of these recensions in the Syriac; the analogy of the Latin is at present our only guide. But if a conjecture be allowed, I think that the various facts of the case are adequately explained by supposing that versions of separate books of the New Testament were first made and used in Palestine, perhaps within the apostolic age, and that shortly afterward these were collected, revised, and completed at Edessa. Many circumstances combine to give support to this belief. The early condition of the Syrian Church, its wide extent and active vigor, lead us to expect that a version of the Holy Scriptures into the common dialect could not have been long deferred; and the existence of an Aramaic Gospel was in itself likely to suggest the work. Differences of style, no less than the very nature of the case, point to separate translations of different books; and, at the same time, a certain general uniformity of character bespeaks some subsequent revision. Whatever may be thought of the alleged intercourse of Abgarus with our blessed Lord, Edessa itself is signalized in early Church history by many remarkable facts. It was called the "holy" and "blessed" city, (*Horae Syriacae*); its inhabitants were said to have been brought over by Thaddeus, in a marvelous manner, to the Christian faith; and, "from that time forth," Eusebius adds, (*Euseb., H. E., ii, 1,*) "the whole people of Edessa has continued to be devoted to the name of Christ, exhibiting no ordinary instance of the goodness of the Savior;" in the second century it became the center of an important Christian school, and long afterward retained its pre-eminence among the cities of this province. As might be expected, tradition fixes on Edessa as the place whence the Peshito took its rise. Gregory Bar Hebraeus, one of the most learned and accurate of Syrian writers, relates that the New Testament Peshito was "made in the time of Thaddeus, and Abgarus, King of Edessa;" when, according to the universal opinion of ancient writers, the apostle went to proclaim Christianity in Mesopotamia. No other direct historical evidence remains to determine the date of the Peshito; and it is impossible to supply the deficiency by the help of quotations occurring in early Syrian writers. No Syrian works of a very early period exist. Still it is known that books were soon translated from Syriac into Greek, and while such an intercourse existed it is scarcely possible that the Scriptures remained untranslated. Again, the controversial writings of

Bardesanes necessarily imply the existence of a Syriac version of the Bible. Tertullian's example may show that he could hardly have refuted Marcion without the constant use of Scripture. And more than this, Eusebius tells us that Hegesippus "made quotations from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and the Syriac, and especially from [writings in] the Hebrew language, showing thereby that he was a Christian of Hebrew descent." (Euseb., H. E., iv, 22.) This testimony is valuable as coming from the only Greek writer likely to have been familiar with Syriac literature; and may we not see in the two Gospels thus mentioned two recensions of Matthew — the one disfigured by apocryphal traditions, and the one written in the dialect of Eastern Syria? Ephrem Syrus, himself a deacon of Edessa, treats the version in such a manner as to prove that it was already old in the fourth century. He quotes it as a book of established authority, calling it "Our Version;" he speaks of the "Translator" as one whose words were familiar, (*Horae Syriacae*); and, though the dialects of the East are proverbially permanent, his explanations show that its language, even in his time, had become partially obsolete. Another circumstance serves to exhibit the venerable age of this version. It was universally received by the different sects into which the Syrian Church was divided in the fourth century, and so has continued current even to the present time. The respect in which the Peshito was held was further shown by the fact that it was taken as the basis of other versions in the East. An Arabic and a Persian version were made from it; but it is more important to notice that, at the commencement of the fifth century — before the Council of Ephesus, 431 A.D. — an Armenian version was made from the Syriac in the absence of Greek MSS. These indications of the antiquity of the Peshito do not, indeed, possess any conclusive authority, but there is no sufficient reason to call in question the opinion which has obtained the sanction of the most competent scholars, that its formation is to be fixed within the first half of the second century. The text, even in its present corrupt state, exhibits remarkable agreement with the most ancient Greek MSS., and the earliest quotations. The very obscurity which hangs over its origin is a proof of its venerable age, because it shows that it grew up spontaneously among Christian congregations, and was not the result of any public labor. Had it been a work of late date, of the third or fourth century, it is scarcely possible that its history should have been so uncertain as it is.

THE OLD LATIN VERSION.

At first it is natural to look to Italy as the center of the Latin literature of Christianity, and the original source of that Latin version of the Holy Scriptures which, in a later form, has become identified with the Church of Rome, yet, however natural such a belief may be, it finds no support in history. Rome itself, under the emperors, was well described as a "Greek city;" and Greek was its second language. As far as we can learn, the mass of the poorer population — every-where the great bulk of the early Christians — was Greek, either in descent or in speech. Among the names of the fifteen bishops of Rome, up to the close of the second century, four only are Latin; but in the next century the proportion is nearly reversed. When Paul first wrote to the Roman Church he wrote in Greek; and in the long list of salutation to its members, with which the Epistle is concluded, only four Latin names occur. Shortly afterward, Clement wrote to the Corinthians in Greek in the name of the Church of Rome; and at a later date we find the bishop of Corinth writing in Greek to Soter, the ninth in succession from Clement. Justin, Hermas, and Tatian published their Greek treatises at Rome. The Apologies to the Roman emperors were in Greek. Modestus, Caius, and Asterius Urbanus bear Latin names, yet their writings were Greek. Meanwhile, however, though Greek continued to be the natural, if not the sole language of the Roman Church, the seeds of Latin Christianity were rapidly developing in Africa. Nothing is known in detail of the origin of the African Churches. At the close of the second century Christians were found in that country in every place and of every rank. They who were but of yesterday, Tertullian says about the year 200, (*Apol.*, i, 37,) already fill the palace, the senate, the forum, and the camp, and leave their temples only to the heathen. To persecute the Christians was even then to decimate Carthage. These fresh conquests of the Roman Church preserved their distinct nationality in their language. Carthage — the second Rome — escaped the Graecism of the first. In Africa Greek was no longer a current dialect. A peculiar form of Latin, vigorous, elastic, and copious, however far removed from the grace and eloquence of a classical standard, fitly expressed the spirit of Tertullian. It is, then, to Africa we must look for the first traces of the Latin "Peshito," the "Simple" version of the West. And here a new difficulty arises. The Syrian Peshito has been preserved without material change in the keeping of the Churches for whose use it was made. But no Church of Northern Africa, however corrupt, remains to testify to its ancient Bible. The version was revised

by a foreign scholar, adopted by a foreign Church, and in the end its independent existence has been denied. The Scriptural quotations of Tertullian, however, give sufficient evidence that he distinctly recognized a current Latin version, marked by a peculiar character, and that it was so authorized by popular use as to form the theological dialect of the country. We have no means of tracing the history of the version before the time of Tertullian; but its existence, *then*, is also attested by the Latin translation of the writings of Irenaeus. The Scriptural quotations which occur in them were evidently taken from some foreign source, and not made by the translator. That this source was no other than a recension of the Vetus Latina appears from the coincidence of readings which it exhibits with the most trustworthy MSS. of the version. In other words, the Vetus Latina is recognized in the first Latin literature of the Church. It can be traced back as far as the earliest records of Latin Christianity. Every circumstance connected with it indicates the most remote antiquity. Now the beginning of Tertullian's literary activity can not be placed later than 190 A.D., and we shall thus find the date 170 A.D., as that before which the version must have been made. How much more ancient it really is can not yet be discovered. Not only is the character of the version itself a proof of its extreme age, but the mutual relations of different parts of it show that it was made originally by different hands; and if so, that it was coeval with the introduction of Christianity into Africa, and the result of the spontaneous efforts of African Christians. The MSS., in which the Old Latin Version is found, are few, but some of them are of great antiquity. In the Gospels Lachman made use of four, of which one belongs to the fourth, and another to the fourth or fifth century. To these Tischendorf has since added the Palatine MS. of the same date, but inclining to the Italian rather than to the African text; and besides these he enumerates nine others, more or less perfect, ranging from the fifth to the eleventh century, of which two give African readings.

§ 12. THE TESTIMONY OF HERETICAL AND APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS.

Before we inquire into the relation which the heretical and apocryphal writings bear to our canonical Gospels, let us take a survey of the heretical sects which arose in the first two centuries, and their relation to the great body of Christians called the Catholic Christians, or the Catholic Church. They may

be arranged under two great principles: "That well-known pharisaical Judaism whose shibboleth was that the Gentiles should be constrained to observe the ceremonial law, and which continued to attack Paul in his missionary labors, produced *Ebionism*, in the general sense of this term; the desire to amalgamate with Christianity Grecian and Oriental theosophy, and an opposition to Judaism, inclusive of the Old Testament, on the part of Gentile philosophers converted to Christianity, introduced *Gnosticism*. These two directions were, however, also combined into a Gnostic-Ebionism, a system for which the doctrines of the Essenes seem to have served as a point of transition and connecting link. This 'opposition of science falsely so called' (1 Tim. vi, 20) began to intrude into Christianity during the latter years of Paul's labors. Against it Paul uttered a prophetic warning in his farewell address at Miletus. (Acts xx, 29, 30.) Afterward he opposed it in the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, and especially in his pastoral letters, even as Peter combated it in his First Epistle. It assumed many and varied forms. It appeared in the shape of Oriental theosophy, magic, and theurgy, in voluntary asceticism with reference to meats and marriage, in fancied mysteries about the nature and subordination of heavenly powers and spirits, and in the transformation of certain fundamental doctrines of Christianity (such as that of the resurrection, 2 Tim. ii, 18) into a mere idealism. These seeds of evil had already borne abundant fruit when John came to take up his residence in Asia Minor. Accordingly, in his First Epistle, the apostle opposed the growing heresy, and more especially that form of Gnosis, in which the incarnation of God in Christ was denied." (See Kurtz's Church History, pp. 71 and 72.)

The *Ebionites* proper — as distinguished from the Nazarenes, who, though they held themselves bound still to observe the ceremonial law, believed in the Divinity of Christ, and did not reject Paul entirely — deemed the observance of the ceremonial law indispensably necessary for salvation; they saw in Jesus nothing but a human Messiah, whom, at his baptism, God had endowed with supernatural powers. His Messianic activity they limited to his teaching, by which he had enlarged and perfected the law, adding to it new and more strict commandments. The death of Christ was an offense to them, under which they consoled themselves with the promise of his return, when they expected that he would set up a terrestrial kingdom. They, of course, repudiated the apostle Paul entirely, and in order to have some basis for their monstrous heresies, they *mutilated and interpolated the Gospel of Matthew*.

A similar position to the Gospels was taken by the *Gnostics*. Though their doctrines were as irreconcilable with the contents of our Gospels as those of the Ebionites, they did not assail their authenticity, but rejected them only as carnal apprehensions of Jesus and his doctrine, while Marcion boldly *mutilated the Gospel of Luke*, and declared this to be the only true Gospel. With regard to the evidence the Gnostics give for the authenticity of our Gospels, they may be divided into two principal classes: the Theosophic (or Valentinian) Gnostics, and the Marcionites.

Now, if it can be proved that the theosophic Gnostics appealed to our canonical Gospels as freely and confidently as did the Catholic Christians, that they did not pretend to possess any Gospel, in any way contradictory to the account of Christ's ministry contained in our Gospels, and that the Gospel used by the Marcionites was essentially the same with that of Luke, we have an argument of uncommon strength in favor of the authenticity of our Gospels. For these early heretics were, in their opinions and feelings, so widely separated from the Catholic Christians, that they present themselves as an independent class of witnesses, and they lived at a time, when, upon the supposition that our Gospels were not written by the authors whose names they bear, it must have been very easy to them to prove the fact. Could they have rejected the authority of the Gospels *on this ground*, they would certainly have done it. And had they done so, it is altogether incredible that the fact should not have been conspicuous throughout the controversial writings of Irenaeus and Tertullian, the two principal writers against the Gnostics. From their works it does not appear that the Valentinians, the Marcionites, or any other Gnostic sect, adduced *in support of their opinions* a single narrative relating to the public ministry of Christ, besides what is found in the Gospels, or that any sect appealed to the authority of any history of our Lord's ministry besides the Gospels, except so far as the Marcionites, in their use of the interpolated and mutilated copy of Luke's Gospel, may be regarded as forming a verbal exception. The Fathers were eager to urge against the Gnostics the charge of corrupting and perverting the Scriptures, and of fabricating apocryphal writings, but they never brought forward the far graver allegation, that the Gnostics pretended to set up other histories of Christ *in opposition to those received* by the great body of Christians. Had they been guilty of this, the fact neither would nor could have remained unnoticed. On the contrary, Irenaeus says: "There is such assurance concerning the Gospels, that the heretics themselves

bear testimony to them, so that each one of them, taking the Gospels as his starting-point, endeavors thereby to maintain his own teaching." (Adv. Haer., III, xii, 7.) And Tertullian says: "They profess to appeal to the Scriptures; they urge arguments from the Scriptures — as if they could draw arguments about matters of faith from any other source than the records of faith." (De Praescr. Haer., c. xiv.) He takes in this treatise, moreover, especial pains to prove that they had no right at all to appeal to the Scriptures as they do.

But the question naturally arises, how could the Gnostics defend their strange doctrines, and yet appeal to our Gospels? This important question is more fully answered by Mr. Norton than by any other writer on this subject. We will, therefore, give to the reader the benefit of a brief condensation of his argument: 1. The theosophic Gnostics, in common with the Catholic Christians, applied the allegorical mode of interpretation to the New Testament. Neglecting the proper meaning of words, they deduced from them mystical senses. Their whole system of interpretation was, besides, arbitrary, and unsupported by any correct principle. The vocabulary of the theosophic Gnostics, like that of other erring sects, consisted, in great part, of words from the New Testament, on which they had imposed new senses. It thus became easy for them, on the one hand, to find supposed references to their theory; and, on the other, to explain away much that was inconsistent with it. Like other false expositors of Scripture, they detached particular passages from their connection, and infused a foreign meaning into the words. Irenaeus, after saying they appealed to unwritten tradition as a source of their knowledge, goes on to remark, that, "twisting, according to the proverb, a rope of sand, they endeavor to accommodate, in a plausible manner to their doctrines, the parables of the Lord, the declarations of the prophets, or the words of the apostles, so that their fiction may not seem to be without proof. But they neglect the order and connection of the Scriptures, and disjoin, so far as they are able, the members of the truth. They transpose and re-fashion, and, making one thing out of another, they deceive many by a fabricated show of the words of the Lord which they put together. (Cont. Haeres., lib. I, c. viii, § 1.) 2. They maintained a principle similar to a fundamental doctrine of the Roman Catholics; namely, that religious truth could not be learned from the Scriptures alone, without the aid of the oral instructions of Christ and his apostles, as preserved by tradition. "When," says Irenaeus, "they are confuted by proofs from the Scriptures, they turn and accuse the Scriptures themselves, as if they were not correct, nor of

authority; they say that they contain contradictions, and that the truth can not be discovered from them by those who are ignorant of tradition. For that it was not delivered in writing, but orally; whence Paul said, 'We speak wisdom among the perfect, but not the wisdom of this world.' (Lib. III, c. ii, § 2.) "The heretics," says Tertullian, "pretend that the apostles did not reveal all things to all, but taught some doctrines openly to every one, some secretly and to a few only." (De Praescr. Haer., c. xxv.) What was peculiar in their own doctrines they regarded as that esoteric teaching which had come down to them by oral tradition. This notion of a *secret* tradition is not found in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, or Tertullian. When the two latter speak of tradition, they mean that traditional knowledge of the history and doctrines of Christianity which necessarily existed among Christians. It is described by Irenaeus as a "tradition manifest throughout the world, and to be found in every Church." (Lib. III, c. iii, § 1.) By it, he says, a knowledge of our religion was preserved without books among believers in barbarous nations. (Ibid., c. iv, § 2.) At the end of about a century from the preaching of the apostles, there must have been, throughout the communities which they had formed, a general acquaintance with what they had taught, even had no written records of our religion been extant. In regard likewise to facts — important in their reference to Christianity, as, for example, the genuineness of the books of the New Testament — the Christians of the last half of the second century must have relied on the testimony of their predecessors. It is this traditional knowledge concerning Christianity — not secret, but open to all — which Irenaeus and Tertullian appeal to with justifiable confidence in their reasoning against the heretics, when they distinguish between the evidence from tradition and the evidence from Scripture.

3. In connection with their notion of a secret tradition, some of the Gnostics said, according to Irenaeus, "that the apostles, practicing dissimulation, accommodated their doctrine to the capacity of their hearers, and their answers to the previous conceptions of those who questioned them, talking blindly with the blind, weakly with the weak, and conformably to their error with those who were in error; and that thus they preached the Creator to those who thought the Creator was the only God, but to those able to comprehend the unknown Father, they communicated this unspeakable mystery in parables and in enigmas." (Lib. III, cap. v, § 1.) "Some," says Irenaeus, "impudently contend that the apostles, preaching among the Jews, could not announce any other God but him in whom the Jews had believed." (Ib., cap. xii, § 6.)

4. Some of the Gnostics, especially the Marcionites, maintained that

Paul was far superior to the other apostles in the knowledge of the truth — "the hidden doctrine having been manifested to him by revelation." (*Ibid.*, c. xiii, § 1.) They represented the other apostles as having been entangled by Jewish prejudices from which he was in great measure free. Marcion regarded the Gospels as expressing the false Jewish opinions of their writers. But among the Gospels he conceived that there was ground for making a choice; and he selected for his own use, and that of his followers, the Gospel of Luke. This he further adapted to his purpose by rejecting from it what he viewed as conformed to those opinions. Nor did he consider Paul himself as wholly free from Jewish errors, but likewise struck out, from those of his Epistles which he used, the passages in which he thought them to be expressed. Sometimes, according to Irenaeus, the Gnostics apparently, without making an exception in favor of Paul, charged the apostles generally with Jewish errors and ignorance concerning the higher truths and mysteries of religion. "All those," he says, "who hold pernicious doctrines have departed in their faith from him who is God, and think that they have found out more than the apostles, having discovered another God. They think that the apostles preached the Gospel while yet under the influence of Jewish prejudices, but that their own faith is purer, and that they are wiser than the apostles." He states that Marcion proceeded *on these principles* in rejecting the use of some of the books of Scripture, and of portions of those which he retained. (*Lib. III*, c. xii, § 12.) "The heretics," says Tertullian, "are accustomed to affirm that the apostles did not know all things; while, at other times, under the influence of the same madness, they turn about and maintain that the apostles did indeed know all things, but did not teach all things to all." (*De Praescr. Haer.*, c. xxii.) 5. Add to this the belief of the theosophic Gnostics in their own infallible spiritual knowledge. This they conceived of as the result of their spiritual nature. "They object to us," says Clement of Alexandria, "that we are of another nature, and unable to comprehend their peculiar doctrines." (*Stromat.*, vii, § 16.)

After these introductory remarks we will proceed to the examination of the testimony of heretical writers, as Westcott gives it in his Canon, and we shall find it strictly analogous to that of the Fathers in its progressive development. As the New Testament recognizes the existence of parties and heresies in the Christian society from its first origin, so the earliest false teachers witness more or less clearly to the existence and reception of our canonical Gospels.

SIMON MAGUS AND CERINTHUS.

The heretics that arose in the apostolic age were Simon Magus and Cerinthus. The former seems to have been the first representative of the antichristian element of the Gentile world, the latter that of the antichristian element in Judaism. In the lately-discovered parts of a work of Hippolytus, a disciple of Irenaeus, (*Philosophumena*, or a refutation of all heresies, book VI,) there are preserved several quotations from a writing named "The Great Announcement," which contains an account of the revelation Simon Magus professed to be intrusted with, and which seems to have been compiled from his oral teaching by one of his immediate followers. In the fragments, which Hippolytus quotes of this work, there are coincidences with words recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Reference is also made to the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians in terms which prove that it was placed by the author on the same footing as the books of the Old Testament. "The Cerinthians," Epiphanius says, "make use of Matthew's Gospel, (the Gospel according to the Hebrews,) like the Ebionites, on account of the human genealogy, though their copy is not entire. . . . The apostle Paul they entirely reject on account of his opposition to circumcision." But of the most importance is the relation of Cerinthus to John. While we find in the New Testament no reference to the *later* developments of Gnosticism by Valentinus or Marcion, — another proof of the authenticity of the apostolical writings, for if they had been written after the apostolical age, an entire ignoring of the heresies of the second century would be inexplicable, — some of the prominent features in the false systems of Simon Magus and of Cerinthus are exposed in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in the Introduction to John's Gospel. Nothing, indeed, can be more truly opposite to Cerinthianism than the theology of John. The character of his Gospel was evidently influenced by prevailing errors; though it is not a mere controversial work, we can not but feel that it was written to satisfy some pressing want of the age, and to meet some false philosophy, which had already begun to fashion a peculiar dialect. Cerinthus upheld a ceremonial system, and taught only a temporary union of the Logos with the man Jesus. St. John proclaimed that Judaism had passed away, and set forth clearly the manifestation of the Eternal Word in His historic Incarnation. The teaching of John is doubtless far deeper and wider than was needed to meet the errors of Cerinthus, but it has a natural connection with the period in which he lived.

THE OPHITES.

This sect, into which some Christian ideas were infused, Hippolytus places in the age next succeeding that of the apostles. Although they are said to have made use of the Gospel according to the Egyptians, and of the Gospel of Thomas, the passages given from their books contain clear references to the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, and to several Epistles. Irenaeus speaks of the Ophites as the first source of the Valentinian school, the original "hydra-head from which its manifold progeny was derived."

BASILIDES.

He stood at the head of one of the Gnostic sects, and lived, according to Eusebius, (Hist. Ecc., IV, 7,) not long after the times of the apostles. He is said to have been a younger cotemporary of Cerinthus, and a follower of Menander, who was himself the successor of Simon Magus. Clement of Alexandria and Jerome fix the period of his activity in the time of Hadrian, and he found a formidable antagonist in Agrippa Castor. All these circumstances combine to place him in the generation next after the apostolic age, between Clement of Rome and Polycarp. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Epiphanius give specimens of the teaching of Basilides, exactly accordant with the more important quotations of Hippolytus. The mode in which the books of the New Testament are treated in these fragments, show that the earliest heretics sought to recommend their doctrines by forced explanations Of apostolic language. And more than this, they contain the earliest undoubted instances in which the Old and New Testaments are placed on the same level; the Epistles of Paul are called "Scripture," and quotations from them are introduced by the well-known form: "it is written." Since Basilides lived on the verge of the apostolic times, it is, however, not surprising that he claimed other sources of Christian doctrine besides the canonical books. The belief in Divine inspiration was still fresh and real; and Eusebius relates that he set up imaginary prophets, Barcabbas and Barcoph, (or Parchor,) "names to strike terror into the superstitious." At the same time he appealed to the authority of Glaucias, who is said to have been, like Mark, an interpreter of Peter; he also made use of certain "Traditions of Matthias," which claimed to be grounded on private intercourse with the Savior. The author of the Homilies on Luke, which have been ascribed to Origen, speaks of a "Gospel according to Basilides." But there is no mention of it by Irenaeus or by Clement of Alexandria, nor by

Epiphanius, nor by Eusebius, nor by Theodoret. Why should we not have heard as much of a gospel written by Basilides as of the defective Gospel of Luke used by the Marcionites? The notion that Basilides wrote a gospel probably arose from the fact that he wrote a commentary on the Gospels. However that may be, he admitted the historic truth of all the facts contained in the canonical Gospels, and used them as Scripture. In the fragments of his writings which we find in Hippolytus, there are definite references to the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, as well as to several Epistles; and Bunsen is of opinion, "that his whole metaphysical development is an attempt to connect a cosmogonic system with John's prologue and with the person of Christ." (Bunsen's Hippolytus and his Age, vol. I, p. 87.) So much is certain, we possess, in Basilides, a witness to the existence of these Gospels as early as between 120 and 130 A.D.

VALENTINUS.

Shortly after Basilides began to propagate his doctrines, another system arose at Alexandria. Its author, Valentinus — after the example of the Christian teachers of his age — went to Rome, which he chose as the center of his labors. Irenaeus relates, that "he came there during the episcopate of Hyginus, was at his full vigor in the time of Pius, and continued there till the time of Anicetus." His testimony, therefore, *in point of age*, is as venerable as that of Justin, and he is removed, by one generation only, from the time of John. Just as Basilides claimed, through Glaucias, the authority of Peter, Valentinus professed to follow the teaching of Theodas, a disciple of Paul. This circumstance is important; for it shows that at the beginning of the second century, alike within and without the Church, the sanction of an apostle was considered to be a sufficient proof of Christian doctrine. The fragments of his writings which remain show the same natural and trustful use of Scripture as any other Christian works of the same period. He cites the Epistle to the Ephesians as "Scripture," and refers clearly to the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. The Valentinians, however, are said to have added a new gospel to the other four: "Casting aside all fear, and bringing forward their own compositions, they boast that they have more gospels than there really are. For they have advanced to such a pitch of daring as to entitle a book, which was composed by them not long since, 'the Gospel of Truth,' though it accords in no respect with the Gospels of the apostles; so that the Gospel, in fact, can not exist among them without blasphemy. For if that which is brought forward by

them is the Gospel of Truth, and still is unlike those which are delivered to us by the apostles — they, who please, can learn *how* from the writings themselves — it is shown at once that that which is delivered to us by the apostles is not the Gospel of Truth." (Iren. Adv. Haer., III, xi, 11, 9.) What, then, was this gospel? If it had been a history of our Blessed Lord, and yet wholly at variance with the canonical Gospels, it is evident that the Valentinians could not have received these — nor, indeed, any one of them — as they undoubtedly did. And here, then, a new light is thrown upon the character of some of the early apocryphal gospels, which has been in part anticipated by what was said of the gospel of Basilides. The gospel of Basilides or Valentinus contained their system of Christian doctrine, their view of the Gospel, philosophically, and not historically. The writers of these new gospels in no way necessarily interfered with the old. They sought, as far as we can learn, to embody their spirit and furnish a key to their meaning, rather than to supersede their use. The Valentinians had *more* gospels than the catholic Church, since they accepted a doctrinal gospel.

The titles of some of the other Gnostic gospels confirm what has been said. Two are mentioned by Epiphanius in the account of those whom he calls "Gnostics," as if that were their specific name, the *Gospel of Eve* and the *Gospel of Perfection*. Neither of these could be historic accounts of the life of Christ, and the slight description of their character which he adds, illustrates the wide use of the word "gospel." The first was an elementary account of Gnosticism, "based on foolish visions and testimonies," called by the name of Eve, as though it had been revealed to her by the serpent. The second was "a seductive composition." (Epiph. Haer., xxvi, 2.) The analogy of the title of this "Gospel of Perfection" leaves little doubt as to the character of the "Gospel of Truth." Puritan theology can furnish numerous similar titles. And the partial currency of such a book among the Valentinians offers not the slightest presumption against their agreement with catholic Christians on the exclusive claims of the four Gospels as records of Christ's life. These they took as the basis of their speculations; and by the help of commentaries endeavored to extract from them the principles which they maintained.

HERACLEON.

Origen says that "he was reported to have been a familiar friend of Valentinus," (Comm. in Joan., tom. ii, § 8.) Assuming this statement to be true,

his writings can not well date later than the first half of the second century; and he claims the title of the first commentator on the New Testament. Fragments of his commentaries on the Gospels of Luke and John have been preserved by Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The fragments contain allusions to the Gospel of Matthew, to the Epistles of Paul to the Romans, and Corinthians, (I,) and to the Second Epistle to Timothy; but the character of the Commentary itself is the most striking testimony to the estimation in which the apostolic writings were held. The sense of the inspiration of the Evangelists — of some providential guidance by which they were led to select each fact in their history, and each word in their narrative — is not more complete in Origen. The first commentary on the New Testament exhibits the application of the same laws to its interpretation as were employed in the Old Testament. The slightest variation of language was held to be significant. Numbers were supposed to conceal a hidden truth. The whole record was found to be pregnant with spiritual meaning, conveyed by the teaching of events in themselves real and instructive. It appears, also, that differences between the Gospels were felt, and an attempt made to reconcile them, (Orig. in Joan., x, § 21;) and it must be noticed that authoritative spiritual teaching was not limited to our Lord's own words, but the remarks of the Evangelist also were received as possessing an inherent weight. The introduction of commentaries implies the strongest belief in the authenticity and authority of the New Testament Scriptures; and this belief becomes more important when we notice the source from which they were derived. They took their rise among heretics, and not among catholic Christians. Just as the earliest Fathers applied themselves to the Old Testament, to bring out its real harmony with the Gospel, heretics endeavored to reconcile the Gospel with their own systems. Commentaries were made where the want for them was pressing. But unless the Gospels had been generally accepted, the need for such works would not have been felt. Heracleon was forced to turn and modify much that he found in John, which he would not have done if the book had not been raised above all doubt. And his evidence is the more valuable because it appears that he had studied the history of the apostles.

PTOLEMAEUS.

Ptolemaeus, like Heracleon, was a disciple of Valentinus. Epiphanius has preserved an important letter which Ptolemaeus addressed to an "honorable sister Flora," in which he maintains the imperfect character of the Law. In proof of this doctrine he quoted words of our Lord recorded by Matthew, the

prologue to John's Gospel, and passages from Paul's Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, (I,) and Ephesians. Many other fragments of the teachings, if not of the books, of Ptolemaeus have been preserved by Irenaeus, (Adv. Haer., I, 1sqq;) and though they are full of forced explanations of Scripture, they recognize, even in their wildest theories, the importance of every detail or doctrine. He found support for his doctrine in the parables, the miracles, and the facts of our Lord's life, as well as in the teaching of the apostles. In the course of the exposition of his system quotations occur from the four Gospels, and from the Epistles of Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, (I,) Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians.

THE MARCOSIANS.

"The Marcosians," Irenaeus writes, "introduce with subtily an unspeakable multitude of apocryphal and spurious writings, (*γραφαῖ*) which they forged *themselves*, to confound the foolish and those who know not the Scriptures (*γράμματα*) of truth." (Adv. Haer., I, xx, 1.) In the absence of further evidence, it is impossible to pronounce exactly on the character of these books; it is sufficient that they did not supplant the canonical Scriptures. At the same time their appearance in this connection is not without importance. Marcus, the founder of the sect, was probably a native of Syria; and Syria, it is well known, was fertile in those religious tales which are raised to too great importance by the title of gospels. Whatever the apocryphal writings may have been, the words of Irenaeus show that they were easily distinguishable from Holy Scripture; and the Marcosians themselves bear witness to the familiar use of our Gospels. The formularies which Marcus instituted contain references to the Gospel of Matthew, and perhaps to the Epistle to the Ephesians, (Adv. Haer., I, xiii, 3.) The teaching of his followers offers coincidences with all four Gospels. These Gospel quotations present various remarkable readings, but there is no reason to suppose that they were borrowed from any other source than the canonical books. Irenaeus evidently considered that they were taken thence; and while he accuses the Marcosians of "adapting" certain passages of the Gospels to their views, the connection shows that they tampered with the interpretation and not with the text.

MARCION

Hitherto the testimony of heretical writers to the New Testament has been confined to the recognition of detached parts, by casual quotations or

characteristic types of doctrine. Marcion, on the contrary, fixed a definite collection of apostolic books as the foundation of his system. Paul only, according to him, was the true apostle; and Pauline writings alone were admitted into his canon. This was divided into two parts: "The Gospel" and "The Apostolicon." The Gospel was a recension of Luke, with numerous omissions and variations from the received text. The Apostolicon contained ten epistles of Paul, excluding the pastoral epistles and that to the Hebrews. Tertullian and Epiphanius agree in affirming that Marcion altered the text of the books which he received to suit his own views; and they quote many various readings in support of their assertion. Those which occur in the Epistles are certainly insufficient to prove the point. With the Gospel the case was different. The influence of oral tradition, by the form and use of the written Gospels, was of long continuance. The personality of their authors was, in some measure, obscured by the character of their work. The Gospel was felt to be Christ's Gospel — the name which Marcion ventured to apply to his own — and not the particular narration of any Evangelist. And such considerations as these will explain, though they did not justify, the liberty which Marcion allowed himself in dealing with the text of Luke. There can be no doubt that Luke's narrative lay at the basis of his Gospel; but it is not equally clear that all the changes which were introduced into it were due to Marcion himself. Some of the omissions can be explained at once by his peculiar doctrines, but others are unlike arbitrary corrections, and must be considered as various readings of the greatest interest, dating, as they do, from a time anterior to all other authorities in our possession.

TATIAN.

The history of Tatian throws an important light on that of Marcion. Both were naturally restive, inquisitive, impetuous. They were subject to the same influences, and were for a while, probably, resident in the same city. (Tat. ad Gr., 18; Just. Ap., i, 26.) Both remained for some time within the Catholic Church, and then sought the satisfaction of their peculiar wants in a system of stricter discipline and sterner logic. Both abandoned the received canon of Scripture; and together they go far to witness to its integrity. While they witness to the existence of a critical spirit among Christians of the second century, they point to a Catholic Church as the one center from which their systems diverged.

The earliest mention, of the Diatessaron of Tatian is in Eusebius. "Tatian," he says, "the former leader of the Encratites, having put together, in some strange fashion, a combination and collection of the Gospels, gave this the name of the Diatessaron, and the work is still partially current." The words evidently imply that the canonical Gospels formed the basis of Tatian's Harmony. The next testimony is that of Epiphanius, who writes that "Tatian is said to have been the author of the Harmony of the four Gospels, which some call the Gospel according to the Hebrews." (Epiph. Haer., xlvi, 1.) The express mention of the four *Gospels* is important as fixing the meaning of the original titles. Not long afterward, Theodoret gives a more exact account of the character and common use of the book. "Tatian also composed the gospel called 'Diatessaron,' and all the other passages which show that Christ was born of David according to the flesh. This was used not only by the members of his own party, but even by those who followed the apostolic doctrine, as they did not perceive the evil design of the composition, but used the book in their simplicity for its conciseness. And I found also myself more than two hundred such books in our Churches, (in Syria,) which had been received with respect; and having gathered all together, I caused them to be laid aside, and introduced in their place the Gospels of the four Evangelists." (Theod. Haer., lib. I, 20.) Not only, then, was the Diatessaron grounded on the four canonical Gospels, but in its general form it was so orthodox as to enjoy a wide ecclesiastical popularity. The heretical character of the book was not evident upon the surface of it, and consisted rather in faults of defect than in erroneous teaching. Theodoret had certainly examined it, and he, like earlier writers, regarded it as a compilation from the four Gospels. He speaks of omissions which were, in part at least, natural in a Harmony, but notices no such apocryphal additions as would have found place in any gospel not derived from canonical sources.

Though in the preceding quotations from the heretical writings nearly all the so-called apocryphal gospels have been referred to and characterized, we may throw still clearer light on the whole question by pointing out the different classes of these apocryphal gospels, and adding some general remarks.

There can be no doubt that the Gospel of Matthew in the Aramaic Hebrew — whether the Evangelist wrote his Gospel originally in that language or in Greek is a question which will be answered in the Introduction to that Gospel — was the original of various recensions, called the Gospel according

to the Hebrews, the Ebionite Gospel, the Gospel of Cerinth; it is also highly probable that the numerous quotations which occur in the Clementine Homilies are to be traced to some recension of the Gospel of Matthew by one of the Judaizing sects, perhaps the Cerinthians. The Nazarenes evidently possessed it at first in the pure form which we find in the Greek text; for even in Jerome's time the copy which they still preserved bore the closest resemblance to the canonical Gospel. But inasmuch as the outward isolation and peculiar views of the Judaizing sects rendered the insertion of fresh material easy, the Ebionites falsified and mutilated it, most probably, in various ways to suit their peculiar views.*

[*In order to enable the reader to make a comparison between the Gospel according to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Matthew, we will copy a few quotations. The following quotation is made by Origen, (Comm. on Matt., tom. XVI, § 14:)

"Another rich man said to him, Master, what good thing shall I do to live? He said to him: Fulfill the law and the prophets. He answered him: I have fulfilled them. He said to him: Go, sell all that thou possessest and distribute to the poor, and come, follow me. But the rich man began to scratch his head, and it did not please him. And the Lord said to him: How sayest thou, I have fulfilled the law and the prophets, since it is written in the law, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; and lo! many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, are clothed in filth, dying of hunger; and thy house is full of many goods, and nothing at all goes out of it to them! And he turned and said to Simon, his disciple, who was sitting by him: Simon, son of Jonas, it is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than for a rich man *to* enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In Jerome we find the following quotations:

"So the mother of the Lord, and his brethren said to him: John the Baptist is baptizing for the remission of sins; let us go and be baptized by him. But he said to them: What sin have I committed that I should go and be baptized by him? Unless, perchance, this very word which I have spoken is (a sin of) ignorance." (Hieron. Adv. Pelag., III, 2.)

"Now, it came to pass when the Lord had come up out of the water, the Holy Spirit with full stream came down and rested upon him, and said to him: My Son, in all the prophets I was waiting for thee, that thou shouldest come, and I might rest in thee. For thou art my rest; thou art my first-born Son, who reignest forever." (Hieron. in Isaiah, IV, xi, 2.)

"Now the Lord, when he had given the cloth to the servant of the priest, went to James and appeared to him. For James had taken an oath that he would not eat bread from that hour on which he had drunk the cup of the Lord, till he saw him risen from the dead. Again, a little afterward, the Lord says, Bring a table and bread. Immediately, it is added, he took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave it to James the Just, and said to him, My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man has risen from the dead." (Hieron. de Vir. Illust., II.)

"In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use," says Jerome, on Matt. xii, 13, "the man with the withered hand is described as a mason, who sought the help of Christ with words to this effect: I was a mason, seeking a livelihood by the labor of my hand. I pray thee, Jesus, to restore to me my health, that I may not beg my bread in disgrace."

These extracts show us clearly how little any other age than that of the apostles was able to originate or even to reproduce the simple grandeur of inspired language, and what might have been expected from writings founded on tradition, even when shaped after an apostolic pattern. In no sense can the apocryphal gospels of the Judaizing sects bear any comparison with ours, neither in form nor in matter. They are destitute of spirit, life, good taste, sublimity, and authority.]

As it is admitted on all hands, that the Gospel of Marcion was a mutilated edition of that of Luke, and sufficient has been said on this point, we pass on to the so-called "Gospel according to the Egyptians." On this Mr. Norton remarks: "It was an anonymous book, extant in the second century, and probably written in Egypt, in the dark and mystical style that prevailed in that country. In judging of its importance we must compare the few writers who recognize its existence with the far greater number to whom it was unknown, or who were not led by any circumstance to mention it. It was a book of which we should have been ignorant, but for a few incidental notices afforded by writers, none of whom give evidence of having seen it. Neither Clement, nor any other writer, speaks of it as a Gnostic gospel. The Gnostics did not appeal to it in support of their fundamental doctrines; for had they done so, we should have been fully informed of the fact. The only argument for believing it to have been a history of Christ's ministry is, that it contained a narrative of a pretended conversation of Christ with Salome, but that might as well have been inserted in a merely doctrinal book. And if the book had been a historical gospel, the representation of Christ — to judge from the words ascribed to him in the conversation with Salome — must have been so foreign in its character from

that in our Gospels, that it could not have existed in the last half of the second century without having been an object of far greater attention than what this book received."

The same may be said concerning the so-called "Gospel according to Peter." From the account which Serapion, Bishop of Antioch about the close of the second century, gives of it, as quoted by Eusebius, (*Hist. Eccl.*, lib. VI, c. xii,) it appears clearly that it did not pretend to be a history of Christianity. Had this been the case, Serapion could not have regarded it with such indifference as he first manifested. It is impossible that the existence of such a history should not have been notorious, that it should not have been a frequent subject of remark. When we recollect the abundant notices of Marcion's Gospel, it can not be believed that there was another historical book extant among the heretics, of which the notices are so scanty, and which is never mentioned as a historical book. It belongs to the same class of writings as the Gospel of Basilides, the traditions of Matthias, the Gospel according to Thomas, the True Gospel, the Gospel of Eve, the Gospel of Perfection, which, as we remarked above, were doctrinal tracts, not historical accounts of Christ's ministry; or, at least, so very obscure ones, that no sect for a moment pretended to set them up in opposition to our canonical Gospels. Norton remarks very fitly: "About the beginning of the last century a manuscript was made known of a gospel ascribed to Barnabas, in the Italian language, but supposed to be translated from the Arabic. It is the work of a Mohammedan, or a work interpolated by a Mohammedan. Much more has been written about this book than all that is to be found in the Christian writers of the first three centuries concerning apocryphal gospels; yet it is a book of which, probably, few of my readers have ever heard. It is easy to apply this fact to assist ourselves in judging of the importance to be attached to the notices of apocryphal gospels found in the Fathers." Nor would we have devoted so much attention to the consideration of these apocryphal gospels, had not the latest German school of destructive criticism set up the monstrous claim, that *the Ebionitic and Gnostic Gospels were the original histories of our Lord, and our canonical Gospels later productions, written for the express purpose to improve upon them!* To critics who can maintain that the Gospel according to the Hebrews or the Gospel of Marcion are respectively the originals of Matthew and Luke, it is sufficient to apply the word of the apostle: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." The authors of our four

canonical Gospels, who stood infinitely above all the authors of the second century, are assumed to have written toward the close of that century, under the fictitious names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and to have remained undiscovered, although they succeeded in revolutionizing the whole Christian literature of that age, and substituting their products in the place of the original histories of Christ's ministry, so that none of the critical writers at the close of the second century could discover the least trace of the unheard of legerdemain!

From the apocryphal gospels having a heretical tendency must be distinguished those fabulous books called the Gospels of the Infancy, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Protevangelion of James, etc. "The former," says Mr. Westcott, "were either based on the same oral traditions as the canonical Gospels, or revisions of the canonical texts; but these enter on a new field, and illustrate the writings of the New Testament more by the complete contrast which they offer to the spirit and style of the whole, than by minute yet significant divergences from particular books. The completeness of the antithesis which these spurious stories offer to the Divine Record appears at once — if we may be allowed for a moment to compare light with darkness — in relation to the treatment of the three great elements of the Gospel history, miracles, parables, and prophecy. In the apocryphal miracles we find no worthy conception of the laws of providential interference; they are wrought to supply personal wants, or to gratify private feelings, and often are positively immoral. Nor, again, is there any spiritual element in their working; they are arbitrary displays of power, and without any spontaneity on our Lord's part or on that of the recipient. These apocryphal gospels are also entirely without parables; they exhibit no sense of those deeper relations between nature and man, between corruption and sin, which are so frequently declared in the synoptic Gospels; and, at the same time, they do not rise to the purely-spiritual theology of John, which in its very essence rises above the mixed earthly existence of man. Yet more, they do not recognize the office of prophecy; they make no reference to the struggles of the Church with the old forms of sin and evil, reproduced from age to age, till the final regeneration of all things. History, in them, becomes a mere collection of traditions, and is regarded neither as the fulfillment of the past nor as the type of the future."

In conclusion, we may mention two other apocryphal writings which contain numerous allusions to the facts of the Gospels, but are not imitations of

the apostolical books — the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and some portions of the Sybilline Oracles. In them the Gospel history is thrown into a prophetic form.

§ 13. THE TESTIMONIES OF HEATHEN ADVERSARIES.

To the external evidences for the authenticity of the Gospels is to be added the testimony of avowed enemies. The learned Lardner says in his collection of Jewish and heathen testimonies, (on the New Testament canon:) "Of all the testimonies on the writings of the New Testament, which we meet with in the first centuries of the Christian era, none are weightier and more important than those of the learned philosophers who wrote against Christianity; namely, of Celsus, in the second, Porphyry, in the third, and Julian the Apostate, in the fourth century."

Celsus, a philosopher, who flourished about 176 A.D., proposed to himself the formal task of setting forth how dangerous the Christian religion would prove to the State. His learned argument against the Christians is *the first heathen testimony as to the existence of New Testament writings*. This work, entitled "The True Word," has unfortunately been lost, but in Origen's reply to it there are more copious extracts from it than from any other book of antiquity that has been lost. In these extracts we have almost an abridgment of the Gospel history. They contain about eighty quotations from the New Testament, which amply prove that Celsus was acquainted with the writings of Matthew, Luke, and John, and some of the Epistles of Paul. He mentions nearly all the leading events in the life of Christ from his birth to his death; of course, only in order to make them ridiculous. His whole argument, however, is based on the admission that the writings of the Christians were the productions of their professed authors, though he refers to some alterations of the Gospels made by the Marcionites and other heretics. From the testimony, then, of this most malignant enemy of the Christian religion, who was, at the same time, a man of considerable learning and influence, it appears, that the writings of the Evangelists existed in his time, the first period succeeding the apostolic age, and that these writings were then acknowledged, even by enemies, to be authentic.

The next witness is Porphyry, who was born 230 A.D., and wrote against Christianity about 270 A.D. From the few fragments left of this work it appears that he was acquainted with our Gospels and some other of the New Testament writings. This work enjoyed a high reputation among the heathen, and Eusebius and other learned Christians deemed it worth their while to refute it. In what we have left of it there are direct references to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, the Acts, and the Epistles to the Galatians. Speaking of the Christians, he calls Matthew their Evangelist. This man was every way qualified, both by education and his position in society, to find out whether the New Testament writings were authentic, or whether, after the death of the apostles and Evangelists, spurious works were, as their writings, palmed upon the Christians. But we discover not even a hint at a suspicion of this kind; yea, Porphyry appears to have had no doubt whatever as to the authenticity of these writings. From the attempt of this ingenious writer that the book of Daniel was an *ex post facto* prophecy, we see how well he knew to estimate an argument against the authenticity of a book of the New Testament, and how eagerly he would have made use of it against the Christians, if he had had but the least data for forming one.

One hundred years after Porphyry, flourished the Emperor Julian, (A.D. 331-363,) surnamed the Apostate, from his renunciation of Christianity after he mounted the imperial throne. Though he resorted to the most artful political means for undermining Christianity, yet, as a writer against it, he was every way inferior to Porphyry. From various extracts of his work against the Christians, transcribed by Jerome and Cyril, it is evident that he did not deny the truth of the Gospel history, as a history; though he denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ asserted in the writings of the Evangelists, he acknowledged the principal facts in the Gospels, as well as the miracles of our Savior and his apostles. Referring to the difference between the genealogies recorded by Matthew and Luke, he noticed them by name, and recited the sayings of Christ in the very words of the Evangelists. He also bore testimony to the Gospel of John being composed later than the other Evangelists, and at a time when great numbers were converted to the Christian faith both in Italy and Greece; and alluded oftener than once to facts recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. By thus quoting the four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, and by quoting no other books, Julian shows that these were the *only* historical books received by the Christians as of authority, and as containing authentic memoirs of Jesus Christ and his

apostles, together with the doctrines taught by them. But Julian's testimony does something more than represent the judgment of the Christian Church in his time; it discovers also his own. He himself expressly states the early date of these records; he calls them by the names which they now bear. He all along supposes, he no where attempts to question, their genuineness or authenticity; nor does he give even the slightest intimation that he suspected the whole or any part of them to be forgeries.

We have seen that none of these avowed enemies of Christianity has expressed the least suspicion as to the authenticity of the New Testament writings, and we would ask, in conclusion, who will deny that in the writings of a Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, all of whom were learned men and zealous adversaries and persecutors of the Christians, and whose testimonies cover the period from 176 to 361 of the Christian era, every reasonable demand of testimony borne by enemies is fully met, and that this testimony, in the wise providence of God, makes the external evidence for the Gospel history as complete as it possibly can be from the nature of the case?

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERNAL EVIDENCES.

§ 14. THE PECULIAR DIALECT OF GREEK IN WHICH THE EVANGELISTS HAVE WRITTEN.

As we remarked in § 5, that some arguments for the genuineness or integrity of the Sacred Text were, at the same time, arguments for the authenticity of the records, so we can not entirely separate the internal evidences for the authenticity from the arguments for the credibility or historic verity of the Gospel records, which will be the subject of investigation in our next Part. In the case of such compositions as the Gospels, the proof of their having been written by apostles, and by those who received their accounts immediately from the apostles, is at the same time, as we shall further show in the next Part, the proof of their historic verity. But, though the arguments for their authenticity and their credibility are thus intimately blended together, and though the ultimate purpose of both is the same, it is, nevertheless, desirable to

consider the former separately, and simply with reference to their bearing upon the question of authenticity. They will thus form a natural transition and proper introduction to Part III.

The Greek language, in which the New Testament writings originally appeared — as is universally admitted, with the exception of the Gospel of Matthew, and the Epistle to the Hebrews* — is not the classical Greek, such as was written by Plato, Aristotle, and other eminent Greek writers. Had the Evangelists and apostles written in pure, elegant, classical Greek, thoughtful minds would have found considerable difficulty in believing them to be the authors of those productions, and we should lack one important evidence of the authenticity of New Testament Scripture — its being written in the style natural to the persons by whom, and to the age in which it was produced.

[* The Epistle to the Hebrews is now held, by all men of competent learning, to have been originally composed in Greek. And as to the Gospel of Matthew, though the opinions of the learned are still divided, yet the conviction has of late been growing in favor of the proper originality of its present form, which was certainly in current use before the close of the apostolic age. (Fairbairn's Hermeneutical Manual.)]

The basis of the New Testament Greek is the common or Hellenic dialect — the name given to that form of the Greek language which came into general use after the Macedonian conquest. It was called *common*, because it originated in a sort of fusion of the particular dialects which had prevailed in earlier times; and this fusion of dialects had its origin chiefly from the fusion of the several States of Greece into the one great Macedonian Empire. In this fusion of dialects, however, the Attic still prevailed as the model form of the Greek language. This common dialect we find in the New Testament writings — in some of them to a greater extent than in others — intermixed with the free and frequent use of forms derived from the Aramaic or Syro-Chaldaic dialect of the Hebrew language, which had become the vernacular language of the Jewish people in the time of the Savior. This Hebraistic influence† in the style of the New Testament writers appears, as Fairbairn shows by many examples, 1, in the various features of grammatical construction peculiar to the Hebrew language, as, (1,) in the more frequent use of the prepositions for marking

relations, which were wont to be indicated in pure Greek by means of cases; (2,) in the paucity of conjunctions which existed in the Hebrew, while the Greek possessed a great abundance — of which, however, the New Testament writers did not avail themselves. (3.) A further Hebraistic turn appears in the frequent use of the genitive pronouns instead of the possessives. This naturally arose from the inspired writers being used to the Hebrew suffixes. (4.) Another pronominal peculiarity, arising from assimilation to the Hebrew, is occasionally found in the New Testament. In Hebrew there is only one relative pronoun, and this is without any distinction as to number, gender, or case; on which account, to make the reference explicit, it is necessary to add the suffixes of the personal pronouns, or these pronouns themselves with a preposition. Hence such expressions as the following: "The land in which ye dwell upon it," "the place in which ye sojourn in it," and so on. As the Greek language possesses a declinable relative pronoun, and adverbs derived from it, there was no need for this kind of awkward circumlocution. Yet the Evangelists were so accustomed to the Hebrew usage that they indulged in it occasionally, though not so frequently as the Septuagint. (5.) Again, the Hebrew was as remarkable for the fewness, as the Greek for the multiplicity, of its forms to express time — the one having its simple past and future tenses, while the other had its present, imperfect, perfect, pluperfect, its two aorists, first and second future, and paulo-post future. There can be no doubt that the New Testament writers were well acquainted with the principal tenses of the Greek verb; at the same time there are occasional anomalies, with a manifest preference for the simple past and future of the Hebrew, and a tendency to use the future, as expressive of necessity and continued action (*must* and *is wont*) somewhat more frequently than is usual in ordinary Greek. 2. In the use of words and phrases which have their correspondence only in Hebrew, but are not found in profane Greek writers, whether of the earlier or of the later periods. We mention, first, such words as ἄββα, (abba,) ἀμὴν, (amen,) γεέννα, (hell,) σατān, (Satan,) etc. These are Oriental words in Greek letters, or with a Greek termination, and their meaning must be determined simply by a reference to their Oriental use. There are, again, words and phrases in themselves strictly Greek, but used in a sense different from what would naturally be put upon them by a simply Greek reader. For instance, the phrase πᾶσα σάρξ, (all flesh,) for "all men," is quite a Hebraism, for native Greek writers never used σάρξ in the sense of "*men*;" and such an expression, if employed by them,

would have meant not all mankind, but the whole flesh — of a man or an animal, as it might happen.

[† Against the frequent misuse of the so-called Hebraisms in the interpretation of the New Testament, Fairbairn, in his Hermeneutical Manual, has very justly protested, showing, in the first place, that they are not nearly so numerous as they were at one time represented to be. They occur only so far as rendered necessary by the circumstances of the writers. Though the Greek syntax differs in many things from the Hebrew, we find the New Testament writers accommodating themselves far more to the foreign idiom than has been generally allowed; as, for instance, in the discriminating use of the aorist and perfect tenses — the aorist as denoting the historic past, and the perfect as denoting the past in its relation to the present, the past continuing with its effects and consequences to the present. John carefully observes this distinction when he says, (c. i, 3:) ἐγένετο ὄνδρε ἐν ὁ γέγονεν, that is, nothing whatever that has been made, and is still in being, was made without Him. So, also, in Colossians i, 16; iii, 3. In the second place, we should beware not to attach arbitrary meanings to the real Hebraisms which we find in the New Testament, as if the Hebrews had contravened the laws of all human language. For a long time the opinion was prevailing among commentators and lexicographers, that the prepositions, when handled by a Hellenistic Jew, might express almost any relation whatever. So Schleusner assigns to the preposition ἐις twenty-four, and to ἐν, thirty distinct uses and meanings. In a few instances, even the authorized English version and that of Luther have suffered from the too prevalent notion of Hebraistic laxity. Thus, in the prayer of the converted malefactor, (Luke xxiii, 42:) "Remember me when thou comest ἐν τῇ βασιλεᾳ σου" — not *into* thy kingdom, which might seem to point to the glory into which the Lord was presently going to enter, but *in* thy kingdom; namely, when the time comes for thee to take to thyself thy great power, and to reign among men; for this future manifestation of glory was undoubtedly what the faith of the penitent man anticipated and sought to share in, not the glory which lay within the vail, which only the answer of Christ brought within the ken of his spiritual vision. From the real or alleged Hebraisms of the New Testament we must distinguish a class of expressions not in themselves absolutely new, but still fraught with an import which could not attach to them as used by any heathen writer, nor even in the production of any Greek-speaking Jew prior to the birth of Christ. With the marvelous events of the Gospel age, old things passed away, all things became new; and the change which took place in the Divine dispensation could not fail to impress itself on those words and forms of expression which bore respect to what had then for the first time come properly into being. We refer to such terms as λόγος, (word,) βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, (kingdom of God,) ἀών μέλλων, (world to come,) δικαιοσύνη, (righteousness,) ζωή, (life,) θάνατος, (death,) χάρις, (grace,) etc. In so far as these terms embodied the distinctive facts or

principles of Christianity, their former and common usage could only in part exhibit the sense now acquired by them; for the full depth and compass of meaning belonging to them in their new application, we must look to the New Testament itself, comparing one passage with another, and viewing the language used in the light of the great things which it brings to our apprehension.]

On the whole, we may say the New Testament Greek has about as many Hebraisms as a work written in English by a German in this country, who, though familiar with the English language, is not a thorough scholar, or a work translated from the German, and referring to modes of thought peculiar to German mind, will exhibit, more or less, the idiom of the German language. Thus, the Hebraisms we find in the Gospels show the Evangelists to have been Jews by birth, and men in humble stations, who were not ambitious of seeking an exemption from the dialect they had once acquired, and we need not wonder to find the Hebraistic elements also in the writings of so learned a man as Paul. Great as his erudition was, it was the erudition of a Jewish, not of a Grecian, school. His argumentations are those of a Jewish convert to Christianity, confuting his brethren on their own ground. How clearly can we recognize in his writings the Saul of Tarsus, who was educated at the feet of Gamaliel! There was, moreover, apart from the relation the New Testament writers bore to their country and nation, as Fairbairn remarks, "a necessity for a certain departure from the pure, classical style, and calling in the aid of Jewish idioms and forms of speech, in order to exhibit in the most distinct and appropriate manner the peculiar truths of the Gospel. The native language of Greece, though in some respects the most perfect medium for the communication of thought which has ever been employed by the tongue of man, yet from being always conversant with worldly things, adapted to express every shade of thought and every variety of relationship within the human and earthly sphere — but still *only* these — it was not fully adequate to the requirements and purposes of Christian authorship. For this higher end it needed to borrow something from the sanctuary of God, and to be, as it were, baptized in the modes of thought and utterance which were familiar to those who had enjoyed the training of the Spirit. Thus the writings of the Old Testament formed a necessary preparation for the language of the New, as did also the history and institutions of the one for the religious ideas of the other. Nor is it too much to say, that a Gospel in pure Greek, or even an apostolic epistle in pure Greek,

is inconceivable. The canonical and the Hebrew are most intimately connected." Fairbairn adds to this: "It is perfectly consistent with all this, and no less true, that the writers of the New Testament often show a correct acquaintance with the idioms of the Greek language. In many cases their language rises superior to the common dialect of the time, and approaches marvelously near to the precision of Attic Greek, while in other passages it seems to sink below the average standard, and to present to us the peculiarities of the later Greek, distorted and exaggerated by Aramaic forms of expression. Where, however, in a merely-literary point of view, the Sacred Volume may thus seem weakest, it is, considered from a higher point of view, incomparably strongest. It is this investiture of its doctrines with the peculiar richness and force of Hebraistic modes of expression, rather than with the diffluent garb of a corrupted and decayed Hellenism, that does truly reveal to us the overruling providence and manifold wisdom of God."

It is also to be borne in mind, that, while all the writers of the New Testament partook, to some extent, of the Hebraistic influence, some did so considerably more than others. The Hebraistic element differed even with the same writers in different parts of their writings, as in the Apocalypse of John, which is considerably more Hebraistic than either his Gospel or Epistles. The Gospel of Luke is decidedly less marked with Hebraisms than those of Matthew and Mark. While, therefore, there are peculiarities which distinguish the New Testament Greek, as a whole, from other Greek writings, there are also peculiarities distinguishing the Greek of one writer from that of another, words and phrases used by one and not used by the others, or used in a manner peculiar to himself. Thus there is an *individual*, as well as a *general*, impress on the language of the New Testament writers — another mark of their authenticity.

We have shown how fully the language of the Gospels accords with the personality and situation of those to whom they are ascribed. We may go still further and assert, that they could not have been written by any person or persons who lived in another age than that of the apostles. The conjunction of such Latinisms as κεντυρίων, (centurion,) λεγεών, (legion,) πραιτώριον, (praetorium, judgment-hall,) κουστωδία, (watch,) κῆγνσος, (census, tribute,) κοδράντης, (quadrans, farthing,) δηνάριον, (denarius, penny,) ἀσσάριον, (assarius, farthing,) σπεκουλάτωρ, (speculator, executioner,) φραγελλώσας, (having scourged, a participle formed from the Latin verb

flagellare,) and many other terms, referring to the military force, revenue, and offices of the Roman Government, with such Hebraisms as κορβᾶν, (Mark vii, 11,) ραββουνί, (my Lord,) δύο δύο, (literally, two, two, Mark vi, 7,) πρασιάι πρασιάι, (literally, onion-beds, onion-beds, that is, in squares, like a garden-plot, Mark vi, 40, a Hebraistic repetition, as in the previous instance,) τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, (the abomination of desolation,) was natural only in Palestine during the period between Herod the Great and the destruction of Jerusalem, and marks the writers for Jews of that time and country. If we bear in mind that although the New Testament diction has much in common with the LXX and the Greek apocryphal literature of the Old Testament, yet it has also much that is peculiar to itself; that these conclusive peculiarities could possibly arise only in the apostolic age, in such a state of the Jewish polity, as characterized the time between the death of our Savior and the destruction of Jerusalem, and, finally, that the later Christian Greek literature necessarily presupposes the New Testament diction as its basis, we see at once how powerful a proof of the authenticity of our Gospels their peculiar idiom is. Apart from every other consideration, this circumstance alone exposes the absurdity of the theory which assigns the second century to the composition of the Gospels or of any one of them.

Before dismissing, however, the argument for the authenticity of the Gospel records drawn from the New Testament Greek, it is proper to notice an objection. It has been asked: Was the current language of the common Jewish people not the Aramaic dialect of the Hebrew language? Did our Savior and his apostles not usually speak in that language? How does it come, then, that the Evangelists, as well as the other writers of the New Testament, being Jews, should write in Greek? It is true that our Lord is represented on several occasions as speaking in Aramaic: as when he said to the daughter of the Jewish ruler, Jairus, "Talitha cumi," and to the blind man, "Ephphatha," or when he referred to the terms currently employed among the people, such as raka, rabbi, corban; when he applied to his disciples such epithets as Cephas, Barjona, Boanerges, or when, on the cross, he exclaimed, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." There is, on the other hand, a very remarkable circumstance to which the Duke of Manchester, (in his Essay on the Harmonizing of the Gospels,) has called attention. If we compare the Old Testament passages in the synoptical Gospels, we find that those of them which occur *in the sermons or sayings of the Lord*, are always from the LXX, while those of them which

are quoted by *the Evangelists themselves*, deviate from the LXX in favor generally of the Hebrew text. If Christ had generally spoken the Aramaic, it would be incomprehensible why the Evangelists should put quotations from the LXX *only upon his lips*, while *they themselves*, in *their own* quotations, do not restrict themselves to the LXX. The verbal harmony of the synoptical Evangelists is also best accounted for by the presumption that our Lord spoke usually in Greek with his disciples, and this presumption is confirmed by the fact that at the raising of Jairus's daughter, where Jesus spoke Aramaic with the ruler of the synagogue, the verbal harmony of the Synoptist's report of his saying is defective; so, also, in the history of his sufferings, the Old Testament is no longer quoted from the LXX, because at Jerusalem the Aramaic was spoken more generally than in Galilee.

Though Dr. Fairbairn contends that the Aramaic, or later Syro-Chaldaic form of the Hebrew, was the vernacular language of the Jewish people in the age of our Lord, and, consequently, the medium of intercourse on all ordinary occasions, he admits, "that from a long and varied concatenation of circumstances, the Greek language must have been very commonly understood by the higher and more educated classes throughout Syria. It was the policy both of Alexander and his successors, in that part of the world, to extend the language and culture as well as ascendancy of Greece. With this view cities were planted at convenient distances, which might be considered Grecian rather than Asiatic in their population and manners. The Syriac kings, by whom the Macedonian line of rulers was continued, kept up Greek as the court language, and were, doubtless, followed by their official representatives and the influential classes generally throughout the country. The army, too, though not entirely, nor perhaps even in the major part, yet certainly in very considerable proportions, was composed of persons of Grecian origin, who could not fail to make the Greek language in some sense familiar at the various military stations in the regions of Syria. Even after the Macedonian rule had terminated and all became subject to the sway of the Romans, it was still usually through the medium of the Greek tongue that official intercourse was maintained, and the decrees of government were made known. It is in the very nature of things impossible that so many Hellenizing influences should have continued in operation for two or three centuries without leading somewhat generally to a knowledge of Greek among the better classes in all parts of Syria. There were also circumstances more strictly peculiar to the Jewish people, which could not

be without their effect in making them to some extent acquainted with the Greek language. Partly from special encouragements held out to them at the founding of Alexandria, a Grecian city, and partly, perhaps, from the mercantile spirit which began to take possession of them from the time of the Babylonish exile, Alexandria became one of their great centers, where, as we are told by Philo, they formed about two-fifths of the entire population. They abounded also, as is clear from the Acts of the Apostles, in the Greek-speaking cities of Asia Minor, and in those of Greece itself. From whatever causes, the dispersion seems, for some generations previous to the Christian era, to have taken very much a western, and especially a Grecian, direction; in every place of importance inhabited by Greeks, members of the stock of Israel had their homes and synagogues. It is only, too, what might have been *expected* in the circumstances, that the culture and enterprise, which distinguished the communities in those Grecian cities, would act with stimulating effect upon the Jewish mind, and bring its powers into more energetic play and freedom of action than was likely to be found among the Palestinian Jews, who were sealed up in their national bigotry and stagnant Pharisaism. Hence the only moral and religious productions which are known to have appeared among the Jews, between the closing of the Old Testament canon and the birth of Christ — those contained in the apocryphal writings — came chiefly, if not entirely, from the pen of the Hellenistic Jews, and exist only — most probably never did exist but — in the Greek language. Hence also the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which was completed several generations before the Christian era, and which, there is good reason to believe, was in extensive use, about that time, among the Jewish people. So that, looking to the numbers, the higher intelligence, and varied *resources* of the Hellenistic Jews, and taking into account their frequent personal visits to Palestine, at the ever-recurring festivals, we can not doubt that they materially contributed to a partial knowledge and use of the Greek tongue among their brethren in Palestine."

The fact that the books of the New Testament, and especially those which contain our Lord's personal discourses, should have been originally composed in the Greek instead of in the Aramaic language, in case our Lord and his immediate disciples spoke generally not in Greek to their countrymen, is thus accounted for by Dr. Fairbairn: "It was comparatively but a small portion of the people resident in Jerusalem and Judea who embraced the Christian faith; and those who did, having, in the first instance, enjoyed many opportunities of

becoming personally acquainted with the facts of Gospel history, and enjoying afterward the ministry of apostles and Evangelists, who were perfectly cognizant of the whole, were, in a manner, independent of any written records. Besides, the troubles which shortly after befell their native land, and which were distinctly foreseen by the founders of the Christian faith, destined, as they were, to scatter the power of the Jewish nation, and to render its land and people monuments of judgment, presented an anticipative reason against committing the sacred and permanent records of the Christian faith to the Hebrew language. That language itself, already corrupted and broken, was presently to become to all but the merest fragment of the Jews themselves, antiquated and obsolete. The real centers of Christianity — the places where it took firmest root, and from which it sent forth its regenerating power among the nations — from the time that authoritative records of its facts and expositions of its doctrines became necessary — were to be found in Greek-speaking communities — the communities scattered throughout the cities of Asia Minor, of Greece, at Rome, and the West — where also the first converts to the Christian faith consisted chiefly of those whose native tongue was Greek. Whether, therefore, respect were had to the immediate wants of the first Christian communities, or to the quarters in which the Gospel was to find its most active agents and representatives, and the direction it was appointed to take in the world, the Greek was obviously the language in which its original and authoritative documents behooved to be written. Whatever reasons there were for the adherents of Judaism getting the Scriptures of the Old Testament into Greek; whatever reasons, also, Josephus could have for translating into Greek his Jewish histories, and the authors of the apocryphal writings for adopting that language in preference to the Aramaic, the same reasons existed, and in far greater force, for the inspired writings, which were to form, in earlier and later times, the fundamental records of the Christian faith, being composed in the Greek language, and in that language committed to the faithful keeping of the Church. Had they not been originally composed in Greek, the course of Providence would presently have required that they should be translated into Greek; and considering how much depended on the correct knowledge of them, and how many sources we have for illustrating Greek, as compared with Aramaic productions, it was unspeakably better that, from the first, they should have appeared in a Greek form."

§ 15. SOME OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STYLE IN WHICH THE GOSPELS ARE WRITTEN.

1. The style of the Gospels, apart from the peculiar dialect of Greek in which they were written, is totally devoid of ornament; it presents no beautiful transitions from one subject to another; the ear is not charmed with the melody of harmonious periods; the imagination is not fired with grand epithets. In short, we find in the Gospels the simplicity of writers who were more intent upon things than upon words; we find men of plain education honestly relating what they knew, without attempting to adorn their narratives by any elegance of diction. And this is precisely the kind of writing which we should expect from the persons to whom those books are ascribed.

2. The Gospels are not proper histories; that is, they do not furnish a full and satisfactory account of the ministry of Jesus to one previously unacquainted with the essential facts concerning it. Either individually or collectively, they present only a brief narrative of some of the most striking events in our Lord's ministry, and these told by the writers, for the most part, nakedly and in a few words. No skill is shown by any one of the Evangelists in connecting the different parts so as to form a continuous history. No explanations are given, except a few, which are parenthetical and unimportant. With the exception of some passages in John's Gospel, there is no comment on any thing told which discovers the writer's feelings or state of mind. This peculiarity of the Gospels furnishes another proof that they could not have been forged, no more than they could have been written by men whose imaginations had been strongly excited by some extraordinary delusion.

3. We discover in the Gospel narratives a striking consistency with that which the Evangelists do not state expressly. This striking consistency has been presented by Mr. Norton in detail; it is sufficient to quote from him the leading features:

In the narratives of the Evangelists, the existence of many facts which are not expressly mentioned is implied. In order to understand fully what is told, and to perceive its bearing and application, we must take into view very much that is not told. There is to be found in almost every part of the Gospels a latent reference to some existing state of things which is not described. But when we attend to the character of those facts with which different portions of the narrative are thus connected, we find that they are all probable or certain; that

we have distinct evidence of them from other sources, or that they are such as must or might have existed. The inferences from these histories, though many and various, are all consistent with the histories themselves, and whatever we can learn from other sources. In tracing out the necessary or probable bearing of those actions and discourses which are recorded, or in assigning their probable occasions or consequences, we detect no inconsistency with the history itself, and find no contradiction of known facts; but, on the contrary, we are continually perceiving new marks of probability and truth. This coincidence between what is told and what is implied does not appear here and there only, but discovers itself throughout the Gospels. But such a consistency of the narrative with itself can evidently not be the work of study or artifice. The Gospels are very inartificial compositions, and if the coincidences had been intended to give an air of probability to the narrative, the writer would have taken care that they should be noticed by the reader. The just and lively conception — which the writers of the Gospels evidently possessed of those numerous facts and circumstances that must or might have existed, if their history be true — admits of no other explanation, than that the narratives rest on the authority of those who were witnesses of what is related, and were themselves concerned in the transactions recorded. It follows, therefore, that these histories were committed to writing either by some of the immediate disciples of Christ, or by persons who derived, generally speaking, correct and particular information from such disciples. And if this conclusion is reached, there is no room left to doubt that they are the works of those particular individuals to whom they have always been ascribed.

We discover, therefore, in the characteristics of the Gospels which we have described, another mode in which it has pleased God to preserve to us in the very books themselves the evidence of their authenticity. Such is their incompleteness, that they are necessarily complicated with a great body of circumstantial evidence of the most unsuspicious kind. Thus, what we might consider as their defects, when regarded merely as literary compositions, contribute greatly to enhance their value.

§ 16. THE FREQUENT ALLUSIONS OF THE EVANGELISTS TO THE HISTORY OF THEIR TIMES.

"Whoever," says Michaelis, "undertakes to forge a set of writings, and ascribe them to persons who lived in a former period, exposes himself to the utmost danger of a discordancy with the history and manners of the age to which his accounts are referred; and this danger increases in proportion as they relate to points not mentioned in general history, but to such as belong only to a single city, sect, religion, or school. Of all books that ever were written, there is none, if the historical books of the New Testament are a forgery, so liable to detection; the scene of action is not confined to a single country, but displayed in the greatest cities of the Roman Empire; allusions are made to the various manners and principles of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, which are carried so far with respect to this last nation, as to extend even to the trifles and follies of their schools. A Greek or Roman Christian, who lived in the second or third century, though ever so well versed in the writings of the ancients, would still have been wanting in Jewish literature; and a Jewish convert in those ages, even the most learned rabbi, would have been equally deficient in the knowledge of Greece and Rome. If, then, the historical books of the New Testament thus exposed to detection — had it been an imposture — are found after the severest researches to harmonize with the history, the manners, and the opinions of the first century; and since the more minutely we inquire, the more perfect we find the coincidence, we must conclude that they were written in the age in which they profess to have been written."

The numerous incidental allusions to the civil history of the times, which the Gospels and the Acts furnish, and which are most strikingly verified by profane writers, have been most carefully collated by Mr. George Rawlinson in his "Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Scripture Records." He groups them under two heads, considering, first, all such as bear upon the general condition of the countries, which were the scene of the history, and, secondly, such as have reference to the civil rulers, who are represented as exercising authority in the countries at the time of the narrative, as follows:

I. The political condition of Palestine at the time to which the New Testament narrative properly belongs, was one curiously complicated and anomalous; it underwent frequent changes, but retained through all of them certain peculiarities, which made the position of the country unique among the

dependencies of Rome. Not having been conquered in the ordinary way, but having passed under the Roman dominion with the consent and by the assistance of a large party among the inhabitants, it was allowed to maintain, for a while, a species of semi-independence, not unlike that of various native States in India, which are really British dependencies. A mixture, and to some extent an alternation, of Roman with native power resulted from this arrangement, and a consequent complication in the political *status*, which must have made it very difficult to be thoroughly understood by any one who was not a native and a *contemporary*. The chief representative of the Roman power in the East — the President of Syria, the local Governor, whether a Herod or a Roman procurator, and the high-priest, had each and all certain rights and a certain authority in the country. A double system of taxation, a double administration of justice, and even in some degree a double military command, were the natural consequence, while Jewish and Roman customs, Jewish and Roman words, were simultaneously in use, and a condition of things existed full of harsh contrasts, strange mixtures, and abrupt transitions. Within the space of fifty years Palestine was a single united kingdom under a native ruler, a set of principalities under native ethnarchs and tetrarchs, a country in part containing such principalities, in part reduced to the condition of a Roman province, a kingdom reunited once more under a native sovereign, and a country reduced wholly under Rome, and governed by procurators dependent on the President of Syria, but still subject in certain respects to the Jewish monarch of a neighboring territory. These facts we know from Josephus, and other writers, who, though less accurate, on the whole confirm his statements; they render the civil history of Judea during this period one very difficult to master and remember; the frequent changes, supervening upon the original complication, are a fertile source of confusion, and seems to have bewildered even the sagacious and painstaking Tacitus. The New Testament narrative, however, falls into no error in treating of the period; it marks, incidentally and without effort or pretension, the various changes in the civil government — the sole kingdom of Herod the Great, (Matt. ii, 1; Luke i, 5;) the partition of his dominions among his sons, (Matt. ii, 22; xiv, 1; Luke iii, 1;) the reduction of Judea to the condition of a Roman province, while Galilee, Iturea, and Trachonitis continued under native princes, (Luke iii, 1;) the restoration of the old kingdom of Palestine, in the person of Agrippa the First, (Acts xii, 1, etc.,) and the final reduction of the whole under Roman rule, and re-establishment of procurators, (Acts xxiii, 24; xxiv, 27, etc.,) as the civil heads, while a species

of ecclesiastical superintendence was exercised by Agrippa the Second, (Acts xxv, 14, etc.) Again, the New Testament narrative exhibits in the most remarkable way the mixture in the government — the occasional power of the President of Syria, as shown in Cyrenius's "taxing," (Luke ii, 2; compare Acts v, 37;) the ordinary division of authority between the high-priest and the procurator, (Matt. xxvii, 1, 2; Acts xxii, 30; xxiii, 1-10;) the existence of two separate taxations — the civil and the ecclesiastical — the "census," (Matt. xvii, 17,) and the "didrachm," (Matt. xvii, 24;) of two tribunals, (John xviii, 28, 32, etc.,) two modes of capital punishment, two military forces, (Matt. xvii, 64, 65,) two methods of marking time, (Luke iii, 11;) at every turn it shows, even in such little matters as verbal expressions, the coexistence of Jewish with Roman ideas and practices in the country — *a coexistence which*, it must be remembered, *came to an end within forty years of our Lord's crucifixion*. The general tone and temper of the Jews at the time, their feelings toward the Romans, and toward their neighbors, their internal divisions and sects, their confident expectation of a deliverer, are represented by Josephus, and other writers, in a manner which very strikingly accords with the account incidentally given by the Evangelists. The extreme corruption and wickedness, not only of the mass of the people, but even of the rulers and chief men, is asserted by Josephus in the strongest terms;* while, at the same time, he testifies to the existence among them of a species of zeal for religion, a readiness to attend the feasts,† a regularity in the offering of sacrifice,‡ an almost superstitious regard for the Temple,§ and fanatic abhorrence of all who sought to "change the customs which Moses had delivered," (Acts vi, 14.) The conspiracy against Herod the Great, when ten men bound themselves by an oath to kill him, and, having armed themselves with short daggers, which they hid under their clothes, entered into the theater where they expected Herod to arrive, intending, if he came, to fall upon him and dispatch him with their weapons,|| breathes the identical spirit of that against Paul, which the promptness of the chief captain, Lysias, alone frustrated, (Acts xxiii, 12-31.) We find, from Josephus, that there was a warm controversy among the Jews themselves as to the lawfulness of "giving tribute to Caesar,"¶ (Matt. xxii, 17;) that the Samaritans were hostile to such of the Galileans as had their "faces set to go to Jerusalem," (Luke ix, 51;) that on one occasion, at least, they fell upon those who were journeying through their land to attend a feast, and murdered a large number,** that the Pharisees and Sadducces were noted sects, distinguished by the tenets which in Scripture are assigned to them;†† that the Pharisees were the more popular, and

persuaded the common people as they pleased, while the Sadducees were important chiefly as men of high rank and station;‡‡ and that a general expectation, founded upon

[* Joseph., De Bell. Jud., vii, 8, § 1: "For that time was fruitful among the Jews in all sorts of wickedness, so that they left no evil deed undone; nor was there any new form of wickedness which any one could invent if he wished to do so. Thus they were all corrupt both in their public and their private relations; and they vied with each other who should excel in impiety toward God and injustice to men. The more powerful oppressed the common people, and the common people eagerly sought to destroy the more powerful, for the former class were governed by the love of power, and the latter by the desire to seize and plunder the possessions of the wealthy." (Compare Ant. Jud., xx, 7, § 8; Bell. Jud., v, 13, § 6; and 10, § 5.)]

[† Joseph., Ant. Jud., xvii, 9, § 3; xx, 4, § 3; Bell. Jud., ii, 19, § 1, etc. On one occasion it appears that more than two and a half millions of persons had come up to Jerusalem to worship. (Bell. Jud, vi, 9, § 3.)]

[‡ Ant. Jud, xv, 7, § 8: "In Jerusalem there were two fortresses, one belonging to the city itself, and the other to the Temple. Whoever held these had the whole nation in their power; for without the command of these, it was not possible to offer the sacrifices; and no Jew could endure the thought that these should fail to be offered; they were even ready sooner to lay down their lives than omit the sacrifices which they were accustomed to offer to God.

[§ Not only was Caligula's attempt to have his statue set up in the Temple resisted with determination, (Joseph., Ant. Jud., xviii, 8,) but when the younger Agrippa, by raising the hight of his house, obtained a view into the Temple courts, the greatest indignation was felt. The Jews immediately raised a wall to shut out his prospect, and when Festus commanded them to remove it, they positively refused, declaring that they would rather die than destroy any portion of the sacred fabric. (See Ant. Jud., xx, 8, § 11, and on the general subject compare Philo, De Legat. ad Caium pp. 1022, 1023.)]

[|| Ant. Jud., xv, 8, §§ 14.]

[¶ Josephus tells us that when Cyrenius came to take the census of men's properties throughout Judea, a controversy arose among the Jews on the legality of submission to foreign taxation. Judas of Galilee (Acts v, 37) maintained that it was a surrender of the theocratic principle; while the bulk of the chief men, including some considerable number of the Pharisees, took the opposite view, and persuaded the people to submit themselves. (Ant. Jud., xviii, 1, § 1.)]

[** Ant. Jud., xx, 6, § 1: "Now, there arose an enmity between the Samaritans and the Jews, from the following cause: The Galileans were

accustomed, in going up to the feasts that were held in Jerusalem, to pass through the country of the Samaritans. At this time there was, on the road which they took, a village called (Ginea, situated on the boundary between Samaria and the great plain. When the Galileans came to this place they were attacked, and many of them killed.]

[†† Ant. Jud., xviii, 1, §§ 3, 4. Note especially the following: Of the Pharisees — "They believe that souls have immortal vigor, and that beyond the grave there are rewards and punishments, according as they follow a virtuous or a vicious course of life in this world." Of the Sadducees — "But the doctrine of the Sadducees is, that the soul is annihilated together with the body." (Compare Acts xxiii, 8.)]

[‡‡ Ant. Jud., I, s.c. [The Pharisees] "are very influential with the people; and whatever prayers to God or sacrifices are performed, are performed at their dictation. The doctrine (of the Sadducees) is received by but few: but these are the men who are in the highest authority."]

the prophecies of the Old Testament, existed among the Jews during the Roman war, that a great king was about to rise up, in the East, of their own race and country.* This last fact is confirmed by both Suetonius† and Tacitus,‡ and is one which even Strauss does not venture to dispute. It would be easy to point out a further agreement between the Evangelical historians and profane writers with respect to the manners and customs of the Jews at this period. There is scarcely a matter of this kind noted in the New Testament, which may not be confirmed from Jewish sources, such as Josephus, Philo, and the Mishna. The points of agreement hitherto adduced have had reference to the Holy Land and its inhabitants. It is not, however, in this connection only that the accuracy of the Evangelical writers in their accounts of the general condition of those countries which are the scene of their history is observable. Their descriptions of the Greek and Roman world, so far as it comes under their cognizance, are most accurate. No where have the character of the Athenians and the general appearance of Athens been more truthfully and skillfully portrayed than in the few verses of the Acts which contain the account of Paul's visit. The people — "*Athenians and strangers* spending their time in nothing but hearing or telling of some new thing," (Acts xvii, 21;) philosophizing and disputing on Mars' Hill and in the market-place, (*ibid.*, verse 17,) glad to discuss, though disinclined to believe, (Acts xvii, 32, 33,) and yet religious withal, standing in honorable contrast with the other Greeks in respect of their reverence for things divine, (*ibid.*, verse 22) — are put before us with all the

vividness of life, just as they present themselves to our view in the pages of their own historians and orators. § Again, how striking, and how thoroughly classical is the account of the tumult at Ephesus, (Acts xix, 23,) where almost every word receives illustration from ancient coins and inscriptions, as has been excellently shown in a recent work of great merit on the life of Paul. || Or, if we turn to Rome and the Roman system, how truly do we find depicted the great and terrible emperor, whom all feared to provoke — the provincial administration by proconsuls and others chiefly anxious that tumults should be prevented — the contemptuous religious tolerance — the noble principle of Roman law, professed, if not always acted on, whereby

[* Bell. Jud., vi, 5, § 4. "But that which most of all roused them to undertake this war, was an ambiguous oracle, . . . found in their sacred books, that, at that time, a man of their country should rule over the whole earth."]

[† Suet., Vit. Vespasian, § 4: "An ancient and settled opinion had prevailed throughout the whole East, that fate had decreed that at that time persons proceeding from Judea should become masters of the world. This was foretold, as the event afterward proved, of the Roman emperor; but the Jews applied it to themselves, and this was the cause of their rebellion." (Compare Vit. Octav., § 94, and Virg. Eclog., iv.)]

[‡ Tacit. Histor., v, 13: "These things [the prodigies that occurred just before the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans] were regarded by a few as alarming omens; but the greater number believed that it was written in the ancient books of the priests, that at that very time the East should become very powerful, and that persons proceeding from Judea should become masters of the world."]

[§ How attractive to *strangers* Athens was, even in her decline, may be seen from the examples of Cicero, Germanicus, Pausanias, and others. (See Conybeare and Howson's Life of St. Paul, vol. i, pp. 398, 399.) On the greediness of the Athenians after *novelty* see Demost. Philipp., i, p. 43, ("Or tell me, do you wish to go about asking each other in the market-place, What is the news? And can there be any thing newer than that the man of Macedon," etc.;) Philipp. Epist., pp. 156, 157; AElian., Var. Hist., v, 13; Schol. ad Thucy., iii, 38, etc. On their religiousness, compare Pausan., i, 24, § 3, (the Athenians are more zealous than others in the worship of gods;) Xen., Rep. Atheniens., iii, §§ 1, 8; Joseph., Contra Apion., ii, 11, ("All say that the Athenians are the most religious of the Greeks;") Strab., v, 3, § 18; AElian., Var. Hist., v, 17; Philostrat., Vit. Appollon., vi, 3; and among later authors, see Mr. Grote's History of Greece, vol. iii, pp. 229-232.]

[|| See the Life and Epistles of St. Paul by Messrs. Conybeare and Howson, vol. ii, pp. 66, etc. (1.) The "Great Goddess Diana" is found to have borne that title as her *usual title*, both from an inscription, (Boeckh, Corpus Inscript., 2,963,) and from Xenophon, (Ephes., i, p. 15,) "I invoke our ancestral God, the Great Diana of the Ephesians." (2.) The Asiarchs are mentioned on various coins and inscriptions. (3.) The town-clerk (*γραμματεὺς*) of Ephesus is likewise mentioned in inscriptions. (Boeckh, No. 2,963, No. 2,966, and No. 2,990.) (4.) The curious word *νεωκόρος*, (Acts xix, 35,) literally "sweeper" of the temple, is also found in inscriptions and coins, as an epithet of the Ephesian people. Boeckh, No. 2,966.) The "silver shrines of Diana," the "court-days," the "deputies" or "proconsuls," (*ἀνθύπατοι*,) might receive abundant classical illustration. The temple was the glory of the ancient world; enough still remains of the "theater" to give evidence of its former greatness.]

accusers and accused were brought "face to face," and the latter had free "license to answer for themselves concerning the crimes laid against them," (Acts xxv, 16) — the privileges of Roman citizenship, sometimes acquired by birth, sometimes by purchase — the right of appeal possessed and exercised by the provincials — the treatment of prisoners — the peculiar manner of chaining them — the employment of soldiers as their guards — the examination by torture — the punishment of condemned persons not being Roman citizens by scourging and crucifixion — the manner of this punishment; — the practice of bearing the cross, of affixing a title or superscription, of placing soldiers under a centurion to watch the carrying into effect of this sentence, of giving the garments of the sufferer to these persons, of allowing the bodies after death to be buried by the friends — and the like! The sacred historians are as familiar not only with the general character, but even with some of the obscurer customs of Greece and Rome, as with those of their own country. Fairly observant and always faithful in their accounts, they continually bring before us little points which accord minutely with notices in profane writers nearly cotemporary with them, while occasionally they increase our knowledge of classic antiquity by touches harmonious with its spirit, but additional to the information which we derive from the native authorities.* Again, it has been well remarked that the condition of the Jews beyond the limits of Palestine is represented by the Evangelical writers very agreeably to what may be gathered of it from Jewish and heathen sources. The wide dispersion of the chosen race is one of the facts most evident upon the surface of the New Testament history. "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, and

Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, strangers of Rome, Cretes, and Arabians," (Acts ii, 9-11,) are said to have been witnesses, at Jerusalem, of the first outpourings of the Holy Ghost. In the travels of Paul through Asia Minor and Greece, there is scarcely

[* Among minute points of accordance may be especially noticed the following: 1. The geographical accuracy. (1.) Compare the divisions of Asia Minor mentioned in the Acts with those in Pliny. Phrygia, Galatia, Lycania, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Asia, Mysia, Bithynia, are all recognized as existing provinces by the Roman geographer writing probably within a few years of Luke. (2.) The division of European Greece into the two provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, (Acts xix, 24, etc.,) accords exactly with the arrangement of Augustus noticed in Strabo, (xvii, ad fin.) (3.) The various tracts in or about Palestine belong exactly to the geography of the time, *and of no other*. Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Trachonitis, Iturea, Abilene, Decapolis, are recognized as geographically distinct at this period by the Jewish and classical writers. (See Plin., H. N., v, 14, 18, 23; Strab., xvi, §§ 10, 11, 34; Joseph., Ant. Jud., xix, 5, § 1, etc.) (4.) The routes mentioned are such as were in use at the time. The "ship of Alexandria," which, conveying Paul to Rome, lands him at Puteoli, follows the ordinary course of the Alexandrian corn-ships, as mentioned by Strabo, (xvii, 1, § 7,) Philo, (in Flacc., pp. 968-9,) and Seneca, (Epist. 77,) and touches at customary harbors. (See Sueton., Vit. Tit., § 25.) Paul's journey from Troas by Neapolis to Philippi presents an exact parallel to that of Ignatius, sixty years later, (Martyr. Ignat., c. 5.) His passage through Amphipolis and Apollonia, on his road from Philippi to Thessalonica, is in accordance with the Itinerary of Antoine, which places those towns on the route between the two cities. (5.) The mention of Philippi as the first city of Macedonia to one approaching from the East, ("the chief city of that part of Macedonia," Acts xvi, 12,) is correct, since there was no other between it and Neapolis. The statement that it was a "colony" is also true, (Dio. Cass., li, 4, p. 445, D.; Plin., H. N., iv, 11; Strab., vii, Fr., 41.) 2. The minute political knowledge. (1.) We have already seen the intimate knowledge exhibited of the state of Ephesus, with its proconsul, town-clerks, Asiarchs, etc. A similar exactitude appears in the designation of the chief magistrates of Thessalonica as "the rulers of the city," (Acts xvii, 6,) their proper and peculiar appellation. (Boeckh, Corp. Inscr., No. 1,967.) (2.) So, too, the Roman Governors of Corinth and Cyprus are given their correct titles. (3.) Publius, the Roman Governor of Malta, has again his proper technical designation, ("the chief man of the island," Acts xxviii, 7,) as appears from inscriptions commemorating the chief of the Melitans, or Melitensium primus." See Alford ii, p. 282.) (4.) The delivery of the prisoners to the "captain of the [Praetorian] guard" at Rome is in strict accordance with the practice of the time. (Trajan. ap. Plin., Ep. x, 65:

"He ought to be sent bound to the Prefects of my Praetorian guard.") Compare Philostrat., Vit. Sophist., ii, 32. Among additions to our classical knowledge for which we are indebted to Scripture it may suffice to mention, 1. The existence of an Italian cohort, (the Italian band,) as early as the reign of Tiberius, (Acts x, 1.) 2. The application of the term Σεβαστὴ, (Augustan,) to another *cohort*, a little later, (Acts xxviii, 1.) 3. The existence of an altar at Athens with the inscription, "To the unknown God," (Acts xvii, 23,) which is not to be confounded with the well-known inscriptions to unknown gods. 4. The use of the title στρατηγοὶ (Praetors) by the Duumviri or chief magistrates of Philippi, (Acts xvi, 20.) We know from Cicero, (De Leg. Agrar., 34,) that the title was sometimes assumed in such cases, but we have no other proof that it was in use at Philippi.]

a city to which he comes but has a large body of Jewish residents. Compare with these representations the statements of Agrippa the First, in his letter to Caligula, as reported by the Jewish writer, Philo. "The Holy City, the place of my nativity," he says, "is the metropolis, not of Judea only, but of most other countries, by means of the colonies which have been sent out of it from time to time; some to the neighboring countries of Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, Coelo-Syria — some to more distant regions, as Pamphylia, Cilicia, Asia as far as Bithynia, and the recesses of Pontus — and in Europe, Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, AEtolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, together with the most famous of the islands, Euboea, Cyprus, and Crete, to say nothing of those who dwell beyond the Euphrates. For, excepting a small part of the Babylonian, and other satrapies, all the countries which have a fertile territory possess Jewish inhabitants; so that, if thou shalt show this kindness to my native place, thou wilt benefit not one city only, but thousands in every region of the world, in Europe, in Asia, in Africa — on the continents, and in the islands — on the shores of the sea, and in the interior." In a similar strain, Philo himself boasts, that "one region does not contain the Jewish people, since it is exceedingly numerous; but there are many of them in almost all the flourishing countries of Europe and Asia, both continental and insular." And the customs of these dispersed Jews are accurately represented in the New Testament. That they consisted in part of native Jews, in part of converts or proselytes, is evident from Josephus;* that they had places of worship, called synagogues or oratories, in the towns where they lived, appears from Philo; that these were commonly by the seaside, as represented in the Acts, (Acts xvi, 13,) is plain from many authors;† that they had also — at least sometimes — a synagogue belonging to them at Jerusalem,

whither they resorted at the time of the feasts, is certain from the Talmudical writers; that at Rome they consisted in great part of freed men, or "Libertines," whence the synagogue of the Libertines, (Acts vi, 9,) may be gathered from Philo and Tacitus. Their bearing toward the apostolic preachers is such as we should expect from persons whose close contact with those of a different religion made them all the more zealous for their own; and their tumultuous proceedings are in accordance with all that we learn from profane authors of the tone and temper of the Jews generally at this period.‡

[* Joseph., Ant. Jud., xx, 2; De Bell. Jud., vii, 3, § 3; Contr. Apion., ii, 36, etc.]

[† Philo frequently mentions the synagogue under the name of "places of prayer." (In Flacc., p. 972, A., B., E.; Legat. in Caium, p. 1,014, etc.) Their position by the seaside or by a riverside is indicated, among other places, in the Decree of the Halicarnassians reported by Josephus, (Ant. Jud., xiv, 10, § 23,) where the Jews are allowed to offer prayers by the seaside according to their national custom. See also Philo, Legat. in Caium, p. 982, D.; Tertull. ad Nat., i, 13; and Juv. Sat., iii, 13.]

[‡ For the tumultuous spirit of the foreign Jews, see Sueton., Vit. Claud., p. 25; Dio Cassius, Ix, 6; Joseph., Ant. Jud. xviii, 8, § 1; 9, § 9; xx, 1, § 1, etc.]

II. The civil governors and administrators distinctly mentioned by the New Testament historians are the following: the Roman Emperors Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius; the Jewish Kings and Princes, Herod the Great, Archelaus, Herod the Tetrarch, (or as he is commonly called, Herod Antipas,) Philip the Tetrarch, Herod Agrippa the First, and Herod Agrippa the Second; the Roman Governors, Cyrenius, (or Quirinius,) Pontius Pilate, Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Festus, and Felix, and the Greek Tetrarch, Lysanias. It may be shown from profane sources, in almost every case, that these persons existed; that they lived at the time, and bore the offices assigned to them; that they were related to each other, when any relationship is stated, as Scripture declares; and that the actions ascribed to them are either actually such as they performed, or at least in perfect harmony with what profane history tells us of their characters.

The Jewish kings and princes, whose names occur in the New Testament narrative, occupy a far more prominent place in it than the Roman emperors.

The Gospel narrative opens, "In the days of Herod the King," (Matt. ii, 1; Luke i, 5;) who, as the father of Archelaus, (Matt. ii, 22,) may be identified with the first monarch of the name, the son of Antipater the Idumean. This monarch is known to have reigned in Palestine cotemporaneously with Augustus, who confirmed him in his kingdom, and of whom he held the sovereignty till his decease. Cunning, suspicion, and cruelty are the chief traits of his character, as depicted in Scripture, and these are among his most marked characteristics in Josephus.* The consistency of the massacre at Bethlehem with his temper and disposition is now acknowledged;† skepticism has nothing to urge against it, except the silence of the Jewish writers, which is a weak argument, if it is not outweighed by the testimony, albeit somewhat late and perhaps inaccurate, of Macrobius.‡

[* The cruelties, deceptions, and suspicions of Herod the Great fill many chapters in Josephus. (Ant. Jud., xv, 1, 3, 6, 7, etc.; xvi, 4, 8, 10; xvii, 3, 6, 7, etc.) His character is thus summed up by that writer: "He was a man cruel to all alike, yielding to the impulse of passion, but regardless of the claims of justice; and yet no one was ever favored with a more propitious fortune." (Ant. Jud., xvii, 8, § 1.) His arrest of the chief men throughout his dominion, and design that on his demise they should all be executed, (Ibid, 6, § 5; Bell. Jud., i, 33, § 6,) shows a bloodier temper than even the massacre of the Innocents.]

[† Strauss grants the massacre to be "not inconsistent with the disposition of the aged tyrant to the extent that Schleiermacher supposed," but objects that "neither Josephus, who is very minute in his account of Herod, nor the rabbins, who were assiduous in blackening his memory, give the slightest hint of this decree." He omits to observe, that they could scarcely narrate the circumstance without some mention of its reason — the birth of the supposed Messiah — a subject on which their prejudices necessarily kept them silent.]

[‡ Macrobius, Saturnal., ii, 4: "When Augustus had heard that *among the children under two years of age whom Herod, the king of the Jews, had commanded to be slain in Syria*, there was also one of the king's own sons, he said it was better to be the sow than the son of Herod;" Strauss contends that "the passage loses all credit by *confounding the execution of Antipater*, who had gray hairs, with the murder of the infants renowned among the Christians;" but Macrobius says nothing of Antipater, and evidently does not refer to any of the known sons of Herod. He believes that among the children massacred was an *infant* son of the Jewish king. It is impossible to say whether he was right or wrong in this belief. It may have simply originated in

the fact that a jealousy of a *royal* infant was known to have been the motive for the massacre. (See Olshausen, *Biblic. Comment.*, vol. i, p. 72, note, p. 67, E. T.)]

At the death of Herod the Great his kingdom — according to Josephus — was divided, with the consent of Augustus, among three of his sons. Archelaus received Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, with the title of ethnarch; Philip and Antipas were made tetrarchs, and received, the latter Galilee and Perea, the former Trachonitis and the adjoining regions. § The notices of the Evangelists are confessedly in complete accordance with these statements. Matthew mentions the succession of Archelaus in Judea, and implies that he did not reign in Galilee, (Matt. ii, 22.) Luke records Philip's tetrarchy, (Luke iii, 1;) while the tetrarchy of Antipas, who is designated by his family name of Herod, is distinctly asserted by both Evangelists, (Matt. xiv, 1.) Moreover, Matthew implies that Archelaus bore a bad character at the time of his accession, or soon afterward, which is consistent with the account of Josephus, who tells us that he was hated by the other members of his own family; and that shortly after his father's death he slew three thousand Jews, on account of a tumult at Jerusalem. The first three Evangelists agree as to the character of Herod Antipas, which is weak, rather than cruel or bloodthirsty; and their portraiture is granted to be "not inconsistent with his character, as gathered from other sources." The facts of his adultery with Herodias, the wife of one of his brothers,|| and of his execution of John the Baptist for no crime that

[§ Josephus says, "When Caesar had heard these things he dissolved the assembly, and a few days after he appointed Archelaus, not indeed king, but ethnarch of half the country which had been subject to Herod, and the other half he divided, and gave it to two other sons of Herod, Philip, and Antipas, . . . to the latter of whom he made Perea and Galilee subject, . . . while Batanea with Trachonitis and Auranitis, with a certain part of what is called the House of Zenadorus, were subjected to Philip; but the parts subject to Archelaus were Idumea, and Judea, and Samaria." (*Antiq. Jud.*, xvii, 11, § 4.) Compare the brief notice of Tacitus: "The country which had been subdued was governed, in three divisions, by the sons of Herod." (*Hist.*, v, 9.)]

[|| Josephus says, "Herod the tetrarch had married the daughter of Aretas, and had now lived with her a long time. But having made a journey to Rome, he lodged in the house of Herod, his brother, but not by the same mother. For this Herod was the son of the daughter of Simon, the high-priest. Now, he fell

in love with Herodias, this man's wife, who was the daughter of Aristobulus, their brother, and the sister of Agrippa the Great; and he had the boldness to propose marriage. She accepted the proposal, and it was agreed that she should go to live with him whenever he should return from Rome." (Ant. Jud., xviii, 5, § 1.) And again: "Herodias, their sister, was married to Herod, the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high-priest, who had also a daughter Salome; after the birth of whom Herodias, in shameful violation of the customs of our nation, allowed herself to marry Herod, the brother of her former husband by the same father, separating from him while he was living. Now this man [whom she married] held the office of tetrarch of Galilee." (Ibid., § 4.)

could be alleged against him, are recorded by Josephus;* and though in the latter case there is some apparent diversity in the details, yet it is allowed that the different accounts may be reconciled.† The continuance of the tetrarchy of Philip beyond the fifteenth, and that of Antipas beyond, the eighteenth of Tiberius, is confirmed by Josephus,‡ who also shows that the ethnarchy of Archelaus came speedily to an end, and that Judea was then reduced to the condition of a Roman province, and governed for a considerable space by procurators. However, after a while, the various dominions of Herod the Great were reunited in the person of his grandson, Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus and brother of Herodias, who was allowed the title of king, and was in favor with both Caligula and Claudius. It can not be doubted that this person is the "Herod the King" of the Acts, (Acts xii, 1,) whose persecution of the Church, whose impious pride, and whose miserable death, are related at length by the sacred historian. Josephus records, with less accuracy of detail than Luke, the striking circumstances of this monarch's decease — the "set day," the public assemblage, the "royal dress," the impious flattery, its complacent reception, the sudden judgment, the excruciating disease, the speedy death.§

[* Ant. Jud., xviii, 5, § 2: "Now some of the Jews thought that the army of Herod had been destroyed by God, in most righteous vengeance for the punishment inflicted upon *John, surnamed the Baptist*. For he taught the Jews to cultivate virtue, and to practice righteousness toward each other and piety toward God, and so to come to baptism. For he declared that this dipping would be acceptable to Him, if they used it not with reference to the renunciation of certain sins, but to the purification of the body, the soul having been purified by righteousness. And when others thronged to him — for they were profoundly moved at the hearing of his words — Herod feared

that his great influence over the men would lead them to some revolt, for they seemed ready to do any thing by his advice; he, therefore, thought it much better to anticipate the evil, by putting him to death, before he had attempted to make any innovation, than to allow himself to be brought into trouble and then repent after some revolutionary movement had commenced. And so John, in consequence of the suspicion of Herod, was sent as a prisoner to the aforementioned castle of Machaerus, and was there put to death." The genuineness of this passage is admitted even by Strauss. (Leben Jesu, § 48; vol. i, pp. 344-47, E. T.)]

[† This even Strauss admits. The chief points of apparent difference are the motive of the imprisonment and the scene of the execution. Josephus makes fear of a popular insurrection, the Evangelists offense at a personal rebuke, the motive. But in this there is no contradiction, for Antipas might well fear that John, by his strong censure of the marriage and the whole course of the tetrarch's life, might stir up the people into rebellion against him. Again, from the Gospels we naturally imagine the prison to be near Tiberias, where Herod Antipas ordinarily resided; but Josephus says that prison was at Machaerus in Perea, a day's journey from Tiberias. Here, however, an examination of the Gospels shows, that the place where Antipas made his feast and gave his promise is not mentioned. It only appears that it was near the prison. Now, as Herod at this time was engaged in a war with Aretas, the Arabian prince, between whose kingdom and his own lay the fortress of Machaerus, it is a probable solution of the difficulty that he was residing with his court at Machaerus at this period. (Strauss, § 48, ad fin.) This supposition is confirmed by the fact that Josephus connects the imprisonment and death of the Baptist with the defeat of Herod in battle by his father-in-law, Aretas — this defeat being regarded by many of the Jews as a just punishment sent by God upon Herod for this act of injustice and cruelty.]

[‡ Philip is said to have retained his tetrarchy till the twentieth year of Tiberius. (Ant. Jud., xviii, 5, § 6.) Herod Antipas lost his government in the first of Caligula. (Ibid., ch. 7.)]

[§ Josephus, Ant. Jud., xix, 8, § 2: "Now after he had reigned three full years over the whole of Judea, he was at the city of Caesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower. And there he held public shows in honor of Caesar, having learned that a certain festival was celebrated at that time to make vows for his safety. Now, at that festival, there were assembled a multitude of those who were first in office and authority in the province. On the second day of the shows, putting on a robe made entirely of silver, the texture of which was truly wonderful, he came into the theater early in the morning. When the first beams of the sun shone upon the silver, it glittered in a wonderful manner, flashing forth a brilliancy which amazed and awed those who gazed upon him. Whereupon his flatterers immediately cried out — though not for his good — one from one place, and one from another — addressing him as a god — 'Be propitious unto us;' and adding, 'Although we

have heretofore feared thee as a man, yet henceforth we acknowledge thee to be of more than mortal nature.' The king did not rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. A little after, therefore, looking up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head; and he immediately understood that it was a messenger of evil, as it had formerly been of good; whereupon he was overcome with a profound sadness. There was also a severe pain in his bowels, which began with a sudden violence. Turning, therefore, to his friends, he said: 'I, your god, am now commanded to end my life; and fate immediately reprobates the false shouts that were just now addressed to me; and so I, whom you call immortal, am now snatched away by death. But we must accept the fate which God ordains! And, indeed, we have not lived ill, but in the most brilliant good fortune.' When he had said this he was overcome by the intensity of the pain. He was, therefore, quickly carried to the palace, and the report went abroad to all that he must inevitably soon die. . . . Being consumed thus, for five days in succession, with the pain in his belly, he departed this life."]

No where does profane history furnish a more striking testimony to the substantial truth of the sacred narrative, no where is the superior exactness of the latter over the former more conspicuous.

On the death of Herod Agrippa, Judea — as Josephus informs us — became once more a Roman province under procurators,* but the small kingdom of Chalcis was, a few years later, conferred by Claudius on this Herod's son, Agrippa the Second, who, afterward, received other territories.† This prince is evidently the "King Agrippa" before whom Paul pleaded his cause. (Acts xxv, 13, etc.) The Bernice, who is mentioned as accompanying him on his visit to Festus, was his sister, who lived with him, and commonly accompanied him upon his journeys.‡ Besides his separate sovereignty he had received from the emperor a species of ecclesiastical supremacy in Judea, where he had the superintendence of the Temple, the direction of the sacred treasury, and the right of nominating the high-priests.§ These circumstances account sufficiently for his visit to Judea, and explain the anxiety of Festus that he should hear Paul, and Paul's willingness to plead before him. The Roman procurators, Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus, are prominent personages in the history of Josephus, where they occur in the proper chronological position,|| and bear characters very agreeable to those which are assigned to them by the sacred writers. The vacillation of Pilate, his timidity, and, at the same time, his

occasional violence,¶ the cruelty, injustice, and rapacity of Felix,** and the comparatively-equitable

[* Ant. Jud., xix, 9, § 2: "[Claudius] therefore sent Cuspius Fadus as a procurator over Judea and all the kingdom."]

[† Ant. Jud., xx, 5, § 2; vii, 1; and 8, § 4. Agrippa II bore the title of king, (De Bell. Jud., ii, 12, § 8.)]

[‡ Ant. Jud., xix, 9, § 1; xx, 7, § 3. The evil reports which arose from this constant companionship are noticed by Josephus in the latter of these passages. They are glanced at in the well-known passage of Juvenal, (Sat. vi, 155-169:) "That well-known diamond made even more precious by being worn on the finger of Bernice. This jewel the barbarian formerly gave to that unchaste woman, and Agrippa gave it to his sister, in that country where kings keep the Sabbath festival with naked feet, and an ancient indulgence allows the old men to eat pork." (Compare Tacit., Hist., ii, 2, 81.)]

[§ Joseph., Ant. Jud., xx, 8, § 8; 9, § 7: "The king had been intrusted by Claudius Caesar with the care of the Temple." In one passage, (Ant. Jud., xx, 1, § 3,) Josephus says that these privileges continued to be exercised by the *descendants* of Herod, king of Chalcis, from his decease to the end of the war. But he here uses the term "descendants" very loosely, or he forgets that Agrippa II was the nephew, and not the son of this monarch. (See the note of Lardner, Credibility, vol. i, p. 18, note g.)]

[|| The procuratorship of Pilate lasted from the twelfth year of Tiberius — A.D. 26 — to the twenty-second — A.D. 36. (See Joseph., Ant. Jud., xviii, 3, § 2; 4, § 2.) Felix entered upon his office as *sole* procurator in the twelfth year of Claudius — A.D. 53 — and was succeeded by Porcius Festus early in the reign of Nero, (Ant. Jud., xx, 7, § 1; 8, § 9.)]

[¶ The vacillation and timidity of Pilate appear in his attempt to establish the images of Tiberius in Jerusalem, followed almost immediately by their withdrawal. (Ant. Jud., xviii, 3, § 1.) His violence is shown in his conduct toward the Jews who opposed his application of the Temple money to the construction of an aqueduct at Jerusalem, (Ibid., § 2,) as well as in his treatment of the Samaritans on the occasion which led to his removal. (Ibid., iv, § 1.) Agrippa the elder speaks of the iniquity of his government in the strongest terms, (Ap. Philon., Leg. ad Caium, p. 1,034: "He feared lest they should examine and expose the misdeeds of his former procuratorship, the taking of bribes, the acts of violence, the extortions, the tortures, the menaces, the repeated murders without any form of trial, the harsh and incessant cruelty.")]

[** Tacitus says of Felix: "Antonius Felix exercised the royal authority in a manner agreeable to the baseness of his disposition, with all cruelty and

wantonness." (Hist., v, 9.) And again: "But his father, whose surname was Felix, did not conduct himself with the same moderation. Having been a long time governor of Judea, he thought he could commit all crimes with impunity, relying on his great power." (Ann., xii, 54.) Josephus gives a similar account of his government. (Ant. Jud., xx, 8.) After he quitted office he was accused to the emperor, and only escaped a severe sentence by the influence which his brother Pallas possessed with Nero.]

and mild character of Festus,* are apparent in the Jewish historian, and have some sanction from other writers.

[*See Ant. Jud., xx, 8, §§ 10, 11; Bell. Jud., ii, 14, § 1. In the latter passage Josephus says: "Now Festus having succeeded this man in the office of procurator, relieved the country of its greatest scourge. For he captured a large number of the robbers, and destroyed not a few. But Albinus, who succeeded Festus, did not govern after the same manner. For it is not possible to mention any form of evil-doing which he omitted to practice."]

It only remains to notice an objection that has been made to the evidence presented in the many historical allusions of the Evangelists, and their verification by profane writers. It is said that there are remarkable facts in the Gospels, which we do not find alluded to by profane historians, though we might justly expect them to have attracted their attention. We shall speak of these in § 23.

Great stress is laid upon the difficulty with regard to the taxing of Cyrenius. The satisfactory solution, which has been made of this and a few other minor difficulties, the reader will find in the Commentary. Mr. Rawlinson closes his historical review with the following remarks: "We have found that the historical books of the New Testament contain a vast body of incidental allusions to the civil history of the times, capable of being tested by comparison with the works of profane historians. We have submitted the greater part of these incidental allusions to the test of such comparison; and we have found, in all but some three or four doubtful cases, an entire and striking harmony. In no case have we met with clear and certain disagreement; in such cases we must take into consideration that profane writers are not infallible; Josephus, our chief profane authority for the time, has been shown, even in matters where he does not

come into any collision with the Christian Scriptures, to teem with inaccuracies. If, therefore, in any case it should be thought that we must choose between Josephus and an Evangelist, sound criticism requires that we should prefer the latter to the former. Josephus is not entirely honest; he has his Roman masters to please, and he is prejudiced in favor of his own sect, the Pharisees. He has been convicted of error, which is not the case with any Evangelist. His authority, therefore, is, in the eyes of a historical critic, inferior to that of the Gospel writers, and in any instance of contradiction, it would be necessary to disregard it. In fact, however, we are not reduced to this necessity. The Jewish writer no where actually contradicts the Gospel records, and in hundreds of instances he confirms them. It is evident that the entire historical frame-work, in which the Gospel picture is set, is real; that the facts of the civil history, small and great, are true, and the personages correctly depicted." We have only to add that such correctness could not have been attained, *unless the Gospels were written by the men, to whom they are ascribed, who were living in the age in which the events described by them took place.*

§ 17. THE RELATION OF THE FOUR GOSPELS TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

In the case of three out of the five historical books of the New Testament, there is an internal testimony to their composition by cotemporaries, which is of no small importance. "*And he that saw it,*" says John, "bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he says true, that ye may believe." (John xix, 35.) And again, still more explicitly, after speaking of himself, he says: "*This* is the disciple which testifieth of these things *and wrote these things:* and we know that his testimony is true." (John xxi, 24.) Either, therefore, John must be allowed to have been the writer of the fourth Gospel, or the writer must be deemed guilty of willful fraud.

That the Acts of the Apostles and the third Gospel have "a testimony of a particular kind," which seems to give them a special claim to be accepted as the works of a cotemporary, is admitted even by Strauss. The writer of the Acts, he allows, "by the use of the first person, identifies himself with the companion of Paul," and the prefaces of the two books make it plain that they "proceeded from the same author." Yet, while Strauss does not venture to deny that a companion of Paul *may have* written the two works, he finds it "difficult"

to believe that this was actually the case, and "suspects" that the passages of the Acts, where the first person is used, "belong to a distinct memorial by another hand, which the author of the Acts has incorporated into his history"(!) But still he allows the alternative — that "it is possible the companion of Paul may have composed the two works" — only it must have been "at a time when he was no longer protected by apostolic influence from the tide of tradition,"(!) and so was induced to receive into his narrative, and join with what he had heard from the apostle, certain marvelous — and, therefore, incredible — stories which had no solid basis. A hypothesis like this is not worthy of a serious refutation. The Acts, as is clear from the fact of their terminating where they do, were composed at the close of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, A.D. 58 — or 63, according to some writers — and the Gospel, as being the "former treatise," must have been written earlier.

We may, therefore, independently of the general voice of antiquity on the authenticity of the third Gospel, allow it to have been composed by one who lived in the apostolic age and companied with the apostles. And a new argument is presented to us for the early date of the first and second, based upon their accordance with the third, their resemblance to it in style and general character, and their diversity from the productions of any other period. The first three Gospels belong so entirely to the same school of thought, and the same type and stage of language, that, on critical grounds, they must be regarded as the works of cotemporaries; while in their contents they are at once so closely accordant with one another, and so full of little differences, that we must assign to them an almost instantaneous origin. So peculiar is their relation to each other that the authenticity of one involves that of the others. If the evidence for either of the Gospels had been much weaker than that for the other three, its discrepancies from them, if there had been no other cause, would have decided its rejection. Moreover, if one of the Gospels had been published much in advance of the others, it is not probable that a second account of the ministry of Christ, confirmatory to any great extent of the preceding one, would have been written. A supplementary gospel, like that of John, might of course have been added in any case; but had the Gospel of Matthew, for instance, been composed, as some have supposed, before the separation of the apostles and the formation of distinct Christian communities, it would have been carried, together with Christianity, into all parts of the world; and it is very unlikely that, in that case, the Gospels of Mark and Luke, which cover chiefly the same

ground, would have been written. The need of written gospels was not felt at first, while the apostles and companions of Christ were in full vigor, and were continually moving from place to place, relating with all the fullness and variety of oral discourse the miracles which they had seen wrought, and the gracious words which they had heard uttered by their Master. But, as they grew old, and as the sphere of their labors enlarged, and personal superintendence of the whole Church by the apostolic body became difficult, the desire to possess a written gospel arose, and simultaneously, in different parts of the Church, for different portions of the Christian body, the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were published.

The peculiar relation of the synoptic Gospels to one another, and to the Gospel of John, and the points which modern criticism has made on this relation with reference to their inspiration, the reader will find fully discussed in Part IV. It is sufficient, here, to quote the following remarks of Dr. Lange on the bearing which the peculiar relation of the Gospels to each other have on their authenticity. He says: "The attempts that have been made, in modern times, to prove that the four Gospels weaken each other's authority have had the very opposite result. By their mutual relation to each other the Gospels gain the compactedness of a house hewn into a rock; for the relation of their differences and points of agreement is so peculiar that sound criticism finds in them, after every new investigation, four independent witnesses for one and the same fact, and accordingly, also, for each other. If, for instance, a critic wishes to disprove the authority of the Gospel of John, he recognizes that of three synoptic Gospels in order to gain a point of attack against the fourth Gospel. But the points of agreement between this and the three other Gospels prove so many and so strong, that, by recognizing the authority of the latter, the former is virtually, also, recognized. Or, the Gospel of John is taken for the authentic record of the Gospel history, and the differences between this and the three other Gospels are pointed out in order to shake thereby the authority of the latter. But in this case, also, the force of the agreement between the two sets of documents proves stronger than that of the differences, so that, if the fourth Gospel is true, the subject-matter of the three others must also be true. Again, Luke and Matthew are taken in hand to undermine the authority of Mark. But Mark has so much in common with the two others, that if he falls they must fall with him, while at the same time his peculiarities establish his independent authority. So, if the second Gospel is made the original Gospel at the expense

of the first and third, Matthew and Luke have so much that is peculiar to them, that their own originality is placed beyond any and every reasonable doubt, while they have, at the same time, so much in common with Mark, that the recognition of the latter involves that of their own authority. In all these different directions the Gospels have been attacked by modern criticism, but all such attacks have proved futile. Their peculiar relation to one another is a fine net of truth, spread out to catch all impure criticism, and to entangle the critics in their own contradictions. Or we may compare the four Gospels to a wondrous grove, in which a magic influence makes the godless critics run to and fro in utter confusion, finding neither ingress nor egress. This magic influence proceeds from the circle of the four Gospels, because, from the fourfold refraction of the One Light of the world, there are issuing a thousand dazzling reflections for every oblique look, while the straightforward look sees in the fourfold refraction but the One Sun of the day. We may say that the relation of the four Gospels to each other, while it courts and challenges the spirit of criticism more than any single one for itself, becomes in turn the withering critique of every false criticism. Whenever criticism undertakes to undermine one Gospel through the other, it overlooks the mysterious links that bind them together, and thus digs its own grave. While the four Gospels testify to the Divine origin which they have in common, so completely and so mysteriously, that every impure critique is put to shame, they are in their outward form so purely human, that they thereby invite critical examination; and they rest on so firm a basis that every new examination can only bring them additional gain."

§ 18. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPELS — A POSTULATE
OF REASON, AS IT ALONE ACCOUNTS FOR THE EXISTENCE
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, AND FOR SOME OF PAUL'S
EPISTLES, WHOSE AUTHENTICITY IS UNIVERSALLY
ADMITTED.

The Christian Church is in the world, and has been in it a little more than eighteen centuries; that it can be traced back to the historically-attested death of Christ is placed beyond the possibility of a doubt by heathen and Jewish as well as Christian writers. Josephus, born 37 A.D., says, in a passage, of which we will include in brackets what has been justly declared to have been interpolated: "About this time Jesus appears, a wise man, [if it is right to call him

a man, for he was] performing surprising deeds, [a teacher of men, who willingly received the truth,] and many Jews as well as heathen became his followers; [being the Messiah] on the accusations of our chief men, Pilate condemned him to the cross; nevertheless, those who had loved him before did not give up their faith in him; [for he appeared to them alive on the third day, as the prophets had predicted of him, besides many other marvelous things,] and the generation of Christians, that are named after him, is not extinct to this day." (Ant. Jud., XVIII, 3, § 3.) In another passage, which can not be justly suspected, Josephus, who grew up at Jerusalem till he was twenty-six years of age, and was thus a witness of the principal occurrences at Jerusalem, mentioned in the Acts, subsequently to the accession of Herod Agrippa, says: "Ananus . . . called the council of judges, and bringing before them James, the brother of *Jesus, who was called Christ*, and certain others, he accused them of transgressing the laws, and delivered them up to be stoned." (Ant. Jud., XX, 9, § 1.) There existed, therefore, according to the testimony of Josephus, in the early part of the first century, a body of followers of Christ. Tacitus, the Roman historian, who wrote in the second half of the first century, says, (Ann., XV, 44,) speaking of the fire which consumed Rome in Nero's time, and of the general belief that he had caused it: "In order, therefore, to put a stop to the report, he laid the guilt, and inflicted the severest punishments upon a set of people who were holden in abhorrence for their crimes, and called by the vulgar, *Christians*. *The founder of that name was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his Procurator, Pontius Pilate.* This pernicious superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again, and spread not only over *Judea, where the evil originated*, but through *Rome also*, whither all things that are horrible and shameful find their way, and are practiced. Accordingly, the first who were apprehended confessed, and then on their information *a vast multitude* were convicted, not so much of the crime of setting Rome on fire, as of hatred to mankind." Suetonius says briefly in reference to the same occasion: "*The Christians* were punished, a set of men of a *new and mischievous superstition*." (Vita Ner., § 16.) The younger Pliny, while he was Governor of Bithynia, says, in an official report to Trajan: "They [that is, those Christians who recanted] declared that the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were accustomed to meet on a stated day, before it was light, and to sing in concert a hymn of praise to Christ, as God, and to bind themselves by an oath, not for the perpetration of any wickedness, but that they would not commit any theft, robbery, or adultery, nor violate their word,

nor refuse, when called upon, to restore any thing committed to their trust. After this, they were accustomed to separate, and then to reassemble to eat in common a harmless meal. Even this, however, they ceased to do, after my edict, in which, agreeably to your commands, I forbade the meeting of secret assemblies. After hearing this, I thought it the more necessary to endeavor to find out the truth by putting to the torture two female slaves, who were called 'deaconesses.' But I could discover nothing but a perverse and extravagant superstition; and therefore I deferred all further proceedings till I should consult with you. For the matter appears to me worthy of such consultation, especially *on account of the number of those who are involved in peril*. For *many of every age, of every rank, and of either sex* are exposed, and will be exposed to danger. Nor has the contagion of this superstition been confined to the cities only, but *it has extended to the villages, and even to the country*. Nevertheless, it still seems possible to arrest the evil, and to apply a remedy. At least, it is very evident that *the temples, which had already been almost deserted*, begin to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities, so long interrupted, are again revived; and the victims, which heretofore could hardly find a purchaser, are now every-where in demand. From this it is easy to imagine *what a multitude of men* might be reclaimed, if pardon should be offered to those who repent." (Pliny, Ep. X, 97.) It is not necessary to quote any more testimonies concerning the existence of a great body of Christians before the close of the first century.

Now to some of these Christians at various places the apostles addressed their Epistles, and there are no valid reasons for entertaining any doubt concerning their authorship, except, perhaps, in the case of that to the Hebrews, and of the two shorter Epistles which are assigned to John. All these Epistles are not only consistent with, but *imperatively demand*, our belief in the *authenticity* of such historical documents as our four Gospels are. It is indisputable that the writers, and those to whom they wrote, believed in the recent occurrence of a set of facts similar to, or identical with, those recorded in the Gospels and the Acts, especially those fundamental facts upon which the Christian faith rests. "Great is the mystery of godliness," says Paul. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii, 16.) "Christ," says Peter, "suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit." (1

Peter iii, 18.) "He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; and this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Peter i, 17, 18.) "God raised up Christ from the dead, and gave him glory." (1 Peter i, 21.) "He is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him." (1 Peter iii, 22.) "Remember," says Paul, "that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead." (2 Tim. ii, 2, 8.) "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain." (1 Cor. xv, 14.) "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles." (1 Cor. xv, 3-7.) These are only half a dozen texts out of hundreds which might be adduced to show that Paul represented the death of Christ on the cross, as necessary to procure the pardon of our sins, or to make that pardon consistent with God's justice and truth; he does not mention the charge on which he was condemned to this ignominious death, but that was necessarily implied. It was a Roman punishment, and Pilate could not condemn a public teacher, whose morals were spotless, on any other charge than that which the Evangelists state at large, and which no enemy of Christ gainsayed, to which He himself pleaded guilty in reply to the adjuration of Caiaphas; namely, "that he said, he was the Christ, the Son of God" — a declaration by which the Roman governor, interpreting it according to the well-known Jewish notions of the Messiah, understood Jesus to have proclaimed himself "the king of the Jews;" on which account he wrote that charge on the tablet over the cross. Paul tells us, (Gal. i, 12,) that he had received his Gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and he proves it by preaching the same Christ, whom the four Evangelists delineate. Matthew records the last commission of Jesus, commanding his disciples to baptize all nations "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." God is here called Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the same divinity is claimed for the Son and Holy Ghost as for the Father. John calls Jesus in his antemundane state "the Word, that was with God from the beginning, and that was God," and says: "the Word became flesh." Paul teaches Christ's divinity proper, and his incarnation not less distinctly and emphatically than John or Matthew. "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are

all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. viii, 6.) "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii, 9.) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. ii, 6, 7.) "God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." (Rom. viii, 3, 32.) These are only a few texts out of a hundred, which might be adduced to show that the writers of the Epistles entirely agree with the Evangelists, as to the facts on which Christianity is based, and as strongly assert their reality. If we find in Paul's Epistles some doctrines that are not in the Gospels, and if others are set forth more fully and distinctly, it is exactly what we have to expect according to John xvi, 12-14.

But we will go a step further and make the argument more direct and more pointed in giving it a strictly *historical* character. "Christianity or revealed religion is," as Rawlinson remarks in the opening of his Lectures on the "Historical Evidences," "in nothing more distinguished from the other religions of the world, than in its objective or historical character. The religions of Greece and Rome, of Egypt, India, Persia, and the East generally, were speculative systems, which did not even seriously postulate a historical basis. But it is otherwise with the religion of the Bible. There, whether we look to the Old or the New Testament, to the Jewish dispensation, or to the Christian, we find a scheme of doctrine which is bound up with facts; which depends absolutely upon them, and which is null and void without them." The truth of this remark we will illustrate and confirm by a consideration of *the incontestable facts implied in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians* — Epistles which, even by those critics who have assailed the authenticity of every other portion of the New Testament canon, *are admitted to be authentic*, that is, *to have been composed by the man whose name they bear, at the time and for the class of readers that are claimed for them.*

There was in the churches in Galatia and at Corinth a party which denied the apostolical authority of Paul, which saw in him, at best, an apostle's disciple. Paul, in vindicating his apostolical authority, appeals to his call by the risen Savior, and to his possessing the power to work miracles. He commences the Epistle to the Galatians with these words: "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither

by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." The mention of the resurrection of Christ, in this connection, is evidently made to remind the Galatians that he had seen the risen Savior as well as the other apostles. It appears from verses 13-17, that they were well acquainted with his former enmity against Christ and his disciples, and with the miraculous event which resulted in his conversion. In I Cor. xv, 8, the apostle tells the Corinthians that the risen Savior was seen (**ώφθη**) by him, as he had been seen by others, and, 1 Cor. ix, 1, he bases his apostleship upon his personal knowledge of Christ, obtained by actual sight (**έώρακα.**) From this sight, which took place with the natural eye, in a state of perfect self-consciousness, Paul distinguishes a vision, of which he himself does not know whether he had it in or out of the body. (2 Cor. xii, 1, 2.) Yet the personal manifestation of the risen Savior, narrated Acts ix, although it was the most important in point of its effects and differed also in its nature from subsequent manifestations of the Lord, was not an isolated fact in the life of the apostle, but only the grand opening act of his personal communion with the Lord. He appeals in different places to especial revelations of Christ on doctrinal points, in full accordance with what the Lord had told him at his conversion: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee."

Now, what deductions are we compelled to draw from what Paul writes to the Galatians and Corinthians respecting his having seen the risen Savior? If he has told the truth, if Christ appeared to him, then the truth of what the Evangelists have reported of the resurrection of Christ receives an incontestable confirmation, and the verity of that fact involves the *authenticity* of the Gospels. The latter has never been called in question by any who admit the resurrection of Jesus. It is attacked simply, as we shall show in the next Part, on the ground of the miraculous elements of the Gospel narratives. Whoever admits the miracle of Christ's resurrection can not object to the other miracles recorded in the Gospels.

But is Paul's testimony of having seen the risen Savior trustworthy? Was he a man of veracity, and of a sound mind? Has he told the truth? We answer: 1. If Christ did not appear to Paul, neither did he receive those miraculous powers to which he appealed in vindication of his apostolical authority, in letters whose authenticity, even those who assail every other portion of the New Testament Canon have felt themselves compelled to acknowledge. And how

were, then, the Galatians and Corinthians brought to believe his Gospel of a risen Savior? 2. If Paul has not told the truth, we must set him down either as one of the most stupid victims of a disordered imagination, or as a willful impostor. For we must bear in mind that he did not become an apostle for the promulgation of mere theories or speculations, such as would admit of both intellect and candor. All he preached was based upon his testimony of the fact of the resurrection of the crucified Redeemer.

Can we conceive the author of such a composition as the Epistle to the Romans to have been the wretched dupe of an entirely unaccountable self-deception? That he was — far from being a weak-minded enthusiast or fanatic — a man of gigantic intellect, high culture, dialectic skill, inflexible purpose, and indomitable courage, the destructive criticism of modern infidelity must unwillingly admit, inasmuch as, in order to put the person of Christ out of the way, Paul is made the self-constituted founder of the Christian Church, and, consequently, the author of the whole modern civilization and culture.

Or was Paul a willful impostor? Is it conceivable that he should have blasted all his earthly prospects, and subjected himself to unceasing privations and sufferings, (2 Cor. xi, 23-27,) in order to make Jews and Gentiles believe what, in the case supposed, he must have known to be a lie? The thought is as great an outrage upon common-sense, and as black a libel upon humanity as it is a daring blasphemy against God. Hear how the apostle himself affirms his candor and soberness: "Yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain. . . . For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." (1 Thess. ii, 1, 3, 4.) "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (2 Cor. iv, 1, 2.) "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ. . . . If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. xv, 14, 15, 19.)

So much with regard to Paul's testimony of having seen the risen Savior. Let us also consider what he says concerning the existence of miraculous powers in the primitive Churches. In the Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xii-xiv) the apostle speaks of certain extraordinary gifts, (*charismata*), not for the purpose of proving their reality, or instructing his readers about their origin, but taking their existence for granted, he merely gives direction about their proper use. He mentions the gift of healing, prophecy, the discerning of spirits, and working of miracles. If the existence of these gifts had not been an incontestable fact, the apostle could not have written thus to a society of Christians, a part of whom did not recognize his apostolical authority, for it would have given his opponents the best means to destroy all confidence in him even as a man of veracity. In the Epistle to the Romans, (c. xii, 6,) these gifts are likewise referred to. In Galatians iii, 5, we meet again the working of miracles. Thus these *charismata* appear in all the Churches, however remote from each other they are. In the Epistle to the Galatians the apostle has a special object in appealing to them. The Galatians had been shaken in their Christian faith, and were in danger of apostatizing from the Gospel which Paul had preached to them. He reminds them that they had received, through his preaching of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit and the power to work miracles. Now, if they had not received these powers, how could the apostle have dared to argue thus? In vindicating his apostleship against his detractors at Corinth, he appeals to the miracles performed by himself before their eyes: "The signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, wonders, and mighty deeds." According to Acts xviii, 11, 18, the apostle was at Corinth some eighteen months. From his miracles not being mentioned there, we see that the writers of the New Testament did not eagerly mention every miracle of which they had knowledge, but passed by many in silence for the reason given by John in his Gospel, (c. xx, 30; xxi, 25.)

Other epistles of Paul show a decline of these *charismata* in the Churches; in his pastoral letters the apostle finds it necessary to point out the proper qualifications of a minister of the Gospel, undoubtedly because the rich stream of miraculous gifts had comparatively ceased to flow, and they no longer pointed out to the Churches the proper persons for the various offices. The Epistle to the Hebrews, no matter by whom it was written, was certainly written before the close of the first century; Clement of Rome quotes from it largely, and internal evidences demonstrate that it was composed while the Temple

worship was still in its full glory. The believing Jews, like the Galatians, came in danger of apostatizing from the faith; for this reason they are reminded, (Heb. ii, 4,) of the miracles performed among them and accompanying the preaching of the Gospel by those who had heard the Lord. These miraculous powers appear here in nearly the same order in which they stand, 2 Cor. xii, 12. We have thus the strongest evidence that there was no difference in this respect between the Jewish and heathen converts, that the one enjoyed these gifts as well as the other. From this fact we have to infer that the Lord himself wrought such miracles as are recorded in the Gospels, for the Master was certainly not inferior to his disciples, and it is expressly so stated, Heb. ii, 4.

The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul sustain the nearest relation to each other, and are wonderfully confirmed one by the other. The incidental allusions in the Epistles to facts related at length in the Acts, and *vice versa*, as well as the mention of facts in the one that are omitted in the other, complete each other. No less striking is the agreement between the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospels.

§ 19. THE ABSURDITY OF THE MYTHICAL THEORY.

Unless all the arguments by which we have established the authenticity of the Gospel records are of no account, the mythical theory, laid down by Strauss in his "Life of Jesus," has no ground on which it can stand, and deserves no formal refutation. To state it is to refute it; and inasmuch as no English or German writer has stated this theory so clearly and fairly as Mr. Norton, we will give his statement, showing thereby how utterly futile this last effort of infidelity is to explain the origin of Christianity or any one essential fact connected with its origin.

The external testimonies for the authenticity Strauss sets aside by simply making the following assertions: "The most ancient testimonies tell us, firstly, that an apostle, or some other person who had been acquainted with an apostle, wrote a Gospel history; but not whether it was identical with that which afterward came to be circulated in the Church under his name; secondly, that writings similar to our Gospels were in existence, but not that they were ascribed with certainty to any one apostle or companion of an apostle. Such is the uncertainty of these accounts, which, after all, do not reach further back

than the third or fourth decade of the second century. According to all the rules of probability the apostles were all dead before the close of the first century, not excepting John, who is said to have lived till A.D. 100; concerning whose age and death, however, many fables were early invented. What an ample scope for attributing to the apostles manuscripts they never wrote!" (Strauss, Life of Jesus, i, 62.) In the following passage he asserts still more emphatically, that the apostles and their associates are not to be held responsible for the fables contained in the Gospels: "The fact that many such compilations — as the Gospels — of narratives concerning the life of Jesus were already in general circulation during the lifetime of the apostles, and more especially that any one of our Gospels was known to an apostle and acknowledged by him, can never be proved. With respect to isolated anecdotes, it is only necessary to form an accurate conception of Palestine and of the real position of the eye-witnesses referred to, in order to understand that the origination of legends, even at so early a period, is by no means incomprehensible. Who informs us that they must necessarily have taken root in that particular district of Palestine where Jesus tarried longest, and where his actual history was well known? And with respect to eye-witnesses, if by these we are to understand the apostles, it is to ascribe to them absolute ubiquity to represent them as present here and there weeding out all the unhistorical legends concerning Jesus, in whatever places they had chanced to spring up and flourish." (Ibid., i, 63, 64.)

The internal evidences for the authenticity of the Gospels are entirely ignored by Strauss on account of the internal evidences which he sets up in opposition to them; namely, the contradictory statements which he charges upon the Evangelists, and the impossibility of miracles. As these two objections are directed against the historic verity or credibility of the Gospel records, we shall consider them in the next Part, and proceed now to the statement of the mythical theory itself in the words of Norton.

As there was among the Jews an eager expectation of their Messiah, Jesus, at least during a part of his ministry, regarded himself as the Messiah, as "the greatest and last of the prophetic race." He was, consequently, so regarded by his followers. The expectation, which the Jews entertained of their Messiah, was definite and "characterized by many important particulars." They had formed many imaginations concerning him connected with allegorical and typical misinterpretations of the Old Testament; and, after the appearance of Jesus, there were some among the Jews who converted their imaginations of

what the Messiah was to be into fictions of what Jesus had been, and embodied those fictions in a history of his ministry. The Jewish people generally rejected him, as not their Messiah, and their leaders persecuted and crucified him as a religious impostor and blasphemer. Nor, according to Strauss, were the supposed fictions concerning him propagated by his immediate disciples, who had witnessed his deeds and listened to his words, his apostles, and their associates; nor, consequently, by those who knew and held the truth concerning him, as taught by them. To affirm that they were propagated by the apostles and their associates would be to maintain what the most reckless infidelity has shrunk from directly asserting; namely, that the received history of Jesus is a collection of enormous falsehoods, fabricated by his immediate disciples, and preached by them with ineffable effrontery in the very face of those who knew them to be false. From this simple solution of the origin of our religion, the "mythical" theory of Strauss essentially differs; for though he does not define the sense in which he uses the term "*mythus*," it is fundamental in his theory that *mythi*, and particularly the *mythi* or fables concerning Jesus, are not generally intentional falsehoods. It is this characteristic alone which distinguishes it from the more obvious and base solution of the origin of Christianity which has been adverted to. According to Strauss, the greater part of those fictions concerning Jesus, which are embodied in the Gospels, became connected with his history during the period of about thirty years which intervened between his death and the destruction of Jerusalem, (Strauss, i, 84,) that is, during the period throughout which many of his apostles and their associates — the first preachers of our religion — and the great body of those instructed by them were living. These fictions did not proceed from, nor were they countenanced by, them, nor were they received as true by those who relied on their authority. How, notwithstanding, they obtained such currency as almost immediately to obscure and obliterate his true history, is to be thus explained:

The age, it is true, was "a historical age" — by which term Strauss, I suppose, must be understood as meaning an age in which facts would be recorded, and mythological fables would not find ready currency — but "the pure historic idea was never developed among the Hebrews." "Indeed, no just notion of the true nature of history is possible, without a perception of the inviolability of the chain of finite causes and of the impossibility of miracles. This perception, which is wanting to so many minds of our own day, was still more

deficient in Palestine, and, indeed, throughout the Roman Empire. And to a mind still open to the reception of the marvelous, if it be once carried away by the tide of religious enthusiasm, all things will appear credible; and should this enthusiasm lay hold of a yet wider circle, it will awaken a new creative vigor even in a decayed people. To account for such an enthusiasm it is by no means necessary to presuppose the Gospel miracle as the existing cause. This may be found in the known religious dearth of that period, a dearth so great that the cravings of the mind after some religious belief excited a relish for the most extravagant forms of worship; secondly, in the deep religious satisfaction which was afforded by the belief in the resurrection of the deceased Messiah, and by the essential principles of the doctrine of Jesus." (Strauss, i, 64, 65.)

The theory of Strauss necessarily supposes that Jesus was a conspicuous individual who acted strongly on the minds of men. Before this theory can be received, it becomes requisite to explain the very rapid growth of those most extraordinary fictions concerning him, which sprung up and flourished while very many of his contemporaries were still living; especially as by a great majority of those contemporaries, his enemies, they would be at once indignantly spurned and trampled under foot, as being, what they were, monstrous falsehoods; while by another portion, the first adherents of Jesus, and the original witnesses of his ministry, their growth, to say the least, was not fostered — they did not rest on their testimony. Strauss has shown himself sensible that an explanation of this phenomenon is requisite; and the solution which he gives of the sudden development of such an array of fables concerning Jesus may be found in the following passage. It may be readily understood, if we bear in mind what has been before stated, that, according to his theory, the Jews had entertained many imaginations concerning their expected Messiah; and that the process in forming the history of Jesus which has come down to us, consisted in converting these imaginations of what was to be into fables concerning Jesus.

He says: "A frequently-raised objection still remains, . . . the objection, namely, that the space of about thirty years from the death of Jesus to the destruction of Jerusalem, during which the greater part of the narratives must have been formed — or even the interval extending to the beginning of the second century, the most distant period which can be allowed for the origin of even the latest of these Gospel narratives — is much too short to admit of the use of so rich a collection of *mythi*. But as we have shown, the greater part of these *mythi* did not arise during that period, for their first foundation was laid

in the legends of the Old Testament before and after the Babylonish exile; and the transference of these legends, with suitable modifications, to the expected Messiah was made in the course of the centuries which elapsed between that exile and the time of Jesus. So that, for the period between the foundation of the first Christian community and the writing of the Gospels, there remains to be effected only the transference of Messianic legends, almost all ready formed, to Jesus, with some alterations to adapt them to Christian opinions and to the individual character and circumstances of Jesus; only a very small proportion of mythi having to be formed entirely new." (Strauss, i, 84, 85.) This is the only explanation he affords.

It appears, then, according to Strauss, that some time during the thirty or forty years after the death of our Lord, the small body of his followers among the Jews was divided into two parties of very different characters. One was composed of his personal friends and followers, the apostles and their associates, who knew his true history and doctrines, and who did not propagate those falsehoods concerning him on which the religion of Christians is founded. The other was composed of persons who did propagate those falsehoods. These had their origin, as Strauss suggests, in districts of Palestine where Jesus did not tarry long, and where his actual history was not well known, and it would, he says, be ascribing absolute ubiquity to the apostles to suppose them to have been capable of being present here and there to weed out all the unhistorical legends concerning him in whatever places they had chanced to spring up and flourish. (Strauss, i, 63, 64.) Those who propagated these fictions concerning him had no intention of deceiving. They were unconscious of falsehood; they believed that what they related had actually taken place. They had so little acquaintance with Jesus or with the eye-witnesses of his ministry, that they did not know that all which they affirmed concerning him was untrue. On the contrary, they were persuaded that it was true. But though, as Strauss suggests, their fictions may not originally "have taken root in that particular district of Palestine where Jesus tarried longest," (Strauss, i, 84,) yet, in order to make converts to the belief of them, it was necessary that they should be preached in parts of Palestine where our Lord had been well known, and where there could be no ignorance respecting the essential facts in his ministry. Here, on the one hand, they would be indignantly and vehemently contradicted by the great body of the unbelieving Jews, and on the other, they would be denied and discredited by the true followers of

Christ. The innocent impostors, who, in their ignorance, propagated unconsciously such enormous falsehoods concerning him, must have been surprised to find all those acquainted with the facts in his history, whether friends or enemies, utterly confounded, to say the least, by their marvelous stories. One might think that their own confidence would have been shaken by the direct and authoritative evidence, which they must have encountered on every side, of the falsehood of their narrations. It might seem, moreover, that it would be impossible under such circumstances to procure converts to the belief of them. But such was not the case. Their own confidence was not shaken; they persisted in promulgating their stories, and they triumphed signally. They are the true authors of Christianity. It is to them that we are indebted for the Gospels. Their fictions have supplanted the real history of Christ, the original testimony of eye-witnesses, and have become the foundation of Christian faith! Nor is this all. Keeping themselves out of view, they have had complete success in putting their stories before the world as resting on the authority of the apostles and their associates, in making them responsible for their marvelous tales. The whole Christian world has believed that these stories proceeded from apostles and their associates. But it was not so. They proceeded from another party among the followers of Jesus Christ, a party that does not appear in history, the existence of which is irreconcilable with all remaining records and memorials of the times when it is supposed to have flourished, utterly irreconcilable with all probability, and which, therefore, was unknown to the world before its discovery by Strauss.

It is to be borne in mind that the distinguishing characteristic of the theory of Strauss, the "mythical" theory of the origin of Christianity, consists in the supposition that the *mythi* or fictions in the history of Jesus were not intentional fabrications for the purpose of deception, but that they sprang up, as it were, spontaneously; those among whom they originated, and by whom they were propagated, being unconscious of falsehood. This fact is fully recognized by Strauss, though not clearly apprehended by him in its necessary relations. His reader should keep it in mind. We must not suffer ourselves to vacillate between two theories wholly inconsistent with each other. The apostles and their associates were, or were not, the most shameless of impostors. According to Strauss they were not impostors. It follows that the history of our Lord, which the Christian world has received, was not derived from them, though it grew to its present form principally while the most, or many, of them were

living. It proceeded, therefore, from other individuals, of whom history has preserved no record, and who must have taught under the circumstances which have been described.

We may next observe, that, however difficult was the task of these teachers of our present religion in persuading the cotemporaries and countrymen of an individual as conspicuous as our Lord must have been, to give credit to a history of him full of marvels that were utterly devoid of truth, yet this was not the sole, nor the greatest, difficulty which they are supposed to have overcome. This teaching consisted, as we are informed by Strauss, in identifying the history of Jesus with the anticipations of the Jews concerning their expected Messiah. The *mythi* respecting this imaginary personage were ready made for their use, and they had only to turn them into historical fictions, and accommodate them to Jesus.

But every one knows what were the popular expectations of the Jews respecting their coming Messiah. Of him, David, the greatest of their kings, the founder of their monarchy, was, in their view, the especial type; though in all by which the favor of God had distinguished David, the Messiah was to be far more distinguished. He, too, was to be a monarch, the restorer of the kingdom of Israel, a warrior, a conqueror, the deliverer and exalter of his people. Establishing the seat of his empire at Jerusalem, he was to found a kingdom extending over the world, and enduring to the consummation of all things, over which he was to rule without a successor. This was the outline of their expectations, which, doubtless, before the coming of our Lord, was filled up, as it has been since, with many particular imaginations corresponding to its general character.

But according to Strauss, it was the purpose of those who propagated the fabulous history of Jesus, to evince that he was the Messiah through the correspondence of its fictions with the previous expectations of the Jews concerning the Messiah. This history actually shows one striking point of resemblance in representing Jesus as the last great messenger of God to the Jewish nation endowed with miraculous powers. But the whole representation of the purpose and effects of his mission, of his personal character, of his humble condition in this world, of his determined repression of all hope of worldly aggrandizement for himself, his followers, or his countrymen, of his annunciation to his immediate disciples that they must submit to poverty and

suffering, and prepare themselves for the last outrage of persecution, together with the account of the apparent triumph of his enemies, and of his cruel death — this representation, if it were a fiction, might seem to have been devised in direct opposition to the expectations of the Jews respecting their Messiah.

But it may be said that the facts to which I have referred were so notorious that no other account could be given by the honest impostors, who, unconscious of falsehood, propagated the stories of his miracles. Certainly these facts were so notorious that no other account could be given but that which we have received. But such being the case, it follows that no attempt could be more hopeless or more foolish, than an attempt to persuade the Jews that the life and death, the character, acts, and teachings of Jesus corresponded to their previous expectations of the Messiah. So far, indeed, from their finding any such correspondence, we know that, during his ministry, and after his death, he was rejected by a very great majority of the nation, as disappointing all their hopes from a Messiah, and exasperating their strongest prejudices.

This theory of Strauss is, indeed, an outrage upon common-sense, if the preceding account of it be correct, and no one will pretend that it is not. But we have as yet viewed this theory only under one aspect; namely, in its relation to the Jewish nation. We will consider it in some other very important relations in which its author has not presented it, and in regard to which he has, of course, given no explanation.

The heathens believed the Gospel, and of the strength of their belief they gave sure proof by the marvelous change which it wrought in their hearts and lives, by the wide separation which it produced between them and the heathen world, by their readiness to submit to all the deprivations and evils which it brought upon them. Now, from whom did the heathens receive their knowledge of Christianity and of the Gospels? The theory of Strauss admits of but one answer. According to this theory, they must have received it not from the main body of the Jewish Christians, but from those few mistaken men among them who, having little or no acquaintance with Jesus, propagated, unconscious of falsehood, those *mythi* concerning him with which the Gospels are filled, and who thus established in the world not merely a fabulous history of him, the professed Messiah of whom they knew nothing correctly, but likewise a new religion, embracing the noblest principles of action, founded upon faith in one whose real history they had obliterated or rendered doubtful, and whose

character they had essentially misrepresented. This is the only answer which the theory of Strauss admits. But the only answer admitted by authentic history and indisputable fact is that the heathens were instructed in Christianity by the immediate followers and companions of our Lord, and by their associates — by those who were perfectly aware whether their teaching was or was not true; that they received our religion from Barnabas, and Paul, and Luke, from Peter and Mark, from the apostle John, who resided so long among them, and from others associated with these early teachers. Above all, no degree of folly, certainly none to which a rational person can be required to give heed, will lead any one to pretend expressly that there is any evidence or any ground whatever for imagining that the Gospel was preached to the heathen world in two different forms; in one form by half-crazy fanatics, who filled the history of our Lord with stories of fictitious miracles, and in another, by his immediate followers and friends, who told the truth concerning him, whatsoever that was. But turning from unquestionable truths, we will enter the regions of mere hypothesis. We will clear the ground, as far as possible, of those facts that stand in our way. The Epistles of Paul we will regard as forgeries, and the whole history of the propagation of Christianity, which may be gathered from the New Testament, as a fabrication. We will suppose that these Christians received their instruction in Christianity from the fanatical and ignorant portion of Christ's disciples. Every one knows what these teachers effected. Let us consider their means and the obstacles which they had to encounter.

They were men very deficient in good sense. They had taken no pains to inform themselves correctly concerning the character, acts, and teaching of him whose disciples they professed to be, and whom they were so zealous in exhorting others to obey. They had, on the contrary, fallen into the grossest mistakes concerning them. God did not "bear them witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." The pretense that he did so is merely one of those fables which are put forward throughout the New Testament. It was not only morally, but physically, impossible that they should produce any miraculous evidence of the truth of their fictions. Nor were they distinguished for eloquence or ability of any sort, since, though they effected such an astonishing work, history has not even preserved their names, but has falsely substituted for them those of other individuals — apostles of Christ and the associates of apostles. Such were the character and the facilities

for accomplishing their purpose, possessed by these zealous missionaries of falsehood. What obstacles, then, had they to encounter?

According to Strauss their main purpose in their mythical history of Christ, which we now find in the Gospels, was to evince that a Messiah — named Jesus — had appeared among the Jews. This was the story which they propagated in the heathen world. But the heathen world would have regarded only with indifference or ridicule such a story from such preachers — a story that a Messiah had appeared among the Jews, a people toward whom the prevalent feelings of the heathens had been those of dislike and contempt; and in whose supposed good or ill fortune in the advent of their Messiah it must have been very hard to persuade them that they had any concern. Admitting, however, that it were possible to excite their attention to the subject, with what ineffable scorn must they have regarded the sort of evidence laid before them! How would they have listened to proofs founded on a pretended correspondence between a body of incredible fictions and certain passages of a book called the Old Testament — a book for which they had no respect, which even many of them had never heard of, and which, it may be safely presumed, no one of them had read — which passages were represented to them as expressing typically or mystically what the Jews had expected concerning the Messiah? With how much patience would they have listened to these Jewish proselyting missionaries who had come among them, when these missionaries themselves told them that the person, whom they called on them to receive as the Jewish Messiah, had been rejected by his own nation as an impostor and blasphemer, and had, in consequence of his pretensions, suffered a public execution, as ignominious as it was cruel? What must they have thought of this Jewish Messiah, the deliverer of his people, when he was preached to them after the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish nation? Is it possible, an intelligent reader may ask, that any one can have been so bewildered and confounded by irreligion and mysticism, as to imagine that the most astonishing moral revolution in the history of mankind, the establishment of Christianity in the heathen world, was effected by such agents, under such circumstances?

We add to Mr. Norton's critique of Strauss a few remarks:

1. The mythical theory is a tissue of self-contradictory statements. One Gospel is rejected as spurious, and then, again, treated as authentic, in order

to prove from it the spuriousness of another. In one place we are told that the people, among whom these myths originated, were in a state of childish ignorance and, credulity, under the influence of an untutored, extravagant imagination; in another place we are called upon to admire the deep philosophy, lying at the bottom of these evangelical myths, the expansive views, thorough analysis, and far-seeing sagacity of those ignorant and superstitious persons who propagated them!

2. What we are called upon to believe by the mythical theory, is, in short, that Jesus — if he wrought no miracles, and was the subject of no miracles — contradicted, in every circumstance of his birth, and education, and teaching, and life, and death, the best established and most cherished notions of all around him, concerning the promised Messiah, and was, nevertheless, believed to be that Messiah. We are called upon to believe that miracles were ascribed to him, because the Messiah *ought* to have wrought miracles; that he was believed to have risen again, because it suddenly occurred to somebody that he *ought* to have risen again; and that, *by such a process as this*, a creed of fables was transmuted into a creed of facts, and, toward the close of the second century, stamped indelibly, and with one impression, upon the faith and institutions of the great Christian communities throughout the world, so that the consentient tradition of all these Churches ascribes their foundation to the first disciples of Jesus Christ, and our Gospels to those whose names they bear; and this tradition is confirmed by the universal observance of the sacraments, of the weekly Lord's day, and of Easter, the special festival in remembrance of Christ's resurrection.

3. That no speculative system, based upon the myth of an incarnate God, could have started such a revolution in the moral world, as has been produced by Christianity for over eighteen centuries, with the manifest destiny to leaven and change the whole world, is evident, from the fact, that all the philosophical elements, to which the mythical theory attributes the propagation of Christianity, are found in the lofty speculations of Plato, in the logology of Philo, and a host of Oriental myths, concerning incarnations of Deity; but though they were in the world for centuries, they never exerted a world-renewing influence.

4. "With this last effort," says Dr. Schaff, "infidelity seems to have exhausted its scientific resources. It can only repeat itself hereafter. Its different theories have all been tried and found wanting. One has in turn transplanted and

refuted the other, even during the lifetime of their champions. They explain nothing in the end; on the contrary, they only substitute an unnatural for a supernatural miracle, an inextricable enigma for a revealed mystery. They equally tend to undermine all faith in God's providence, in history, and ultimately in every principle of truth and virtue, and they deprive a poor and fallen humanity, in a world of sin, temptation, and sorrow, of its only hope and comfort in life and in death. — The same negative criticism which Strauss applied to the Gospels, would, with equal plausibility, destroy the strongest chain of evidence before a court of justice, and resolve the life of Socrates, or Charlemagne, or Luther, or Napoleon, into a mythical dream. The secret of the mythical hypothesis is the pantheistic denial of a personal, living God, and the *a priori* assumption of the impossibility of a miracle. In its details it is so complicated and artificial, that it can not be made generally intelligible, and in proportion as it is popularized, it reverts to the vulgar hypothesis of intentional fraud, from which it professed, at the start, to shrink back in horror and contempt."

PART III.

THE HISTORIC VERITY OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS.

§ 20. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IN the preceding Part, the authenticity of the Gospels has been established by the most conclusive evidences. A book, however, may be authentic; that is, it may have been written by the author by whom it claims to have been written, and yet have no claims upon our confidence; that is, it may not be credible. Though this is rarely the case with historical books, and, in the nature of the case, inapplicable to such records as the Gospels, yet, we will consider them for the present, without any reference to their containing a divine revelation, and subject them to the same laws of historical criticism as may be applied to any historical record.

CHAPTER I.

A CONSIDERATION OF THE OBJECTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN RAISED AGAINST THE CREDIBILITY OF THE EVANGELISTS.

§ 21. THE ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES OR CONTRADICTIONS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

IT has been asserted that the Evangelists differ in some of their statements from each other to such a degree as to contradict each other. That we find their records as different as we should expect them, from independent writers, is admitted; but it can be satisfactorily shown, that they are not of such a nature as to impair their character as faithful and trustworthy reporters. The charge of alleged contradictions will be refuted in detail, in the interpretation of the respective passages to which the charge refers; such, for instance, as the difference with regard to the hour of the crucifixion of our Lord. Here we confine ourselves to general remarks:

1. The differences adduced, consist mostly of omissions by one Evangelist of what is mentioned by another, such omissions being regarded by Strauss as equivalent to direct negatives.* Throughout his "Life of Jesus," he conceives himself at liberty to discard facts recorded by one Evangelist only, on the mere ground of silence on the part of the others. Whatever an Evangelist does not record, he is argued not to have known; and his want of knowledge is taken as a proof that the event could not have happened. The sophistry of such an argument is apparent. Who will deny that eye-witnesses of one and the same event notice a different portion of the attendant circumstances, and that, moreover, those who record an event which they have witnessed, omit, ordinarily, by far the greater portion of the attendant circumstances, though they have noticed them at the time! Strauss's cavils could only have been precluded by the mere repetition, on the part of each Evangelist, of the exact circumstances mentioned by every other — a repetition which would have been considered to mark collusion, and which would thus have destroyed their value as distinct and independent witnesses. The deviations, therefore, with regard to particular circumstances attending an event, are so far from lessening the credibility of the Gospel history, that they rather increase it. They are deviations, such as are most sure to appear, wherever there is the highest degree of harmlessness, the calmest consciousness of entire truthfulness, and an entire absence of collusion. And, suppose we should have to acknowledge the existence of a deviation, for which — from a want of a full knowledge of all the attending circumstances — we could not offer a satisfactory explanation; as, for instance, with regard to the cure of the blind at Jericho, (Matt. xx, 29, 34; Mark x, 46, 52; Luke xviii, 35, 19) — such a concession would still leave the credibility of the Gospel history untouched. It would only conflict with the verbal inspiration of the Evangelists, but they would remain historical authorities of the first order, witnesses as fully to be trusted for the circumstances of our Lord's life, as Xenophon for the sayings and doings of Socrates. Even Lessing, that severe critic, while he pointed out apparent discrepancies in the accounts of Christ's resurrection, did not feel himself justified to reject the fact itself on the ground of these discrepancies. "Who," he says, "has ever drawn such an inference in profane history? If Livy, Polybius, and Tacitus record the same event, but with such a difference, as regards the attending circumstances, that the details of the one seem irreconcilable to that of the other, is, therefore, the event itself put in question? Now, if we deal so trustfully with profane writers, why should we torture the Evangelists for every syllable?" To which Tholuck

adds: "It will not be easy to find two historians in classic antiquity, who, though equally trustworthy, do not differ from, or even contradict, each other, when they relate the same event, be it from the imperfections of man's faculties of observation and description, or because the writers could not anticipate our circumstances and meet our wants. How insoluble are often the difficulties which arise from the conflicting testimonies of trustworthy witnesses at court! He that would make shipwreck of faith on account of some few insignificant discrepancies in the Gospel narratives, would be no greater loss to the Church than *he* would be a gain, who is induced to embrace the faith of the Gospel by no weightier argument, than the proof that the Evangelists stated alike every particular of each event, and wrote down the words of our Lord *verbatim* and *literatim*, like stenographers."

[* With regard to the Annunciation, for instance, Mr. Rawlinson observes, we find the following enumeration of discrepancies: "1. The individual who appears is called, in Matthew, *an angel of the Lord*; in Luke, *the angel Gabriel*. 2. The person to whom the angel appears is, according to Matthew, Joseph; according to Luke, Mary. 3. In Matthew, the apparition is seen in a dream; in Luke, while awake. 4. There is a disagreement with respect to the time at which the apparition took place. 5. Both, the purpose of the apparition and the effect, are different." In this way five discrepancies are created out of the single fact that Matthew does not relate the Annunciation to the Virgin, while Luke gives no account of the angelic appearance to Joseph. Similarly, in the section where the calling of the first apostles is examined, discrepancies are seen between the fourth and the first two Evangelists, in the following respects: "1. James is absent, according to John's Gospel, and, instead of his vocation, we have that of Philip and Nathanael. 2. In Matthew and Mark, the scene is the coast of the Galilean Sea; in John, it is the vicinity of the Jordan. 3. In each representation there are two pairs of brothers; but, in the one, they are Andrew and Peter, James and John; in the other, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael. And, 4. In Matthew and Mark, all are called by Jesus; in John, Philip only, the others being directed to him by the Baptist." Here, again, we have four discrepancies made out of the circumstance, that the first two Evangelists relate only the actual call of certain disciples, while John informs us what previous acquaintance they had of Jesus. So, from the mere silence of Matthew, Strauss concludes, positively, that he opposes Luke, in not considering Nazareth, but Bethlehem, to have been the original residence of our Lord's parents; from the omission, by the three earlier writers, of the journeys into Judea, during our Lord's ministry, he pronounces that they contradict John, who speaks of such journeys; he finds a discrepancy between this Evangelist's account of the relations between the

Baptist and our Lord, and the account of the others, since he gives, and they do not give, the testimony borne by the former to our Lord's character; he concludes, from Luke's *not saying* that John the Baptist was in prison when he sent his two disciples to our Lord, that he considered him as not yet cast into prison; he finds Luke's and Matthew's accounts of the death of Judas "irreconcilable," because Luke *says nothing* of remorse, or of suicide, but relates what has the appearance of a death by accident; he regards the presence of Nicodemus at our Lord's interment, as a "fabrication of the fourth Evangelist," simply because it is unnoticed by the others; he concludes, from their silence as to the raising of Lazarus, that "it can not have been known to them," and, therefore, that it can not be true; and, in other instances, too numerous to mention, he makes similar use of the mere fact of omission.]

2. By far the greatest number of the so-called discrepancies in the Gospels are of a chronological character, and some of them — as, for instance, the journey of Jesus into the country of the Gadarenes, which, according to Matthew, was preceded by a number of events that followed it according to Mark and Luke — might, indeed, be called contradictory, if it could be shown that any of the Evangelists designed to furnish us with a complete, consecutive account of the ministry of Christ. The very contrary of this assumption is an undeniable fact. They evidently do not intend, or pretend, to give us more than a selection from the rich materials of the life and labors of their Master. All that the Synoptists report of the earlier half of his ministry is confined to a few fragments. From Matt. xi, 21, it appears that Christ had endeavored by mighty works to call Chorazin to repentance; but neither Matthew nor the other Evangelists say any thing of the works of Christ performed there. It has, however, been contended, that Luke, in the preface to his Gospel, does claim to give a history of Christ in chronological order. But this is not so. Compared with the sketches, which some Christians had made in an unauthorized manner, Luke could very properly call his work "perfect" and "in order," even though he did not pursue the life of Christ from day to day, and week to week, but gave what appeared to him most important, in some systematic order. Each of the Evangelists had a plan of his own, according to which he arranged and grouped the events, and, therefore, the sequence — called *akolouthia* — of the events and sermons differs in each of the Synoptists. But if this difference in the selection and arrangement of the material in each of the Synoptists has its ground in the special plan which each followed, it is evident that this variety implies no incongruity or disharmony. The question, whether and how the

chronological order of the events, recorded by the Evangelists, can be established, belongs to the subject of the Harmony of the Gospels, which we shall treat in Part V. It is sufficient to remark here, with regard to such sayings and discourses of the Lord as are placed by the Evangelists in connection with different occasions, that we are fully justified to assume, that similar sayings and discourses were delivered by our Savior more than once, at different times and under different circumstances, as appears, for instance, clearly from those denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees which were first uttered by our Lord on his journey to Jerusalem, (Luke xi, 37,) afterward solemnly repeated in the Temple at the close of his public ministry. (Matt. xxiii.)

§ 22. THE ASSUMPTION THAT MIRACLES ARE IMPOSSIBLE AND UNSUSCEPTIBLE OF PROOF.

While German rationalism has vainly tried to disprove the verity of the miracles recorded in the Gospels, that is, to explain away the miraculous nature of these occurrences by means of an interpretation, admitted now on all hands to be entirely unauthorized and absurd — pantheistic and atheistic philosophy denies the miracles on the plea of their *impossibility*. This stupendous assumption is the basis upon which the criticism of Strauss, in his "Life of Jesus," rests. Miracles are declared to be impossible, and, therefore, a narrative of which supernatural occurrences form an essential part, is, just so far, said to be devoid of historic character. The thesis that miracles are impossible, implies, of course, that the word "miracle" is not used in the sense of the Latin "*mirabile*," meaning something wonderful arising from *natural* causes not known at the time of its taking place, or yet unknown. With this is conceded the proper definition of a miracle. It is a Divine interposition to accomplish, by special agency, an effect not to be reached in the natural course and order of events. But the denial of the possibility of such an interposition — from whatever stand-point the argument is attempted, whether with reference to philosophical conceptions of God's nature and attributes, or with reference to experience and the empirical laws of Nature, which are said to preclude the possibility of a sufficient evidence of the miracle — can be shown to be a mere begging of the question. Let us examine this axiom of modern infidelity in its chameleon-like phases, which all may be summed up under two general heads.

I. Spinoza, the father of modern pantheism, to whom God and nature are one, says in substance: "A miracle is inconsistent with the perfections of the Deity, for it is conceivable only upon the supposition that the self-manifestation of God in nature proved defective, but such a supposition would be irreconcilable with a belief in God's perfection." In this syllogism Spinoza takes for granted: 1. That there is in the universe no self-conscious, personal Intelligence, independent of matter, for he defines a miracle, at another place, "as something which we can not explain by a natural law, but which has always a natural cause," admitting evidently of no other Divinity *than what nature manifests*. *Matter is to him the only image of his God.* 2. That the world is still in its original, normal state, its harmony not having been disturbed by sin, the act of free moral agents, and that, therefore, there is no need of a Divine interposition for moral purposes, that is, for the sake of the moral beings in the physical universe. On the contrary, it is assumed, that the universe is governed only by physical laws, not by moral laws, and that a miracle would be an alteration of the established machinery of nature. 3. That, because nature is an expression of God's will, there can be no other expression. It is assumed that, because God acts after a particular mode in certain circumstances, he can never have reasons for acting after a different manner in other circumstances. It is assumed that an addition is an inconsistency, that to superinduce any thing further upon something previously existing is to declare that which thus existed to have been wrong or bad. It is evident that, unless these premises can be proved, the pantheistic argument against miracles falls to the ground. "The simple question," says Dr. J. Haven, in an article on miracles, (Bibl. Sacra, 1862,) "is this: *Is there a Deity at all?* Or is all power to be resolved into this great system of universal, invariable, eternal law — this grand machinery of 'eternally-impressed consequences,' that goes grinding and clanking on from eternity to eternity? If the latter, then we grant that miracles are out of question. But if *there be a God*, as some of us in our simplicity have supposed, if we may crave the indulgence of this highly-cultivated age so far as to be permitted to retain the antiquated notion of a Deity at the head of affairs; and if we place this Deity where he belongs, behind all those laws, and above them all, as their source and spring, then why may not the power that usually works in and by such and such methods or laws, if occasion requires, act in some other way, without or above those laws? Nay, why may he not, if necessary to the accomplishment of his purposes, even reverse, or wholly set aside for the time, those usual methods of procedure which we call laws of nature?" We call an

event natural, when it is produced by natural means or agencies. But God, who created these agencies and set them in operation, is himself supernatural, and when he operates in nature otherwise than through those so-called natural causes, we call the work supernatural. The work of creation is supernatural; it is a work in nature, proceeding from a power above nature. The raising of the dead would be supernatural, for there is no physical or physiological law capable of producing such a result. To contend that every event or phenomenon must be referred as an effect to a physical law, is simply to deny both the existence of a Supreme Intelligence as the original cause or creator, and that of the power of self-determination of the human will, either of which being denied, neither the possibility of miracles nor any other question of religion or morality is worth speaking about. "Admit, on the other hand, the existence of a free will in man, and we have the experience of a power analogous, however inferior, to that which is supposed to operate in the production of a miracle, and forming the basis of a legitimate argument from the less to the greater — as Twesten shows in his "*Borlesungen über die Dogmatik*." In the will of man we have the solitary instance of an efficient cause, in the highest sense of the term, acting among and along with the physical causes of the material world, and producing results which would not have been brought about by any invariable sequence of physical causes left to their own action. We have evidence also of an *elasticity*, so to speak, in the constitution of nature, which permits the influence of human powers on the phenomena of the world to be exercised or superseded at will, without affecting the stability of the whole. We have thus a precedent for allowing the possibility of a similar interference by a higher will on a grander scale, provided for by a similar elasticity of the matter subjected to its influence. Such interferences, whether produced by human or by superhuman will, are not contrary to the laws of matter; but neither are they the result of those laws. They are the work of an agent who is independent of the laws, and who, therefore, neither obeys them nor disobeys them. (See Rothe in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1858, p. 33.) If a man, of his own free will, throws a stone into the air, the motion of the stone, as soon as it has left his hand, is indeed determined by a combination of purely-material laws. But by what *law* came it to be thrown at all? What law brought about the circumstances through which the aforesaid combination of material laws came into operation on this particular occasion and in this particular manner? The law of gravitation, no doubt, remains constant and unbroken, whether the stone is lying on the ground or moving through the air; but neither the law of gravitation

nor all the laws of matter put together could have brought about this particular result, without the interposition of the free will of the man who throws the stone. *Substitute the will of God for the will of man*; and the argument, which in the above instance is limited to the narrow sphere within which man's powers can be exercised, becomes applicable to the whole extent of creation and to all the phenomena which it embraces." (Mansell on Miracles, p. 28.) As this argument ought to be apprehended with the utmost clearness, we will give it as stated by another late English writer, Dr. Heurtley, in his refutation of Baden Powell: "The human will is the element, the action of whose disturbing force upon the material system around us comes most frequently or most strikingly under our notice. Man, in the exercise of his ordinary faculties, is perpetually interfering with, or molding, or controlling the operation of those ordinary laws of matter which are in exercise around him. He does so, if he does but disturb one pebble in its state of rest, or stay the fall of another before it reaches the ground. He does so to a vastly-greater extent when, by means of the appliances with which art, instructed by science, has furnished him, he projects a ball to the distance of four or five miles, or constrains steam, or light, or electricity, or chloroform to do his bidding. Still his doings are not miracles, because they do not extend beyond the range of his unassisted powers. But what is there in the reason of things to make it incredible or even improbable, that God, on special occasions, and for special ends, may have endowed some men with *superhuman* powers, by which the laws of the material world may be controlled to an extent beyond what could have been done by *unassisted* nature? or that he may have directed or permitted beings superior in might to man to exercise such powers? That he has done so Scripture affirms. To say that it is contrary to experience is to beg the whole question at issue. The fact is, once admit that there is a God, and that he may, for special reasons, endow man with higher powers, and you grant that there are *agents* who have it in their power to interfere with or control the laws ordinarily in operation in the material world, so as to work miracles. Admit, further, that there may be an *occasion* calling for superhuman interference — and such surely is the authentication of a revelation containing truths which it was of the utmost consequence for man to know, but of which, except by revelation, he could know nothing — and the possibility is advanced to the highest probability."

We have shown, then, that "a miracle is *not* a violation of the laws of nature, in any sense in which such a violation is impossible or inconceivable. It

is simply the introduction of a new agent, possessing new powers, and, therefore, not included under the rules generalized from a previous experience. Its miraculous character, distinguishing it from mere new discoveries in nature, consists in the fact that the powers in question are supposed to be introduced for a special purpose, and to be withdrawn again when that purpose is accomplished, and thus to be excluded from the field of future observation and investigation. But the supposition of such powers needs not imply any violation of the present laws observed by present natural agents. The *laws of nature* are simply general statements concerning the powers and properties of certain classes of objects which have come under our observation. They say nothing about the powers and properties of other objects or classes of objects which have not been observed, or which have been observed with a different result. There are laws, for instance, of one class of material agents which do not apply to another; and there are laws of matter in general which are not applicable to mind; and so there may be other orders of beings of which we have no knowledge, the laws of whose action may be different from all that we know of mind or body. A *violation*, in the proper sense of the word, *of the laws of nature would only take place, if, in two cases in which the cause or antecedent fact were exactly the same, the effect or consequent fact were different.* But no such irregularity is asserted by the believer in miracles. He does not assert that miracles are produced by the abnormal action of natural and known causes — on the contrary, he expressly maintains that they are produced by a special interposition of Divine power; and that such an interposition, constituting in itself a different cause, may reasonably be expected to be followed by a different effect. So far, then, as a miracle is regarded as the operation of a special cause producing a special effect, it offers no antagonism to that general uniformity of nature, according to which the same effects will always follow from the same causes. The opposition between science and miracle, if any exist, must be sought in another quarter; namely, in the assumption that the introduction of a special cause is itself incredible. The ground of such an assumption appears to lie in the hypothesis that the existing forces of nature are so mutually related to each other that no new power can be introduced without either disturbing the whole equilibrium of the universe, or involving a series of miracles, coextensive with the universe, to counteract such disturbance." (Mansel, pp. 24, 25.) To the last-named assumption it is sufficient to reply: 1. If we admit the personality and, as implied in the personality, the moral nature of God, without which admission no religion, no

feeling of a spiritual relation between God and man, and no conception of a mind superior to nature can have any existence, we may doubtless believe that God from the beginning so ordered the constitution of the world as to leave room for the exercise of those miraculous powers which he foresaw would, at a certain time, be exercised; just as he has left similar room for the exercise, within narrower limits, of the human will. 2. That God should interpose in the uniformities which exist among natural phenomena, by introducing a new (miraculous) power, is the less surprising, as he has permitted man, as a free moral agent, to act contrary to the design for which he was created, and thus, by sinning, to violate the originally-established order of nature, and the miraculous interposition of God has really for its object to restore the order of things which has been disturbed by the fall.

II. It is asserted that "even supposing a miracle were wrought, it would be impossible to establish the fact by evidence." On what grounds is this assertion made? Hume says: "A miracle is contrary to human experience, and, therefore, incredible." To state this argument is to refute it. Neither the major nor the minor premise is true. To assert that miracles are contrary to all human experience is an assumption which begs the whole question in dispute. That miracles are contrary to general experience is very true, else they would not be miracles. That they are contrary to *all* human experience is not true. So far from this, they have become actually the objects of human experience in connection with the promulgation both of the Jewish and, afterward, of the Christian systems of religion. The facts are well attested, the statements clear, full, explicit. The instances, though rare, yet, in the aggregate, are numerous. The witnesses are many, men of good character and good sense. They testify to plain facts, about which there could well be no mistake. They appeal to their contemporaries for the truth of their statements; and that testimony goes uncontradicted, nay, is confirmed, by their enemies. Now it is a sheer begging of the question for any man to assert that miracles are contrary to human experience, when so many witnesses testify positively to the occurrences under their own observation of events, which, if they really did occur as stated, must be admitted to be miraculous. The fact that Mr. Hume, or any number of men, did not see a miracle, does not prove that nobody has ever seen one. Mere negative testimony can not outweigh positive. Nor is the major premise of Mr. Hume's argument more tenable. An event is not necessarily incredible, because not known to have occurred before. Is it quite certain that nothing can take

place in the world which has not already taken place? Even if it were conceded, then, as it is not, that miracles are contrary to human experience, it by no means follows that they are, on that account, necessarily incredible. If in ten thousand millions of occurrences we have found nothing but natural occurrences — this will never entitle us, by any logical rule, to declare that in no other occurrence can there be supernatural agency.

Again, it is said: "You can not prove a miracle, as it is beyond the capacity of a man to tell what powers are in nature. You may show us a phenomenon inexplicable in our present state of knowledge, but this does not prove it to be beyond agencies of nature as yet undiscovered by man." It is sufficient to reply to this, that, though we do not know the full extent of the powers of nature, there are some things — just such things as the works actually recorded as having been done by Christ and his apostles — of which we are quite certain that they are not within the range of natural agency. Moreover, "in proportion as the science of to-day surpasses that of former generations, so is the improbability that any man could have wrought in past times, by natural means, works which no skill of the present age is able to imitate. The effect, therefore, of scientific progress, as regards Scriptural miracles, is gradually to eliminate the hypothesis which refers them to unknown natural causes, and to reduce the question to the following alternative: Either the recorded acts were not performed at all, or they were performed, as their authors themselves declare, by virtue of a supernatural power consciously exercised for that very purpose. The theory which attempts to explain them as distorted statements of events reducible to *known natural causes*, has been tried by the rationalists of Germany, and has failed so utterly as to preclude all expectation of its revival, even in the land of its birth. There remains only the choice between accepting the sacred narrative as a true account of miracles actually performed, and rejecting it as wholly fictitious and incredible; whether the fiction be attributed to the gradual accretion of mythical elements, or — for a later criticism has come back again to the older and more intelligible theory — to the conscious fabrication of a willful impostor." (Mansel, pp. 22, 23.) Again, it is said by Strauss, and repeated by a writer in the late "Essays and Reviews:" "No testimony can reach to the supernatural; testimony can apply only to apparent, sensible facts; testimony can only prove an extraordinary and perhaps inexplicable occurrence or phenomenon: that it is due to *supernatural causes* is entirely dependent on the previous belief and assumptions of the parties." To

this Mansel (pp. 14, 15) makes the pertinent and weighty reply: "It may, with certain exceptions, be applicable to a case in which the assertion of a supernatural cause rests solely on the testimony of the *spectator* of the fact; but it is not applicable to those in which the cause is declared by the *performer*. Let us accept, if we please, merely as a narrative of 'apparent, sensible facts,' the history of the cure of the blind and dumb demoniac, or of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate; but we can not place the same restriction upon the words of our Lord, and of Peter, *which expressly assign the supernatural cause*: 'If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you,' (Matt. xii, 28,) and, 'By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth doth this man stand here before you whole,' (Acts iv, 10.) We have here, at least, a testimony reaching to the supernatural; and if that testimony be admitted in these cases, it may be extended to the whole series of wonderful works performed by the same persons. For if a given cause can be assigned as the true explanation of any single occurrence of the series, it becomes at once the most reasonable and probable explanation of the remainder. . . . One miracle is enough to show that the series of events with which it is connected is one which the Almighty has seen fit to mark by exceptions to the ordinary course of his providence; and, if this be once granted, we have no *a priori* grounds on which we can determine how many of such exceptions are to be expected. If a single miracle recorded in the Gospels be once admitted, the remainder cease to have any special antecedent improbability, and may be established by the same evidence, which is sufficient for ordinary events." Again, we are told: "In nature, and from nature, by science and by reason, we neither have, nor can possibly have, any evidence of a *Deity working miracles*; for that we must go out of nature and beyond reason. If we could have any such evidence *from nature*, it could only prove extraordinary natural effects, which would not be *miracles* in the old theological sense, as isolated, unrelated, and uncaused; whereas, no *physical* fact can be conceived as unique, or without analogy and relation to others, and to the whole system of natural causes." To this Dr. J. Haven, quoted above, replies: "True, that which is *from* nature, that is, produced by natural causes, can not be supernatural; but it is not true that *in* nature, that is, within the limits and domain of nature, there can be no occurrence of the supernatural. Nor is it true that whatever is beyond the power of natural causes to produce is, therefore, beyond the domain of reason to investigate, and must be received, if at all, only by a blind and unquestioning faith. That is not for a moment to be conceded. That which is extra-natural is

not of necessity incapable of proof. The question whether a dead man was, on a certain occasion, restored to life, is a question to be settled wholly by evidence and investigation of reason. If the event *did* occur, clearly it was supernatural; the laws and forces of nature are not adequate to produce such a result. But *did* it occur? That is the real question; and it is a question which falls as clearly and fully within the range of rational investigation, and the laws of evidence, as any question in physical science." One word more with reference to a phrase which Strauss and a writer in the "Essays and Reviews" use in place of an argument, "that miracles are inconceivable by reason." This phrase can certainly not mean that we can not have an idea of a miracle, for we can easily form the idea or notion of an event in nature — for instance, of a person rising from the dead, with a cause beyond nature. Those who use it no doubt mean by it, that a miracle is contrary to intuitive reason, that is, to a fundamental law or constitutional principle of the mind; such, for instance, as the law of causation. If this were the case, we grant that it would be impossible to establish a miracle. But what constitutional law of the mind is contradicted by a miracle? None has been named. It is certainly not the law of causation; for a supernatural event is not declared to be an effect without a cause; it is merely an effect not resulting from the agencies working in that system which we call nature. The principle of cause and effect must not be confounded with the principle of the uniformity of nature. While the former is universal, the latter is only partial; it declares, for instance, that fire left to itself will burn, but it does not say that fire may not be counteracted by a higher and Divine agency. Upon a disregarding of this distinction rests the assertion that a miracle is contrary to experience. Inductive philosophy has shown that there is a set of agencies working in nature, and that there is uniformity in their operations. All this is freely granted; but when it is said that there can be nothing else, we demand the proof that every occurrence must have a physical or mundane cause. To this demand infidelity has never given a response.

We have now met the assumption of the impossibility of miracles in all its various phases. The verity of the miracles recorded in the Gospel history rests upon the credibility of the Evangelists, and upon the divine seal which the subject of their narrative, Jesus Christ, stamps upon the whole Gospel history.

§ 23. THE ALLEGED LACK OF SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY BY PROFANE WRITERS.

The verification by profane writers of the many incidental allusions to the civil history of the times, which the writings of the Evangelists furnish, has been set forth in § 16. In § 18 of the same chapter we have seen that the existence, at this time, of one called by his followers Christ, the place of his teaching, his execution by Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judea under Tiberius, the rapid spread of his doctrine through the Roman world, the vast number of converts made in a short time, the persecutions which they underwent, the innocence of their lives, their worship of Christ as God, are witnessed to by heathen writers of eminence, and would be certain and indisputable facts, had the New Testament never been written. To expect from profane sources a testimony concerning the supernatural facts recorded by the Evangelists would be absurd, since those who believed them naturally and almost necessarily became Christians.

It has, however, been urged that, assuming the historical truth of the New Testament narrative, we might have expected far more frequent and fuller notices of the Christian religion and its Founder than the remains of antiquity furnish. It has, for instance, been said that Josephus ought to have said more of Christ; and Seneca, the brother of Gallio, the observant Pausanias, the voluminous Plutarch, the copious Dio, the exact Arian, should have made frequent mention of Christianity in their writings, instead of almost wholly ignoring it. To this objection Mr. Rawlinson makes the following reply:

"Let it be considered, in the first place, whether the very silence of these writers is not a proof of the importance which in their hearts they assigned to Christianity, and the difficulty which they felt in dealing with it — whether, in fact, it is not a *forced* and *studied* reticence — a reticence so far from being indicative of ignorance that it implies only too much knowledge, having its origin in a feeling that it was best to ignore what it was unpleasant to confess and impossible to meet satisfactorily. Pausanias must certainly have been aware that the shrines of his beloved gods were in many places deserted, and that their temples were falling into decay, owing to the conversion of the mass of the people to the new religion; we may be sure he inwardly mourned over this sad spirit of disaffection — this madness, as he must have thought it, of a degenerate age; but no word is suffered to escape him on the painful subject;

he is too jealous of his gods' honor to allow that there are any who dare to insult them. Like the faithful retainer of a fallen house, he covers up the shame of his masters, and bears his head so much the more proudly, because of their depressed condition. Again, it is impossible that Epictetus could have been ignorant of the wonderful patience and constancy of the Christian martyrs, of their marked contempt of death, and general indifference to worldly things; he must, one would think, as a Stoic, have been moved with a secret admiration of those great models of fortitude, and if he had allowed himself to speak freely, could not but have made frequent reference to them. The one contemptuous notice, which is all that Arian reports, sufficiently indicates his knowledge; the entire silence, except in this passage, upon what it so nearly concerned a Stoical philosopher to bring forward, can only be viewed as the studied avoidance of a topic which would have been unpalatable to his hearers, and to himself perhaps not wholly agreeable. The philosopher who regarded himself as raised by study and reflection to an exalted height above the level of ordinary humanity, would not be altogether pleased to find that his elevation was attained through the power of religion, which he looked on as mere fanaticism. Thus, from different motives — from pride, from policy, from fear of offending the chief of the State, from real attachment to the old heathenism, and tenderness for it — the heathen writers who witnessed the birth and growth of Christianity united in a reticence which causes their notices of the religion to be a very insufficient measure of the place which it really held in their thoughts and apprehensions. A large allowance is to be made for this studied silence in estimating the value of the actual testimonies to the truth of the New Testament narrative adducible from heathen writers of the first and second centuries.

"And the silence of Josephus is, more plainly still, willful and affected. It is quite impossible that the Jewish historian should have been ignorant of the events which had drawn the eyes of so many to Judea but a few years before his own birth, and which a large and increasing sect believed to possess a supernatural character. Jesus of Nazareth was, humanly speaking, at least as considerable a personage as John the Baptist, and the circumstances of his life and death must have attracted at least as much attention. There was no good reason why Josephus, if he had been an honest historian, should have mentioned the latter and omitted the former. He had grown to manhood during the time that Christianity was being spread over the world; he had probably witnessed the tumults excited against Paul by his enemies at Jerusalem, (Acts

xxi, 27, etc.; xxii, 22, 23; xxiii, 10;) he knew of the irregular proceedings against 'James, the Lord's brother,' (Gal. i, 9;) he must have been well acquainted with the persecutions which the Christians had undergone at the hands of both Jews and heathen; at any rate he could not fail to be at least as well informed as Tacitus on the subject of transactions of which his own country had been the scene, and which had fallen partly within his own lifetime. When, therefore, we find that he is almost entirely silent concerning the Christian religion, and, if he mentions Christ at all, mentions him only incidentally in a single passage, as, 'Jesus, who was called Christ;' when we find this, we can not but conclude that, for some reason or other, the Jewish historian practices an intentional reserve, and *will* not enter upon a subject which excites his fears or offends his prejudices. No conclusions inimical to the historic accuracy of the New Testament can reasonably be drawn from the silence of a writer who determinedly avoids the subject.

"Further, in estimating the value of that direct evidence of adversaries to the main facts of Christianity which remains to us, we must not overlook the probability that much evidence of this kind has perished. The books of the early opponents of Christianity, which might have been of the greatest use to us for the confirmation of the Gospel history, were, with an unwise zeal, destroyed by the first Christian Emperors. Other testimony of the greatest importance has perished by the ravages of time. It seems certain that Pilate remitted to Tiberius an account of the execution of our Lord, and the grounds of it; and that this document, to which Justin Martyr more than once alludes, was deposited in the archives of the empire. The 'Acts of Pilate,' as they were called, seem to have contained an account, not only of the circumstances of the crucifixion, and the grounds upon which the Roman Governor regarded himself as justified in passing sentence of death upon the accused, but also of the miracles of Christ."

Dr. Kurtz remarks, in his Church History: "Among *genuine non-Biblical* testimonies about Christ, probably the most ancient is a Syriac letter of Mara, addressed to his son Serapion, written about the year 73. Mara, a man thoroughly versed in Greek philosophy, but not satisfied with the consolations it offered, writes from his place of exile a letter of comfort and instruction to his son, in which he ranks Christ along with Socrates and Pythagoras; he honors him as a wise king; he charges the Jews with his murder, declares that thereby they had brought upon themselves the destruction of their commonwealth, but that Christ continued to live in the new law which he had given."

CHAPTER II.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE EVANGELISTS.*

§ 24. THE EVANGELISTS WERE IN A CONDITION TO INFORM THEMSELVES ACCURATELY AND THOROUGHLY CONCERNING THE THINGS WHICH THEY RECORD.

[* The argument to be presented in this chapter has been stated at large in all the English works on the "Evidences of Christianity." We follow substantially Horne's Introduction, deviating, however, from that author in the order of the argumentation, and basing the personal credibility of the Evangelists upon the preceding proofs of the authenticity of the writings ascribed to them. If the Gospel records have been written by the persons whose names they bear, it can not be denied that they were written by men who were possessed of a full knowledge of all they relate, and who had no conceivable motive to deviate from the truth. The credibility of a historian is established when there is sufficient evidence, 1. That he has had ample means of knowing the truth of the facts he relates, either by being himself an eye-witness, or by deriving his knowledge from an eye-witness; 2. That he is a man of a sound mind, free from any mental bias to self-deception; 3. That he is above the suspicion of having any motive or design to mislead his readers. Though historical works are generally accepted without a special inquiry into these criteria of credibility, being rejected only where there is positive proof that the historian is destitute either of the ability or of the willingness to report correctly, the Gospel history can challenge its being subjected to the severest tests of historical criticism.]

Two of them were the chosen and almost constant companions of the wonderful person whose life they describe; they listened to his public discourses, they enjoyed his familiar intercourse and private instruction, they were eye-witnesses of his miracles, and consequently received them on the testimony of their own senses. Certainly no other biographer ever enjoyed such opportunities of informing himself thoroughly concerning the subject of his narrative. Even cotemporary historians rarely *see* the facts which they relate; they are often in a distant country from that in which the event happened, and are informed of it only by public reports, which are seldom faithful in all points. If it happens that an author be at the same time both historian and witness —

that he has accompanied the general whose actions he relates, as, for instance, Polybius accompanied Scipio — that he has been his particular confident — we set a high value upon his memoirs, and should consider it an act of injustice to call them in question *without solid proofs*. If Plato has been deemed a competent witness, and in every respect qualified to compose the biographical account of his master, Socrates, surely the Evangelists were equally-competent witnesses of the facts which they have related.

It is true, two of them were not eye-witnesses; but they received their information from eye-witnesses, and their accounts agree in every essential point with those of the eye-witnesses; though it is evident, at the same time, that they did not know, or paid no regard to what others had before written on the same subject. (See more on this subject, § 32.)

§ 25. THE EVANGELISTS EXHIBIT IN THEIR NARRATIVES NO SYMPTOM OF MENTAL DERANGEMENT, WHICH MIGHT HAVE MADE THEM VICTIMS OF SELF-DELUSION.

To every candid reader of the Gospels the certainty of the assertion made in the heading is self-evident, and a contrary supposition seems unworthy of an answer. Yet, as there are so many who condemn the Gospels without having subjected them to a candid examination, we will show how unreasonable it is to suspect the Evangelists of being the victims of self-delusion. In the first place, let it be borne in mind that their testimony did not relate to certain abstract doctrinal points, concerning which they might have erred through some mental defect. It respected facts concerning the reality of which they could not be misled. They became the disciples of Jesus Christ upon rational conviction, not upon internal persuasion alone, but on the irrefragable evidence of clear and stupendous miracles, proofs submitted to their senses, and approved by their reason — such proofs as enthusiasm could not have counterfeited, and never would have required; and at every step of their progress, as their faith was called to signalize itself by new exertions, or to sustain new trials, it was fortified by new proofs. The slowness and caution with which the apostles received the fact of their Lord's resurrection from the dead fully exempt them from all suspicion of being the dupes of delusion and credulity. In the second place, the style of enthusiasts is always obscure, arrogant, and violent; the style of the Evangelists is the very reverse of this, plain, calm, and unexaggerated, detailing

the facts which establish the unparalleled perfection of their divine Lord with the particularity and consistency of truth. Moreover, they do that which enthusiasts *never* do; they record their own mistakes, follies, and faults, and those of very serious magnitude, acknowledged to be such by themselves, and severely censured by their Master. Nor do we discover in the Gospels any effusion of passion and imagination, such as we find invariably in the writings of enthusiasts.

§ 26. THE EVANGELISTS CAN NOT BE CHARGED WITH HAVING
HAD ANY MOTIVE OR DESIGN TO IMPOSE UPON THE WORLD
WHAT, IF IT DID NOT TAKE PLACE, THEY MUST HAVE
KNOWN TO BE FALSE.

No man of sense or candor ever dared to make such a charge. It is self-evident that, if the first disciples of Jesus, had any disposition to commit such a fraud, it would have been impossible for them to succeed in it with their cotemporaries; and that, even if they could have done it, they would not have had a conceivable motive for it. No man will propagate a deliberate falsehood without having some advantage in view, either immediate or remote. Now, the first teachers of Christianity could have no prospect whatever of any advantage. They could expect none from him in whom they professed to believe. Jesus Christ, indeed, had warned them to expect persecution, ignominy, and death in this world, if they continued to be his disciples. They could not expect any honors or emoluments from the hands of the Jews and heathens, who persecuted them with unrelenting severity. They could not expect to acquire wealth, for their profession of the Christian faith subjected them to the loss of all things. Moreover, according to their own principles, either as Jews or Christians, they involved themselves in eternal misery if they made themselves guilty of propagating a deliberate falsehood. Again, how incredible that the sublimest precepts of piety and virtue should have been delivered by men of such abandoned principles, as they must have been, if they had really been impostors! How incredible that the first disciples should have been willing to die for the cause of Christ, who, if he had not risen again from the dead, would have miserably deceived them! Lastly, if the apostles and Evangelists had designed to impose upon mankind, they would have accommodated themselves to the opinions and inclinations of the people whom they addressed; they would

carefully have avoided saying any thing that might offend them; but, instead of this, they did not spare the prejudices and corruptions of their cotemporaries.

That the Evangelists were, on the contrary, men of the strictest integrity and sincerity is, as has been already remarked from another stand-point, manifest from the style and manner of their writings. There are no artful transitions or connections, no effort to set off a doubtful action and reconcile it to some other, or to the character of the person that did it. They do not dissemble certain circumstances in the life and sufferings of their Master which have no tendency to enhance his glory in the eyes of the world: such as the low circumstances of his parents, the mean accommodations of his birth — that, when he appeared publicly to the world, his townsmen and near relations despised and rejected him — that few among his followers were men conspicuous for wealth, dignity, or knowledge — that the rulers, the scribes and Pharisees disowned his pretensions and opposed him continually — that some, who for a time followed him, afterward deserted him — that he was betrayed into the hands of high-priests and rulers by one of those who had been selected for his constant companions. Impostors would certainly have acted differently.

The same integrity and fidelity we find in what they record concerning themselves. They honestly acknowledge not only the lowness of their station, but also the inveteracy of their national prejudices, the slowness of their apprehension, the weakness of their faith, the ambition of some of the disciples, the intolerant temper of others, and the worldly views of all. They even tell us of their cowardice in deserting their Master when he was seized by his enemies; and that after his crucifixion, they had for a while given up their hopes in their Master, notwithstanding all the proof that had been exhibited, and the conviction which they had before entertained that he was the Messiah, and his religion was from God. They mention, with many affecting circumstances, the incredulity of one of their number, who was convinced of the reality of their Lord's resurrection only by ocular and sensible demonstration. They might have concealed their mental and moral deficiencies, or, at least, they might have alleged some reasons to extenuate them. But they did no such thing. They related, without disguise, events and facts just as they happened, and left them to speak for themselves.

In short, it does not appear that it ever entered the minds of these writers to consider how this or the other action would appear to mankind, or what objections might be raised against it. Greater marks of sincerity than those which the Evangelists bear it is impossible to find in any historical compositions that are extant; they convince their readers, in all they have written, that they published nothing to the world but what they believed themselves. When they relate any of the miracles of Jesus Christ, or the exercise of the miraculous powers with which they were endowed, they relate these astonishing facts, without any ornaments of language, in the most concise and simple manner; saying nothing previously to raise expectation, nor after the recital of them breaking out into exclamations, but they leave the reader to draw his own conclusion. When they narrate the resurrection and ascension of Christ they afford no explanation of any difficulties; they never offer a single argument to enforce their credit; they leave the bare facts with their readers, who may receive or reject them. In perusing the simple and unadorned narratives of the Evangelists it is impossible not to feel that the purport of their writing was *to bear witness of the truth.*

Finally, the same striking integrity characterizes the Evangelists when speaking of their enemies. Of all who were concerned in the persecution and death of Christ, they mention by name only the high-priest Caiaphas and his coadjutor Annas, the Roman Procurator Pilate, and the treacherous disciple Judas. The suppression of their names would have impaired the evidence of their history to posterity; but not the slightest tincture of resentment is observable in the notice of these persons. The epithet attached to Judas by all the Evangelists — ὁ παραδοὺς, who delivered him up — is expressive of the simple fact rather than of its criminality, which latter would more aptly be signified by προδότης, traitor, as he is styled on one solitary occasion.

CHAPTER III.

THE DIVINE SEAL STAMPED UPON THE GOSPEL HISTORY BY ITS SUBJECT, THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

§ 27. THE VERITY OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY BEST ACCREDITED BY THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

AFTER having proved that the canonical Gospels were written in the apostolic age, and having found no testimony contrary to the consentient tradition of Christian antiquity in regard to their having been written by the persons whose names they bear, we placed them on no higher ground than other ancient productions. We have, thus far, considered them merely as human productions, and subjected them, as such, to the common laws of historical criticism. The result of this critical investigation has been, that we found them to bear the highest marks of human credibility — such as no other historical work of antiquity has. The assumption that miracles are impossible, and that, therefore, credibility can not be claimed for a record of miracles, we have met by showing, on metaphysical grounds, that, and why, miracles are not impossible, and that, therefore, the miraculous elements of the Gospel history are not incompatible with its credibility. But we have now to go a step further, and produce the *positive* proofs of the historic verity of the miracles recorded in the Gospels.

Instead of basing the truth of Gospel history and the Divinity of Christ upon the miracles recorded by the Evangelists, we may prove the historic verity of the miracles and the Divinity of Christ by the unparalleled perfectness of the moral and intellectual character of *the man Jesus of Nazareth*, as he is presented to us by the plain and honest fishermen of Galilee. "Demanding nothing more," says Mr. Young, in his *Christ of History*, "than the *simple humanity* of Jesus of Nazareth, we shall venture from this platform to assert and expound *his true Divinity*. Dismissing all preconceptions, however fondly cherished, and however long adopted into the faith of the Churches, assuming nothing which is not virtually and even formally admitted by enemies as well as friends, we hope to show that the *manhood* of Christ, as it appealed to the senses and the minds of the men of his own times, supplies and sustains the proof of his *Godhood*. Behold only *the man Jesus* — *he* shall indicate and demonstrate his union with absolute Godhead. Such a *humanity* as his is utterly inexplicable, except on the ground of true Divinity."*

[* Mr. Norton, though not admitting the perfect exhibition of moral excellence in the teachings and actions of Christ, *as an intrinsic proof of his Divinity proper*, nevertheless argues from it *the truthfulness of the Gospel records*. His argument is this: "The Gospels contain an exhibition of character incomparably more wonderful than is to be found in any other writings. It is the character of a messenger from God, assuming in his name the highest authority, constantly exercising supernatural powers, and appearing among men for the purpose of making them acquainted with God, with their own immortal nature, with their duty, and with those ennobling and awful sanctions by which it is enforced. He is represented as discovering to men a perfect system of religion. He always appears, whether teaching, or acting, or suffering, as displaying the highest excellence. His character is everywhere consistent with itself and with the supernatural dignity of his office, though he is represented as passing through scenes the most trying and humiliating. We have, then, in these writings a just conception of a perfect system of religion, as taught by a Divine teacher, assuming the highest authority and exercising the most extraordinary powers, and displaying throughout a character in which we discover nothing but what is excellent and sublime. Now, the writers of the Gospels derived those conceptions which we find in their works either from reality or from their own imaginations. If it be contended that these writers did not draw from reality, but from imagination — the answer to this supposition is, that the conceptions of moral excellence and sublimity which we find displayed and embodied in their writings would imply a transcendent genius and force of mind to which there is no parallel, which it is impossible should have existed in four anonymous, unknown authors, and which are irreconcilable with the actual want of extraordinary talents, and of skill in composition, that is discovered in their works. These conceptions likewise would imply a correctness of moral principle, and a purity and sublimity of moral feeling, which could not exist in union with intentional falsehood. The argument, therefore, is briefly this, that the religion and morality of the Gospels, as exhibited in the doctrines, precepts, and life of Christ, are such as could not have been conceived and represented by the writers of the Gospels if they had not had a living archetype before them; and that, without such an archetype, the power of conceiving and representing what we find in the Gospels, if it ever existed in any human being, would necessarily imply that that extraordinary being had a character which entitled him to perfect confidence. It was wholly out of the power of the writers of the Gospels to deceive us, as they must have done, supposing their representations false; and the very existence of such a power, in any case, would in itself imply the absence of all will to deceive. The intrinsic character of these writings, therefore, affords positive evidence of their historic verity as to all essential facts."]

From this stand-point it is our object to show that the character and life of Jesus could not possibly have been the natural product of the times and country in which the Gospel records incontestably originated — nor, indeed, of any other age or country; that the moral and intellectual perfectness of the character of Jesus, and the wonderful harmony and consistency of his doctrines and works, could not possibly have been conceived and delineated by the Evangelists, unless they had been actually witnessed by them; that the moral and intellectual perfectness of Jesus imparts to the testimony he gives of himself, as well as to the miracles which the Evangelists ascribe to him, a verity absolutely unassailable; and, finally, that the unparalleled *human* perfection of Jesus — which by almost universal consent, even of unbelievers, rises far above every human greatness known before or since — can not be rationally explained, except on the ground of such an essential union with the Godhead as he claimed himself, and as the Evangelists ascribed to him. Thus, as the eye of a traveler at the foot of a mountain may slowly travel up the majestic slope till it is lost in the clouds or dazzling glories of the summit, so the mind may contemplate Christ from his lowliest and most human traits, where he is one with the humblest human being, up beyond the highest reach and limit of humanity, "far above all principalities, and powers, and every name that is named," to that dazzling summit of glory where he is one with God.

From whatever point of view we examine the human character and earthly life of Jesus, whether we contemplate the circumstances, times, and country in which he lived, or his moral and intellectual grandeur, or the testimony he gives of his own person, or the nature of the miracles ascribed to him, we shall be compelled, *by a strictly-historical process*, to acknowledge the justness of the deductions named above. This new homage to the Savior was first paid by the modern Evangelical theology of Germany. Dr. C. Ullmann opened the way by his work on "*The Sinlessness of Jesus an Evidence of Christianity*"; and, ever since the appearance of that classical work, greater prominence has been given by English, as well as German theologians, to the ethical element and human perfection of Christ. This branch of apologetical literature, in the English language, has been also enriched by Dr. John Young in his "*Christ of History*," by Dr. Horace Bushnell in his "*Nature and the Supernatural*," and by the theological tract of Dr. Schaff, entitled, "*The Moral Character of Christ, or the Perfection of Christ's Humanity, a Proof of his Divinity*."

§ 28. THE ADMITTED OUTER CONDITIONS OF THE LIFE OF
JESUS — LEAVING ITS ASTOUNDING RESULTS, AS WELL AS
THE UNLIMITED SCOPE OF THE MIND OF JESUS AND THE
PERFECT SYMMETRY OF HIS CHARACTER, UTTERLY
INEXPLICABLE WITHOUT THE ADMISSION OF A
SUPERNATURAL AND DIVINE ELEMENT.

The most destructive criticism finds itself compelled to admit that Jesus of Nazareth is a historical personage, that he was a resident in the obscure village of Nazareth till about thirty years old, a carpenter's son, poor, unlearned, unbefriended, and that he was put to an ignominious death by the Jewish hierarchy a few years after he had appeared in public.

It is utterly inconceivable that such circumstances and conditions would have been made by any Jewish writer the substratum of the miraculous life of the Messiah. And it is equally inconceivable that a mere man, under such circumstances and conditions, could have become the turning-point of the world's history, accomplishing what neither the wisdom of the wisest, nor the power of the mightiest, neither philosophers nor emperors could accomplish. This Mr. Young, the author of "The Christ of History," has set forth in a very minute and complete argumentation, of which we will give the main points: Ordinarily the early life and social position of a man are the true key to the proper understanding of his future character and career. To this rule the life of Jesus makes an unqualified exception. In his early training and position there is nothing that but distantly accounts for his subsequent relation to the world. His life stands out a mysterious exception from all laws which generally govern the destiny of men; what he became and accomplished could not possibly be the natural development of earlier impressions received through favorable circumstances. He grew up among a people seldom and only contemptuously named by the ancient classics, and subjected at the time to the yoke of a foreign oppressor; in a remote and conquered province of the Roman Empire; in the darkest district of Palestine; in a little country town of proverbial insignificance; in poverty and manual labor, in the obscurity of a carpenter's shop; without the help of literary culture, as is testified by the surprise of the Jews, who knew all his human relations and antecedents. "How knoweth this man letters," they asked, when they heard Jesus teach, "having never learned?" (John vii, 15.) This question is unavoidable and unanswerable, if Christ be regarded a mere man. For each effect presupposes a corresponding cause. The

difficulty here presented can by no means be solved by a reference to the fact that many, perhaps the majority of great men, especially in the Church, have risen by their own industry and perseverance from the lower walks of life, and from a severe contest with poverty and obstacles of every kind. The fact itself is readily conceded; but in every one of these cases, schools, or books, or patrons and friends, or peculiar events and influences, can be pointed out, as auxiliary aids in the development of intellectual or moral greatness. There is always some human or natural cause, or combination of causes, which accounts for the final result. In the case of Christ no such natural explanation can be given. All the attempts to bring him into contact with Egyptian wisdom, or the Essenic theosophy, or other sources of learning, are without a shadow of proof; and, even if he had been in connection with some sources of learning, the phenomenon he presents would remain unexplained, for, as we shall show, he taught the world as one who had learned nothing from it, and was under no obligation to it.

Another fact in the life of Jesus which leaves its astounding results unexplained on natural grounds, is his *early death*. On this point we will quote Mr. Young in full: "He, whom Christians recognize as the Redeemer of the world, was only a youth. Whether his religion be regarded as a system of doctrines, or as a body of laws, or as a source of extraordinary influence, it is passing strange that *he* should have died in early life. His brief period of existence afforded no opportunity for maturing any thing. In point of fact, while he lived he *did* very little in the *common* sense of *doing*. He originated no series of well-concerted plans, he neither contrived nor put in motion any extended machinery, he entered into no correspondence with parties in his own country and in other regions of the world, in order to spread his influence and obtain cooperation. Even the few who were his constant companions, and were warmly attached to his person, were not, in his lifetime, imbued with his sentiments, and were not prepared to take up his work in his spirit after he was gone. He constituted no society with its name, design, and laws all definitely fixed and formally established. He had no time to construct and to organize, his life was too short; and almost all that he did was to *speak*. He spoke in familiar conversation with his friends, or at the wayside to passers-by, or to those who chose to consult him, or to large assemblies, as opportunity offered. He left behind him a few spoken truths — not a line or word of writing — and a certain spirit incarnated in his principles, and breathed out from his life, and then

he died. In the ordinary course of events the memory of a mere youth, however distinguished, would soon have utterly perished from among men. But Jesus lives in the world at this moment, and has influenced the world from his death till now. This is an unquestioned fact. There have been multitudes in all the ages since his death, and at this moment, after nearly two thousand years, there are multitudes to whom he is dearer than life. History tells of warriors who reached the summit of their fame in comparative youth; it tells of men of science also, and of scholars, and of statesmen, who in youth rose to great and envied distinction. But the difference is obvious, and it is wide between the conquest of territory and the conquest of minds — between scientific, literary, or political renown and moral, spiritual influence and excellence. Is there an instance of a man who died in youth, gaining vast influence of a purely-spiritual kind, not by force of arms, and not by secular aid in any form, but simply and only by his principles and his life — of such a man transmitting that influence through successive generations, and after two thousand years retaining it in all its freshness, and continuing, at that distance of time, to establish himself, and to reign almighty in the minds and hearts of myriads of human beings? If there be, or any thing approaching to it, where is it? There is not such an example in the whole history of the world, except Jesus Christ."

"There is," says Dr. Schaff, "another striking distinction of a general character between Christ and the heroes of history. We should naturally suppose that such an uncommon personage, setting up the most astounding claims and proposing the most extraordinary work, would surround himself with extraordinary circumstances, and maintain a position far above the vulgar and degraded multitude around him. We should expect something uncommon and striking in his look, his dress, his manner, his mode of speech, his outward life, and the train of his attendants. But the very reverse is the case. His greatness is singularly unostentatious, modest and quiet, and, far from repelling the beholder, it attracts and invites him to familiar approach. His public life never moved on the imposing arena of secular heroism, but within the humble circle of every-day life, and the simple relations of a son, a brother, a citizen, a teacher, and a friend. He had no army to command, no kingdom to rule, no prominent station to fill, no worldly favors and rewards to dispense. He was a humble individual, without friends and patrons in the Sanhedrim, or at the court of Herod. He never mingled in familiar intercourse with the religious or social leaders of the nation, whom he had startled in his twelfth year by his questions

and answers. He selected his disciples from among the illiterate fishermen of Galilee, and promised them no reward in this world but a part in the bitter cup of his sufferings. He dined with publicans and sinners, and mingled with the common people without ever condescending to their low manners and habits. He was so poor that he had no place on which to rest his head. He depended for the supply of his modest wants on voluntary contributions of a few pious females, and the purse was in the hands of a thief and a traitor. Nor had he learning, art, or eloquence, in the usual sense of the term, nor any other kind of power by which great men arrest the attention and secure the admiration of the world. The writers of Greece and Rome were ignorant even of his existence till, several years after the crucifixion, the effects of his mission in the steady growth of the sect of his followers forced from them some contemptuous notice, and then roused them to opposition. And yet this Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, he shed more light on things human and divine than all scholars and philosophers combined, without the eloquence of schools, he spoke words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, he has set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and sweet songs of praise, than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times. Born in a manger, and crucified as a malefactor, he now controls the destinies of the civilized world, and rules a spiritual empire which embraces one-third of the inhabitants of the globe. There never was in this world a life so unpretending, modest, and lowly in its outward form and condition, and yet producing such extraordinary effects upon all ages, nations, and classes of men. The annals of history produce no other example of such complete and astounding success in spite of the absence of those material, literary, and artistic influences which are indispensable to success for a mere man."

We have seen that the outer conditions of the life of Jesus make its astounding results utterly inexplicable on the basis of ordinary history, experience, and psychology. The same is true with regard to the unlimited scope of his mind and the perfect symmetry of his character. Let us first consider the one great central idea of his mission, that of the establishment of a new spiritual kingdom: "Contrary to every religious prejudice of his nation, and even of his time," says Horace Bushnell, "contrary to the

comparatively-narrow and exclusive religion of Moses itself, and to all his training under it,* he undertakes to organize a kingdom of God, or kingdom of heaven on earth. His purpose includes a new moral creation of the race — not of the Jews only, but of the whole human race. He declared thus, at an early date in his ministry, that many shall come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God; that the field is the world; and that God so loveth the world as to give for it his only-begotten Son. He also declared that his Gospel shall be published to all nations, and gave his apostles their commission to go into all the world and publish his Gospel to every creature. Here, then, we have the grand idea of his mission — it is to new-create the human race, and restore it to God in the unity of a spiritual kingdom. And, upon this single fact, Reinhard erects a complete argument for his extra-human character, going into a formal review of all the great founders of States, and most celebrated law-givers, all the philosophers, all the prophet-founders of religions, and discovering as a fact that no such thought as this, or nearly proximate to this, had ever before been taken up by any living character in history; showing, also, how it had happened to every other great character, however liberalized by culture, to be limited in some way to the interests of his own people or empire, and set in opposition or antagonism more or less decidedly to the rest of the world. But to Jesus alone, the simple Galilean carpenter, it happens otherwise; that, having never seen a map of the world, or heard the name of half the great nations on it, he undertakes, coming out of his shop, a scheme as much vaster and more difficult than that, of Alexander, as it proposes more, and what is more divinely benevolent! This thought of a universal kingdom, cemented in God — why, the immense Roman Empire of his day, constructed by so many ages of war and conquest, is a bauble in comparison, both as regards the extent and the cost! And yet the rustic tradesman of Galilee propounds even this for his errand, and that in a way of assurance as simple and quiet as if the immense reach of his plan were, in fact, a matter to him of no consideration. Nor is this all: there is included in his plan, what, to any mere man, would be yet more remote from the possible confidence of his frailty; it is a plan as universal in time as it is in the scope of its objects. It does not expect to be realized in a lifetime, or even in many centuries to come. He calls it, understandingly, his grain of mustard-seed; which, however, is to grow, he declares, and overshadow the whole earth. But the courage of Jesus, counting a thousand years to be only a single day, is equal to the run of his work. He sees a rock of stability where men see only frailty

and weakness. Peter himself, the impulsive and rather-unreliable Peter, turns into a rock and becomes a good foundation, as he looks upon him. 'On this rock,' he says, 'I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' His expectation, too, reaches boldly out beyond his own death; that, in fact, is to be the seed of his great empire; 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth,' he says, 'alone.' And if we will see with what confidence and courage he adheres to his plan, when the time of his death approaches — how far he is from giving it up as lost, or as an exploded vision of his youthful enthusiasm — we have only to observe his last interview with the two sisters of Bethany, in whose hospitality he was so often comforted. When the box of precious ointment is broken upon his head, he justifies her against the murmuring disciples, and says, 'Let her alone. She has done what she could. She is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that this woman has done shall be told for a memorial of her.' Such was the sublime confidence he had in a plan that was to run through all future ages, and would scarcely begin to show its fruit during his own lifetime. Is this great idea, then, which no man ever before conceived — the raising of the whole human race to God, a plan sustained with such evenness of courage and a confidence of the world's future so far transcending any human example — is this a *merely-human development*? Regard the benevolence of it, the universality of it, the religious grandeur of it, as a work readjusting the relations of God and his government with men — the cost, the length of time it will cover, and the far-off date of its completion. For a Nazarene carpenter, a poor, uneducated villager, to lay out a project which can not be completed in many thousands of years, and transcends all human ability, doing it in all the airs of sobriety, entering on the performance without parade, and yielding life to it firmly as the inaugural of its triumph, is, we may safely affirm, more than human."

[* And yet it has been asserted that Jesus' conception of his Messianic mission was nothing more than a reflection of the popular opinions of his day, more or less modified by his own individuality! Of all the attempts to account for the work and character of Christ on natural grounds, denying the Divine element, this is the most unscrupulous and absurd. For nothing can be proved more irrefutably than this, that Jesus' conception of his Messianic mission was diametrically opposed to the Messianic ideas which prevailed among the Jewish people.]

The unparalleled universality of the mind of Jesus, and the perfect symmetry of his character, are comprehensively set forth by Dr. Schaff in the following remarks: "History exhibits to us many examples of commanding geniuses, who stand at the head of their age and nation, and furnish material for the intellectual activity of whole generations and periods, till they are succeeded by other heroes at a new epoch of development. As rivers generally spring from high mountains, so knowledge and moral power rises and is continually nourished from the heights of humanity. . . . But they never represent universal, but only sectional humanity; they are identified with a particular people or age, and partake of its errors, superstitions, and failings almost in the same proportion in which they exhibit their virtues. Moses, though revered by the followers of three religions, was a Jew in views, feelings, habits, and position, as well as by parentage; Socrates never rose above the Greek type of character; Luther was a German throughout, and can only be properly understood as a German; Calvin, though an exile from his native land, remained a Frenchman; and Washington, the purest and noblest type of the American character, can be to no nation on earth what he is to the American. Their influence may and does extend far beyond their respective national horizon, yet they can never furnish a universal model for imitation. . . . What these representative men are to particular ages, or nations, or sects, or particular schools of science and art, Christ was to the human family at large in its relation to God. He, and he alone, is the universal type for universal imitation. Hence he could, without the least impropriety or suspicion of vanity, call upon all men to follow him. He stands above the limitations of age, school, sect, nation, and race. Although a Jew according to the flesh, there is nothing Jewish about him which is not at the same time of general significance. The particular and national in him is always duly subordinated to the general and human. Still less was he ever identified with a party or sect. He was equally removed from the stiff formalism of the Pharisees, the loose liberalism of the Sadducees, and the inactive mysticism of the Essenes. He rose above all the prejudices, bigotries, and superstitions of his age and people, which exert their power even upon the strongest and otherwise most liberal minds. Witness his freedom in the observance of the Sabbath, by which he offended the scrupulous literalists, while he fulfilled the true spirit of the law in its universal and abiding significance; his reply to the disciples, when they traced the misfortune of the blind man to

a particular sin of the subject, or his parents; his liberal conduct toward the Samaritans as contrasted with the inveterate hatred and prejudice of the Jews, including his own disciples, at the time; and his charitable judgment of the slaughtered Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, and the eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them. All the words and all the actions of Christ, while they were fully adapted to the occasions which called them forth, retain their force and applicability undiminished to all ages and nations. . . . He was free from all one-sidedness, which constitutes the weakness as well as the strength of the most eminent men. He was not a man of one idea, nor of one virtue, towering above all the rest. The mental and moral forces were so well tempered and moderated by each other that none was unduly prominent, none carried to excess, none alloyed by the kindred failing; each was checked and completed by the opposite grace. His character never lost its even balance and happy equilibrium, never needed modification or readjustment. It was thoroughly sound and uniformly consistent from the beginning to the end. We can not properly attribute to him any one temperament. He was neither sanguine like Peter, nor choleric like Paul, nor melancholy like John, nor phlegmatic as James is sometimes represented to have been; but he combined the vivacity without the levity of the sanguine, the vigor without the violence of the choleric, the seriousness without the austerity of the melancholic, the calmness without the apathy of the phlegmatic temperaments. He was equally far removed from the excesses of the legalist, the pietist, the ascetic, and the enthusiast. With the strictest obedience to the law, he moved in the element of freedom; with all the fervor of the enthusiast, he was always calm, sober, and self-possessed; notwithstanding his complete and uniform elevation above the affairs of this world, he freely mingled with society, male and female, dined with publicans and sinners, sat at the wedding feast, shed tears at the sepulcher, delighted in God's nature, admired the beauties of the lilies, and used the occupations of the husbandman for the illustration of the sublimest truths of the kingdom of heaven. His zeal never degenerated into rashness, nor his constancy into obstinacy, nor his tenderness into sentimentality. His unworldliness was free from indifference and unsociability, his dignity from pride, his affability from undue familiarity, his self-denial from moroseness, his temperance from austerity. He combined childlike innocence with manly strength, all-absorbing devotion to God with untiring interest in the welfare of man, tender love to the sinner with uncompromising severity against sin, commanding dignity with winning humility,

fearless courage with wise caution, unyielding firmness with sweet gentleness. He is justly compared with the lion in strength, and with the lamb in meekness. He equally possessed the wisdom of the serpent and the simplicity of the dove. He brought both the sword against every form of wickedness, and the peace which the world can not give. He was the most effective, and yet the least noisy, the most radical, and yet the most conservative, calm, and patient of all reformers. He came to fulfill every letter of the law, and yet he made all things new. The same hand which drove the profane traffickers from the Temple, blessed little children, healed the lepers, and resuscitated the sinking disciple; the same ear which heard the approbation from heaven, was open to the cries of women in travail; the same mouth which pronounced the terrible woe on the hypocrites, and condemned the impure desire and unkind feeling as well as the open crime, blessed the poor in spirit, announced pardon to the adulteress, and prayed for his murderers; the same eye which beheld the mysteries of God and penetrated the heart of man, shed tears of compassion over ungrateful Jerusalem, and tears of friendship at the grave of Lazarus. These are indeed opposite, yet not contradictory traits of character — as little as the different manifestations of God's power and goodness in the tempest and the sunshine, in the towering Alps and the lily of the valley, in the boundless ocean and dew-drops of the morning. They are separated in imperfect men, indeed, but united in Christ, the universal model for all."

Though the above sketch comprises all the elements which constitute mental and moral perfection,* we can not refrain from adding a few lineaments drawn by Bushnell, when he considers him as a teacher, his method and manner, and other characteristics, apart from his doctrine which does not come into consideration in our present investigation:

[*We are aware that we anticipate in part the subject-matter of the subsequent section on the moral perfection of Christ; but it is impossible to consider mental entirely apart from moral perfection. Besides, the moral perfection of Christ will be viewed for itself, as *sinlessness*. Here we consider only his moral as well as mental *greatness*.]

"First of all, we notice the perfect originality and independence of his teaching. We have a great many men who are original within a certain boundary

of educated thought. But the originality of Christ is uneducated. That he draws nothing from the stores of learning can be seen at a glance. The impression we have in reading his instructions justifies to the letter the language of his contemporaries, when they say, 'This man hath never learned.' There is nothing in any of his allusions, or forms of speech, that indicates learning. Indeed, there is nothing in him that belongs to his age or country — no one opinion, or taste, or prejudice. If he is simply a man, he is most certainly a new and singular kind of man, never before heard of, one who is quite as great a miracle in the world as if he were not a man."

"Neither does he teach by the human methods. He does not speculate about God, as a school-professor, drawing out conclusions by a practice on words, and deeming that the way of proof; he does not build up a frame of evidence from below, by some constructive process, such as the philosophers delight in; but he simply speaks of God and spiritual things as one who has come out from him to tell us what he knows. And his simple telling brings us the reality; proves it to us in its own sublime self-evidence; awakens even the consciousness of it in our own bosom, so that formal arguments or dialectic proofs offend us by their coldness. Indeed, he makes even the world luminous by his words — fills it with an immediate and new sense of God, which nothing has ever been able to expel."

"At the same time, he never reveals the infirmity so commonly shown by human teachers, when they veer a little from their point, or turn their doctrine off by shades of variation, to catch the assent of multitudes. He never conforms to an expectation, even of his friends. When they look to find a great prophet in him, he offers nothing in the modes of the prophets. When they ask for places of distinction in his kingdom, he rebukes their folly, and tells them he has nothing to give but a share in his reproaches and his poverty. When they look to see him take the sword as the Great Messiah of their nation, calling the people to his standard, he tells them he is no warrior and no king, but only a messenger of love to lost men; one that has come to minister and die, but not to set up or restore the kingdom. Every expectation that rises up to greet him is repulsed; and yet, so great is the power of his manner, that multitudes are held fast, and can not yield their confidence.

"Again, the singular balance of character displayed in the teachings of Jesus, indicates an exemption from the standing infirmity of human nature.

Human opinions are formed under a law that seems to be universal. First, two opposite extremes are thrown up in two opposite leaders or parties; then a third party enters, trying to find what truth they both are endeavoring to vindicate, and settle thus a view of the subject that includes the truth and clears the one-sided extremes. It results, in this manner, that no man, even the broadest in his apprehensions, is ever at the point of equilibrium as regards all subjects. Even the ripest of us are continually falling into some extreme and losing our balance, afterward to be corrected by some others who discover our error, or that of our school.* But Christ was of no school or party, and never went to any extreme — words could never turn him to a one-sided view of any thing. This is the remarkable fact that distinguishes him from any other teacher of the world. Having nothing to work out in a world-process, but every thing clear in the simple intuition of his superhuman intelligence, he never pushes himself to any human eccentricity. It does not even appear that he is trying, as we do, to balance opposites and clear extravagances, but he does it as one who can not imagine a one-sided view of any thing. He will not allow his disciples to deny him before kings and governors; he will not let them renounce their allegiance to Caesar. He exposes the oppressions of the Pharisees in Moses' seat, but, encouraging no factious resistance, says, 'Do as they command you.' His position as a reformer was universal — according to his principles almost nothing, whether in Church, or State, or in social life, was right — and yet he is thrown into no antagonism against the world. With all the world upon his hands, and a reform to be carried in almost every thing, he is yet as quiet and cordial, and as little in the attitude of bitterness or impatience, as if all hearts were with him, or the work already done; so perfect is the balance of his feeling, so intuitively moderated is it by wisdom not human. . . . 'Judge not,' he says, in holy charity, 'that ye be not judged;' and, in holy exactness, 'Whosoever shall break, or teach to break one of these least commandments, shall be least in the kingdom of God;' in the same way, 'He that is not with us is against us;' and, 'he that is not against us is for us;' 'Ye tithe mint, anise, and cummin;' and, 'These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.' So magnificent and sublime, so plainly Divine is the balance of Jesus! Nothing throws him off the center on which truth rests; no prejudice, no opposition, no attempt to right a mistake, or rectify a delusion, or reform a practice. If this be human, I do not know, for one, what it is to be human."

[* It is worthy of note, that, while all other teachers have been refuted in something, no errors in science, theology, or morals, or no inconsistency with his own system has ever been, even plausibly, charged upon Jesus, though his sayings anticipate the sanction or condemnation of all religious thought, civilization, and philosophy.]

"Again, it is a remarkable and even superhuman distinction of Jesus, that, while he is advancing doctrines so far transcending all deductions of philosophy, and opening mysteries that defy all human power of explication, he is yet able to set his teachings in a form of simplicity that accommodates all classes of minds; and this for the reason that he speaks directly to men's convictions themselves, without and apart from any learned and curious elaboration, such as the uncultivated can not follow. No one of the great writers of antiquity had even propounded, as yet, a doctrine of virtue which the multitude could understand. But Jesus tells them directly, in a manner level to their understanding, what they want, what they must do and be, to inherit eternal life, and their inmost convictions answer to his words."

"Call him then, who will, a mere man; what human teacher ever came down thus upon the soul of the race as a beam of light from the skies — pure light, shining directly into the visual orb of the mind, a light for all that live, a full, transparent day, in which truth bathes the spirit as an element? Others talk and speculate about truth, and those who can may follow; but Jesus is the truth, and he lives it; and if he is a mere human teacher, he is the first who was ever able to find a form for truth at all adequate to the world's uses. And yet the truths he teaches outreach all the doctrines of all the philosophers of the world. He excels them, a hundredfold more, in the scope and grandeur of his doctrine, than he does in his simplicity itself. Is this human, or is it Divine?

"Once more, it is a high distinction of Christ's character, as seen in his teachings, that he is never anxious for the success of his doctrine. Fully conscious of the fact that the world is against him, scoffed at, despised, hated, alone too in his cause, and without partisans that have any public influence, no man has ever been able to detect in him the least anxiety for the final success of his doctrine. The consciousness of truth, we are not about to deny, has an effect of this nature in every truly-great mind. But when has it had an effect so complete? What human teacher, what great philosopher has not shown some traces of anxiety for his school that indicated his weakness? But here is a lone

man, a humble, uneducated man, finding all the world against him, and yet the world does not rest on its axle more firmly than he upon his doctrine. Questioned by Pilate what he means by truth, it is enough to answer, 'He that is of the truth heareth my voice.' If this be not more than human, no other man of the race, we are sure, has ever dignified humanity by a like example."

"Such is Christ as a teacher. When has the world seen a phenomenon like this? A lonely, uninstructed youth, coming forth amid the moral darkness of Galilee, even more distinct from his age, and from every thing around him, than a Plato would be rising up alone in some wild tribe in Oregon, assuming thus a position at the head of the world, and maintaining it for eighteen centuries by the pure self-evidence of his life and doctrine! Does he this by the force of mere human talent or genius? If so, it is time that we begin to look to genius for miracles; for there is really no greater miracle."

We close this section with some remarks of Dr. Ullmann in regard to the hypothesis, that the wonderful character of Christ was not drawn from actual life, but from the mind of those who record his life: "Modern criticism holds the opinion, that the picture of the personality of Jesus was the work of the fancy of the earliest Christian Church, who invented, after his death, this description of the founder of their religion. But this runs counter to all historical analogy. The great revolutions of history have not been effected by fictitious personages, but by living men; and those men must have possessed within themselves a real power corresponding to, and accounting for, the influence they possessed. Then, it is not conceivable that a community — that is, a number of individuals differently constituted — should have succeeded in producing so harmonious a character. Or, is it imagined that one man was the author of this image? In that case, we are at a loss to understand how that individual could produce so rare a work. We must, moreover, have to rank him higher than the object which called forth his inventive power; to him we must accord the meed of wonder and praise which we withhold from Jesus. But we should not thus find an explanation of the problem, which has indeed only become more difficult and involved. For in this case, as well as in the former, the first question which we put is still this, How is it, that an ideal of so perfect a kind ever came into the mind of man, whether of many men or of one individual? . . . How could a form of a sublime majesty, such as mankind had till then no conception of, and would not have at this day if it had not been here presented to us; how could that appear upon the bounded horizon of a Jewish mind? Or could the idea of

him who was the first to embrace, in his boundless love, the whole human race, arise within the narrow consciousness of an Israelite? Further, the incredibility of all this will be fully apparent, if we take into consideration the education and mental training of the first disciples. They were plain, simple men; untrained as authors; the large proportion of them were any thing but men of fancy and imagination. They were, moreover, men of sincerity and simplicity in their religious belief; hence they would not have invented had they been able. And even if they would, it is certain that they could never have succeeded in achieving, with the means at their disposal — humanly speaking, so insignificant — what the masters of thought and of discourse, a Plato and a Xenophon, had, in their account of Socrates, failed to accomplish. Let criticism show us that any thing similar occurs elsewhere in the page of history! Till it does so — and it never will be able to do so — we shall continue to maintain — what seems so abundantly evident to every healthy mind — that the reason why the disciples have been able to place before our eye in such vivid reality so great a majesty of moral character, is, that they themselves had seen in real life one who manifested those qualities. The inimitable nature of the Gospel picture must ever remain one of its leading characteristics. But the fact that it can not be imitated is a pledge of the truth of its contents."

§ 29. THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS, THE IDEA OF WHICH COULD NOT HAVE BEEN CONCEIVED BY THE EVANGELISTS, IF THEY HAD NOT SEEN IT ACTUALIZED IN THE LIFE OF JESUS — INCONTESTABLY PROVING THAT HE WAS NOT A MERE MAN.

Before we proceed to apply sinlessness to the person of Jesus, it is proper to define the term, and to make some remarks on the scope and importance of the investigation before us, in doing which we give a condensation of the elaborate argumentation of Ullmann. The idea of sinlessness is, in the first instance, a negative one. It is the absence of antagonism to the moral law, and to the Divine will, of which that law is the expression; and this not only in relation to separate acts of will and outward actions, but also in relation to the tendency of the whole moral nature, and to its most deep-seated disposition. Doubtless this conception is in itself of great importance, inasmuch as it marks off, more distinctly than any other, the line of demarkation between moral purity

and any trace of moral pollution. Yet it is not sufficient to regard sinlessness as the absence of all opposition to the moral law. For the conception of sinlessness is one which, like that of sin, can be applied only to natures such as have been appointed to will and to do in the capacity of moral agents; in the case of which, therefore, the omission of such willing and doing is itself a deviation from the divine law of life. Sinlessness must, therefore, imply positive goodness — goodness of nature, and goodness in action. It is in this sense of the word, not as negative merely, but as essentially positive, that we apply the epithet "sinless" to Jesus. By this epithet he is characterized as not only free from all sin, but as holy. By it is meant that he was filled at every moment of his life with the spirit of obedience, and with a love to God which surrendered itself unconditionally to his will, and with those powers which flow from an uninterrupted communion with God. Such sinlessness can be predicated only of an individual in whose case, on the one hand, the impossibility of sinning does not follow at once from a necessity of his nature, who, in other words, is susceptible of being tempted,* and whom, on the other hand, we may believe endowed with an integrity of moral nature, by the right use of which the possibility of not sinning becomes an impossibility of sinning. In a case where both these conditions are fulfilled, the development of a life altogether pure and holy is conceivable; a life it would be which we should have to regard as at once typically perfect — raised far above every thing which history tells us of, and, at the same time, as truly human; and this is what we hold the moral character and life of Jesus to have been.

[* The question, how far it can be affirmed, from a dogmatical or speculative stand-point, that sinfulness or actual transgression in Christ is *a priori* inconceivable, is out of the scope of our present investigation. It will be fully considered in our comments on the temptation of Christ, (Matt. iv.) It is sufficient here to remark, that we must be careful to distinguish the possibility of sinning from a leaning or bent toward sin. Sin may be possible where it has not existed in the faintest degree; but a *penchant* toward sin is inconsistent with sinlessness, for it involves a germ, a minimum of sin. The possibility of sin must be presupposed in Jesus, ere we can conceive that Jesus could be tempted. A liability to be tempted does not in itself imply the existence of any evil; for even the purest virtue, *if it dwells in a finite nature*, is liable to be tempted. The impossibility of sinning, in the abstract, can be ascribed to the infinite God alone; of him it is true in the absolute necessity of his nature — a necessity which is identical with the highest liberty. Had Jesus been endowed with an absolute impossibility of sin, he could not have been

a true man; his temptation is, therefore, presented to us in the Scriptures as one of the most marked features of his history, and as the indispensable condition of his typical character, while, at the same time, the possibility of sin in him never became actual fact.]

Hitherto the doctrine of the sinless character of Christ has been almost invariably contemplated in the light of an immediate postulate of faith, as a necessary consequence of the incarnation, or as an indispensable condition of the work of Christ as Redeemer; and those who have thus treated it, have not proceeded from this stand-point to a more detailed investigation and proof of the fact itself. We, on the contrary, will leave out of account this immediate conviction of the truth of the doctrine — without, at the same time, calling it in question, or denying that it may be right and valid in its own place — and begin by seeking to establish and vindicate our belief in the sinlessness of Christ. In the mode of proof that we shall adopt in so doing, our arguments will be drawn from the historical appearance of Christ. We do not say: Because Christ was the Son of God, he could not be subject to sin; or, because he was the Redeemer, he must have been free from sin. What we say is: Because he *was* free from sin, and showed himself in all respects perfectly pure and holy, we are warranted in believing that he was the Son of God, the deliverer from all sin, the author of true redemption, and the revealer of redeeming truth. Now, while we follow this historical and apologetical course, we do not mean to assert that the dogmatical or philosophical course is valueless. We are persuaded that, if both methods are rightly pursued, they must lead to the same result. Doctrinally to maintain the sinlessness of Christ were to believe an empty form, if that doctrine had no basis of historical reality; and the historical reality would lie on something fragmentary and detached, were it not organically united with the sum total of the Christian system. But while the two methods mutually presuppose and require one another, still, in their practical treatment, they must be carefully distinguished.

The apologetical mode of presenting the sinlessness of Jesus has a very peculiar import, in that it appeals to the moral consciousness of men. The truly-convincing evidences for Christianity are those which are at once theoretical and practical; for the object is not only by the use of argument to convince the understanding, but at the same time to touch the conscience, to move the will, and to give a decided impulse to the spirit, and a new direction

to the whole life. The entrance into the domain of Christianity is not to be gained by a mere process of thought, but can only be attained by undergoing a new process of life, a radical change of the moral nature. Now, the subject which we have here to consider speaks directly to the conscience. The image of Jesus rises up before the soul as a thing that has really been, in all its clear and stainless purity. True, it can never be reproduced as a living reality in us, without shivering and shattering all our virtuous conceits, without casting us, as sinful men, prostrate in the dust before the Holy One. But while it thus humbles us, it exalts us too, and draws us with an inwardly-overpowering might into the communion of holy and compassionate Divine love, shining forth on us from him as the brightest mirror. If Jesus is holy, free from sin, and true to the exclusion of all error, and thus stands upon a platform elevated high above the common fate of mortals, all of whom, without exception, are subject to error and to sin — then we are both entitled and enjoined to reverence in him — in his whole manifestation upon earth, in all that he did and all that he taught — the exponent of the will of God concerning man; then we have every warrant to look to him, the Sinless One, as the author of our deliverance from sin, to him, being one with the Father, as the restorer of true union with God. It is thus that the apologetical mode of presenting the sinlessness of Jesus, while it vindicates belief, is at the same time fitted to call forth and increase the same.

After these preliminary remarks, let us contemplate the portrait of the moral perfection of Christ. We find it most comprehensively drawn by Dr. Schaff, and give it — detached from other traits of his character which we have dwelt upon in the preceding section, and from considerations to which we shall draw the attention afterward. He says:

"The first impression which we receive from the life of Jesus, is that of its perfect *innocency* in the midst of a sinful world. He, and he alone, carried the innocence of a pure childhood untarnished through his youth and manhood. . . Of the boyhood of Jesus we know only one fact, recorded by Luke; but it is in perfect keeping with the peculiar charm of his childhood, and foreshadows at the same time the glory of his public life, as one uninterrupted service of his Heavenly Father. When twelve years old we find him in the Temple, in the midst of the Jewish doctors, not teaching and offending them, as in the apocryphal Gospels, by any immodesty or forwardness, but hearing and asking questions, thus actually learning from them; and yet filling them with astonishment at his understanding and answers. There is nothing premature,

forced, or unbecoming his age, and yet a degree of wisdom and an intensity of interest in religion which rises far above a purely-human youth. 'He increased,' we are told, 'in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man;' he was subject to his parents, and practiced all the virtues of an obedient son; and yet he filled them with a sacred awe as they saw him absorbed 'in the things of his Father,' and heard him utter words which they were unable to understand at the time, but which Mary treasured up in her heart as a holy secret. Such an idea of a harmless and faultless, heavenly childhood, of a growing, learning, and yet surprisingly-wise boyhood, as it meets us in living reality at the portal of the Gospel history, never entered the imagination of biographer, poet, or philosopher before. On the contrary, as has been justly observed by Horace Bushnell, 'in all the higher ranges of character, the excellence portrayed is never the simple unfolding of a harmonious and perfect beauty contained in the germ of childhood, but it is a character formed by a process of rectification in which many follies are mended and distempers removed, in which confidence is checked by defeat, passion moderated by reason, smartness sobered by experience. Commonly a certain pleasure is taken in showing how the many wayward sallies of the boy are, at length, reduced by discipline to the character of wisdom, justice, and public heroism so much admired. Besides, if any writer, of almost any age, will undertake to describe, not merely a spotless, but a superhuman or celestial childhood, not having the reality before him, he must be somewhat more than human himself if he does not pile together a mass of clumsy exaggerations, and draw and overdraw, till neither heaven nor earth can find any verisimilitude in the picture.' This unnatural exaggeration, into which the mythical fancy of man, in its endeavor to produce a superhuman childhood and boyhood, will inevitably fall, is strikingly exhibited in the apocryphal Gospels, which are related to the canonical Gospels as the counterfeit to the genuine coin, or as a revolting caricature to the inimitable original, but which, by the very contrast, tend, negatively, to corroborate the truth of Evangelical history. While the Evangelists expressly reserve the performance of miracles to the age of maturity and public life, and observe a significant silence concerning the parents of Jesus, the pseudo-evangelists fill the infancy and early years of the Savior with the strangest prodigies."

"In vain we look through the entire biography of Christ for a single stain, or the slightest shadow on his moral character. There never lived a more harmless being on earth. He injured nobody, he took advantage of nobody, he

never spoke an improper word, he never committed a wrong action.* The manner of expelling the profane traffickers from the Temple is the only instance which modern criticism has dared to quote against his freedom from the faults of humanity. But the very effect which it produced shows that, far from being the outburst of passion, the expulsion was a judicial act of a religious reformer, vindicating in just and holy zeal the honor of the Lord of the Temple, and that with a dignity and majesty which at once silenced the offenders, though superior in number and physical strength, and made them submit to their well-deserved punishment without a murmur, and in awe of the presence of a superhuman power. The cursing of the unfruitful fig-tree can still less be urged, as it evidently was a significant symbolical

[* "No vice that has a name can be thought of in connection with Jesus Christ. Ingenious malignity looks in vain for the faintest trace of self-seeking in his motives; sensuality shrinks abashed from his celestial purity; falsehood can leave no stain on him who is incarnate truth; injustice is forgotten beside his errorless equity; the very possibility of avarice is swallowed up in his benignity and love; the very idea of ambition is lost in his Divine wisdom and Divine self-abnegation." (*Bayne.*)]

act, foreshadowing the fearful doom of the impenitent Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem.* . . . But this freedom from the common sin and guilt is, after all, only the negative side of his character, which rises in magnitude as we contemplate the positive side, namely, his moral and religious perfection. It is universally admitted, even by Deists and rationalists, that Christ taught the purest and sublimest system of ethics, which throws all the moral precepts and maxims of the wisest men of antiquity far into the shade. The Sermon on the Mount alone is worth infinitely more than all that Confucius, Socrates, and Seneca ever said or wrote on duty and virtue. But the difference is still greater if we come to the more difficult task of practice. While the wisest and best of men never live up even to their own imperfect standard of excellency, Christ fully carried out his perfect doctrine in his life and conduct. He is the living incarnation of the ideal standard of virtue and holiness, and universally acknowledged to be the highest model for all that is pure, and good, and noble in the sight of God and man. We find him moving in all the ordinary and essential relations of life, as a son, a friend, a citizen, a teacher, at home and in

public; we find him among all classes of society, with sinners and saints, with the poor and the wealthy, with the sick and the healthy, with little children, grown men and women, with plain fishermen and learned scribes, with despised publicans and honored members of the Sanhedrim, with friends and foes, with admiring disciples and bitter persecutors, now with an individual, as Nicodemus or the woman of Samaria, now in the familiar circle of the twelve, now in the crowds of the people; we find him in all situations, in the synagogue and the Temple, at home and on journeys, in villages and the city of Jerusalem, in the desert and on the mountain, at the wedding feast and the grave, in Gethsemane, in the judgment-hall and on Calvary. In all these various relations, conditions, and situations, as they are now crowded within the few years of his public ministry, he sustains the same consistent character throughout, without ever exposing himself to censure. He fulfills every duty to God, to man, and to himself, without a single violation of duty, and exhibits an entire conformity to the law, in the spirit as well as the letter. His life is one unbroken service of God in active and passive obedience to his holy will, one grand act of absolute love to God and love to man, of personal self-consecration to the glory of the Heavenly Father and the salvation of a fallen race. In the language of the people who were 'beyond measure astonished at his works,' we must say, the more we study his life: 'He did all things well.' In a solemn appeal to his Heavenly Father, in the parting hour, he could proclaim to the world that he had glorified him in the earth and finished the work he gave him to do."

[* These and a few other instances in the life of Jesus — namely, the charge of disobedience toward his parents for remaining behind in the Temple, of interference with the rights of property in permitting the demons to rush among the herd of swine, his selection of Judas to the apostleship, the appearance of untruth in John vii, 8-10 — though frivolous and scarcely worthy of notice in connection with a nature so elevated as that of Jesus, will be fully considered in our comments upon the respective passages. They certainly leave not the minutest stain on the purity of Jesus. The argument against the sinlessness of Jesus, drawn from a pretended impossibility of sinlessness in a finite nature, is a mere *petitio principii*, and can not fall within the scope of this investigation, which proposes to deal only with facts.]

"The first feature in this singular perfection of Christ's character which strikes our attention, is the perfect harmony of virtue and piety, of morality and

religion, or of love to God and love to man. The ground-work of his character was the most intimate and uninterrupted union and communion with his Heavenly Father, from whom he derived, to whom he referred every thing. Already, in his twelfth year, he found his life-element and delight in the things of his Father. It was his daily food to do the will of Him that sent him, and to finish his work. To him he looked in prayer before every important act, and taught his disciples that model prayer, which, for simplicity, brevity, comprehensiveness, and suitableness can never be surpassed. He often retired to a mountain or solitary place for prayer, and spent days and nights in the blessed privilege. But so constant and uniform was his habit of communion with the great Jehovah, that he kept it up amid the multitude, and converted the crowded city into a religious retreat. But the piety of Christ was no inactive contemplation, or retiring mysticism and selfish enjoyment, but thoroughly practical, ever active in works of charity, and tending to regenerate and transform the world into the kingdom of God. 'He went about doing good.' His life is an unbroken series of good words and virtues in active exercise, all proceeding from the same union with God, animated by the same love, and tending to the same end, the glory of God and the happiness of man."

"Finally, as all the active virtues meet in him, so he unites the passive. No character can become complete without trial and suffering. The ancient Greeks and Romans admired a good man struggling with misfortune as a sight worthy of the gods. Plato describes the righteous man as one who, without doing any injustice, yet has the appearance of the greatest injustice, and proves his own justice by perseverance against all calumny unto death; yea, he predicts that, if such a righteous man should ever appear, he would be 'scourged, tortured, bound, deprived of his sight, and after having suffered all possible injury, nailed on a post.' (Politicus, p. 74, ss. ed., Ast., p. 361, E. ed., Bip.) No wonder that the ancient Fathers saw in this remarkable passage an unconscious prophecy of Christ. But how far is this ideal of the great philosopher from the actual reality, as it appeared three hundred years afterward! The highest form of passive virtue attained by ancient heathenism or modern secular heroism is that stoicism which meets and overcomes the trials and misfortunes of life in the spirit of haughty contempt and unfeeling indifference, which destroys the sensibilities, and is but another exhibition of selfishness and pride. Christ has set up a far higher standard by his teaching and example, never known before. . . . His passive virtue is not confined to the closing scenes of his ministry. As

human life is beset at every step by trials, vexations, and hinderances, which should serve the educational purpose of developing its resources and proving its strength, so was Christ's. During the whole state of his humiliation he was 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,' and had to endure 'the contradiction of sinners.' He was poor, and suffered hunger and fatigue. He was tempted by the devil. His path was obstructed with apparently-unsurmountable difficulties from the outset. His words and miracles called forth the bitter hatred of the world, which resulted at last in the bloody counsel of death. The Pharisees and Sadducees forgot their jealousies and quarrels in opposing him. They rejected and perverted his testimony; they laid snares to him by insidious questions; they called him a glutton and wine-bibber for eating and drinking like other men, a friend of publicans and sinners for his condescending love and mercy, a Sabbath-breaker for doing good on the Sabbath day; they charged him with madness and blasphemy for asserting his unity with the Father, and derived his miracles from Beelzebub, the prince of devils. The common people, though astonished at his wisdom and mighty works, pointed sneeringly at his origin; his own country and native town refused him the honor of a prophet. Even his brothers, we are told, did not believe in him, and, in their impatient zeal for a temporal kingdom, they found fault with his unostentatious proceeding. His apostles and disciples, with all their profound reverence for his character, and their faith in his Divine origin and mission as the Messiah of God, yet by their ignorance, their carnal, Jewish notions, and their almost habitual misunderstanding of his spiritual discourses, must have constituted a severe trial of patience to a teacher of far less superiority to his pupils."

"But how shall we describe his *passion*, more properly so called, with which no other suffering can be compared for a moment! Never did any man suffer more innocently, more unjustly, more intensely than Jesus of Nazareth. Within the narrow limits of a few hours we have here a tragedy of universal significance, exhibiting every form of human weakness and infernal wickedness, of ingratitude, desertion, injury, and insult, of bodily and mental pain and anguish, culminating in the most ignominious death then known among the Jews and Gentiles. The Government and the people combined against him who came to save them. His own disciples forsook him; Peter denied him; Judas, under the inspiration of the devil, betrayed him. The rulers of the nation condemned him, the furious mob cried, 'Crucify him,' and rude soldiers mocked him. He

was seized in the night, hurried from tribunal to tribunal, arrayed in a crown of thorns, insulted, smitten, scourged, spit upon and hung like a criminal and a slave between two robbers and murderers!"

"How did Christ bear all these little and great trials of life, and the death on the cross? Let us remember first, that, unlike the icy Stoics in their unnatural and repulsive pseudo-virtue, he showed the keenest sensibility in the agony of the garden, and the deepest sympathy with human grief in shedding tears at the grave of a friend, and providing a refuge for his mother in the last dying hour. But with this truly-human tenderness and delicacy of feeling he ever combined an unutterable dignity and majesty, a sublime self-control and imperturbable calmness of mind. There is a grandeur in his deepest sufferings, which forbids a feeling of pity and compassion on our side as incompatible with the admiration and reverence for his character. We feel the force of his words to the women of Jerusalem, when they bewailed him on the way to Calvary: 'Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children.' We never hear him break out in angry passion and violence, although he was at war with the whole ungodly world. He never murmured, never uttered discontent, displeasure, or resentment. He was never disheartened, discouraged, ruffled, or fretted, but full of unbounded confidence that all was well ordered in the providence of his Heavenly Father. He moved serenely, like the sun above the clouds as they sailed under him. He was ever surrounded by the element of peace, and said in his parting hour: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' He was never what we call unhappy, but full of inward joy, which he bequeathed to his disciples in that sublimest of all prayers, 'that they might have his joy fulfilled in themselves.' With all his severe rebukes to the Pharisees, he never indulged in personalities. He ever returned good for evil. He forgave Peter for his denial; and would have forgiven Judas, if, in the exercise of sincere repentance, he had sought his pardon. Even while hanging on the cross, he had only the language of pity for the wretches who were driving the nails into his hands and feet, and prayed in their behalf, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.' He did not seek or hasten his martyrdom in morbid enthusiasm or ambitious humility, but quietly and patiently waited for the hour appointed by the will of his Heavenly Father. But when it came, with what self-possession and calmness, with what strength and meekness, with what majesty and gentleness did he pass through its dark and

trying scenes!* Here every word and act are unutterably significant, from the agony in Gethsemane, when overwhelmed with the sympathetic sense of the entire guilt of mankind, and in full view of the terrible scenes before him — the only guiltless being in the world — he prayed that the cup might pass from him, but immediately added, 'Not my, but thy will be done,' to the triumphant exclamation on the cross, 'It is finished!' Even his dignified silence before the tribunal of his enemies and the furious mob, when, 'as a lamb dumb before his shearers, he opened not his mouth,' is more eloquent than any apology, and made Pilate tremble. Who will venture to bring a parallel from the annals of ancient or modern sages, when even a Rousseau confessed, 'If Socrates suffered and died like a philosopher, Jesus Christ suffered and died like a God!' The passion and crucifixion of Jesus, like his whole character, stands without a parallel, solitary and alone in its glory."

[* On this point Dr. Bushnell makes the following profound remarks: "It will be observed that his agony, the scene in which his suffering is bitterest and most evident, is, on human principles, wholly misplaced. It comes before the time, when as yet there is no arrest, and no human prospect that there will be any. He is at large to go where he pleases, and in perfect outward safety. His disciples have just been gathered round him in a scene of more than family tenderness and affection. Indeed, it is but a few days since that he was coming into the city, at the head of a vast procession, followed by loud acclamations, and attended by such honors as may fitly celebrate the inaugural of a king. Yet here, with no bad sign apparent, we see him plunged into a scene of deepest distress, and racked in his feeling with a more than mortal agony. Coming out of this, assured and comforted, he is shortly arrested, brought to trial, and crucified; where, if there be any thing questionable in his manner, it is in the fact that he is even more composed than some would have him to be, not even stooping to defend himself or vindicate his innocence. . . . By the misplacing of his agony thus, and the strange silence he observes when the real hour of agony is come, we are put entirely at fault on natural principles. But it was not for him to wait. . . . He that was before Abraham, must also be before his occasions. In a time of safety, in a cool hour of retirement, unaccountably to his friends, he falls into a dreadful contest and struggle of mind. . . Why now this so great intensity of sorrow? Why this agony? Was there not something unmanly in it, something unworthy of a really-great soul? Take him to be only a man, and there probably was. But this one thing is clear, that no one of mankind ever had the sensibility to suffer so intensely; even showing the body, for the mere struggle and pain of the mind, exuding and dripping with blood. Evidently there is something mysterious here. What, we begin to ask, should be the

power of a superhuman sensibility? And how far should the human vehicle shake under such power? How, too, should an innocent and pure spirit be exercised, when about to suffer in his own person the greatest wrong ever committed? Besides, there is a vicarious spirit in love; all love inserts itself vicariously into the sufferings, and woes, and, in a certain sense, the sins of others, taking them on itself as a burden. How, then, if perchance Jesus should be Divine, an embodiment of God's love in the world — how should he feel, and by what signs of feeling manifest his sensibility, when a fallen race are just about to do the damning sin that crowns their guilty history; to crucify the only perfect being that ever came into the world; to crucify even him, the messenger and representative to them of the love of God, the deliverer who has taken their case and cause upon him? Whosoever duly ponders these questions, will more and more distinctly see that what he looks upon to be the pathology of a superhuman anguish. It stands, he will perceive, in no mortal key. It will be to him the anguish, not of any pusillanimous feeling, but of holy character itself; nay, of a mysteriously-transcendent, or, somehow, Divine character."]

In the portraiture of the character and life of Jesus which we have been contemplating, we find all the different lineaments which lie scattered up and down the pages of the Gospel narrative in the most artless simplicity, without any trace of forethought and design, gathered together into one whole. It is evident that the picture of Jesus which the Gospels present to us, and which the apostles every-where describe, is such that, even if it had not been expressly stated in Scripture that Jesus was without sin, we could never have conceived of sin, of separation from God, of moral obliquity, as forming a feature in that picture, without being sensible that we should thus materially disfigure and deface it, nay, destroy it altogether. Nevertheless, it has been called in question on the ground that, in order to pronounce concerning any one that he is absolutely free from sin, a perfect knowledge of his heart is above all things requisite; and the apostles could not see into the heart of Jesus even in the time of their intercourse with him, while of the earlier period of his life they had no personal knowledge. In meeting this question, Ullmann proves the verity of the picture which the New Testament presents of the sinlessness of Jesus, by the following unanswerable arguments, which we will give in his own language, though not in the order in which he discusses the subject:

1. It is unquestionably true that the disciples of Jesus could not look immediately into his heart like the omniscient Searcher of Hearts; but what is a man's life but the index and revelation of his spirit; and is it possible to

account for a perfectly-moral life otherwise than on the supposition of a perfectly-moral soul which it represents? Can we explain purity of action otherwise than as flowing from purity of heart? What circumstance is there in the life of Jesus to favor the idea that he ever acted in a manner merely legal and external, while in heart he was not truly good, or that his inmost disposition was in conflict with his actions? The principle on which the objection is based would, if applied generally, abolish all faith in human virtue and spiritual greatness.

2. If Jesus had not unfolded before the eyes of those with whom he was surrounded a character of perfect purity and sinless holiness, his apostles could not have made a representation of such a character; for the idea of sinlessness in a human nature had never been thought of previous to the appearing of Christ; or, where the thought occurs, we find inseparably connected with it the conviction that it could not be realized in actual life, that a perfectly-sinless human being never did or could exist on earth. Plato, it is true, draws a sketch of a righteous man, in which he represents perfect virtue as necessarily conjoined with suffering; but the idea of the virtue he describes is entirely restricted to uprightness; no reference is made to that inward religiousness by which virtue rises into holiness, and, what is a still more important consideration, the sketch of Plato is only a conception of his mind, without any intimation that it was ever realized in actual life. Perhaps there is no man of antiquity with whom men would have associated the idea of moral perfection more readily than Socrates; and yet, although we possess such glorious descriptions of that great man, drawn by his revering disciples, neither they nor any one else, least of all Socrates himself have ventured to maintain that he was entirely free from moral blemishes, a perfect man. The prevalent conviction in the heathen world, that moral perfection is a thing which it is impossible for man to attain, is clearly expressed by Epictetus, who, after setting forth the idea of moral stainlessness with more clearness than any preceding philosopher, asks the question, whether it be possible that it should ever be realized, and answers: "No, it is impossible; all that is possible is constantly to strive after a state of not sinning." The same sentiment we find in Judaism; its ruling principle was a consciousness of sin produced by a law given by a God of holiness; for although the Jew had, along with this consciousness of sin, also the belief in grace — still he felt himself under the curse of sin, which the law was incapable of removing. Neither the founder of the Old Testament dispensation laid any

claim to the possession of spotless righteousness, nor that greatest prophet of the ante-Christian age, who had, indeed, an anticipation that the idea of moral purity would be realized, but not till it should be seen in him whom he announced. But, behold! here stand the plain, simple-minded apostles, themselves reckoned neither among the poets nor the philosophers, in whom we find only the idea of sinless holiness most clearly defined, and whose faith in its actual realization in the person of Jesus has become such a certainty that they could sacrifice for its sake all that men usually hold dear; further, we find that they have given a description of the pure and holy life of Jesus, in which the subsequent moral development of nineteen centuries has discovered no fault or blemish, in which men of the present day still recognize a picture of the most perfect character in the domain of religion and morality that can anywhere be found. From all this we certainly can not draw any other conclusion than this: If an idea arose in all its clearness in the minds of the apostles, which the great thinkers and poets of antiquity were entirely ignorant of, or saw but dimly, this can be accounted for only by the manifestation of a real life; and if those who till then had regarded faultlessness as a thing unattainable by man, had now the strongest belief in the reality of a sinless life, the cause for the change could only lie in the overpowering impression produced by that life itself, seen unfolding itself before their eyes.

3. The testimony of the apostles receives its full confirmation and its proper validity from the testimony of Jesus himself. The two must be taken together, for only together do they form a satisfactory proof. He, whom others regarded as a spotless and holy being, must be fully conscious in himself of perfect freedom from sin; and again, this consciousness of his must be corroborated by the impression which he produces upon others; thus united, alone, can either testimony receive its full import. In considering the testimony of Jesus concerning himself, let us first contemplate its negative aspect. He who had so keen an eye for the sins of others must, if we will not suppose him to have been self-blinded, have seen as clearly sin in himself if it was there. But we find nowhere in his history, as we do in the case of the best of men, even the most occasional expression of consciousness of sin; there is no humbling of himself before God on account of sin, there is no prayer for the forgiveness of sin. Does not this inevitably lead to the conclusion, that the source from whence those feelings, which we find precisely in the men of highest moral character, proceed, had in him no existence whatever? It follows, likewise, from what he

said on the occasion of his baptism, that he felt conscious that he needed for himself no repentance or regeneration. But more than this. So far was Jesus from standing in need of forgiveness for himself, that the position he held with reference to sinful men was that of a pardoner of sin. He came not only to preach forgiveness, he came to bestow it; and could this have been done by one who felt guilt and sin in himself? To forgive sin belongs to God only; hence, Jesus could claim that right only on the ground of a deep consciousness of oneness with God, a consciousness based upon a feeling of perfect freedom from sin.

But the positive testimonies are much stronger. Here we have, first of all, to notice that most conclusive saying of Jesus, which we find in John's Gospel: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"* When we read this question, the feeling forces itself upon us, that its author must have been a personality of a moral character most peculiar; a feeling greatly strengthened by the recollection that he who spoke these words was one who in his whole life presents to us a picture at once of purest truthfulness and most divine humility. Every man, too, must at once be fully convinced, that to apply these words to himself would only prove him a vain fool or a miserable hypocrite. Last of all could this happen in a community from the midst of which we hear that same apostle, who has preserved us the saying of Jesus, exclaim: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It is certainly a fact of the highest significance, that, in opposition to this attestation of universal sinfulness, which every one without exception must indorse, there is One who steps forth from the ranks of humanity and exclaims: "Who convinceth me of sin?" That Jesus by these words did not intend to say of himself simply, what any honest man, who led a life in conformity with the law, might say — "Nobody could point to any sin he had committed" — is self-evident. That he, on the contrary, meant positively to affirm the purity of his moral consciousness, that his conscience was free from guilt, his inner as well as outer life unstained by sin, is irrefutably proved from those other sayings which John records of Christ, and whose meaning it is impossible to explain away, when he declares himself to be the way, the truth, and the life; when he says that it is his meat to do the will of Him that sent him; when he testifies that he does at all times the things which please the Father, that he never seeks his own will, but always the will of the Father. These are expressions which present to us the picture of a life which not only had in it no place for sin, but, more than this, which can only be thought of as

an actually-perfect life. There are, especially, two significant passages which come under consideration here. The first is: "I and my Father are one." (John x, 30.) It matters not, for our purpose, whether the unity spoken of is to be understood as a unity of nature, or a moral unity, a unity of will; for where perfect unity with the Divine will exists, there must also, of necessity, be not only perfect freedom from sin, but perfect goodness. Similar is the case with regard to the other passage: "He that has seen me has seen the Father." (John xiv, 9.) Certainly we are not to restrict these words so as to mean merely that there was in Jesus *something* Divine along with what was imperfect and sinful, as there is in every man. They must be taken in the full sense, that Jesus was morally and mentally an image of the invisible God, an expression of the Divine nature. But it is only a character of stainless purity and unsullied holiness that can be a spiritual reflection of God; where sin exists, the Holy One can not be seen; where the Holy One is seen, there neither sin nor any imperfection can exist.

[* This passage has by some commentators been translated: "Which of you convinceth me of error?" We shall show in our comment on John viii, 46, that this translation is not correct. But supposing it were correct, even in that case these words of Jesus would be of great importance for our purpose, for they would at least contain an *indirect* testimony to the religious and moral purity of Jesus. For if he claims exemption from error in that province which alone comes under consideration in this passage — namely, the domain of morality and religion — this must imply that he lays claim to purity of inward nature and of outward conduct. For freedom from sin presupposes freedom from error, and *vice versa*; the two act and react upon each other. The human mind, whatever divisions psychology may make of its powers, is not in reality separated into different departments. It is absolutely one and undivided, manifesting itself, however, in various ways, and exerting itself in different directions. The threads of our whole intellectual life are so subtilely and finely interwoven, that to touch one is to move the whole; that every impression affects in some way the whole spirit, and every action is the result of the complicated co-operation of the most different energies of the mind. The man as thinking can not be sundered from the man as feeling; nor the man as willing from the man as knowing. In consequence of this undivided unity of the soul, it is inconceivable that a person should be perfect in regard to volitions and acts, and yet be defective and imperfect in moral and religious knowledge. When our knowledge has the purity of truth, it acts with a purifying power on the life; and purity of life tends to enlighten, and to preserve the enlightenment of the intellect. From this it follows, that the

necessary presupposition and result of the sinlessness of Jesus was the entire absence of error in respect of things religious and moral.]

There can, therefore, be no doubt that Jesus bore within him the consciousness of being sinless and holy; and that to this consciousness he gave repeated expression. If we will not acknowledge the validity of a self-testimony of so peculiar a character, there remains nothing but to declare Jesus to have been either a fanatic or a hypocrite. If we declare him a fanatic, we must suppose that he drew no clear line of demarkation between good and evil; that he did not examine every fold of his heart, or know all the motions of his will; nay, we must believe that he was a victim to the vainest self-deception when he uttered those memorable words. And is this conceivable in the case of one who on every other occasion could distinguish with such incomparable precision between good and evil, whose keen vision pierced to the remotest depths of the nature of men, and whose feelings on all moral subjects were so singularly refined? Is it possible that he who knew others so well should have been ignorant of himself? He would thus form a strange exception even to human knowledge. For no other man, even the most darkened, would ever entertain a doubt that he is a sinner; was Jesus then a sinner, and alone ignorant of the fact? Or, if such conclusions are too absurd to be entertained, we must be prepared to accept the other more fearful alternative. He was conscious of transgressing against the Divine law, we must suppose, in thought, word, and deed, and yet he expressly denied it. But who is there that would dare to undertake the defense of such a position, to maintain that he, who in all the circumstances of his life acted from the purest conscientiousness, and who at last died for his testimony upon the cross, was, after all, nothing more than an abject hypocrite? How could it be that he, of whom even the least susceptible must confess that there breathed around him an atmosphere of purity and faith, should have fallen into an antagonism so deep and so deadly? Into such absurd and revolting self-contradictions we must land, if we refuse to acknowledge the truth of the Divine self-testimony of Jesus concerning his sinlessness.

4. There is still another argument that establishes the certainty of the perfect holiness of Jesus beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt. The moral effects produced upon mankind by Christianity are such that the sinlessness of Jesus is their necessary condition or originating cause. In other words, it can be shown that there have been, since the appearance of Christ on

earth, actual manifestations, which can be explained rationally only on one assumption; namely, that the Author of Christianity was a being of sinless holiness; and that, if we refuse to make this assumption, these manifestations must remain entirely inexplicable.

An unbiased investigation will place beyond a doubt the following facts: that Christianity produced in individual believers — that is, in those who were deservedly so called — a rich supply of virtues; and that these were, partly, virtues of which men had previously no conception whatever, or, at all events, no idea, so high and pure as Christianity imparts. Such virtues are humility, meekness, and the self-denial of compassionate love. Nor has Christianity exercised a less salutary moral influence upon the common relations of human life. In marriage and the family, in the condition of civil and political life, in the relation of ranks, castes, and nations to one another, and, in a word, in the whole condition of the race, it has laid the foundation of a state of society essentially different from what it was before. All these moral manifestations disclose to us the grand truth that Christianity has produced something *new* in the moral world, that the individual character which is molded by its influence, and also the humanity which it forms, is a new moral *creation*. This the apostle Paul expresses in a most forcible manner, when he says: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." Let us now inquire what must be the originating cause of that new creation which we find in the moral life of the Christian world. In seeking an answer to this question, we will naturally be inclined to point first to the moral ideas peculiar to Christianity — that is, to Christian ethics. Christianity has, undoubtedly, an ethical system of incomparable purity, depth, and completeness; it far transcends every thing that the heathen world has to point to; its principle and spirit far excel the loftiest ideas of the Old Testament economy, and there can be no doubt that this of itself is a fact of great importance for our purpose. For these ideas of Christian ethics are the expression and result of the moral spirit which existed in the Founder of Christianity, and thus they afford a testimony to the purity and dignity of his moral teaching. But if we are thus compelled to argue from the doctrine to its Author, this is still more the case when we look beyond the doctrine to the original source of those influences which have produced so mighty a revolution in the moral world. And this primary source is not the *doctrine* of Jesus, but his *person*. This is necessarily the case; for it is not any doctrine which calls into

being a new life; it is only life which can generate life. For this we have the most decisive testimony of Christian experience. The same apostle who uttered the sublime saying, concerning the new creation, says, also, when he wishes to describe the primary source and fountain of his life: "I live; but not I, but Christ liveth in me." He affirms that any one is a new creature, not because he walks according to the doctrine of Christ, but because he is "*in*" Christ — that is, personally united to him; and in this the apostle expresses only what is the experience of every true Christian in every age.

The question now arises: In what way must such a personality have been constituted to make it capable of imparting a regenerating power to Paul, and to all those whose experience has been like his? And to this question we must answer: It can not have been a personality in itself sinful, for then it would have differed from other men only in degree. It would still have partaken of the old nature. It would not have realized in itself an entirely *new creation*; and thus it could not have prepared the way for a new moral birth. On the contrary, it must have been a personality raised above all connection with the old nature; one in which the power of sin was entirely broken; which was itself in the highest sense a new creation, and was thus in a condition to produce the deep renovating effects which a perfect ideal alone could produce.* Thus, on the supposition that the Founder of Christianity was not without sin, it is impossible to understand how a morality of so pure and perfect a stamp as that which characterizes our religion could derive its origin from such a being, or how it could express its peculiar character in such words as these: "Old things are passed away, all things are become new." If, on the other hand, we suppose the Author of Christianity to have been altogether without sin, then it is easy to perceive how, within its sphere, a new creation could come to perfection in the moral world by his being formed within the individual believer.

[*] In reply to the objection, that the sinlessness of Jesus should have produced also in those who come within his renovating influence a perfect freedom from transgression, Ullmann observes: "We find that, in all true Christians, the principle of sin is in fact broken, and that they feel assured of its complete and final overthrow. If, in spite of this conquest of the principle of sin, it is still found operating in their lives, this circumstance only leads us to conclude that, in order to be ever more and more and at length perfectly freed from sin, all that is required is a complete surrender to the renovating influence of Christ; a conviction which can rest upon nothing else than a

certainty of the fullness and boundless efficacy of that holy, sinless life which dwells in the person of Jesus."]

Again, if the Christian feels in his inmost soul a consciousness that morally he is a new man, that old things are passed away and all things are become new, then *his position with reference to God must have been changed*. The dominion of sin can not be broken, and the power of a new life can not be attained, unless its guilt has been first abolished, and the foundation laid of a right standing in relation to the holy God. Now, the words which express all that belongs to this circle of ideas are these two: *Reconciliation* and *Redemption*. These two things constitute the fundamental consciousness of the Christian world; for the Christian world is what it is essentially because it is conscious of being reconciled and redeemed. Now, if we find this consciousness in the Christian religion alone, if Christianity is the only religion which can effect a true reconciliation between man and God by an actual redemption from sin, then it is not difficult to discover that the author of such a religion must himself be of a perfectly-sinless and holy character. The true relation of man to God can find its realization only in one in whom sin, which is the ground of separation between man and God, has no place. The real manifestation of Divine grace can exist only in one in whom the one spring of action is the fullness of love which he derives from perfect fellowship with God, and in whom this forms the principle which regulates his whole life. Were there not at the head of the Christian religion such a being, it were inconceivable how it could be the religion of reconciliation and redemption, or how the deep-rooted consciousness of being reconciled and redeemed should have come to form the fundamental belief of the Christian world. With such a being at the head of Christianity, this is at once explained. Now, if the consciousness of being reconciled and redeemed, possessed by the Christian world, has any reality, then that from which it emanated must also have had a real existence. And that that consciousness had a real foundation rests equally upon an actual fact — on a fact which every Christian practically experiences. The doctrine of the sinless holiness of Jesus is, therefore, as secure as is the truth of the efficacy of his work of reconciliation and redemption.

One point more remains to be noticed. Not only have morality and religion been both presented under a new aspect by Christianity, but it has effected an interpenetration of the moral and religious elements such as formerly did not

exist. This blending of the moral and religious, which we call holiness, can only be accounted for, that it was fully realized in the person of Christ. It is Christianity alone which combines religion and morality into one, though giving each its full due; for it knows nothing of a piety which does not sanctify, which is not of an entirely *ethical* character, seeking to subdue and transfuse the whole life; or of a morality which does not rest upon a living faith, which is not thoroughly *religious*. This union gives, as has been remarked above, the idea of holiness. But it is something more than the idea that Christianity gives; it sets forth holiness not as something unattainable, far beyond the grasp of humanity, but as already really implanted in humanity — as an idea which, from the time of its first perfect manifestation in the person of its Founder, is destined to be realized ever more and more within the Christian Church. It is self-evident that the idea of holiness and the belief of its attainability by man could not proceed from any thing else than from the great fact of the life manifestation of the sinless and perfect character of Jesus.

5. When we endeavor to bring before our minds the image of the personality of Jesus in direct connection with the influences and works which originated in him, three things strike us as peculiar — unlimited perfection, unapproachable dignity, and unconditional power of action. The character of Jesus is so constituted that we can not take away one single trait from it, or add one to it, without at once being sensible that we have not only altered but disfigured it. He includes in himself, in fact, all perfection; and, along with the highest energy, and an inexhaustible fountain of life, there is a harmony so perfect that, we are compelled to exclaim: Here no improvement can be suggested by the loftiest idealizing, for the ideal itself has become real, and the life itself is stamped with the seal of perfection! In its perfection we feel, moreover, that something attaches to the person of Jesus which our thoughts and words are incapable of grasping. Art has striven in vain to find an adequate expression for the image of Christ; and so, to describe his spiritual nature and character, is a task which never has been, and never will be, accomplished to our complete satisfaction. We feel ever that he is possessed of a dignity which is unapproachable by man, of a fullness which, the more we draw from it, the greater do its treasures appear. This is perceived not only by separate individuals, but by humanity as a whole. The higher and truer the inner life of an individual becomes, the more clearly does he discern and realize the image of Jesus; and at every new step in the development of humanity the form of the

Nazarene is illuminated by a fuller light. At the same time there is a distinct consciousness that it is not the image of Christ which increases by means of us, but that we, by living more deeply into it, grow in our capacity of understanding it. And however nearly we may approximate toward him, we always feel that he towers above us at a height to which no man will ever be able fully to rise — that there is a distance between him and us which none can traverse. This eminence of Jesus is further evidenced by the unbounded power of influencing men which he manifests. The image of the serene and holy One of Golgotha sinks to the very depths of our heart, and presents itself before the soul — sometimes as a conscience warning us of sin and evil, at other times like a word of consolation coming directly from our compassionate God. And while its influence is thus felt in our own inmost life, it is no less perceptible in the ordinary course of the history of mankind. The traces there are alike notorious and indelible, and the whole development of humanity, especially in its highest aspects, would be inexplicable apart from the recognition of the presence of such a power. We can conceive it to be possible that all the great men of history should pass into utter oblivion, but we must hold it to be impossible that the memory of this image should depart, because it has become part and parcel of the inmost and truest life of humanity. Nothing like this can be affirmed of any other man. The capacity and perfection of all others are conjoined with limitation and sinfulness; eminence in every other instance is explicable on human grounds, and can be represented in human forms; all other influence on humanity, even that which deserves to be called world-wide, has its limits. The only exception is Jesus, the sinlessly-holy One.

The question now arises, whether the explanation of this phenomenon can be found within the sphere of that which is merely human; or whether it does compel us to recognize in Jesus a principle which lies beyond human nature and human powers? We, surely, can have no hesitation in denying the former and affirming the latter. If sinlessness or moral perfection were within the reach of man in his present condition, how has it come to pass that experience only furnishes one example of perfect freedom from sin? Why have not persons risen up among men, from time to time, who could lay claim to the same superiority, and compel others to acknowledge the justice of their pretensions? The only rational ground of the fact is, that a principle of sin is implanted in human nature — not, indeed, by original constitution,* but certainly, in its present state, that sin, although not the true, is still the second nature of man —

that it penetrates and rules the whole race. The principle of sin being in such a manner ingrafted in human nature, in the condition in which experience presents it to us, only one supposition can render intelligible the existence of a sinless man; namely, that the chain of sin has been broken, and that, in consequence, a personality has arisen in the midst of the sinful race, whose nature is thoroughly whole and sound, to which have been given powers perfectly pure and amply sufficient for the realization of the higher life. But this is only possible as the result of a Divine creation. Such a person could not be the product of a race subjected to sin. In this aspect he, in whom the possibility of being sinless has become a reality, must be considered a totally new man, a second Adam. But this second Adam, with whose humanity begins a new career, although like the first as respects the soundness and integrity of the higher powers of life, stands in an entirely-different position toward the world. The first man was put in a world where as yet sin was not, and he had only to decide for obedience or disobedience to the plain Divine command which had been given him. The second Adam was born as a child into a world which was already under the dominion of sin, and, through all the stages of the development of his life, was exposed to its influence. In the course of such a development, independently of any natural bias in a man, sin comes upon him from all sides; it takes possession of him when he is as yet in an unconscious, or only half-conscious state; and when he awakens up to full consciousness it is already in the field, and has gained a power with which he has to struggle, not only outwardly but inwardly. Hence the impossibility of conceiving of a development, actually free from sin, being accomplished in a natural way under existing circumstances. But if, as we have found in Jesus, such a development has, notwithstanding all influences to the contrary, been brought to pass, we can not feel any hesitation in assuming the presence of something over and above, and in union with, the integrity of constitution originally given. In him whose development was thus sinless, there must have been an infallible sureness enabling him during its whole course, and even at those stages of it when he was not as yet awakened to full consciousness, to reject every thing impure, untrue, and sinful, and to appropriate for his inner life only the pure, true, and good, from that which the surrounding world presented to him. It must therefore be conceded that a Divine principle conditioned the original integrity of Jesus, and was a constituent element of his personality, and that it grew and progressed in perfect symmetry and in harmony with the human element; and that, consequently, so far from hindering, it really promoted the natural development of the latter, and secured

its perfect purity and orderliness. Clearly, however, we can not understand by this Divine principle merely something akin or bearing resemblance to God, such as is in every man; for sin can and actually does coexist therewith in every man, while the sinlessness of Jesus separates him from, and constitutes him superior to, all other men. We must, therefore, consider that principle to be Divine in its uncorrupted and true essence. *In this way we are led from the sinless Son of man to the Son of God, and the recognition of the pure humanity of Jesus ends in the conviction of his true Divinity.* His personality is so constituted that, as we attentively regard it, we find it marked by those very characteristics of truth, righteousness, holiness, and love, which constitute the essential nature of God. Our thoughts, therefore, unavoidably ascend to God. We are utterly unable to understand or account for his personality otherwise. The conviction is forced upon us that, so far as it is possible to see God in human form, we have him before us in the person of Jesus. And, inasmuch as Jesus presents humanity and Divinity in complete union and interpenetration, we can not conceive of him otherwise than as *God-man*.

[* Never was there a man so purely man as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Never man spoke so humanly, felt so humanly, loved so humanly, lived so humanly, died so humanly. Bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, he had a more genuine humanity than any of the other sons of Adam, inasmuch as it was free from that demoniac adulteration which had been produced by sin. Hence he is so emphatically called, and delights to call himself, the Son of man. The term has mere meaning than it seems at first view to possess. In the Syriac it is the name for humanity itself." (*Tayler Lewis's "The Divine Human of the Scriptures,*" p. 6.)]

§ 30. THE MIRACLES WROUGHT ON AND PERFORMED BY JESUS THE NATURAL AND NECESSARY OUTFLOW OF HIS HISTORICALLY-PROVED PERSONALITY, AND, AT THE SAME TIME, THE GROUND AND WARRANT OF ALL OTHER TRUE MIRACLES, PRECEDING AND SUCCEEDING HIS APPEARANCE ON EARTH.

We take it for granted that the miracles of the Gospel history are meant to be real miracles, according to the definition which we have given of a miracle in § 22. All attempts to explain them away, by putting language to the rack, or

by resolving them into effects from natural causes, have so utterly failed, that those who made such attempts are ridiculed by infidelity itself. Again, the testimony of so credible men as the Evangelists, (see §§ 24, 25, 26,) may be considered sufficient to satisfy a reasonable inquiry after the verity of the miracles they record, more especially when we take into consideration that, according to their testimony, *Christ himself* claimed the power to work miracles, and appealed to it as a proof of his Divine mission; for the supposition that Jesus should have given a false testimony concerning himself, we have seen to be utterly inconceivable; and if the testimony of the Evangelists on this point were false, if the miracles they attribute to Jesus were mere fables, the product of their age, the question arises, how was it possible for them to preserve such a character as that of Christ in its perfect proportions? "If there be a greater miracle," observes Bushnell, "or a tax on human credulity more severe, we know not where it is. Nothing is so difficult, all human literature testifies, as to draw a character, and keep it in its living proportions. How much more to draw a perfect character, and not discolor it fatally by marks from the imperfection of the biographer! How is it, then, that four humble men have done this, while loading down the history of Christ with marvels and fables?"

The verity of the Gospel miracles, however, as we remarked in the introduction to this chapter, rests not simply nor chiefly on the credibility of the Evangelists. It is the moral perfection of Jesus, unparalleled and never having been conceived of by man before, that furnishes the unassailable voucher of his having performed miracles. Very boldly, but truly, Bushnell remarks: "It is no ingenious fetches of argument that we want; no external testimony, gathered here and there from the records of past ages, suffices to end our doubts; but it is the new sense opened in us by Jesus himself — a sense deeper than words and more immediate than inference — of the miraculous grandeur of his life — a glorious agreement felt between his works and his person, such that his miracles themselves are proved to us in our feeling, believed in by that inward testimony. On this inward testimony we are willing to stake every thing, even the life that now is, and that which is to come. If the miracles, if revelation itself can not stand upon the superhuman character of Jesus, then let it fall. If that character does not contain all truth and centralize all truth in itself, then let there be no truth. If there is any thing worthy of belief not found in this, we may well consent to live and die without it. Before this sovereign light, streaming out from God, the deep questions, and dark surmises, and doubts unresolved, which

make a night so gloomy and terrible about us, hurry away to their native abyss. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This it is that has conquered the assaults of doubt and false learning in all past ages, and will in all ages to come. No argument against the sun will drive it from the sky. No mole-eyed skepticism, dazzled by its brightness, can turn away the shining it refuses to look upon. And they who long after God will be ever turning their eyes thitherward, and, either with reason or without reason, or, if need be, against manifold impediments of reason, will see and believe."

We have shown, by a full and critical examination of the character of Jesus, that it can not have been an invention, but that such a person must have lived, else he could not be described, and that he plainly was not a mere man. This historically-proved person — a being who has broken into the world, and is not of it, but has come out from God — is himself the one central and grandest miracle that occurred in the history of the world, the ground and warrant for all other true miracles, preceding and succeeding his appearance on earth, and all the miracles, wrought on and performed by him, are only the natural outflow of that which is already contained in his personality. They are of the same significance in respect of the natural powers as sinlessness is in respect of the moral powers. A perfectly-sinless man is no whit less miraculous a phenomenon in the moral world than a man raised from the dead is in the natural world. To recognize Jesus as sinlessly holy, and yet to deny the miraculous element in his life, would be self-contradictory. It is inconceivable that he should have entered or left the world like other men. Sinful humanity could not produce out of itself the Son of Man, whom to see was to see God the Father, and the historical development of his earthly life would have had no fitting completion, if he had not risen from the dead and ascended to heaven. His supernatural conception, his resurrection and ascension can be called in question only by one who attempts to blot from the record of history the earthly life and character of Jesus, the words spoken and the influences on the minds of men exercised by him. Whoever admits these irrefutable facts of history, must expect supernatural works to proceed from this supernatural personality. The contrary would be unnatural. "Since Jesus is shown," says Bushnell, "to be a superhuman being, manifestly Nature will have a relation to him under and by her own laws, such as accords with his superhuman quality, and it would be

very singular if he did not do superhuman things; nay, it is even philosophically incredible that he should not. . . . Nay, it would be itself a contradiction to all order and fit relation if he could not. To suppose that a being out of humanity will be shut up within all the limitations of humanity, is incredible and contrary to reason. The very laws of nature themselves, having him present to them as a new agent and higher first term, would require the development of new consequences and incidents in the nature of wonders. Being a miracle himself, it would be the greatest of all miracles."

Another highly-gifted American writer of our day, Tayler Lewis, in his "The Divine Human in the Scriptures," says to the same purpose: "In the Bible even the supernatural — we may say it without a paradox — is most natural. It is in such true keeping with the times, with the events and doctrines it attests, with all the surrounding historical circumstances as they are narrated, that we almost lose the feeling of the supernatural in the admirable harmony and consistency of the ideas and scenes presented. It seems to be just what might have been expected; it would be strange that it should be otherwise; the marvelous here is the presumptive, the extraordinary becomes the easy of belief." After illustrating this thought by every part of the Old Testament, where the supernatural appears, he continues: * "But it is in the history of Christ that the idea on which we are dwelling receives its most powerful verification. A life so unearthly, so heavenly, so spiritual, so transcending nature, so full of a Divine power manifesting itself in every word and act, so spent in nights of prayer, and days of sublimest teachings — how out of all keeping does it seem, that to a state so earth-transcending in its spirituality, there should be no corresponding witness of the supernatural! . . . There is a demand for its presence, as not only a fitting but an indispensable accompaniment. The idea can not be complete without it. Such power over the soul! it must extend to the body and the physical life; absence of this healing energy would have been the difficulty to be explained, the feature in the narrative not easy of belief. Such a life and such a death! the resurrection is the only appropriate sequence of a career on earth, yet so unearthly; the ascension into heaven is the only appropriate finale to a drama so heavenly and divine. — The serious reader can not help feeling that in the life of Christ, as given to us by the Evangelists, there is something more than a supernatural *gift*, or the occasional power of working miracles, as something imparted from without, or only exercised by himself through special effort in each particular case. We are impressed, rather, with the idea of the

constant supernatural, as a veiled power, not so much requiring an effort for its manifestation as a restraint to prevent it beaming forth before unholy eyes that could not bear, or might profane the sight. In that earthly tabernacle there was the constant dwelling of the Shekinah, more powerfully present when alone, perhaps, or with a few chosen ones. . . . 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' is an exclamation called out more by the overpowering effect of this constant presence, than by any great public displays of miraculous power. It is this, more than any thing else, that is attested by the holy apostle John in the words: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which our hands have handled of the Word of Life, for the *Life was manifested* and we saw it, and we testify, and tell unto you of that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us.' The reference is not so much to striking outward displays as to the constant spiritual effulgence ever beaming on the soul of the spiritual disciple, and sometimes, even to the eye of sense, surrounding the person of Christ with an outward glory. From the inward supernatural, as from a never intermitting fountain, proceeded the outward miracle-working power, as exhibited in distinct acts. . . . Thus, too, are we told of a constant virtue dwelling in the Savior's person; as in the story of the woman who 'touched the hem of his garment that she might be healed.' Her spiritual state, that is, her pure faith, brought her in a living relation to this power so veiled to the unbelieving or merely curious multitude; and the Savior sanctions her thought when he says: 'I know that power has gone forth from me.' . . . It is credible, it is even to be expected that the supernatural should shine out through a natural so elevated above the ordinary condition of humanity. There is a deep mystery even in our common physical energy. The strength of the body is, in its ultimate resolution, a power of the quiescent spirit. Activity, force, yea, even in some sense, motus or *outgoing energy* are attributes of soul, even when at rest, as much as thought, or will, or emotion. The present bodily organization, instead of a necessary aid, may be, in fact, a limiting, a restraint upon a tremendous power, that needs to be confined as long as it is joined to a selfish or unholy will, even as we chain the madman in his cell. Sometimes, even in common life, there are fearful exhibitions of the loosening of these material bonds. In the last stages of bodily weakness, apparently, some delirium of the soul, if we may call it such, brings out a power of nerve and muscle irresistible to any ordinary strength, inexplicable to any ordinary physiological knowledge. The cases, indeed, are *vastly different*, and yet there is *some analogy*. Such views of the common

organism do not at all account for the higher power that may dwell in a perfectly holy spirituality; but they render it credible; they prepare us to believe in it, yea, to feel it as a spiritual dissonance if there be wholly lacking some high command of nature, in connection with a perfect faith and holy will ever in harmony with the divine. It is the Scriptures, however, that must furnish our only reliable ground of argument on this mysterious subject; and here we find no small proof of such a constant indwelling glory of the supernatural as *distinguished from an occasional miraculous gift*. In certain passages there is the strongest expression of Christ's unwillingness to gratify curiosity by the display of an outward sign; in others there is shown an evident reluctance to have this holy influence the subject of any profane or gossiping rumor. But again, he exhibits it of his own accord to chosen disciples, and then it has the appearance of a manifestation, to favored souls, of a power and a spiritual glory ever more truly present in his retired than in his public life. Such is the impression left upon the mind by the account of the transfiguration. . . . Something, too, of the same feeling comes over us as we read the account of Christ walking on the waters. . . . Why walking thus at that deep time of night over the wild and lonely waves? It was not needed, in addition to his other miracles, for the confirming of the disciples' faith. It seems, rather, the unearthly act of one filled with unearthly thoughts, and seeking a correspondence to them in the more unearthly, or, as we might even call them, supernatural aspects of the natural world. If the answer can not well be given in any thing out of himself, why should we fear to say that it was a rapt physical state, in harmony with an elevated spiritual frame, that demanded it as its fitting outward action? The ecstasy of the soul lifts up the body. There is something of this in the mere earthly human experience. There is a spiritual condition that seems comparatively, if not absolutely, to loosen the power of gravity, to set volition free, and release even the flesh from the hold of earthly bonds. How much more of this ethereal soaring must there have been in the ecstasies of Jesus? In the human spiritual power, as known to us, there is, indeed, nothing that can be strictly compared with it; and yet there *is* enough to render credible such an absolute triumph over matter in the case of one so holy and so heavenly as Christ. . . . We think there is no irreverence in such thoughts. At all events, without any special reasoning about spiritual and physical conditions, there is in Scripture itself good evidence that the human nature in Christ was ever in connection with the supernatural, and that the special miraculous acts were unveilings of a constant hidden power, rather than special enablings or special

efforts in each particular case. Christ's own words convey this thought: 'He is the resurrection and the life.' Even when veiled in human flesh, he is still the brightness of the Father, the express image of his hypostasis. 'We beheld his glory,' says John, 'the glory of the Only-Begotten, full of grace and truth.' The humanity, too, is a true humanity; no one was ever more perfectly human; and yet so wondrous is he, even in his manhood, that it forces the idea of the superhuman and the supernatural as not only the casual explanation of such an existence, but its own fitting, yea, necessary accompaniment."

[* We quote, leaving out all that would interrupt our argument or weaken its force.]

While we have, as we think, presented sufficient grounds in support of our proposition, that all the miracles wrought on and performed by Christ were the natural and necessary outflow of that which is implied in his historically-proved personality — that is, that we can not, as we are compelled to do, recognize Jesus as sinlessly holy, and yet consistently deny the miraculous element in his life — we are, of course, far from permitting the unauthorized inference, that the exercise of miraculous powers necessarily involves or depends upon sinlessness on the part of every person possessed of miraculous powers. We have, on the contrary, referred to the fact that, while with all other persons to whom the Scriptures ascribe the performance of miracles, it is represented as a supernatural gift, as a power imparted from without, and exercised only occasionally through a special effort, the personality of Christ is the only one that stood in such constant connection with the supernatural; that the special miraculous acts performed by him or wrought on him were only the unveilings of a constant hidden power, requiring not so much an effort for its manifestation as a restraint to prevent its beaming forth before unholy eyes. The relation, therefore, which we have discovered between the sinlessness of Jesus and the miracles ascribed to him, admits of no application to other men who wrought miracles, except in so far as, wherever the miraculous element appears in the Holy Scriptures, it appears, in the popular sense of the word, natural, that is, "in such true keeping with the times and occasions by which it is called forth, and in such admirable harmony with the events and doctrines which it attests, that we almost lose the feeling of the supernatural." But not only this, we have

remarked above that Christ himself, being the one central and grandest miracle that occurred in the history of the world, is at the same time *the ground and warrant for all other true miracles, preceding and succeeding his appearance on earth.*

This is a truth which is too much overlooked in the discussion of miracles. In section 22 we showed that miracles are not a disruption of the divinely-established order of the world, but a demonstration of Divine agency for the purpose of restoring the order of the world, which had been disordered by sin, the act of created free agents. Had there not taken place a disorder of the world by sin, there would, indeed, seem to be no demand or even place for that especial Divine agency which we call miraculous. This miraculous agency of God culminated in the incarnation of his Son, the Redeemer from sin, and it is self-evident that he, being the greatest miracle himself, should work miracles. But it is equally evident why Divine Wisdom did not see fit to confine to his person the manifestation of the miraculous agency necessary for the restoration of the moral order of the world. Mankind was to be prepared for the reception of the greatest miracles by the less. The history of the nation in which the Son of God should be born, especially the bringing the people of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, and constituting the covenant people of God, bore, therefore, the stamp of the immediate operation of God; the Divine messengers, especially the great legislator and mediator of the first covenant, Moses, needed the authentication by miracles, and the spirit of prophecy, the continuous and most irrefutable miracle of the Old Testament, had, with the types and the shadows of the law, to point out the coming Messiah. Nor was it proper that the manifestation of supernatural power, preparing for and culminating in the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh, should at once terminate with his ascension to heaven; for, in this case, men would have been still more slow, than they are, to believe that the greatest of all miracles had taken place. The apostles, preaching Jesus and the resurrection, needed God to bear them witness with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and we have credible testimony that the power of working miracles continued with the Church, to some extent, during several centuries.*

[* In connection with these remarks it is proper to consider the question: Whether miracles are now discontinued; and, if so, why? This question we know not how to answer better than Dr. Bushnell has done: "The Scriptures

no where teach, what is often assumed, the final discontinuance of miracles; and it is much to be regretted that such an assumption is so commonly made. There is no certain proof that miracles have not been wrought in every age of the Christian Church. There is certainly a supernatural and Divine causality streaming into the lives and blending with the faith of all good men, and there is no reason to doubt that it may sometimes issue in premonitions, results of guidance and healing, endowments of force, answers to prayer that closely approach in many cases, if they do not exactly meet, our definition of miracles. Again, if miracles have been discontinued, even for a thousand years, they may yet be revived in such varieties of form as a different age may require. They will be revived without fail whenever the ancient reason may return, or any new contingency may occur, demanding their instrumentality. And yet good and sufficient reasons may be given why the more palpable miracles of the apostolic age could not be continued, or must needs be interspersed by agencies of a more silent character. It may have been that they would by and by corrupt the impressions and ideas even of religion, setting men to look after signs and prodigies with their eyes, and so, instead of attesting God to them, making them unspiritual and even incapable of faith. Traces of this mischief begin to appear even in the times of the apostles themselves. Christianity, it is very obvious, inauguates the faith of a supernatural agency in the world. Hence, to inaugurate such a faith, it must needs make its entry into the world through the fact of a Divine incarnation and other miracles. In these we have the pole of thought, opposite to nature, set before us in distinct exhibition. And then the problem is, having the two poles of nature and the supernatural presented, that we be trained to apprehend them conjunctively, or as working together in silent terms of order. For, if the miracles continue in their palpable and staring form of wonders, and take their footing as a permanent institution, they will breed a sensuous, desultory state of mind, opposite to all sobriety and all genuine intelligence. At a certain point the miracles were needed as the polar signs of a new force — but, for the reason suggested, it appears to be necessary, also, that they should not be continuous; otherwise, the supernatural will never be brought into any terms of order, as a force conjoined with nature in our common experience, but will only instigate a wild, eccentric temper, closely akin to unreason, and to all practical delusions. And yet there may be times, even to the end of the world, when some outburst of the miraculous force of God will be needed to break up a lethargy of disbelief and sensuous dullness, equally unreasoning and desultory."]

A consideration of the peculiar nature, significance, importance, and design of the miracles performed by Christ does not properly fall within the scope of our present investigation. We shall consider the miracles of Christ in these practical aspects in our introductory remarks to the eighth chapter of Matthew,

where we meet the first record of a Gospel miracle. How we can distinguish true, Divine miracles from false ones, wrought by diabolic agency, we shall discuss in our comment on Matthew vii, 22.

PART IV.

THE ATTACKS OF MODERN CRITICISM ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS.

§ 31. THE RELATION WHICH THE AUTHENTICITY AND CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS BEAR TO THEIR INSPIRATION.

THE arguments by which we have established the authenticity or apostolical origin of the Gospel records, and the Divine as well as human attestations of their credibility involve also their inspiration. To prove the trustworthiness of the Scriptures from their assumed inspiration, and then to deduce the inspiration from the testimony of the Scriptures, would be a begging of the question. Instead of this we have proved the authenticity and credibility of the Gospels, without any reference to an assumed inspiration, on simply historical grounds, and this historical argumentation is the only *outward* proof needed for their inspiration. With regard to outward proofs of inspiration Mr. Westcott remarks very justly: "To speak of the *proof* of the inspiration of the Scriptures involves, indeed, an unworthy limitation of the idea itself. In the fullest sense of the word we can not prove the presence of life, but are simply conscious of it; and inspiration is the manifestation of a higher life. The words of Scripture are spiritual words, and as such are spiritually discerned. The ultimate test of the reality of inspiration lies in the intuition of that personal faculty — *πνεῦμα* — by which inspired men once recorded the words of God, and are still able to hold communion with him. Every thing short of this leaves the great truth still without us; and that which should be a source of life is in danger of becoming a mere dogma." (Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, p. 45.) In Parts II and III we have met all the attacks that have been made upon the authenticity and the credibility of the Gospels, with the exception of the objections, which modern criticism has deduced from the peculiar relation, in which the three first (synoptic) Gospels stand to one another and to that of John. These objections lie, indeed, not against the authenticity and credibility of the synoptic Gospels, but would, if sustained,

invalidate their inspiration. For while in ordinary historians the strictest integrity is compatible with slight inaccuracy, divergence of testimony — the least discrepancy — appears formidable in a work written by Divine inspiration. It is, therefore, proper to examine these critical difficulties in connection with the question of inspiration — a question which of itself deserves a separate consideration.

Before we, however, enter upon this examination, let us glance at some of the general characteristics of the Gospel records, which, as Mr. Westcott remarks, can only be accounted for on the assumption of their inspiration. "They are *fragmentary in form*. Their writers make no attempt to relate all the actions or discourses of our Lord, and show no wish to select the most marvelous series of his mighty works, and probably no impartial judge will find in any one of them a conscious attempt to form a narrative supplementary to those of the others. But if we know by the ordinary laws of criticism that our Gospels are the only authentic records of the Savior's life, while we believe that Providence regards the well-being of the Christian Church, are we not necessarily led to conclude that some Divine power overruled their composition, so that what must otherwise seem a meager and incomplete record should contain all that is fittest historically to aid our progress and determine our faith? Nor can it be unworthy of notice that while the Gospels evidently contain so small a selection from the works and words of Christ, so few details unrecorded by the Evangelists should have been preserved in other ways. . . . The numerous witnesses of our Lord's works and teaching must have treasured up with affection each recollection of their past intercourse; but the cycle of the Evangelic narrative is clearly marked, and it can not but seem that the same Power which so definitely circumscribed its limits determined its contents. Again, the Gospels are *unchronological in order*. We are at once cautioned against regarding them as *mere history*, and encouraged to look for some new law of arrangement in their contents, which, as I shall endeavor to prove, must result from a higher power than an unaided instinct or an enlightened consciousness. Once more, the Gospels are *brief and apparently confused in style*. There is no trace in them of the anxious care or ostentatious zeal which mark the ordinary productions of curiosity or devotion. The Evangelists write as men who see through all time, and only contemplate the events which they record in their spiritual relations. But, at the same time, there is an originality and vigor in every part of the Gospels, which become a Divine

energy in the Gospel of John. As mere compositions they stand out from all other histories with the noble impress of simplicity and power; and it is as if the faithful reflection of the image of God shed a clear light on the whole narrative. The answer was once given to the Pharisees, when they sought to take Jesus, that never man spoke like that man, and those who assail the authority of the Gospels have been constrained to confess that never was history written as in them." (Introd., pp. 46-48.) On the characteristic differences of the four Gospels Mr. Westcott says further: "The three synoptic Gospels are not mere repetitions of one narrative, but *distinct views of a complex whole*. The same salient points reappear in all, but they are found in new combinations and with new details, as the features of a landscape or the outlines of a figure when viewed from various points. . . . The only conception which we can form of the inspiration of a historic record lies in the Divine fitness of the outward dress in which the facts are at once embodied and veiled. No record of any fact can be complete. The relations of the most trivial occurrence transcend all power of observation, and the truthfulness of special details is no pledge of the truthfulness of the whole impression. The connection and relation and subordination of the various parts, the description and suppression of particular incidents, the choice of language and style, combine to make a history true in its higher significance. This power the Evangelists possessed in the fact that they were penetrated with the truth of which they spoke. The Spirit which was in them searched the deep things of God, and led them to realize the mysteries of the faith. . . . The contrast between the Gospel of John and the synoptic Gospels, both in substance and in individual character, is obvious at first sight; but the characteristic differences of the synoptic Gospels, which are formed on the same foundation and with common materials, are less observed. Yet these differences are not less important than the former, and belong equally to the complete portraiture of the Savior." (Introd., pp. 218-220.) The individual character of each of the four Gospels the reader will find delineated in the special introductions to the respective Gospels.

§ 32. THE PECULIAR AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT OF THE FIRST THREE EVANGELISTS IN THEIR NARRATIVES, AND THE VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS OF THIS SINGULAR PHENOMENON.

The striking difference in contents and character of the first three Gospels from the fourth presents no difficulty. It is easily and satisfactorily accounted for by the difference of the individuality and scope of the Synoptists from that of John, as will be shown in the introduction to each Gospel, as well as by the fact of the later origin of John's Gospel. Owing to this later origin, we may take it for granted that the synoptical Gospels were already generally known when John wrote; that he, therefore, purposely abstaining from writing anew what they had at sufficient length recorded, only sought to complete them by narrating those portions of the life of Jesus which had been omitted by the Synoptists. The peculiar difficulties which claim our attention present themselves when we compare the synoptical Gospels with each other.

There is in them a great amount of agreement. If we suppose the history that they contain to be divided into sections, in forty-two of these all the three narratives coincide; twelve more are given by Matthew and Mark only; five by Mark and Luke only, and fourteen by Matthew and Luke. To these must be added five peculiar to Matthew, two to Mark, and nine to Luke, and the enumeration is complete. But this applies only to general coincidence as to the facts narrated; the amount of verbal coincidence, that is, the passages either verbally the same, or coinciding in the use of many of the same words, is much smaller. Without going minutely into the examination of examples, the leading facts connected with the subject may be thus summed up: The verbal and material agreement of the first three Evangelists is such as does not occur in any other authors who have written independently of one another. The verbal agreement is greater where the spoken words of others are cited than where facts are recorded, and greatest in quotations of the words of our Lord. But in some leading events, as in the call of the first four disciples, in that of Matthew, and in the transfiguration, the agreement even in expression is remarkable; there are also narratives where there is no verbal harmony in the outset, but only in the crisis or emphatic part of the story. (Matt. viii, 3, Mark i, 41, Luke v, 13; and Matt xiv, 19, 20, Mark vi, 41-43, Luke ix, 16, 17.) The narratives of our Lord's early life, as given by Matthew and Luke, have little in common, while Mark does not include that part of the history in his plan. The agreement in the

narrative portions of the Gospels begins with the baptism of John, and reaches its highest point in the account of the Passion of our Lord and the facts that preceded it; so that a direct ratio might almost be said to exist between the agreement and the nearness of the facts that sustain a close relation to the Passion. After this event, in the account of his burial and resurrection, the coincidences are few. The language of all three is Greek, with Hebrew idioms; the Hebraisms are most abundant in Mark, and fewest in Luke. In quotations from the Old Testament the Evangelists, or two of them, sometimes exhibit a verbal agreement, although they differ from the Hebrew and from the Septuagint version. (Matt. iii, 3, Mark i, 3, Luke iii, 4; and Matt. iv, 10, Luke iv, 8; and Matt. xi, 10; Mark i, 2; Luke vii, 27, etc.) Except as to twenty-four verses, the Gospel of Mark contains no principal facts which are not found in Matthew and Luke; but he often supplies details omitted by them, and these are often such as would belong to the graphic account of an eye-witness. There are no cases in which Matthew and Luke exactly harmonize, where Mark does not also coincide with them. In several places the words of Mark have something in common with each of the other narratives, so as to form a connecting link between them, where their words slightly differ. The examples of verbal agreement between Mark and Luke are not so long or so numerous as those between Matthew and Luke, and Matthew and Mark; but, as to the arrangement of events, Mark and Luke frequently coincide where Matthew differs from them. These are the leading particulars; but they are very far from giving a complete notion of a phenomenon that is well worthy of that attention and reverent study of the sacred text by which alone it can be fully and fairly apprehended.

The three Gospels exhibit themselves as three distinct records of the life and works of the Redeemer, but with *a greater amount of agreement than three wholly-independent accounts could be expected to exhibit. The agreement would be no difficulty without the differences*; it would only mark the one Divine source from which they all are derived, the Holy Spirit who spoke by the prophets. *The difference of form and style without the agreement would offer no difficulty*, since there may be a substantial harmony between accounts that differ greatly in mode of expression, and the very difference might be a guarantee of independence. The harmony *and* the variety, the agreement *and* the differences, *together*, form the problem with which Biblical critics have occupied themselves for a century and a half. To

ascribe the verbal differences of the Evangelists, in their reports of sayings of our Lord and of events, in the midst of their general and substantial agreement, simply and directly to the dictation of the Holy Spirit, would make the difficulty greater instead of less. The singular phenomenon can be naturally accounted for only by assuming *the interdependence of one Evangelist upon the other, or some common source, written or oral, or a combination of these elements.*

I. The first and most obvious theory has been, *that the narrators made use of each other's works*. Accordingly, Grotius, Mill, Wetstein, Griesbach, and many others, have endeavored to ascertain which Gospel is to be regarded as the first; which is copied first; and which is copied from the other two. It is remarkable that each of the six possible combinations has found advocates, and that for the support of each hypothesis the same phenomena have been curiously and variously interpreted. This of itself proves the uncertainty of the theory. It is thoroughly refuted by Alford. If one or two of the Evangelists borrowed from the other, we must adopt one of the following suppositions: 1. That the later Evangelist, finding the earlier Gospel, or Gospels, insufficient, was anxious to supply what was wanting. But no possible arrangement of the three Gospels will suit the requirements of this supposition. The shorter Gospel of Mark can not be an expansion of the more complete Gospels of Matthew or Luke. No less can these two Gospels be considered as expansions of Mark; for his Gospel, although shorter, and narrating fewer events and discourses, is, in those which he does narrate, the fullest and most particular of the three. And again, Luke could not have supplemented Matthew; for there are most important portions of Matthew which he has altogether omitted, (e.g., chapter xxv, and much of chapters xiii and xv;) nor could Matthew have supplemented Luke, having omitted almost all of the important matter recorded by Luke, from ix, 51-xviii, 15. Moreover, this supposition leaves all the difficulties of different arrangement and minute discrepancy unaccounted for. We pass on, 2. To the supposition that the later Evangelist purposed to improve the earlier one, especially in point of chronological order. If it were so, nothing could have been done less calculated to answer the end than that which our Evangelists have done. For in no material point do their accounts differ, but only in arrangement and completeness; and this latter difference is such that no one of them can be cited as taking any pains to make it appear that his own arrangement is chronologically accurate. No fixed dates are found in those parts where the

differences exist; no word to indicate that any other arrangement had ever been published. 3. Neither does the supposition that the later Evangelists wished to adapt their Gospels to a different class of readers — incorporating, at the same time, whatever additional matter they possessed — in any way account for the phenomena of our present Gospels. For, even taking for granted the usual assumption, that Matthew wrote for Hebrew Christians, Mark for Latins, and Luke for Gentiles in general, we do not find any such consistency in these purposes as a revision and alteration of another's narrative would necessarily presuppose. We have the visit of the Gentile Magi exclusively related by the Hebraizing Matthew; the circumcision of the child Jesus, and his frequenting the Passovers at Jerusalem, by the Gentile Evangelist Luke. Had the above purposes been steadily kept in view in the revision of the narratives before them, the respective Evangelists could not have omitted incidents so entirely subservient to their respective designs. Or, 4. It may be supposed that, receiving one or two Gospels as authentic, the later Evangelist borrowed from them such parts as he purposed to narrate in common with them. But this does not represent the matter of fact. In no case does any Evangelist borrow from an other any considerable part of even a single narrative. For such borrowing — unless it was with the intent of fraudulently plagiarizing from them, slightly disguising the common matter so as to make it appear original — would imply verbal coincidence. It is inconceivable that one writer, borrowing from another matter confessedly of the very first importance, *in good faith and with approval*, should alter his diction *so singularly* and *capriciously* as, *on this hypothesis*, we find the text of the parallel sections of our Gospels altered. Let the question be answered by ordinary considerations of probability, and let any passage common to the three Evangelists be put to the test. The phenomena presented will be more or less as follows: First, perhaps, we shall have three or five or more words *identical*; then as many *wholly distinct*; then two clauses or more expressed *in the same words, but differing in order*; then a clause *contained in one or two, and not in the third*; then several words identical; then a clause not only wholly distinct, but *apparently inconsistent*; and so forth, with recurrences of the same anomalous alterations, coincidences and transpositions. Nor does this description apply to verbal and sentential arrangement only, but also, with slight modifications, to that of the larger portions of the narratives. Equally capricious would be the disposition of the subject-matter. Sometimes, while coincident in the things related, the Gospels place them in the most various order, each in turn connecting them together

with apparent marks of chronological sequence — e.g., the visit to Gadara, in Matthew viii, 28, as compared with the same in Mark v, 1, and Luke vii, 26, sq. Let any one say, divesting himself of the commonly-received hypotheses respecting the connection and order of our Gospels, whether it is within the range of probability that a writer should thus singularly alter the subject-matter and diction before him, having *no design* in so doing, but intending, fairly and with approval, to incorporate the work of another into his own? Can an instance be any where cited of undoubted borrowing and adaptation from another, presenting similar phenomena? We see, from the above argumentation, that any theory of mutual interdependence of the three Evangelists fails to account for the appearances presented by the synoptic Gospels. We must come to the conclusion that the three Gospels arose *independently of one another.**

[* On this point Mr. Norton makes the following remarks:

"1. The conclusion that no one of the first three Evangelists copied from either of the other two, is important as showing that their Gospels afford three *distinct* sources of information concerning the life of Jesus. The Evangelists, therefore, in their striking correspondence in the representations of his character, miracles, and doctrines must be considered as strongly confirming each other's testimony. Nothing but reality, nothing but the fact that Jesus had acted and taught, as they represent, would have stamped his character and life so definitely and vividly on the minds of individuals ignorant of each other's writings, and enabled them to give narratives, each so consistent with itself, and all so accordant with one another. A false story concerning an imaginary character would have preserved no uniform type. It would have varied in its aspects, according to the different temperaments and talents, the conceptions and purposes of its various narrators.

"2. If the notion that one Evangelist copied from another is proved to be untenable, then the accordance among the first three Gospels proves them all to have been written at an early period, when the sources of authentic information were yet fully accessible, and before any interval had elapsed, during which exaggerations, perversions, and fables, to which the wonderful history of Jesus was exposed, had had time to flow in and to change its character.

"3. If the Evangelists did not copy one from another, it follows that the first three Gospels must have all been written about the same period, since if one had preceded another by any considerable length of time, it can not be supposed that the author of the later Gospel would have been unacquainted with the work of his predecessor, or would have neglected to make use of it;

especially when we take into view that its reputation must have been well established among the Christians. Whatever antiquity, therefore, we can show to belong to any one of the first three Gospels, the same, or nearly the same, we may ascribe to the other two.]

II. It has been assumed that there existed *a written document in the Aramaic language as the common original*, from which the three Gospels were drawn, each with more or less modification. But as this supposition, though it would account for some of the variations in the parallel passages, as being independent translations, would offer no solution whatever of the more important discrepancies of *insertion, omission, and amendment*, the most complicated hypotheses have been advanced, all perfectly capricious and utterly inadequate to account for the phenomena. The supposed original is assumed to have been translated, altered, and annotated by different hands, and the synoptic Gospels are said to have been drawn from one or the other of these different forms into which the original had passed, or from a combination of them. A theory so prolific of assumptions would be admissible only if it could be proved that no other solution is possible.

The "original Gospel" is supposed to have been of such authority as to be circulated every-where, yet so defective as to require annotation from any hand, and so little reverenced that no hand spared it. If the three Evangelists agreed to draw from such a work, it must have been widely, if not universally, accepted in the Church; and yet there is no record of its existence; if of lower authority, it could not have become the basis of the three canonical Gospels. Moreover, the state of literature in Palestine, at that, time, was not such as to make the assumed, repeated editing, translating, and annotating of a history a natural and probable process. (Compare §§ 5 and 6.) Happily, this hypothesis of an original Gospel, which, if true, would overthrow the Divine authority of the Gospel records, has been found so untenable on historical and critical grounds, that it has been given up by its own inventors.

III. Having found the assumption of a common original Gospel as untenable as that of the interdependence of one Evangelist upon the other, let us examine that solution of the problem, which explains the relationship of the synoptical Gospels by deriving them from *a common oral source*, that is, from the common oral teaching of the apostles; which, from the nature of the case, we may assume to have been chiefly historical, giving an account of the

discourses and acts of Jesus of Nazareth. That the written Gospels were the *result*, not the *foundation*, of the apostolical preaching, will not be called in question. On similar grounds, as the baptism of infants, in the nature of the case, was preceded by the baptism of adults, it may be said that the experience of oral teaching was required in order to commit to writing the vast subject of the life of Christ. In the first period of the apostolic age the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in the Church supplied the place of those records, which, as soon as the brightness of his presence began to be withdrawn, became indispensable, in order to prevent the corruption of the Gospel history by false teachers. The great commission given to the apostles was to *preach* the Gospel, and it was only the subsequent want of the Church, established by their preaching, which furnished an adequate motive for adding a written record to the testimony of their living words. Of the great majority of the apostles all that we know certainly is, that they were engaged in instructing, orally, the multitudes who were waiting to receive their tidings. The place of instruction was the synagogue and the market-place, not the student's chamber. "The elders refrained from writing," it is said by Clemens, "because they would not interrupt the care which they bestowed in teaching orally, by the care of composition." Besides, the *written* evidence for the facts of the Gospel was found already in the Old Testament. All the prophets spoke of Christ, and to them the apostles constantly referred, by showing them fulfilled in the life of Christ. That the apostolic preaching consisted chiefly in relating the wondrous life, the teaching and the acts, the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord, we learn from the conditions of apostleship propounded by Peter himself, (Acts i, 21, 22;) that, in order to give a proper testimony of the resurrection of Christ, an apostle must have been an eye and ear-witness of what had happened from the baptism of John till the ascension, that is, during the whole official life of our Lord; and, accordingly, Paul claims to have received an independent knowledge, by direct revelation, of at least some of the fundamental parts of the Gospel history, (Galatians i, 12; 1 Cor. xi, 23; xxv, 3,) to qualify him for his calling as an apostle. That the apostolic preaching was chiefly historic, is confirmed by Luke, who, in the preface to his Gospel, expressly designates the oral apostolical testimony as the source of the Evangelical narratives, which many had taken in hand to draw up; and, as far as the records of apostolic preaching in the Acts of the Apostles go, they confirm this view. Peter, at Caesarea, and Paul, at Antioch, preach alike the facts of the Redeemer's life and death. As to the Epistles, they were evidently not designed for primary

instruction, but for the further instruction of those who were familiar with the great outlines of the "mystery of godliness," (1 Tim. iii, 16,) and had professed their belief by baptism.

We are then led to the inquiry, in what manner the synoptic Gospels are connected with the oral Gospel preached by the apostles? Before showing the relation of the written to the oral Gospel, we remind the reader that the Gospel history was *first orally* delivered by the apostles *at Jerusalem*, where they formed the mother Church, and remained till dispersed by the first persecution. And is it not to be presumed that the very portions of that Gospel history, which form the common subject-matter of the synoptical Gospels, would be more frequently and fully dwelt upon by the apostles in their preaching at Jerusalem, than those incidents which had taken place there, and were therefore well known to those to whom the apostles first addressed themselves? This explains to us, in part, (compare the introductory remarks to § 8 in the Gospel of Matthew,) why it is that the ministry of Jesus in Galilee is almost exclusively recorded to us by the three Evangelists in a manner so singularly similar. There is nothing unnatural in the supposition that the oral narratives of the apostles at Jerusalem, concerning the words and deeds of our Lord, would be delivered, for the most part, in the same form of words; on the contrary, it was in the highest degree desirable for the teachers whom the apostles were sending forth into the world, and it became the most fitting means to secure and make manifest the purity of the subsequent written Gospel. The particular points, especially in sayings of Christ, were always reproduced; unusual expressions were the more firmly retained, since, when they were uttered, they had the more strongly attracted the attention of the disciples. Sermons and sayings were naturally retained with more care, and reported with more uniformity than incidents; although even in the latter, in the same degree that the incident was surprising and peculiar, a fixed type of narration had involuntarily formed itself. Thus it was that the authors had often heard the points, both of incidents and sayings, narrated in substantially the same words. There were, moreover, peculiar circumstances which naturally contributed to the uniformity in question. While modern taste aims at a variety of expression, and abhors a repetition of the same phrases as monotonous, the simplicity of the men, and their language, and their education, would all lead us to expect that the apostles would have no such feeling. They were from the humblest ranks of society in a nation destitute of polite literature. Their abilities and

education were nearly alike. Their susceptibilities for apprehending the scenes they had witnessed were similar, while the poverty of the Aramaic Greek, in which they reported what they had seen and heard, did not admit of much variety. The first preachers aimed at fidelity and truth in their reports of the events they had witnessed, rather than at ornament. They had no wish to dress out their descriptions, even if they had been capable of doing so, and the genius of the dialect they employed had allowed a wider scope and variety. Besides, they had been accustomed, as Jews, to treasure up and hand down traditionally the interpretations of their fathers respecting the law, and must have been disposed to follow the same method in regard to the Christian religion. Nor would the immediate disciples desire to depart from the expressions they had learned from their instructors. On the contrary, they would studiously attach themselves to the form in which the Gospel narratives had orally been delivered to them. Such were the circumstances that contributed to produce and perpetuate a stereotype form of the Evangelical history, and to bring the oral narratives into an archetypal form, which was subsequently transferred to the written Gospels. It is supposed, then, that the preaching of the apostles, and the teaching whereby they prepared others to preach, as they did, would tend to assume a common form, more or less fixed; and that the portions of the three Gospels which harmonize most exactly owe their agreement to the fact that the apostolic preaching had already clothed itself in a settled or usual form of words, to which the writers inclined to conform without feeling bound to do so; and the differences which occur, often in the closest proximity to the harmonies, arise from the feeling of independence with which each wrote what he had seen and heard, or, in the case of Mark and Luke, from what apostolic witnesses had told them. But if the uniformity of the synoptic Gospels is ascribed to the oral narratives of the apostles, it may be asked why the accounts of the death and resurrection of Christ given in the three Gospels present so few correspondences compared with the other narratives? Was not this history of the highest interest and importance? Could it have failed to be repeated and dwelt upon? Should it not, therefore, have presented the most marked similarities in the historic cycle? Whence, then, arise the very great discrepancies running through the description of this event in the four canonical Gospels? To this it may be answered, that these facts took place at Jerusalem, and were so well known that the apostles could insist upon them as indubitable facts without dwelling on the minor circumstances. And, as regards the resurrection, it is possible that the divergence arose from the intention of each

Evangelist to contribute something toward the weight of evidence for this central truth. Accordingly, each of the four Evangelists mentions distinct acts and appearances of the Lord to establish that he was risen indeed.

The supposition that the singular correspondence in matter and language, which exists among the first three Gospels, is to be attributed to the oral teaching of the apostles is strikingly confirmed by Luke, who, in his preface, expressly declares the information derived from the eye-witnesses of the ministry of Christ, that is, the oral narratives of the apostles, to be the only authentic source of his own Gospel, and of the other narratives that had been attempted. While Matthew, the apostle, committed to writing the narratives as he and the other apostles had been accustomed to communicate them orally, Mark and Luke, who derived their knowledge from the apostles, would record those narratives as they had heard them. There would, of course, be variations of language, and minor circumstances would be omitted or inserted, as it was orally related by different individuals, or by the same individual at different times. It is not probable that the apostles recited in a systematic series of discourses all the transactions of the ministry of Jesus related by any one of the first three Evangelists. According to the particular occasion presented, or the special object which they had in view, they would group together events, sayings, and discourses particularly adapted to their purpose. They would class their accounts of the life of Christ, but they did not narrate them chronologically. Thus we may account for the agreements and disagreements in the chronological arrangement of the Synoptists.

As an objection to the foregoing explanation of the coincidence of language among the Synoptists, it has been urged as highly improbable that the apostles, whose native language was Hebrew, or rather its Aramaic dialect, would have addressed the Jews at Jerusalem in Greek. But we must remember that many Hellenists — Jews born and educated in foreign countries, to whom the Greek was more familiar than the language of their own nation — dwelt in Jerusalem, or resorted thither during the great national feasts, and that the Greek was at the time so widely spread, (Josephus, Antiq., XVII, 11, 4; Bell. Jud., III, 9, 1,) that most of the natives of Palestine were sufficiently acquainted with it. Though the apostles may, at first, have preached the Gospel at Jerusalem, more or less, in Aramaic, it is evident that the Greek language was soon substituted; for it is certain that a considerable portion of the early Christians in Jerusalem was composed of Hellenists, (Acts vi, 1;) with

Hellenists Paul disputed after his conversion, (Acts ix, 29;) we find mention of various synagogues in that city of foreign Jews who associated together according to the countries from which they came, (Acts vi, 9.) As the Hellenists, with the converts from Greek Gentiles, soon outnumbered the Christians of Palestine, the Greek language was opted as the regular medium of the Church to promulgate the Gospel. That this could be done even in Jerusalem without provoking popular prejudice, appears from the circumstance that, when Paul spoke in Hebrew, (Acts xxii, 2,) it was unexpected, and produced unusual attention. From this the inference may be drawn, that public addresses were commonly made in Greek.

It is now generally admitted that the oral teaching of the apostles was the archetype, the original source of the common parts of the synoptic Gospels; but, at the same time it has been considered as not of itself sufficient to account for all the phenomena which they present, without assuming the existence of some written documents embodying portions of that oral teaching, such as Luke refers to. Of this opinion is Alford, who says: "I believe that the apostles, in virtue not merely of their having been eye and ear-witnesses of the Evangelical history, but especially in virtue of *their office*, gave to the various Churches their testimony in *a narrative of facts*; such narrative being modified in each case by the individual mind of the apostle himself, and his sense of what was requisite for the particular community to which he was ministering. While they were principally together, and instructing the converts at Jerusalem, such narrative would naturally be *for the most part the same*, and expressed in the same, or nearly the same words; coincident, however, *not from design or rule*, but because *the things themselves were the same*, and the teaching naturally fell for the most part into one form. It would be easy and interesting to follow the probable origin and growth of this cycle of narratives of the words and deeds of our Lord in the Church at Jerusalem — for both the Jews and the Hellenists — the latter under such teachers as Philip and Stephen, commissioned and authenticated by the apostles. In the course of such a process *some portions would naturally be written down* by private believers for their own use or that of friends. And as the Church spread to Samaria, Caesarea, and Antioch, the want would be felt, in each of these places, of similar cycles of oral teaching, which, when supplied, would thenceforward belong to and be current in those respective Churches. And these portions of the Evangelic history, oral or partially documentary, *would be adopted under*

the sanction of the apostles, who were as in all things, so especially in this, the appointed and Divinely-guided overseers of the whole Church. This *common substratum of apostolic teaching, I believe to have been the original source of the common part of our three Gospels.* . . . Delivered, usually, in the same or similar terms to the catechumens in the various Churches, and becoming the text of instruction for their pastors and teachers, it by degrees underwent those modifications which the various Gospels now present to us. And I am not now speaking of any considerable length of time, such as might suffice to deteriorate and corrupt mere traditional teaching, but *of no more than the transmission through men apostolic, or almost apostolic, yet of independent habits of speech and thought, of an account which remained in substance the same.* Let us imagine the modifications which the individual memory, brooding affectionately and reverently over each word and act of our Lord, would introduce into a narrative in relating it variously and under differing circumstances; the Holy Spirit, who brought to their remembrance whatever things he had said to them, (John xiv, 26,) working in and distributing to each severally as he would; let us place to the account the various little changes of transposition or omission, of variation in diction or emphasis, which would be sure to arise in the freedom of individual teaching, and we have, I believe, the only reasonable solution of the arbitrary and otherwise unaccountable coincidences and discrepancies in these parts of our Gospels."

§ 33. A CONSIDERATION OF THE INSPIRED CHARACTER OF THE SYNOPTICAL GOSPELS, ON THE GROUND OF THEIR BEING CHIEFLY THE RESULT OF THE ORAL TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

It is a postulate of reason to assume that, if the Author and Object of our Christian faith was, as is historically proved, God manifest in the flesh, the Son of man in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily, this fact involves another fact; namely, that the records of his life, his discourses, and acts were written under Divine direction and preserved to us by Divine Providence. That they were written under Divine direction, or by inspiration, is, moreover, a necessary inference from the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ to his apostles *in connection with their commission* to preach the Gospel to all the world, and to build up his Church.

It was at their first mission (Matt. x) that Christ referred his apostles to the assistance of the Holy Spirit in certain emergencies of their apostolical calling; namely, when they should be called upon to give an account of their doctrine and ministry. In such cases he would teach them what and how they should speak, (Luke xii, 11, 12;) yea, their Father's Spirit would speak in them, (Matt. x, 19, 20.) It was in his last conversations with them, preparatory to the time when they should carry on his work on earth without his personal presence, that he promised them the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, who should not only bring his teaching to their remembrance, but complete it, and guide them into all truth, even into those truths which they could, as yet, not bear. (John xiv-xvi.) Announcing to them after his resurrection their future mission in the words, "As my Father has sent me, even so send I you," and granting them the power to forgive and retain sins, he breathed upon them — an act emblematical of the Holy Ghost, which they were to receive, (John xx, 21-23;) but while instructed to become his witnesses in Jerusalem, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, they are commanded to tarry at Jerusalem till they should be endued with the Spirit from on high. (Luke xxiv, 49; Acts i, 8.) This promise was fulfilled to its whole extent on the day of Pentecost, and from this day we see the hitherto timid apostles engage in the public preaching of the Gospel with power and success through the Holy Ghost, that had been sent them from heaven. (Acts ii, 33; 1 Peter i, 12.) To the Holy Ghost they ascribe their doctrines and precepts. (Acts xv, 28; v, 3, 4; 1 Cor. xiv, 37; Eph. iii, 5; 1 Thess. ii, 13; iv, 8.) They claim (1 Cor. ii) that they do not speak in human wisdom and skill, but in a higher wisdom given unto them from God, through his Spirit, that searches all things, (v. 10;) that the Holy Ghost imparts unto them a knowledge which is altogether foreign to the world and the natural man, (vs. 8, 14,) being part of that knowledge with which God knoweth himself, (vs. 11, 12,) but by which they are enabled to know the mind of the Lord as such that have the mind of Christ, (v. 16;) that what they know in this way they speak not in words which human wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, (v. 13,) comparing spiritual things with spiritual. For this very reason the apostles place themselves not only on an equal footing with, but even above "the prophets," the sacred writers of the Old Testament. (2 Peter iii, 2; Rom. xvi, 25, 26; 1 Cor. xii, 25; Eph. iv, 11; ii, 20.)

From all this we learn two truths: First, that the men chosen by Christ for the preaching of his Gospel acted, both in their oral teachings and in their

writings, not in the capacity of merely-human witnesses, but that their testimony was united with that of the Holy Ghost, (John xv, 26, 27;) secondly, that the Spirit promised and given by Christ personally to the eleven had reference not so much to them individually, but *to the apostolical office and all its functions*, as we clearly see in the case of the apostle Paul, inclusive of those assistants in their work whom the Lord raised up, and who were also partakers of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost must be conceived of as the Agent, who begets, guides, and governs the Church. In this capacity he is Christ's representative on earth. For this very reason it was necessary that he should pre-eminently manifest his power in those who were to be the chief organs through which the new life was to flow from the head into the whole body; that is, in those who were, to use Paul's expression, the apostles of Jesus Christ *by the will of God*. But from the relation of the Holy Ghost to the *apostolic office* we learn, also, why we may place the writings of the Evangelists, Mark and Luke, on an equal footing with those of the apostles, and consider them as inspired. We need not attach much importance to the tradition that they belonged to the seventy whom Jesus first sent forth to preach in Judea, or to the one hundred and twenty disciples on whom the Holy Ghost fell on the day of Pentecost. It is enough to know that the apostles had received the power to impart the gift of the Holy Spirit by the imposition of their hands, and that they made use of this power. (Acts viii, 14-17; xix, 6.) Are we, then, not authorized to take it for granted that Mark and Luke, whom Peter and Paul had chosen for their special co-workers out of the great number of Evangelists whom the Lord had already raised up from among Jews and Gentiles, received through the apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit necessary to give to the Church an inspired record of the discourses and acts of the Lord? Besides, though they had not been eye and ear-witnesses of the life and ministry of Christ, yet they were the companions of those that had been eye-witnesses, and they heard continually from their lips the sayings and doings of Christ, having the best opportunity to obtain the fullest information. Again, though they had not been commissioned by Christ himself to teach the nations and to feed his lambs, yet they had been made by the apostles their partners and fellow-laborers for the kingdom of God, (2 Cor. viii, 23; 1 Thess. iii, 2; Philem., 24;) they were engaged in the same work of the Lord as the apostles, (1 Cor. xvi, 10,) and had to perform apostolical functions, (Titus i, 5; 2 Tim. iv, 1-5.) Although they did not plant, yet they did water; although they

did not lay the foundation, yet they built upon it, and have transmitted to us records of unadulterated truth through the same Spirit that was also in them, (2 Tim. i, 14,) and we have to honor them next to the apostles as the Divine instruments in the building up of his Church, and as stewards of the mysteries of God, (1 Cor. iv, 1.) Lastly, it must not be forgotten that the Gospels of Mark and Luke, having been written, if not before the death of Peter and Paul, at least before that of the apostle John, must have had the sanction of at least one of the apostles whom the Head of the Church had authorized to bind and to loose.

But the important question arises: *In what sense, or to what extent* were the historical books of the New Testament inspired, especially the records of the two Evangelists who were not themselves apostles? There has been much unnecessary controversy on the definition of the term "inspiration;" different modes and degrees of inspiration have been assumed. The most important distinction appears to us that between *inspiration* and *revelation*: two terms which, though totally different, are often used as synonyms. *Revelation is a purely-Divine act* — it is God revealing himself to man, either by supernatural, external facts, such as the miracles recorded in Scripture, or by supernatural, internal communications, such as when the Spirit of God imparts to man the infallible foreknowledge of future events, or reveals to him doctrines which lie beyond the reach of human reason. In the reception of such a supernatural, internal communication, the human mind is perfectly passive, not thinking its own thoughts, or speaking its own words, but only the thoughts and words of the Spirit of God. *Not so in inspiration.* That demands *human as well as Divine agency.* The Spirit of God in inspiration acts not simply *on* man but *through* man, using the faculties of man according to their natural law. God, who gives the message, selects also the messenger, so that the traits of individual character and the peculiarities of manner and purpose, which are displayed in the composition and language of the sacred writings, are essential to the perfect exhibition of their meaning. By inspiration the human mind is enabled correctly to apprehend, and then authentically and authoritatively to make known, orally or in writing, a revelation which God has given of himself. The duty and qualification authentically and authoritatively to make known a self-revealing act of God is evidently to be distinguished from that Divine act. This distinction is overlooked when it is assumed that, in recording the facts of revelation, the sacred writers wrote down every word just as it was dictated

to them by the Holy Ghost, in the same manner in which God revealed to the prophets future events. This is what is called *verbal inspiration* in the strict sense of the word; but the term itself, as we have seen, is a misnomer — it would be revelation, not inspiration. Such Divine influence as takes place in revelation was not needed for an authentic and authoritative record of revelation, nor do the Evangelists claim it; nor would it have been in accordance with Divine Wisdom to have excluded human agency in the communication of his revelation. The very evidences, for instance, of this human agency, which the apparent or trifling discrepancies in the statements of the different Evangelists present, answer a wise purpose; they convince us that they were independent witnesses, and that the whole story did not arise from some well-concerted plan to deceive the world; the homely style of some of the writers proves to us that they were really fishermen, and not philosophers; thus we have a convincing evidence that the deepest system of theology, and the noblest code of ethics ever propounded — the one stirring the depth of the whole human heart, the other guiding all human life — came, not from the profound speculations of the wisest of mankind, but either from God himself, or else from a source more inexplicable and absolutely impossible. The theory of what is called verbal inspiration, on the contrary, far from being essential to the Divine authority of the Gospel records, is, indeed, as we shall further show, the only ground on which an objection can be brought against their claim of being authentic and authoritative records of a Divine revelation; and though this theory of verbal inspiration has been received as if it were tantamount to plenary inspiration, it rests on no Scripture authority and is supported by no historical testimony, if we except a few ambiguous metaphors of the Fathers. "Much might be said," says Alford, in his *Prolegomena to the Gospels*, "of the *a priori* unworthiness of such a theory, as applied to a Gospel whose character is the freedom of the spirit, not the bondage of the letter; but it belongs more to my present work to try it by applying it to the Gospels as we have them. And I do not hesitate to say, that, being thus applied, its effects will be to destroy the credibility of our Evangelists. Hardly a single instance of parallelism between them arises where they do not relate the same thing, indeed, in substance, but expressed in terms which, if literally taken, are incompatible with each other. To cite only one obvious instance: The title over the cross was written in Greek. According, then, to the verbal-inspiration theory, each Evangelist has recorded *the exact words* of the inscription; *not the general sense*, but the *inscription itself* — not a letter less or more. This is absolutely

necessary to the theory. Its advocates must not be allowed, with convenient inconsistency, to take refuge in a common-sense view of the matter wherever their theory fails them, and still to uphold it in the main. Another objection to the theory is, if it be so, the Christian world is left in uncertainty what her Scriptures are, as long as the sacred text is full of various readings. Some one manuscript must be pointed out to us which carries the weight of verbal inspiration, or some text whose authority shall be undoubted must be promulgated. But manifestly neither of these things can ever happen. The fact is, that this theory uniformly gives way before an intelligent study of the Scriptures themselves; and is only held, consistently and thoroughly, by those who never have undertaken that study. *When put forth by those who have, it is never carried fairly through; but while broadly asserted, is in detail abandoned.*"

Verbal inspiration, *in the sense explained*, is utterly irreconcilable with the peculiar coincidences and differences which the compositions of the Synoptists present; but, in rejecting the verbal dictation of the Gospel records, we are far from calling in question their "*plenary* inspiration." By plenary inspiration we mean such an influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of the Evangelists as prevented them from expressing an error or untruth, in any thing essential to the Divine revelation, of which they were to give an authentic and authoritative record, both with regard to its facts and the doctrines involved in them — yet, so that, on the one hand, the human element was not neutralized by the Divine agency, and, on the other hand, the truth of God remained unimpaired by the individual mind. The relation of the human to the Divine element in the inspired writings is very beautifully and cautiously set forth by Mr. Elliott, (Aids to Faith, page 479:) "As in the case of the Incarnate Word, we fully recognize in the Lord's humanity all essentially-human limitations and weaknesses — the hunger, the thirst, and the weariness on the side of the body, and the gradual development on the side of the human mind — in a word, all that belongs to the essential and original characteristics of the pure form of the nature he vouchsafed to assume, but plainly deny the existence therein of the faintest trace of sin, or of moral or mental imperfection — even so in the case of the written Word, viewed on its purely-human side, and *in its reference to matters previously admitted to have no bearing on Divine Truth*, we may admit therein the existence of such incompleteness, such limitations, and such imperfections as belong even to the highest forms of purely-truthful *human* testimony, but consistently deny the existence of mistaken views, perversion,

misrepresentation, and any form whatever of consciously-committed error or inaccuracy."

Plenary inspiration, then, properly understood, does not forbid the Evangelists to draw from natural sources of information, as Luke, in the preface to his Gospel expressly asserts to have done, or to quote from other inspired writers without giving their words *literatim*, and according to their individuality to differ from each other in the selection, in the manner and in the arrangement of the events which they relate, nor is it inconsistent even with *inaccuracies* in matters which all agree in regarding as wholly unimportant, which have no reference to the purpose of their writings, to give an authentic and authoritative record of Divine revelation. Such alleged inaccuracies have not yet been uncontestedly proved; but even if we admit their existence, they are, like some alleged contradictions, (see § 21,) due either to our ignorance of some simple fact, which, if known, would explain all; or they furnish only an illustration of one of those very conditions and characteristics of human testimony, however honest and truthful, without which it would cease to be human testimony at all. Moreover, there is no need of ascribing to the inspired writers a perfect knowledge of geography, profane history, science, etc.; it is sufficient for their inspired character to maintain that whatever they affirm to be true, if it has the remotest reference to religion, is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and that they never declare any thing to be *scientifically* true that is *scientifically* false. This is a point which concerns not so much the Evangelists as the other inspired writers, especially of the Old Testament; yet, as it is a vital point in the question of inspiration, we may dwell on it for a moment. Though the writers of the Old Testament, compared with the most enlightened sages of heathen antiquity, show a superior knowledge of physical science, which nothing short of Divine inspiration can account for; and though recent discussions of the subjects of controversy by men of acknowledged scientific attainments have tended to show that the oppositions of Scripture and of science are far more doubtful than they are assumed to be; yet — even if the charge of error in matters of human knowledge should be substantiated against any of the sacred writers — this would not militate against their plenary inspiration for the purpose of giving us an infallible depository of religious truth. Scripture was not given to teach us science; it was, therefore, not needful to render the sacred writers infallible in matters of science.

Alford, who arrives, as we have shown, at substantially the same results with regard to the origin of the synoptical Gospels we have tried to reach, lays down the following propositions respecting their inspiration, which are in full harmony with the definition of inspiration given above, and may serve as a summary of our whole investigation:

"1. The results of our inquiries may be thus stated: That our three Gospels have arisen independently of one another from sources of information possessed by the Evangelists; such sources of information, for a very considerable part of their contents, being the narrative teaching of the apostles; and in cases where their personal testimony was out of the question, oral or documentary narratives, preserved in and received by the Christian Church in the apostolic age; that the three Gospels are not formal, complete accounts of the whole incidents of the sacred history, but each of them fragmentary, containing such portions of it as fell within the notice, or the special design, of the Evangelist."

"2. The important question now comes before us: *In what sense are the Evangelists to be regarded as having been inspired by the Holy Spirit of God?* That they *were so, in some sense*, has been the concurrent belief of the Christian body in all ages. In the *second*, as in the *nineteenth* century, the ultimate appeal in matters of fact and doctrine has been to these venerable writings. It may be well, then, first to inquire on what grounds their authority has been rated so high by all Christians?"

"3. And I believe the answer to this question will be found to be: *Because they are regarded as authentic documents, descending from the apostolic age, and presenting to us the substance of the apostolic testimony.* The apostles being raised up for the special purpose of *witnessing to the Gospel history*, and these memoirs having been universally received in the early Church as embodying their testimony, I see no escape left from the inference that they come to us with *inspired authority*. The apostles themselves, and their cotemporaries in the ministry of the Word, were singularly endowed with the Holy Spirit for the founding and teaching of the Church; and Christians of all ages have accepted the Gospels and other writings of the New Testament as the written result of the Pentecostal effusion. The early Church was not likely to be deceived in this matter. The reception of the Gospels was *immediate* and *universal*. They never were placed for a moment, by the consent of the

Christians, in the same category with the spurious documents which soon sprang up after them. In external history, as in internal character, they differ entirely from the apocryphal Gospels; which, though in some cases bearing the name and pretending to contain the teaching of an apostle, were *never recognized as apostolic.*"

"4. Upon the authenticity, that is, the apostolicity of our Gospels, rests their claim to inspiration. Containing the substance of the apostles' testimony, they carry with them that special power of the Holy Spirit which rested on the apostles in virtue of their office, and also on other teachers and preachers of the first age. It may be well, then, to inquire of what kind that power was, and how far extending."

"5. We do not find the apostles transformed, from being men of individual character, and thought, and feeling, into mere channels for the transmission of infallible truth; we find them, humanly speaking, to have been still distinguished by the same characteristics as before the descent of the Holy Ghost. We see Peter still ardent and impetuous, still shrinking from the danger of human disapproval; we see John still exhibiting the same union of deep love and burning zeal; we find them pursuing different paths of teaching, exhibiting different styles of writing, taking hold of the truth from different sides."

"6. Again, we do not find the apostles *put in possession at once* of the Divine counsel with regard to the Church. Though Peter and John were full of the Holy Ghost immediately after the ascension, neither at that time, nor for many years afterward, were they put in possession of the purpose of God regarding the Gentiles, which in due time was specially revealed to Peter, and recognized in the apostolic council at Jerusalem."

"7. These considerations serve to show us in what respects the working of the Holy Spirit on the sacred writers was analogous to his influence on every believer in Christ; namely, in the retention of individual character, and thought, and feeling, and in the gradual development of the ways and purposes of God to their minds."

"8. But their situation and office was *peculiar* and *unexampled*. And for its fulfillment peculiar and unexampled gifts were bestowed upon them. One of these, which bears very closely upon our present subject, was the *recalling by the Holy Spirit of those things which the Lord had said to them*. This was

his own formal promise, recorded in John xiv, 26. And, if we look at our present Gospels, we see abundant evidence of its fulfillment. What unassisted human memory could treasure up sayings and parables, however deep the impression at the time, and report them in full at the distance of several years, as we find them reported, with every internal mark of truthfulness in our Gospels? What invention of man could have devised discourses which, by common consent, differ from all sayings of men — which possess this character unaltered, notwithstanding their transmission through men of various mental organization — which contain things impossible to be understood or appreciated by their reporters at the time when they profess to have been uttered — which inwrap the seeds of all human improvement yet attained, and are evidently full of power for more? I refer to this latter alternative only to remark, that all considerations, whether of the apostles' external circumstances, or their internal feelings respecting Him of whom they bore witness, combine to confirm the persuasion of Christians that they have recorded as said by our Lord *what he truly did say*, and not any words of their own imagination."

"9. And let us pursue the matter further by analogy. Can we suppose that the light poured by the Holy Spirit upon the *sayings* of our Lord would be confined to such sayings, and not extend itself over the other parts of the narratives of his life on earth? Can we believe that those miracles, which, though not uttered in words, were yet *acted parables*, would not be, under the same gracious assistance, brought back to the minds of the apostles, so that they should be placed on record for the teaching of the Church?"

"10. And, going yet further, to those parts of the Gospels which were wholly out of the cycle of the apostles' own testimony, can we imagine that the Divine discrimination which enabled them to detect the 'lie to the Holy Ghost,' should have forsaken them in judging of the records of our Lord's birth and infancy, so that they should have taught or sanctioned an apocryphal, fabulous, or mythical account of such matters? *Some account* of them must have been current in the apostolic circle; for Mary, the mother of Jesus, survived the ascension, and would be fully capable of giving undoubted testimony to the facts. Can we conceive, then, that, *with her among them*, the apostles should have delivered other than a true history of these things? Can we suppose that Luke's account, which he includes among the things *delivered by those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word* from the first, is other than the true one, and stamped with the authority of the witnessing and discriminating

Spirit dwelling in the apostles? Can we suppose that the account in the still more immediately-apostolic Gospel of Matthew is other than the history seen from a different side, and independently narrated?"

"11. But if it be inquired *how far such Divine superintendence has extended in the framing of our Gospels as we at present find them*, the answer must be furnished by no preconceived idea of what ought to have been, but by *the contents of the Gospels themselves*. That those contents are *various*, and *variously arranged*, is token enough that in their selection and disposition we have human agency presented to us, under no more direct guidance, in this respect, than that *general leading* which, in main and essential points, should insure entire accordance. Such leading admits of much variety in points of minor consequence. Two men may be equally led by the Holy Spirit to record the events of our Lord's life for our edification, though one may believe and record that the visit to the Gadarenes took place before the calling of Matthew, while the other places it after that event; though one, in narrating it, speaks of two demoniacs — the other only of one."

"12. And it is observable that in the only place in the three Gospels where an Evangelist speaks of himself, he expressly lays claim, not to any supernatural guidance in the arrangement of his subject-matter, but to a diligent tracing down of all things from the first; in other words, to the care and accuracy of a faithful and honest compiler. After such an avowal on the part of the writer himself, to assert an immediate revelation to him of *the arrangement to be adopted* and the *chronological notices to be given*, is clearly not justified, according to his own showing and assertion. The value of such arrangement and chronological connection must depend on various circumstances in each case; on their definiteness and consistency; on their agreement or disagreement with the other extant records; the preference being, in each case, given to that one whose account is the most minute in details, and whose notes of sequence are the most distinct."

"13. In thus speaking, I am doing no more than even the most scrupulous of our harmonizers have, in fact, done. In the case alluded to in paragraph 11, *there is not one of them who has not altered the arrangement*, either of Matthew or of Mark and Luke, so as to bring the visit to the Gadarenes into the same part of the Evangelic history. But if *the arrangement itself were matter of Divine inspiration*, then have we *no right to vary it* in the slightest

degree, but must maintain — as the harmonists have done in other cases, but never, as I am aware, in *this — two distinct visits to have been made at different times, and nearly the same events to have occurred at both.* I need hardly add that a similar method of proceeding with all the variations in the Gospels, *which would on this supposition be necessary*, would render the Scripture narrative a heap of improbabilities, and strengthen, instead of weakening, the cause of the enemies of our faith."

"14. And not only of the arrangement of the Evangelic history are these remarks to be understood. There are certain minor points of accuracy or inaccuracy, of which human research suffices to inform men, and on which, from want of that research, it is often the practice to speak vaguely and inexactly. Such are sometimes the conventionally-received distances from place to place; such are the common accounts of phenomena in natural history, etc. Now, in matters of this kind, the Evangelists and apostles were not supernaturally informed, but left, in common with others, to the guidance of their natural faculties."

"15. The same may be said of citations and dates from history. In the last apology of Stephen — which he spoke, being full of the Holy Ghost, and with Divine influence beaming from his countenance — we have at least two demonstrable historical inaccuracies. And the occurrence of similar ones in the Gospels does not in any way affect the inspiration or the veracity of the Evangelists."

"16. It may be well to mention one notable illustration of the principles upheld in this section. What can be more undoubted and unanimous than the testimony of the Evangelists to *the resurrection of the Lord?* If there be one fact rather than another of which the apostles were witnesses, *it was this;* and in the concurrent narratives of all four Evangelists it stands related beyond all cavil or question. Yet, of all the events which they have described, *none is so variously put forth in detail,* or with so many minor discrepancies. And this was just what might have been expected on the principles above laid down. The great fact that the Lord *was risen* — set forth by the ocular witness of the apostles, who had seen him — became from that day first in importance in the delivery of their testimony. The *precise order* of his appearances would naturally, from the overwhelming nature of their present emotions, be a matter of minor consequence, and perhaps not even of accurate inquiry till some time

had passed. Then, with the utmost desire on the part of the women and apostles to collect the events in their exact order of time, some confusion would be apparent in the history, and some discrepancies in versions of it which were the results of separate and independent inquiries; the traces of which pervade our present accounts. But what fair-judging student of the Gospel ever made these variations or discrepancies a ground for doubting the veracity of the Evangelists as to the fact of the resurrection, or the principal details of the Lord's appearances after it?" (Alford's Prolegomena to the Greek Testament, Ch. I, Sec. 6.)

PART V.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

§ 34. THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD, JEWISH, GREEK, AND ROMAN, AT THE ADVENT OF JESUS CHRIST.

CHRIST being "the center and turning-point, as well as key of all history," it seems to us not out of place, in an Introduction to the Gospels, to glance at the preparation which existed in the moral and religious condition of the world for the appearance of the Redeemer on earth. Upon this process of preparation Neander, the father of modern Church history,* threw more light than any of his predecessors; and, upon the foundation which he had laid, his worthy successors, Guericke, Kurtz, Jacobi, and Schaff, built their deeply-interesting researches. The most lucid as well as comprehensive discussion of this subject we find in Dr. Schaff's Church History, and quote, therefore, from him, with some modification and abridgment, and with the exception of what is said "on the moral and religious state of the pagan world among the Greeks and Romans," on which we have preferred the statement of Guericke.

[* By birth and early training an Israelite, and a genuine Nathanael too, full of childlike simplicity and of longings for the Messianic salvation — in youth an enthusiastic student of Grecian philosophy, particularly of Plato, who became for him a scientific schoolmaster to bring him to Christ — he had, when in his seventeenth year he received Christian baptism, passed through in his own inward experience, so to speak, the whole historical course by which the world had been prepared for Christianity; he had gained an experimental knowledge of the workings of Judaism and heathenism in their direct tendency toward Christianity; and thus he had already broken his own way to the only proper position for contemplating the history of the Church—a position whence Jesus Christ is viewed as the object of the deepest yearnings of humanity, the center of all history, and the only key to its mysterious sense." (Dr. Schaff's History of the Apostolic Church, p. 96.)]

With the incarnation of the Son of God commences, and on it rests, the fullness of time. (Gal. iv, 4.) It is the end of the old world, and the beginning of the new, which is dated from his birth. The entire development of humanity, especially of the religious ideas of all nations, before the birth of Christ, must be viewed as an introduction to this great event. The preparation for it began indeed with the very creation of man, who was made in the image of God, and destined for communion with him through the eternal Son, and with the promise of deliverance by the seed of the woman, some vague memories of which promise survived in the heathen religions. With the call of Abraham, some two thousand years before the birth of Christ, the religious development of humanity separates into two independent and antagonistic lines, Judaism and heathenism. In the former the development was influenced and directed by a continuous course of Divine co-operation; in the latter it was left to the unaided powers and capacities of man. These two parallel lines continued side by side with each other till, in the fullness of time, they merged in Christianity, which they were mutually to serve by their appropriate fruits, and results, and respectively-peculiar developments; but with which, also, the ungodly elements of both would enter into a deadly conflict. As Christianity is the reconciliation and union of God and man in and through Jesus Christ, the God-man and Savior, it must have been preceded by a twofold process of preparation — an approach of God to man, and an approach of man to God. In Judaism the preparation is direct and positive, proceeding from above downward, and ending with the birth of the Messiah. In heathenism it is indirect, and mainly, though not entirely, negative, proceeding from below upward, and ending with a helpless cry of mankind for redemption. There we have a special revelation or self-communication of the only true God by word and deed, ever growing clearer and plainer, till at last the Divine nature appears in the human to raise it to communion with itself; here man, guided indeed by the general providence of God, and lighted by the glimmer of the *Logos* shining in the darkness, (John i, 5,) yet unaided by direct revelation, and left to his own ways, (Acts xiv, 16,) if haply he might feel after the Lord and find him. In Judaism the true religion was prepared for mankind, and in heathenism mankind was prepared for its reception. There the Divine substance is begotten; here the human forms are molded to receive it. The former is like the elder son in the parable, who abode in his father's house; the latter like the prodigal, who squandered his portion, yet at last shuddered before the gaping abyss of perdition, and penitently returned to the bosom of his father's compassionate love. The flower of paganism

appears in the two great nations of classic antiquity, Greece and Rome. With the language, morality, literature, and religion of these nations Christianity came directly into contact. These, together with the Jews, were the chosen nations of the ancient world, and shared the earth among them. While the Jews were chosen for things eternal, to keep the sanctuary of the true religion, the Greeks prepared the elements of natural culture, of science and art for the use of the Church, and the Romans developed the idea of law, and organized the civilized world in a universal empire, ready to serve the spiritual universality of the Gospel. On the one hand God endowed the Greeks and Romans with the richest natural gifts, that they might reach the highest civilization possible without the aid of Christianity, and thus both provide the instruments of human science, art, and law for the use of the Christian Church, and yet at the same time show the utter impotence of these alone to bless and save the world. On the other hand, the universal empire of Rome was a positive groundwork for the universal empire of the Gospel. It served as a crucible, in which all contradictory and irreconcilable peculiarities of the ancient nations and religions were dissolved into the chaos of the new creation. The Roman legions razed the partition-walls among the ancient nations, brought the extremes of the civilized world together in free intercourse, and united North and South, and East and West in the bonds of a common language and culture, of common laws and customs. Thus they evidently, though unconsciously, opened the way for the rapid and general spread of that religion which unites all nations in one family of God by the spiritual bond of faith and love. In addition to this general survey, let us consider more particularly:

1. *The moral and religious state of the pagan world among the Greeks and Romans.* The religious ideas that lie at the bottom of all pagan religions sprang originally from Divine revelation, either internal or external. Having been darkened by human apostasy, they could not, however, in the distorted form which they assumed in heathenism, avail to check even the grossest manifestations of unbelief and superstition. Resting upon myths and the vague intimations and feelings of the human soul, *the ancient popular religion of the Greeks and Romans*, in particular, naturally came in conflict with the increasing education and refinement of these highly-civilized nations, but could not vanquish the skepticism that was engendered thereby. Hence, notwithstanding the efforts of the Government and the patriotic citizen to prop up the declining State religion, an utter disbelief in every thing religious and

Divine gradually spread among the cultivated and noble classes, and passed over from them into the mass of society, bringing with it a dreadful corruption of morals and manners. A species of philosophy that set up pleasure as the highest good, and wholly denied the reality of any objective truth, became the prevalent mode of thinking, and if here and there a man of more earnest religious temper felt constrained to resist the godless spirit of his age in its extreme forms, yet religion even for him lost its vitality, and God himself became the product of the human understanding. But on the other hand, this very unbelief, groping about in vain for a satisfying object, carried the germ of a reaction. Many, with a sense of inward emptiness and a dim intimation of a higher world, despairing of any satisfaction from the various conflicting philosophical systems, yearned after the old religion of their fathers, and boldly grasped it again with glowing zeal, and the "barbaric" religions of Asia and Egypt were brought in to impart a new decoration and interest to the effete ancestral system, and amulets, talismans, and magicians found a welcome reception. Such was the general state of the religion of the Greeks and Romans at the time of the advent of the Redeemer. Reckless infidelity and horrible superstition, both alike fostered by the reigning dissoluteness of morals, contended for the mastery, and the great mass of the people lay sunk in absolute godlessness.

A deeper religious need was awakened in some few minds, and these sought satisfaction in the *two better* philosophical systems of the time; neither of which, however, was fitted to meet this immortal longing of the heart. The *Stoic* philosophy, through its ideal of a perfect virtue, could indeed flare a clearer light over the prevailing corruption of morals, but could give no disclosures respecting the unseen world and man's future relations to God. Stoicism, moreover, left its disciples to the isolated strain of their own wills. Blindly and coldly they subjected themselves, for life or for death, to the unalterable law of the universe; to despise pleasure and pain, and, in case of necessity, to put an end to an existence which had missed its aim — such was the climax of their wisdom. The principles of *Platonism* did not, indeed, minister to the self-reliant pride of human nature. On the contrary, they tended to produce the sense of dependence upon a higher Power, and to lead men to seek communion therewith, as the only source of enlightenment and moral excellence. But they could only teach them to *seek*, not to find. This consummation could be effected only by a mediator who "was come from God

and went to God." Platonism, in thus hinting at a perfect religion that was itself the substance, while all others were the shadows, and in spiritualizing the popular religions of the time, dimly looked toward Christianity.

We have to survey, 2. *The religious condition of the Jewish people.* This wonderful people was chosen by Sovereign Grace to stand amid the surrounding idolatry as the bearer of the knowledge of Jehovah, the only true God, of his holy law, and of his comforting promise, and thus to become the cradle of the Messiah. It arose with the calling of Abraham, and the covenant of Jehovah with him in Canaan, the land of promise; grew to a nation in Egypt, the land of bondage; was delivered, and organized into a theocratic State, on the basis of the law of Sinai, by Moses in the wilderness; was led back into Palestine by Joshua; became, after the Judges, a monarchy, reaching the hight of its glory in David and Solomon, the types of the victorious and peaceful reign of Christ; split into two hostile kingdoms, and, in punishment of internal discord and growing apostasy to idolatry, was carried captive by heathen conquerors; was restored, after seventy years' humiliation, to the land of its fathers, but fell again under the yoke of heathen foes; yet in its deepest abasement fulfilled its highest mission by giving birth to the Savior of the world. Judaism was, among the idolatrous nations of antiquity, like an oasis in a desert, clearly defined and isolated; separated and inclosed by a rigid moral and ceremonial law. The Holy Land itself, though in the midst of the three grand divisions of the ancient world, was separated from the great nations of ancient culture by deserts south and east, by sea on the west, and by mountains on the north; thus securing to the Mosaic religion freedom to unfold itself and to fulfill its great work without disturbing influences from abroad. And Israel carried in its bosom from the first the large promise, that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

The outward circumstances, and the moral and religious condition of the Jews at the birth of Christ, would indeed seem, at first and on the whole, to be in glaring contradiction with their divine destiny. But, in the first place, their very degeneracy proved the need of Divine help. In the second place, the redemption through Christ appeared by contrast in the greater glory, as a creative act of God. And finally, amid the mass of corruption, as a preventive of putrefaction, lived the succession of the true children of Abraham, longing for the salvation of Israel, and ready to embrace Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah and the Savior of the world.

Since the battle of Philippi, (B.C. 42,) the Jews had been subject to the heathen Romans, who heartlessly governed them by the Idumean Herod and his sons, and afterward by procurators. Under this hated yoke their Messianic hopes were powerfully raised, but carnally distorted. Misapprehending the spirit of the Old Testament, vain-gloriously boasting themselves to be the people of God, utterly blinded as to the cause of the terrible national judgments they were suffering, the mass of the Jewish nation desired nothing but deliverance from temporal distresses, and hoped greedily for the advent of a Messiah who should free them from the Roman yoke by supernatural power, and give *them* the supreme dominion on earth. Their morals were *outwardly* far better than those of the heathen; but under the garb of strict obedience to their law they concealed great corruption. They are pictured in the New Testament as a stiff-necked, ungrateful, and impenitent race, a generation of vipers. Their own priest and historian, Josephus, who generally endeavored to present his countrymen to the Greeks and Romans in the most favorable light, describes them as at that time a debased and ungodly people, well deserving their fearful punishment in the destruction of Jerusalem. As to religion, the Jews, especially after the Babylonish captivity, adhered most tenaciously to the letter of the law, and to their traditions and ceremonies, but without knowing the spirit and power of the Scriptures. They cherished the most bigoted horror of the heathen, and were therefore despised and hated by them as misanthropic. After the time of the Maccabees, (B.C. 150,) they fell into two mutually-hostile sects. The *Pharisees* represented the traditional orthodoxy and stiff formalism, the legal self-righteousness and the fanatical bigotry of Judaism. The bitter opponents of the Pharisees were the skeptical, rationalistic, and worldly-minded *Sadducees*. Their religious creed was confined to the mere letter of the Pentateuch, and contained only such tenets as they deemed to be explicitly taught in it. The sect of the Essenes came into no contact with the Gospel history. They were a mystic, ascetic sect, and lived in monkish seclusion on the coasts of the Dead Sea.

Degenerate and corrupt though the mass of Judaism was, yet the Old Testament economy was the Divine institution preparatory to the Christian redemption, and as such received the deepest reverence from Christ and his apostles, while they sought by terrible rebuke to lead its unworthy representatives to repentance. *Law and prophecy* were the two great elements of the Jewish religion by which it was made *a direct Divine introduction to*

Christianity. (1.) The law of Moses was the clearest expression of the holy will of God before the advent of Christ. It set forth the ideal of righteousness, and was thus fitted most effectually to awaken the sense of man's great departure from it, the knowledge of sin and guilt. It acted as a schoolmaster to lead men to Christ that they might be justified by faith. The same sense of guilt and of the need of reconciliation was constantly kept alive by daily sacrifices, at first in the Tabernacle and afterward in the Temple, and by the whole ceremonial law, which, as a wonderful system of types and shadows, perpetually pointed to the realities of the new covenant, especially to the one all-sufficient atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross. For, inasmuch as God requires absolute obedience and purity of heart, under promise of life and penalty of death, and as he can not cruelly sport with man, there is hidden in the moral and ritual law, as in a shell, the sweet kernel of a promise, that he will one day exhibit the ideal of righteousness in living form, and give the miserable sinner power to fulfill the law. Without such assurance the law were bitter irony. (2.) The law was, as already hinted, the vehicle of the Divine promise of redemption, and became by prophecy a religion of hope. While the Greeks and Romans put their golden age in the past, the Jews looked for theirs in the future. Their whole history, their religious, political, and social institutions and customs pointed to the coming of the Messiah, and the establishment of his kingdom on earth. Prophecy begins with the promise of the Serpent-bruiser immediately after the fall. It predominates in the patriarchal age, and Moses, the law-giver, was at the same time a prophet pointing the people to a greater successor. Without the comfort of the Messianic promise, the law must have driven the earnest soul to despair. From the time of Samuel, some eleven centuries before Christ, prophecy took an organized form in a permanent prophetic office and order. In this form it accompanied the Levitical priesthood and the Davidic dynasty down to the Babylonish captivity, survived this catastrophe, and directed the return of the people and the rebuilding of the Temple; interpreting and applying the law, reprobating abuses in Church and State, predicting the terrible judgments and the redeeming grace of God, warning and punishing, comforting and encouraging, with an ever plainer reference to the coming Messiah, who should redeem Israel and the world from sin and misery, and establish a kingdom of peace and righteousness on earth.

This is the Jewish religion as it flowed from the fountain of Divine revelation and lived in the true Israel, the spiritual children of Abraham, in John

the Baptist, his parents and disciples, in the mother of Jesus, her kindred and friends, in the venerable Simeon, and the prophetess Anna, in Lazarus and his pious sisters, in the apostles and the first disciples, who embraced Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfiller of the law and the prophets, the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

We have to glance, 3. *At the influence which Judaism and heathenism mutually exerted upon one another.* (1.) The Jews, since the Babylonish captivity, had been scattered over all the world. In spite of the antipathy of the Gentiles, they had, by their judgment, industry, and tact, risen to wealth and influence, and had built their synagogues in all the commercial cities of the Roman Empire. They had thus sown the seeds of the knowledge of the true God, and of Messianic hope in the field of the idolatrous world. The Old Testament Scriptures were translated into Greek two centuries before Christ, and were read and expounded in the public worship of God, which was open to all. Every synagogue was, as it were, a mission-station of monotheism, and furnished the apostles an admirable place and a most natural introduction for their preaching of Jesus Christ as the fulfiller of the law and the prophets. Then, as the heathen religions had been hopelessly undermined by skeptical philosophy and popular infidelity, many earnest Gentiles, especially multitudes of women, came over to Judaism either wholly or in part. The thorough converts, called "proselytes of righteousness," were commonly still more bigoted and fanatical than the native Jews. The half-converts, "proselytes of the gate," or "God-fearing men," who adopted only the monotheism, the principal moral laws, and the Messianic hopes of the Jews, without being circumcised, appear in the New Testament as the most susceptible hearers of the Gospel. (2.) On the other hand, the Graeco-Roman heathenism, through its language, philosophy, and literature, exerted no inconsiderable influence to soften the fanatical bigotry in the higher and more cultivated classes of the Jews. Generally the Jews of the dispersion, who spoke the Greek language, the Hellenists, as they were called, were much more liberal than the proper Hebrews, or Palestinian Jews, who kept their mother tongue. This is evident in the Gentile missionaries, Barnabas of Cyprus, and Paul of Tarsus, and in the whole Church of Antioch, in contrast with that at Jerusalem. The Hellenistic-Jewish form of Christianity was the natural bridge to the Gentile. The most remarkable example of a traditional, though very fantastic and Gnostic-like combination of Jewish and heathen elements meets us in the educated circles of the Egyptian

metropolis, Alexandria, and in the system of Philo, who was cotemporary with the founding of the Christian Church, though he never came in contact with it. This Jewish theologian sought to harmonize the religion of Moses with the philosophy of Plato by the help of an ingenious but arbitrary allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament; and from the books of Proverbs and of Wisdom he deduced a doctrine of the *Logos* so similar to that of John's Gospel, that some have imputed to the apostle an acquaintance with the writings of Philo. But Philo's speculation is to the apostle's "Word made flesh," as a shadow to the body, or a dream to the reality. The Theraputae, or Worshipers, a mystic, ascetic sect in Egypt, akin to the Essenes in Judea, carried this Platonic Judaism into practical life; but were, of course, equally unsuccessful in uniting the two religions in a vital and permanent way. Such a union could only be effected by a new religion revealed from heaven.

Thus was the way for Christianity prepared on every side, positively and negatively, directly and indirectly, in theory and practice, by truth and by error, by false belief and by unbelief, by Jewish religion, by Grecian culture, and by Roman conquest; by the vainly-attempted amalgamation of Jewish and heathen thought, by the exposed impotence of natural civilization, philosophy, art, and political power, by the decay of the old religions, by the universal distraction and hopeless misery of the age, and by the yearnings of all earnest and noble souls for the unknown God.

In the fullness of time, when the fairest flowers of science and art had withered, and the world was on the verge of despair, the Virgin's Son was born to heal the infirmities of mankind. Christ entered a dying world as the author of a new and imperishable life.

§ 35. THE CHRONOLOGY AND HARMONY OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

It is very difficult to arrange in their proper chronological order the events of our Lord's life, many of which are narrated by one or more of the Evangelists in a different order. Alford thinks that it is impossible to combine the narratives given by the Evangelists into one continuous history, without doing considerable violence to the arrangement of some one or more of the Evangelists. We readily acknowledge that we can not gather from the Gospel records *that* knowledge

of the real process of the transactions themselves, which alone would enable us to give a satisfactory account of the different order in which they appear in our Gospels, and *with certainty* to assign to each event its proper chronological place; nevertheless, there is light enough to show us the chronological order of the Gospel narratives in the main, and modern harmonists have arrived at the same conclusions on almost every essential point, except with regard to the beginning of the Galilean ministry proper and the insertion of Luke ix, 51-xviii, 14. The late Dr. E. Robinson has given, in his "Harmony of the Four Gospels," a digest of the many learned disquisitions on the various difficult points, and the conclusions which he has arrived at in common with the leading harmonists of Germany, and upon which he builds his harmonistical arrangement of the Gospel narratives, have been accepted by all the later commentators; their synoptical and harmonistical table does not vary from that of Robinson. But there has now appeared a work whose thorough researches have brought out a different and far more satisfactory result with regard to the two important points mentioned above. We refer to "*The Life of Our Lord upon the Earth*," by the Rev. Samuel J. Andrews, who has done the Church a great and lasting service by setting the design of our Lord's Judean ministry, and its relation to the Galilean, as well as his last journey to Jerusalem, in a light which has an important bearing upon the exegesis of the Gospels. We have no doubt that, henceforward, Mr. Andrews will be the standard authority on the chronology and harmony of the Gospels, as Dr. Robinson has been hitherto. To his "Life of Our Lord," our readers will be indebted for much of the light which we have been enabled to throw upon the chronological and harmonistical questions in the Gospel history. By having adopted the results of Mr. Andrews's researches, and arranging them in tabular form, we hope to contribute something toward giving his valuable work a more general circulation. The chronology and harmony of the Gospels is of so much importance, that it ought to be made a subject-matter of study for itself, apart from all other questions, and the Bible student will find in Mr. Andrews's work all he needs for this purpose.

Referring the reader to that work, and to our comments on the respective passages to which the chronological and harmonistical questions refer, for details, and for the reasons that have led us to our conclusions, we will here only present Mr. Andrews's synopsis of the Gospel history, slightly modified, and arranged in tabular form, preceded by a summary of the data we have for

ascertaining the year of our Lord's birth, and death, and the duration of his ministry, in order to obtain a basis for a chronological arrangement of the events narrated in the Gospels.

A. THE DATE OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

According to the received chronology, which is that of Dionysius Exiguus, in the sixth century, Jesus was born in the year of Rome 754. But it is now admitted, on all hands, that this calculation places the nativity some years too late. It can be proved satisfactorily that it could not have occurred after 750, nor before 747.

1. It is certain that Jesus was born before the death of Herod the Great, (Matt. ii, 1-6.) Almost all chronologists agree in putting his death in the year 750, shortly before the Passover, (between the 13th of March and the 4th of April.) But how long before Herod's death was Christ born? The answer to this question depends upon the length of time which the events between his birth and Herod's death — the presentation of the child at the Temple forty days after the nativity, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, and the remaining there till Herod was dead — may have required. So much is certain, that the nativity can not be fixed later than the month of January, 750.

2. Another note of time occurs in Luke iii, 1, 2, where John the Baptist is said to have entered upon his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius. The rule of Tiberius may be calculated either from the beginning of his sole reign, after the death of Augustus, August 19, 767, or from his joint government with Augustus, near the end of 764 or the beginning of 765. It is admitted by most chronologists as almost certain, that Luke computed the reign of Tiberius from his colleagueship. If so, the fifteenth year of Tiberius and the beginning of John's ministry is 779. From the fact that the Levites were not allowed to enter upon their full service till the age of thirty, (Num. iv, 3,) it has been generally supposed — although there is no express law to that effect — that the priests began their labors at the same age. Hence it has been inferred that John must have reached the age of thirty ere he began his ministry. That his ministry may have continued about six months, when the Lord came to be baptized, is in the highest degree probable. If, then, John entered upon his ministry in the year 779, being thirty years old, and about six months elapsed ere the Lord, whose

birth took place six months after that of John, came to him to be baptized, it follows that the birth of John is to be fixed in the Summer of 749, and that of our Lord toward the close of the same year or in the beginning of 750.

3. The baptism of Jesus was followed by a Passover, (John ii, 13,) at which certain Jews mention that the restoration of their Temple had been in progress for forty-six years, Jesus himself being at this time "about thirty years of age," (Luke iii, 23.) The statement of Luke, "And Jesus himself began to be about (ώσει) thirty years of age," has been variously interpreted. According to some it is to be understood as a round or indefinite number, permitting a latitude of at least two or three years. But this is highly improbable. The most natural meaning is, that the Lord was some months more or less than thirty. He was not just thirty, nor twenty-nine, nor thirty-one. This is confirmed by the remark of the Jews, at the Passover which our Lord visited two or three months after his baptism, that the Temple was then in building forty and six years. This building, or rather rebuilding, of the Temple was begun by Herod in the eighteenth year of his reign, or during the year from Nisan, 734-Nisan, 735. The forty-sixth year following was from Nisan, 780-81. If the forty-sixth year is to be taken as completed, it was that of 781; if it is to be taken as current, it was that of 780. This calculation, like the former points, would fix the birth of Jesus toward the close of 749, or beginning of 750. But this calculation is made somewhat uncertain by the consideration that Josephus assigns the length of Herod's reign at thirty-seven or thirty-four years, according as he reckons from his appointment by the Romans, or from the death of Antigonus.

4. Astronomy is also brought under contribution to settle the date of the birth of Christ. Whether the star seen by the Magi was the conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn, which occurred in the year 747, the reader will find discussed in our notes on Matthew ii, 1-10. We do not enter here upon this question, because, owing to our not knowing whether the first appearance of the constellation was designed to signify the annunciation of the incarnation or the actual birth, nor at which of the successive appearances of the constellation the Magi set out on their journey, we can not reach any precise chronological results, except this, that the conjunction of the planets in 747 define the earliest period at which the Lord's birth can be placed.

In respect to the time of the year when Jesus was born there is still less certainty. Mr. Andrews says: "The only direct datum which the Gospels give

us is found in the statement of Luke, (i, 5,) that Zacharias 'was of the course of Abia.' It is known that the priests were divided into twenty-four classes, each of which officiated at the Temple in its turn for a week, (1 Chron. xxiv, 1-19.) This order, originally established by David, was broken up by the captivity. The four classes that returned from Babylon were divided anew by Ezra into twenty-four, to which the old names were given. Another interruption was made by the invasion of Antiochus, but the old order was restored by the Maccabees. Of these courses that of Jehojarib was the first, that of Abia the eighth. We need, therefore, only to know a definite time at which any one of the courses was officiating, in order to be able to trace the succession. Such a datum we find in the Talmudical statements, supported by Josephus, (Bell. Jud., VI, iv, 5,) that, at the destruction of the Temple by Titus, on the 5th of August, 823, the first class had just entered on its course. Its period of service was from the evening of the 4th of August, which was the Sabbath, to the evening of the following Sabbath, on the 11th of August. We can now easily compute backward, and ascertain at what time in any given year each class was officiating. If we take the year 749 as the probable year of Christ's birth, the appearance of the angel to Zacharias announcing John's birth must be placed 748. In this year we find, by computation, that the course of Abia officiated during the weeks from April 17th to 23d, and again from October 3d to 9th. At each of these periods, therefore, was Zacharias at Jerusalem. If the annunciation of the angel was made to him during the former, the birth of John may be placed near the beginning of 749, and the Lord's birth about six months later, or near the middle of 749; if the annunciation was made during the latter, John's birth was near the middle of 749, and the Lord's birth near its end. The fact that we do not know how soon after the completion of the ministry of Zacharias the conception of John is to be placed prevents any very exact statement of dates. Luke (i, 24) uses only the general expression, 'After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived.' Yet the tenor of the narrative leads us to believe that it was soon after his return to his home, and may be placed in either of the months, April or October. Counting onward fifteen months, we reach June and December, in one of which the birth of Christ is thus to be placed." To the month of December the objection is made, that, in the night when the Lord was born, shepherds were in the field keeping watch over their flocks, and that, if we place the birth of Christ in that season, his baptism would fall in January, a month considered by some as unfavorable for the work of baptism. But the most reliable testimonies concerning the climate of Palestine show the

groundlessness of the objection made on this ground. Considering the time most probably required for the events that took place between our Lord's baptism and his first Passover, we are almost forced to the conclusion that he was baptized by John early in January, and that, therefore, his birth is to be placed in the month of December.

B. THE DURATION OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY, AND THE DATE OF HIS DEATH.

We have shown the grounds upon which we may assume that the Baptist began his ministry in midsummer of the year 779, and that our Lord was baptized about six months afterward, that is in January, 780. Immediately after his baptism he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and was there forty days. From John i, 29, we learn that after the temptation he returned to Bethabara the day after John had been visited by a deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem. As he sees Jesus coming he bears witness to him as the Lamb of God. The day following he repeats this testimony to his disciples. Two of them — Andrew, and no doubt John, the narrator of the fact — followed Jesus and staid with him the whole day. Andrew brings his brother Simon to see him also, and he receives the name Cephas. The succeeding day Jesus departs to Galilee. Two days seem to have been spent on the way to Cana, during which time he meets with Philip and Nathanael. On the third day (from the departure to Galilee) the marriage-feast took place at Cana, where our Lord performed his first miracle. From Cana he went down with his mother and brethren, and disciples, to Capernaum, and remained there (John ii, 12, 13) till it was time to go up to Jerusalem to attend the Passover, which, in the year 780, fell upon the 9th of April; the whole interval between his baptism and his first Passover was, consequently, about three months.

The duration of our Lord's ministry can best be determined by the number of Passovers which took place between his baptism and death, and which we have to ascertain from the Gospel of John. This Evangelist mentions six feasts, at five of which Jesus was present; the Passover that followed his baptism, (ii, 13;) a feast of the Jews, (v, 1;) a Passover, during which Jesus remained in Galilee, (vi, 4;) the feast of tabernacles to which the Lord went up privately, (vii, 2;) the feast of dedication, (x, 22;) and, lastly, the Passover at which he

suffered. There are, therefore, certainly three Passovers, and if the feast mentioned in chap. v, 1, be also a Passover, four. The reasons for regarding it as a Passover we shall state in our comments on John v, 1; they are so preponderating that a great majority of commentators and harmonists have declared in favor of it, and we, therefore, assume this conclusion here as the most probable. Accordingly, our Lord's ministry from his baptism embraced three years and about three months, and the Passover on which he died was that of 783.

With regard to the day of the month on which he died, we meet the much-disputed point whether he was crucified on the 14th or 15th Nisan. According to the Synoptists, Jesus partook of the Paschal Supper at the same time with the Jews in general, and at the time appointed in the law, on the evening following the 14th Nisan, Thursday evening, and on the next day, Friday, the 15th Nisan, he was crucified. But according to John (xviii, 28, and xix, 14) it seems that Christ was crucified on the 14th Nisan, the same day on the evening of which the supper was to be legally eaten, and that, consequently, the supper eaten by him and his disciples the evening previous to his death was not the legal Paschal Supper. How John's statement is to be harmonized with that of the Synoptists, will be considered at the proper place in the Commentary. This point is mentioned here only on account of its bearing on the year in which our Lord died. We assume here that our Lord died on the 15th Nisan. As it is almost universally admitted that he died on Friday, the question arises, in what year following 780 the 15th Nisan fell on a Friday. According to Wieseler this was the case in 783. Those who place the crucifixion on the 14th Nisan, find that it fell on a Friday in 782 and 786. Seyffarth contends that he died on the 14th Nisan in the year 785, and that this day was Thursday, not Friday.

Inasmuch as the duration of our Lord's ministry can not be ascertained with absolute certainty, from the number of Passovers which took place between his baptism and death, the following data have been made the basis of computing the year of the death of Christ. 1. The tradition of the Talmudists, that the power to inflict capital punishment was taken from the Jews forty years before the Temple was destroyed, which occurred in 823, is adduced as corroborative of the crucifixion having taken place in the year 783. 2. It has been inferred from the parable of the barren fig-tree, (Luke xiii, 6-9,) that Christ's ministry dated three years from the Passover of 780. 3. The prophetic

half-week of Daniel (ix, 27) has been interpreted as referring to the length of our Lord's ministry; but this is a mere conjecture. 4. The great eclipse of the sun, reported by Phlegon to have taken place in the fourth year of the 202d Olympiad — from July, 785 to 786 — has been considered by some as identical with the darkening of the sun at the crucifixion; but this supposition is of no weight, because the darkening of the sun occurring at the time of the full moon could not have been an eclipse. Besides, the eclipse spoken of by Phlegon occurred, according to astronomical calculations, in November, 782. 5. Some of the Fathers were induced by the passage, Isaiah lxi, 2, where mention is made of "the acceptable year of the Lord," quoted by the Lord at Nazareth, (Luke iv, 19,) to limit his ministry to a single year, or a year and some months. But this supposition is entirely untenable, No less preposterous is the inference of Irenaeus, from John viii, 57, and ii, 20, that our Lord was between forty and fifty years old when he died. 6. According to Tertullian, Christ suffered under Tiberius Caesar, R. Geminus and P. Geminus being Consuls, on the eighth day before the calends of April — March 25th. This statement, although it seems to have obtained general currency, is inexplicable. The Gemini were Consuls during the year beginning January, 782. Our Lord's death could not have taken place in that year on the 25th of March, for he was crucified on the 14th or 15th Nisan; and these days, in 782, fell on the 16th and 17th of April. Besides, Tertullian is not consistent with himself, assigning to our Lord's ministry in one place, one year, and in another place, three years.

In consideration of all the data, though none of them leads to absolute certainty, the majority of *modern* commentators and harmonists have arrived at the conclusion that the ministry of our Lord embraced four Passovers, having a duration of three years and about three months from his baptism in the beginning of January, 780, to the 7th of April, 783.

C. SYNOPTICAL TABLE OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

For the sake of reference in the Commentary we have numbered the different items in the Synoptical Table; and to make it at the same time a table of Harmony, showing more clearly how much of each event two or more Evangelists have related in common, we have often made of one and the same event more than one item. A. U. C., in the first column, is the designation of the Roman Chronology, reckoned from the building of the city of Rome. C. C. C., in the second column, stands for the Common Christian Chronology.

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
I. Introductory Events.								
748	6 B. C.	October	1.	The angel Gabriel announces to Zacharias, a priest of the course of Abia, while burning incense in the Temple, that his aged wife, Elizabeth, shall bear him a son, whose name shall be John.....				
			2.	After his course had completed its ministry, Zacharias returns to his own house, Elizabeth conceives a son, and spends the five months following in retirement in the hill-country of Judah.....			1: 5-22	
749	5 B. C.	March or April.....	3.	In the sixth month of Elizabeth's conception, the angel Gabriel is sent to Nazareth in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary, who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, to announce to her that she should be the mother of the Messiah			1: 23-25	
			4.	Immediately after the visit of the angel, Mary left Nazareth, and went to the home of Zacharias in the hill-country of Judah, and remained there about three months.....			1: 26-33	
749	5 B. C.	June or July.....	5.	A little before the birth of John Mary returns to Nazareth; Joseph, seeing her condition, is minded to put her away privily; but, in obedience to a command of God, which he receives in a dream, through an angel, he takes Mary home as his wife.			1: 39-56	
			6.	Elizabeth gives birth to a son, who is circumcised on the eighth day, and named John, in obedience to the angel's direction. Zacharias, with loosened tongue, and filled with the Holy Ghost, praises God and prophesies concerning the mission of his son	1: 18-25			
II. The Birth, Childhood, and Private Life of Jesus.								
749	5 B. C.	December	7.	In consequence of an edict from Caesar Augustus concerning taxation, Joseph and Mary leave Nazareth to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be taxed there.....				
			8.	Upon their arrival at Bethlehem they can find no room at the inn, and take refuge in a place where			2: 1-5	

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. G.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
749	5 B. C.	December	9.	cattle were lodged. The babe is born, and laid in a manger.....			2: 6,7	
750	4 B. C.	January	10.	The same night in which he was born an angel of the Lord appeared to some shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks, and announced to them his birth. Leaving their flocks, they hastened to Bethlehem to see the child, and, finding him, returned, praising God.....			2: 8-20	
750	4 B. C.	February.....	11.	Upon the eighth day following his birth the child was circumcised, and the name Jesus given to him.....			2: 21	
			12.	Forty days after his birth Mary presented herself with the child in the Temple according to the law.....			2: 22-38	
			13.	Soon after the presentation the Wise Men from the East came to worship the new-born King of the Jews. This visit excited the suspicions of Herod, who made diligent inquiries of them; but being warned of God, in a dream, that they should not return to him, they departed to their own country by another way....	2: 1-12			
			14.	Immediately after their departure, Joseph, warned by God in a dream, takes Mary and Jesus and goes down into Egypt.....	2: 13-15			
750	4 B. C.	May.....	15.	Herod, as soon as he finds himself foiled by the Wise Men, gives orders that all the male children of Bethlehem, of two years old and under, be slain.....	2: 16-18			
			16.	Joseph, with Mary and Jesus, remains in Egypt till he hears, through an angel, of Herod's death. He designs to return to Judea, but is directed by God to go to Nazareth.....	2: 19-22			
761	8 A. D.	April 8th.....	17.	There Jesus remains during his childhood and youth.....	2: 23	2: 39,40		
			18.	Jesus, being twelve years old, goes for the first time from Nazareth up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. After the expiration of the feast he remained behind to converse with the doctors, and was found in the Temple, three days after, by his parents.....			2: 41-51	
			19.	Returning to Nazareth, he dwelt there in retirement till the time came that he should enter upon his public work			2: 52	
			20.	III. Announcement and Introduction of our Lord's Public Ministry.				
779	26 A. D.	July.....	19.	The Baptist's preparation for his mission.....			1: 80	
780	27 A. D.	January.....	20.	He commences to preach and baptize.....	3: 1-12	1: 1-8	3: 1-18	
			21.	After his ministry had continued about six months, Jesus comes from Nazareth to the Jordan, and is baptized by John.....	3: 13-17	1: 9-11	3: 21-23	

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C.G.C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
780	27 A.D.		22.	Immediately after his baptism Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and continued there forty days.....		4: 1-11	1: 12, 13	4: 1-13
			23.	The Baptist's declaration to a deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem.....				1: 19-28
			24.	The next day Jesus returns to the Jordan, and the Baptist points him out as the Lamb of God.....				1: 29-34
			25.	The day following he repeats his testimony to his disciples.....				1: 35, 36
			26.	Two of the Baptist's disciples—Andrew and John—seek the acquaintance of Christ.....				1: 37-40
			27.	The first interview of Christ with Peter.....				1: 41, 42
			28.	The next day our Lord sets out for Galilee, and meets Philip and Nathanael.....				1: 43-51
			29.	Three days after he arrives at Cana, and performs his first miracle.....				2: 1-11
			30.	He makes a short visit at Capernaum, and then goes up to Jerusalem to attend the Passover.....				2: 12, 13
			IV. The First Year of our Lord's Ministry, dating from the First Passover he attended after his Baptism.					
780	27 A.D.	April 11th-18th.....	31.	At the Passover Jesus drives out of the Temple the sellers of animals for sacrifice, and the money-changers.....				2: 14-17
			32.	To the Jews who demand his authority for doing so, he replies in a parable.....				2: 18-22
			33.	During the feast he wrought miracles which led many to believe on him.....				2: 23-25
			34.	He is visited at night by Nicodemus, to whom he explains the nature of the new birth.....				3: 1-21
			35.	Afterward he departs from Jerusalem into the land of Judæa, where he tarries with the disciples he had gained, and who baptized in his name.....				{ 3: 22 4: 2
			36.	The Baptist, in reply to the complaints of his disciples, bears a new testimony to Christ.....				3: 23-36
780	27 A.D.	December	37.	Jesus, knowing that the Pharisees would arouse the jealousy of John's disciples, to the injury of the cause, ceases to baptize, and retires to Galilee.....				4: 1, 3
			38.	Passing through Samaria, he holds a conversation with a woman at Jacob's well.....				4: 4-26
			39.	He tells his disciples of the approaching harvest; and many of the Samaritans believe on him.....				4: 27-42
			40.	After two days he goes to Galilee, and is received there with honor by				

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
				the Galileans because of the works which he did in Jerusalem at the feast.....				
780	27 A.D.		41.	Coming to Cana, he heals the nobleman's son at Capernaum. He afterward lives in retirement till called to go up to the next Passover.				4: 43-45
781	28 A.D.	Mar. 30th-Apr. 5th.	42.	V. The Second Year of our Lord's Public Ministry.				
			43.	During the feast he heals an impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda.....				5: 2-9
			44.	This act, done on the Sabbath day, arouses the anger of the Jews, who conspire against his life.....				5: 10-16
			45.	He defends his right to do so upon grounds which still more exasperate them				5: 17-47
			46.	He hears of the imprisonment of the Baptist, and retires to Galilee to begin his work there..... [The imprisonment of John took place a short time before the Passover, and is related.....]	4: 12-17	1: 14, 15	4: 14, 15	
781	28 A.D.	May.....	47.	He comes to Nazareth, and teaches in the synagogue. The people, becoming enraged at his discourse, attempt to kill him; but he escapes out of their hands and fixes his abode at Capernaum.....	14: 3-5	6: 17-20	3: 19, 20	
			48.	Near Capernaum, on the shore of the Galilean lake, he calls Peter and Andrew, James and John, at the time of the miraculous draught of the fishes, to the apostleship.....	4: 13-16		4: 16-31	
			49.	He teaches, and cures a demoniac, in the synagogue of Capernaum.....	4: 18-22	1: 16-20	5: 1-11	
			50.	He heals Peter's wife's mother and many others.....		1: 21-28	4: 32-37	
			51.	The first tour through Galilee.....	8: 14-17	1: 29-34	4: 38-41	
			52.	A leper cured..... [That this healing is not chronologically placed by Matthew appears from the whole arrangement of chapters viii and ix. Mark connects it with the first circuit in Galilee, but with no mention of place. Luke introduces it with no mark of time.]	4: 23-25*	1: 35-39	4: 42-44	
781	28 A.D.	Summer.....	53.	He returns to Capernaum. A paralytic is brought to his house upon a bed, whom he heals, forgiving his sins.....	8: 2-4	1: 40-45	5: 12-16	
			54.	The call of Levi (or Matthew) the publican.....	9: 2-8	2: 1-12	5: 17-26	
			55.	He defends his disciples for plucking ears of grain on the Sabbath..... Upon another Sabbath he heals a man with a withered hand, which induces the Pharisees to conspire with the Herodians to destroy him.....	9: 9	2: 13, 14	5: 27, 28	
					12: 1-8	2: 23-28	6: 1-5	
					12: 9-14	3: 1-6	6: 6-11	
				*This passage (Matt. iv, 23-25) seems not so much a description of our Lord's first circuit in Galilee as a general statement of his itinerancy there.			*	

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
781	28 A.D.		56.	Jesus withdraws to the Lake of Galilee, followed by great multitudes from all parts of the land. He heals many as they press upon him to touch him, and then directs that a small ship be prepared to wait upon him.....	12: 15-21	3: 7-12		
			57.	He goes into a neighboring mountain to spend the night in prayer.....		6:	12	
			58.	On the following morning he ordains the twelve apostles.....	10: 1-4	3: 13-19	6: 13-16	
			59.	The multitudes gathering around him, he proceeds to deliver the discourse called "The Sermon on the Mount.".....	5: 6: 7;		6: 17-49	
			60.	He returns to Capernaum, and heals the Centurion's servant.....	8: 5-15		7: 1-10	
			61.	Crowds continue to follow him, so that he has no time even to eat, and his friends become alarmed at his incessant labors.....		3: 20, 21		
			62.	On the following day he goes to Nain, and there restores to life the son of a widow, as they were bearing him to the grave.....			7: 11-17	
781	28 A.D. Autumn		63.	While continuing his ministry in that part of Galilee, John the Baptist sends from his prison a message to him by two of his disciples. Jesus returns an answer, and addresses the multitude respecting John.....	11: 2-19		7: 18-35	
				[Immediately upon these words concerning John, follows, in Matthew, (ix, 20-30,) an address to the cities Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum. Luke gives it, (x, 13-16,) in connection with the mission of the seventy disciples. In all probability our Lord made the same address on two different occasions; if not, the time in which Luke places it appears to be more correct; and we must assume that "a part of what was actually spoken to the seventy is given by Matthew on account of its affinity to what precedes, and because the mission of the seventy, as being something altogether temporary and without distinctive character, is not recorded by him."]				
			64.	While dining with a Pharisee, named Simon, he is anointed by a woman who had been a sinner.....			7: 36-50	
			65.	He continues his tour, or makes another one, through Galilee with his disciples, accompanied by certain women.....				8: 1-3
			66.	Having returned to Capernaum—as is to be inferred from Mark iii, 22—he heals one possessed with a devil, both blind and dumb. The Pharisees charge him with casting out devils by the help of Beelzebub,				

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
781	28 A.D.			and some, tempting him, ask a sign from heaven. He replies to their charge, warning them against committing the unpardonable sin, and refuses to give them a sign.....		12: 22-45	3: 22-30	
				[Most of the Harmonists consider the healing, and the discourse consequent upon it, recorded in Luke xi, 14-36, as identical with the above passages in Matthew and Mark. If it is so, the report of Luke is not in chronological order. On the other hand, notwithstanding the great similarity which it bears to Matthew xii, 22, and Mark iii, 22, the healing recorded by Luke seems to have been a different one, and to stand in its proper chronological place. As to the similarity of the discourse of our Lord with the Pharisees, we must remember that, as their blasphemous charge was repeated, so our Lord may have made essentially the same reply.]				
			67.	While he is yet speaking it is announced to him that his mother and brethren stand without, desiring to see him. He points to his disciples, and says, Behold my mother and my brethren		12: 46-50	3: 31-35	8: 19-21
			68.	The same day he left his house and sat by the seaside; and, as the multitude gathered to him, he entered a ship and taught them in a series of parables.....		13: 1-53	4: 1-34	8: 4-18
			69.	At the close of the day he gives a commandment to depart to the other side			4: 35	8: 22
			70.	As they were preparing to go, he holds a conversation with a scribe and with one of his disciples about following him		8: 18-22		9: 57-60*
			71.	He enters the ship with the disciples and crosses the lake. Upon the way a violent tempest arises; Jesus stills the wind and waves.....				
			72.	He lands in the country of the Gergesenes, and is met by two men possessed by demons, whose dwelling was in the tombs near by. Beholding Jesus, they run to meet him, and he, casting out the demons, permits them to enter into a herd of swine feeding near by. The swine, so possessed, run down the hill-side into the sea and perish. The inhabitants desire him to depart from their coasts.....		8: 23-27	4: 36-41	8: 23-25
			73.	After directing one of the healed demoniacs to proclaim through De-		8: 28-34	5: 1-17	8: 26-37

*The parallel passage in Luke is not in its chronological order.

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
781	28 A.D.		74.	capolis what had been done for him, Jesus returns to Capernaum.....	9:	1	5: 18-20	8: 38,39
			75.	After his return to Capernaum he was invited by Matthew to a feast in his house, where he held a conversation with some Pharisees and with some of John's disciples.....	9: 10-17	2:	15-22	5: 29-39
			76.	While yet speaking to them there came a ruler of a synagogue, named Jairus, to him, praying for the healing of his daughter. As Jesus was on the way to the house of Jairus, he heals a woman of an issue of blood. A messenger, meeting him, announces the death of the girl; but he proceeds, and, entering the house, restores her to life.....	9: 18-26	5:	21-43	8: 40-56
				Returning homeward from the house of Jairus, he is followed by two blind men, saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us." They enter his house; and, being healed, he charges them that they should not speak of what he had done; but they, going forth, every-where proclaim it. As they departed a dumb demoniac was brought to him, whom he healed, to the astonishment of the multitude. This gave the Pharisees new occasion to say that he cast out devils through Satan.....	9: 27-34			
				[Some identify Luke xi, 14, 15, with Matthew ix, 32-34; and, as the healing of the dumb demoniac was immediately after that of the blind men, both miracles are placed, at a much later period, after the sending of the seventy.]				
782	29 A.D.	January.....	77.	Leaving Capernaum he visits, accompanied by his disciples, Nazareth again, and is rejected a second time.	13: 54-58	6:	1-6	
782	29 A.D.	February.....	78.	Jesus enters upon a new circuit through Galilee, and sends forth the twelve.....	{9: 35-38 10: 5-42}	6:	7-13	9: 1-6
782	29 A.D.	March	79.	About this time John is beheaded in prison, and the news of his death is brought to Jesus by some of John's disciples.....	14: 6-12	6:	21-29	
			80.	Herod hears of Christ, fears that he is John risen, and expresses a desire to see him.....	14: 1,2	6:	14-16	9: 7-9
782	29 A.D.	April.....	81.	After the return of the twelve to him from their missionary tour, Jesus prepares to go with them across the lake to find seclusion and rest; but, being followed by the multitude, he feeds upward of five thousand persons.....	14: 13-21	6:	30-44	9: 10-17
			82.	Immediately after, he orders the disciples to return in the ship to Capernaum, while he remains to dismiss the people. He spends the night alone in prayer, and early in				6: 1-14

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Mouth and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
782	29 A.D.	April.....	83.	the morning walks upon the sea to rejoin the disciples, who had been driven from their course by a storm and were unable to make the land. Having rescued Peter, who attempts to walk upon the water to meet him, they both enter the boat, and immediately come to the shore in the land of Gennesaret.....	14: 22-34	6: 45-53	.....	6: 15-21
			84.	The people of Gennesaret, when they learned that Jesus had landed on their coasts, bring unto him their sick, who are healed by only touching the hem of his garment.....	14: 35, 36	6: 54-56	.....	.....
			84.	Those whom he had fed, and who had spent the night upon the eastern shore, return and seek him at Capernaum, whither he goes. In answer to his question how he came over the sea, he discourses to them concerning the bread of life. His words are so offensive to many of his followers that they henceforth forsake him. The twelve continue with him, but he declares that one of them is a devil .....	.....	.....	.....	6: 22-71
VI. The Third Year of our Lord's Public Ministry.								
A. HIS STAY IN GALILEE TILL HIS FINAL DEPARTURE FROM THENCE, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES.								
782	29 A.D.	Summer.....	85.	He avoids attending the third Passover at Jerusalem.....	.....	.....	.....	{ 7: 1 (Com. 6: 4.)
			86.	While at Capernaum some of the scribes and Pharisees, who had come from Jerusalem, see his disciples eating with unwashed hands, and find fault. This leads to a discussion of pharisaic traditions, and sharp reproofs of their hypocrisy....	15: 1-20	7: 1-23	.....	.....
			87.	Leaving Capernaum he goes with the twelve into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, avoiding all publicity. But he could not be hid; and he answers the importunate prayer of a Syrophenician woman for her daughter.....	15: 21-28	7: 24-30	.....	.....
			88.	Returning to the region of Decapolis, he heals a man that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and many others, and feeds a multitude of over four thousand persons.....	15: 29-39	7:31-8:10	.....	.....
			89.	The Pharisees and Sadducees again demand a sign. He reproves their hypocrisy, and declares that no sign should be given unto them but the sign of the prophet Jonas.....	16: 1-4	8: 11, 12	.....	.....
			90.	Leaving them he enters a ship, and again departs toward the lake toward Bethsaida. Upon the way he cautions his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, i.e., against their doctrines.	16: 5-12	8: 13-21	.....	.....

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
782	29 A.D.	Summer.....	91.	Arriving at Bethsaida he heals a blind man and sends him home privately		8: 22-26		
			92.	From Bethsaida he goes with his disciples to Cesarea Philippi. On the way he asks them, "Who do men say that I am?" and, being answered, he proposes the same question to them. Peter, as spokesman of his fellow-apostles, professes their faith in Jesus being the Christ, the Son of the living God; and Christ gives him the great promise concerning his Church, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven, forbidding them at the same time to publish that truth	16: 13-20	8: 27-30	9: 18-21	
			93.	He now foretells them his approaching rejection by the Jews, his passion and death, and his resurrection after three days, and rebukes Peter for being offended at this announcement. He then addresses the disciples and the people, teaching them what is involved in following him, and speaking of the rewards he would give his followers when he should come again in the glory of his Father. He adds, that some standing before him shall see him coming in his kingdom, that is, the beginning of his kingdom on earth...	16: 21-28	8: 31-9: 1	9: 22-27	
			94.	Six days after he goes to a high mountain, taking with him Peter, James, and John, and is transfigured before them.....	17: 1-9	9: 2-10	9: 28-36	
			95.	Descending from the mount, he explains, in an answer to their question, how Elias must be the forerunner of the Messiah.....	17: 10-13	9: 11-13		
			96.	At the foot of the mountain they meet the other apostles, surrounded by a multitude, among whom were scribes, questioning with them. The Lord heals a lunatic child, whom the apostles had not been able to heal.....	17: 14-29	9: 14-28	9: 37-42	
			97.	Departing thence, Jesus passes through Galilee, avoiding, as far as possible, public attention, and instructing his disciples again concerning his death and resurrection; but they do not understand him, and are afraid to ask.....	17: 22, 23	9: 30-32	9: 43-45	
			98.	After his return to Capernaum he provides miraculously for the Temple tax	17: 24-27			
			99.	The disciples contend who should be the greatest. Jesus exhorts them to humility, forbearance, and brotherly love.....	18: 1-35	9: 33-50	9: 46-50	
			100.	Soon after this he goes up to Jerusalem secretly to attend the Feast of Tabernacles				7: 2-10

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
782	29 A.D.	October 11th-18th.	101.	During the first few days of the feast there was much inquiry among the people concerning Jesus, and his probable appearance at the feast, but no one spoke openly through fear of the Jews.....				7: 11-13
			102.	After his arrival at Jerusalem he went into the Temple and taught. His enemies wish to arrest him, but do not; and many people believe on him.....				7: 14-31
			103.	Upon a subsequent day of the feast the Pharisees attempt to arrest him, but it fails.....				7: 32-53
			104.	Having spent the night at the Mount of Olives, the Lord returns in the morning to the Temple. The scribes and Pharisees bring an adulteress before him, whom he does not condemn, but directs to go and sin no more.....				8: 1-11
			105.	He continues his teaching in the Temple, reproves the unbelieving Jews, and escapes from their hands.....				8: 12-59
			106.	As he goes he meets and heals a blind man who had been blind from his birth, and it was the Sabbath. So soon as this miracle was reported to the Pharisees, they call him and his parents, examine him and cast him out. He afterward meets Jesus, and believes, and worships him.....				9: 1-38
			107.	Some Pharisees who are present ask him a question, to which he replies in the parable of the Good Shepherd. There is a great division of sentiment among the Jews in regard to him..... [From this feast the Lord returned, most probably, once more to Galilee for a short time; though there is no positive proof of it in the Gospels. Most of the harmonists suppose that he spent the interval, between the feasts of Tabernacles and of Dedication, at Jerusalem or in its vicinity. See note on Matthew xix, 1.]				{ 9: 39- 10: 21 }
				E. OUR LORD'S FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE TO HIS ARRIVAL IN BETHANY.				
782	29 A.D.	November.....	108.	The time when he should be received up, approaching—that is, with the end of his earthly career before him—the Lord prepares to go to Jerusalem.....	19:	1: 10:	1: 9:	51
			109.	He sends messengers before him, who, entering a Samaritan village, are rejected by the inhabitants. He reproves his angry disciples, James and John, and departs to another village.....				9: 52-56
			110.	He replies to one who proposes to follow him.....				9: 61, 62

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
782	29 A.D.	November.....	111.	He now sends out seventy of his disciples to go, two and two, into every city and place where he himself would come.....				
			112.	His instructions to them.....			10: 1	
			113.	They depart and return again with joy, most probably not only once but from time to time. Our Lord's reply to them			10: 2-16	
			114.	He follows in their step, journeying through Perea toward Jerusalem, and attended by great multitudes, whom he teaches and heals.....			10: 17-24	
			115.	On the way he instructs a lawyer concerning the love of our neighbor, and relates the parable of the Good Samaritan.....	19:	2		
			116.	One of his disciples asks for a form of prayer. He teaches his disciples again to pray.....			10: 25-37	
782	29 A.D.	December.....	117.	He heals a dumb demoniac. The Pharisees accuse him of casting out devils through Beelzebub. He replies to them, and while he is speaking a woman in the crowd blesses him. He continues to discourse to the multitude on the desire for signs. [Compare with remarks on No. 66.]			11: 1-13	
			118.	He dines with a Pharisee and sharply rebukes pharisaical hypocrisy. The Pharisees are greatly enraged			11: 14-36	
			119.	He admonishes his disciples again to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and to fear God only.....			11: 37-54	
			120.	A certain man desires Jesus to induce his brother to divide the inheritance with him. He denies the request.....			12: 1-12	
			121.	He adds a warning against covetousness, and relates the parable of the Rich Fool.....			12: 13, 14	
			122.	He further admonishes his disciples to watch for the coming of the Son of man, and after answering a question of Peter proceeds to address the people respecting their inability to discern the signs of the times.....			12: 15-34	
			123.	Being told of the murder of the Galileans by Pilate, he replies, and adds a parable respecting the fig-tree.....			12: 35-59	
			124.	While teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath, he heals a woman who had been sick eighteen years. He is rebuked for this by the master of the synagogue, but puts him to shame			13: 1-9	
				[Luke inserts here the parables of the mustard-seed and leaven. It is not improbable that our Lord repeated these parables, but why they were spoken here is not explained to us.....]			13: 10-17	
							13:18-21]	

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Mouth and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
782	29 A.D.	December.....	123.	He continues his journey toward Jerusalem, and replies to the question of one who asked him, "Are there few that be saved?".....			13: 22-30	
			126.	The same day he replies to certain Pharisees who warn him against Herod's design to kill him.....			13: 31-35	
			127.	On his way to the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem he passes through the village of Bethany, and visits Mary and Martha.....			10: 38-42	
			128.	Having reached Jerusalem, and walking in the Temple, the Jews demand that he declare plainly whether he is, or is not, the Messiah. He answers them by referring to his past words and works. The Jews, accusing him of blasphemy, take up stones to stone him. But he escapes from them, and goes again beyond Jordan and abides there. Many resort unto him and believe in him.....			10: 22-42	
			129.	He is invited to break bread with one of the chief Pharisees on the Sabbath day, and there heals a man who had the dropsy. After having defended the lawfulness of the act, he reproves the guests for choosing the highest seats, and reminds his host of his duty to the poor, and speaks the parable of the Great Supper. As he journeyed on, great multitudes went with him, and he addresses them on self-denial required in disciples.....			14: 1-35	
			130.	Publicans and sinners coming in large numbers to hear him, the scribes and Pharisees complain of his receiving them. He, therefore, utters the parables of the Lost Sheep, of the Lost Piece of Silver, and of the Prodigal Son.....			15: 1-32	
			131.	For his disciples he adds the parable of the Wasteful Steward, with admonitions concerning the faithful use of worldly goods.....			16: 1-13	
			132.	He rebukes the deriding Pharisees, and utters the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.....			16: 14-31	
			133.	He addresses his disciples on offenses, forgiveness, and faith.....			17: 1-10	
783	30 A.D.	February	134.	Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, being sick, they send a message to the Lord, in Perca, to inform him of his sickness. After receiving the message he abides still two days in the place where he was. Taking the disciples with him, he then goes to Bethany and raises Lazarus from the dead. Many of the Jews present believed on him; but others, departing to Jerusalem, tell what had occurred to the Pharisees. A council				

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. G. C.	Mouth and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
783	30 A.D.	March	135.	is summoned, and Caiaphas, the high-priest, advises that he should be put to death. Jesus, learning this, goes with his disciples to a city called Ephraim; and his enemies give a commandment, that if any man know where he is, he should show it, that they might take him.....				{ II: 1-54 - 57
			136.	In Ephraim the Lord abides with the disciples till the approach of the Passover. A little before the feast many went up from the country to Jerusalem to perform the necessary purifications, and there was much discussion as to the probability of his presence. He leaves Ephraim for Jerusalem, passing along the border line of Samaria and Galilee.....		17:	11	11:55, 56
			137.	Upon the way he meets and heals ten lepers.....				17: 12-19
			138.	Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he gives them a warning admonition of his judicial coming.....				17: 20-37
			139.	Jesus exhorts to perseverance in prayer.....				18: 1-8
			140.	To certain self-righteous persons he speaks the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.....				18: 9-14
			141.	He replies to a question of the Pharisees respecting divorce.....	19: 3-12	10: 2-12		
			142.	He receives and blesses little children.....	19: 13-15	10: 13-16	18: 15-17	
			143.	A rich young ruler inquires how he may inherit eternal life. Jesus bids him sell all he has, and follow him; but he went away sorrowful. Our Lord proceeds to address the disciples upon the dangers incident to riches. In answer to a question of Peter, he speaks of the rewards that should be given to the twelve, and to all faithful disciples.....	19: 16-30	10: 17-31	18: 18-30	
			144.	He adds the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.....	20: 1-16			
			145.	He announces to the twelve privately, and for the third time, his approaching death and resurrection; but they do not understand his words, being amazed and full of fear.....	20: 17-19	10: 32-34	18: 31-34	
			146.	Afterward James and John, with their mother, Salome, ask seats of honor in his kingdom. He denies their request.....	20: 20-28	10: 35-45		
			147.	In sight of Jericho—on entering, according to Luke, on departing, according to Matthew and Mark—he heals two blind men sitting by the way, begging, who implore him, as the son of David, to help them..... Entering Jericho, he meets Zacchaeus, and goes to his house, where he remains during the night. In	20: 29-34	10: 46-52	{ 18: 35- 19: 1	

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
				the morning, when about to depart, he speaks to the people the parable of the Ten Pounds. The same evening he reaches Bethany.....				19: 2-28
				C. FROM HIS ARRIVAL AT BETHANY TO HIS DEATH AND BURIAL.				
783 30 A.D.	{ Friday ev'n'g, March 31st, or 8th of Nisan. }		148.	Arriving at Bethany, he abides there for the night. The next day he sups with Simon, a leper—Lazarus, Martha, and Mary being present. Here he is anointed by Mary, while Judas and others murmur at so great waste.....				
783 30 A.D.	{ Saturday ev'g, April 1st, or 9th of Nisan. }		149.	That evening many come out of Jerusalem to see him and Lazarus. The rulers in the city, hearing this, consult how they may put Lazarus also to death.....	26: 6-13	14: 3-9	12: 1-9	
783 30 A.D.	{ Sunday, April 2d, or 10th of Nisan. }		150.	Leaving Bethany, he sends to Bethphage for an ass upon which to ride, and, sitting upon it, he enters Jerusalem amid the shouts of his disciples and of the populace. As he looks upon the city from the Mount of Olives, he weeps over it. All the city is greatly moved, and the Pharisees desire him to rebuke his disciples. He visits the Temple, but, after looking around him, leaves it, and goes with the twelve to Bethany to pass the night.....				12: 10, 11
783 30 A.D.	{ Monday, April 3d, or 11th of Nisan. }		151.	Jesus, leaving Bethany early with his disciples, was hungry, and, beholding a fig-tree by the way which had no fruit, he pronounced a curse upon it.....	21: 1-11	11: 1-11	19: 29-44	12: 12-19
			152.	Proceeding to the city, he enters the Temple and purifies it. He heals there the blind and lame, and the children cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" His reproofs enrage the priests and scribes, who seek to destroy him. In the evening he returns again to Bethany.....	21: 18, 19	11: 12-14		
783 30 A.D.	{ Tuesday, Apr. 4th, or 12th of Nisan. }		153.	Returning to the city in the morning with his disciples, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots, and this leads Jesus to speak to them respecting the power of faith.....	21: 12-17	11: 15-19	19: 45-48	
			154.	As he entered the Temple the Pharisees ask him by what authority he acts. He replies by a question respecting the baptism of John, and adds the parable of the Two Sons and of the Wicked Husbandmen	21: 20-22	11: 20-26		
			155.	The Pharisees wish to arrest him, but are afraid of the people. He utters the parable of the King's Son.....	21: 23-46 (11: 27-) (12: 12)		20: 1-18	
			156.	The Pharisees and Herodians propose to him the question concerning the lawfulness of tribute to Caesar....	22: 1-14		20: 19	
					22: 15-22	12: 13-17	20: 20-26	

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
783 30 A.D.	{ Tuesday, Apr. 4th, or { 12th of Nisan. }		157.	The Sadducees question him respecting the resurrection of the dead.	22: 23-33	12: 18-27	20: 27-40	
			158.	A lawyer inquires concerning the chief commandment.....	22: 34-40	12: 28-34		
			159.	He asks the Pharisees how the Messiah can both be the son and the Lord of David, and they are put to silence.....	22: 41-46	12: 35-37	20: 41-44	
			160.	He then denounces the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, and pronounces his lamentation over Jerusalem	23: 1-39	12: 38-40	20: 45-47	
			161.	After this he watches the people casting in their gifts, and praises the poor widow who cast in two mites.....	12: 41-44	21: 1-4		
			162.	Some Greeks desiring to see him, he prophesies of his death. A voice is heard from heaven. He utters a few touching farewell admonitions, and leaves the Temple.....			12: 20-50	
			163.	As he goes out, the disciples point out to him the size and splendor of the buildings, to whom he replies, that all shall be thrown down.....	24: 1, 2	13: 1, 2	21: 5, 6	
			164.	Ascending the Mount of Olives, he seats himself and answers the question concerning his coming again, and the end of the world.....	(24: 3-)	13: 3-37	21: 7-36	
			165.	He adds, that after two days was the Passover, when he should be betrayed. He goes to Bethany, and the same evening his enemies hold a council, and agree with Judas respecting his betrayal.....	(25: 46)			
				The Lord seemed to have been in seclusion at Bethany.]	{ 26:1-5 } { 14:1,2 }	{ 14:1,2 } { 10, 11 }	22: 1-6	
783 30 A.D.	{ Wedn'sd'y, Ap. 5. Thursd'y, Ap. 6th, or { 14th of Nisan. }		166.	He sends Peter and John from Bethany into the city to prepare the Passover. He describes a man whom they should meet, and who should show them a room, furnished, where they should make ready for the supper. He remains at Bethany till toward evening.....	26: 17-19	14: 12-16	22: 7-13	
			167.	Thursday evening he enters the city and goes to the room where the supper was to be eaten. As the disciples are about to take their places at the table, he observes a strife among them for precedence and seats of honor. To rebuke them, he arose and, girding himself, proceeded to wash their feet.....				
783 30 A.D.	Thursday evening.	168.		Afterward, while they were eating, he declares one of them should betray him. The apostles begin to ask, anxiously, "Is it I?" The Lord describes the traitor as one that is eating with him, but without designating him further. Peter makes a sign to John to ask him who it was, which he does, and	26: 20	14: 17	(22: 14-) 18; 24- 30)	13: 1-17

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.	
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	
783 30 A.D.	{ Thursd'y ev'g. April 6th, or 14th of Nisan. }		169.	Jesus gives him privately a sign, and, dipping the sop, hands it to Judas, who asks, "Is it I?" Jesus answers him affirmatively, and he immediately goes out to make arrangements for the arrest of his Master. The apostles who do not understand the case are surprised...	26: 21-25	14: 18-21	22: 21-23	13: 18-30	
			170.	After the departure of Judas the Lord proceeds to the institution of the Eucharist.....	26: 26-29	14: 22-25	22: 19, 20		
			171.	After the supper Peter makes protestations of fidelity; but the Lord announces to him that before the cock should crow he should deny him. He informs the disciples of the perils that await them, and they bring to him two swords.....	26: 31-35	14: 27-31	22: 31-33	13: 31-38	
783 30 A.D.	Thursday night....		172.	He proceeds to address to them words of encouragement, and answers the questions of Thomas and Philip. He adds the promise of the Comforter, and, calling upon them to arise and depart with him, he continues his address to them as they stand around him, and ends with a prayer.....				14-17:	
			173.	After they had sung a hymn, Jesus goes with his disciples over the brook Cedron to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he awaits the coming of Judas. Having arrived at the Garden, he retires with them to a secluded spot. Here he begins to be heavy with sorrow, and, leaving the three, goes alone to pray. Returning, he finds them asleep. Leaving them, he again prays, and in his agony sweats a bloody sweat, but is strengthened by an angel. Again returning to the three disciples, he finds them asleep. He goes a third time and prays, and, returning, announces the approach of Judas.....	(26: 30) (36: 16)	(14: 26) (32-42)	22: 39-46	18:	1

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
783 30 A.D.	{ Friday mor'g, April 7th, or 15th of Nisan (before the break of day.) }		174.	Lord heals the wound. Beholding their Master in the power of his enemies, all the apostles forsake him and flee, and also a young man who had followed him. He reproaches the multitude that they had come to arrest him as a thief.....	26: 47-56	14: 43-52	22: 47-53	18: 2-12
			175.	From the Garden Jesus is first taken to the house of Annas, and, after a brief delay there, to the palace of Caiaphas, Peter and John following him. Here, while the council is assembling, he is subjected to a preliminary examination respecting his disciples and doctrines. The council being assembled, he is put on trial. As the witnesses disagree, and no charge can be proved against them, he is adjured by Caiaphas to tell whether he be the Christ. Upon his confession, he is condemned as guilty of blasphemy. During this period Peter, who had followed him with John to the high-priest's palace, denies him, and, reminded of his words by the crowing of the cock, goes out to weep.....	(26: 57-) 66; 69- 75)	(14: 53-) 64; 66- 72)	22: 54-62	18: 13-27
783 30 A.D.	{ Friday mor'g, (at daybreak.) }		176.	After the Sanhedrin had pronounced him guilty of blasphemy, and therefore worthy of death, it suspends its session to meet at break of day. During this interval Jesus remains in the high-priest's palace, exposed to all the ridicule and insults of his enemies, who spit upon him and smite him.....	26: 67-68	14:	65	22: 63-65
			177.	As soon as it was day the Sanhedrin again assembles, and, after hearing his confession that he is the Christ, formally adjudges him to death. Binding him, they lead him away to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, that he may execute the sentence	27: 1, 2	15:	1	{ 22: 66 } (-23: 1)
			178.	Judas Iscariot, learning the issue of this trial, and that Jesus was about to be put to death, returns the money the chief priests had given him, and hangs himself.....	27:	3-10		
				The members of the Sanhedrin who led Jesus to Pilate, refuse to enter the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; and thereupon he comes out to them and asks the nature of the accusation. They charge him with being a malefactor, and Pilate directs them to take him and judge him themselves. As they can not inflict capital punishment, they bring the charge of sedition, and Pilate, re-entering the judgment hall, and, calling Jesus, examines him. Satisfied that he is innocent, Pilate				

TIME.				NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.	
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.				Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	
783	30 A.D.	{ Friday mor'g, April 7th, or 15th of Nisan; (bef're 9'o'clk.) }		179.	goes out and affirms that he finds no fault in him	27:	11	15:	23: 2-4	18: 28-38
		{ Friday mor'g, (after 9'o'clk.) }		180.	The Jews renewing their accusations, to which Jesus makes no reply, and mentioning Galilee, Pilate sends him to Herod, who was then in Jerusalem; but Jesus refuses to answer his questions, and is sent back to Pilate. The latter now resorts to another expedient. He seats himself upon the judgment-seat, and, calling the chief-priests and elders, declares to them that neither himself nor Herod had found any fault in him. According to custom, he would release him; but the multitude beginning to cry that he should release Barabbas, not Jesus, he leaves it to their choice.....	27:	12-18	15: 3-10	23: 5-19	18: 39, 40
				181.	During the interval while the people were making their choice, his wife sends a message of warning to him. The people, persuaded by the priests and elders, reject Jesus and choose Barabbas; and Pilate, after having made several efforts in vain to change their decision, at last gives orders that Jesus be scourged previous to crucifixion.....	27:	19-23	15: 11-14	23: 20-24	
				182.	This was done by the soldiers with mockery and abuse; and Pilate, going forth, again takes Jesus and presents him to the people. The Jews continue to demand his death, now upon the ground that he made himself the Son of God. Terrified at this new charge, Pilate again takes Jesus into the hall to ask him, but receives no answer. Pilate still strives earnestly to save him, but is met by the cry that he would not be Caesar's friend. Yielding to fear, he ascends the tribunal, and, calling for water, washes his hands in token of his innocence, and then gives directions that he be taken away and crucified. As he comes forth, he presents him to them as their king. They cry, "Crucify him!" and he is led away to the place of crucifixion..	27:	24-31	15: 15-20	23:	23 19: 1-16
		{ Friday mor'g, (after 9'o'clk.) }		183.	He is led without the city to a place called Golgotha, bearing his cross. Falling exhausted under the burden, the soldiers compelled Simon of Cyrene, whom they met, to bear it for Jesus. To some women, following him and weeping, he speaks words of admonition, and foretells the judgments about to come upon Jerusalem.....	27:	32	15:	21	23: 26-31 19: 17
					He is being affixed to the cross, and they give him wine mingled with gall, but he refuses. Two mal-					

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
783	30 A.D.	{ Friday mor'g, April 7th, or 15th of Nisan (after 9 o'cl'k.) }	184.	efactors are crucified with him, one on the right hand and one on the left. He prays his Father to forgive those that nailed him on the cross. The inscription placed over his head displeases the Jews, but Pilate refuses to change it. The soldiers who keep watch at the foot of the cross divide his garments among themselves.....	27: 33-38	15: 22-28	23: 32-34	19: 18-24
783	30 A.D.	Friday noon.....	185.	He is reviled and derided by the people as they pass by the cross. One of the malefactors reproves the other for joining in this mockery, and prays Christ to remember him. Beholding his mother standing near by with John, he commands him to her as her son.....	27: 39-44	15: 29-32	23: 35-43	19: 25-27
783	30 A.D.	{ Friday, 3 o'cl'k. P. M. }	186.	Darkness now overspreads the land, and Jesus exclaims, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The supernatural darkness prevails from the sixth to the ninth hour. He thirsts and receives drink	27: 45-49	15: 33-36	23: 44, 45	19: 28, 29
783	30 A.D.		187.	After he had drank, he says, "It is finished," commends his spirit to God, and expires. At this moment the vail of the Temple is rent, the earth shakes, rocks are rent and graves opened. The centurion bears witness that he was the Son of God. The people, and the women from Galilee that had followed him, return, smiting their breasts.....	27: 50-56	15: 37-41	23: 46-49	19: 30
783	30 A.D.		188.	Soon after the Lord had expired the chief-priests came to Pilate, requesting that the bodies might be taken down before sunset, because the next day was the Sabbath. In consequence of their request the legs of the two malefactors are broken to hasten their death; but Jesus, being found already dead, is pierced with a spear in the side.....				19: 31-37
783	30 A.D.	{ Saturday, Ap. 8th, or 16th of Nisan. }	189.	In the mean time Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate, and, informing him that Jesus was already dead, asks his body for burial; and Pilate, after satisfying himself that he was actually dead, orders the body to be given to him	27: 57, 58	15: 42-45	23: 50-52	19: 38
783	30 A.D.		190.	Aided by Nicodemus, Joseph took the body, and, winding it in linen cloths with spices, laid it in his own sepulcher in a garden near the cross, and shut up the sepulcher. Some women beheld where he was laid, and, returning home, prepared spices and ointments, that they might embalm him after the Sabbath was past.	27: 59-61	15: 46, 47	23: 53-56	19: 39-42
				Early on the Sabbath the ecclesiastical authorities obtain permission				

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
783	30 A.D.	{ Saturday ev'g, April 8th, or (16th of Nisan.) }	191.	from Pilate to seal up the sepulcher, and to place a watch, lest the disciples should steal the body..... When the Sabbath was past Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, buy spices to embalm the body of Christ.....	27: 62-66 16: 1			
783	30 A.D.	{ Sunday, April 9th, or (17th of Nisan.) }	192.	VII. From the Resurrection to the Ascension. As the day began to dawn there was a great earthquake; and an angel of the Lord, descending, rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, and sat upon it. Terror-stricken, the soldiers fall to the ground	28: 2-4			
			193.	Soon after came Mary Magdalene and the other women to embalm the body, and find the sepulcher open..	28: 1	16: 2-4	24: 1, 2	
			194.	Mary Magdalene, first beholding the stone rolled away, and supposing that the body had been removed by the Jews, runs to find Peter and John to inform them.....				20: 1-2
			195.	The other women proceed to the sepulcher, and there meet an angel, who tells them of the Lord's resurrection, and gives them a message to the disciples.....	28: 5-8	16: 5-8	24: 3-9	
			196.	Soon after they had departed, Peter and John come in haste to see what had occurred, and Mary follows them. Entering the sepulcher they find it empty, and the grave clothes lying in order; John believes, and they leave the tomb to return, but Mary remains behind, weeping. Looking into the sepulcher she sees two angels, and immediately after the Lord appears to her, and gives her a message to bear to the disciples.....		16: 9	24: 12	20: 3-18
			197.	Before the other women return the Lord also appears to them.....	28: 9, 10			
			198.	The accounts of the women are not believed		16: 10, 11	24: 10, 11	
			199.	Upon the return of the soldiers from the sepulcher into the city, the priests and elders, hearing what had taken place, bribe them to spread the report that the disciples had stolen the body.....				
			200.	Early in the afternoon two of the disciples leave Jerusalem for Emmaus. As they go, Jesus joins himself to them, and converses with them till they reach the village. At their urgent request he sits down to eat with them; and, as he is breaking the bread, their eyes, which were holden that they should not know him, are opened, but he	28: 11-15			

TIME.			NO.	CONTENTS.	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
A.U.C.	C. C. C.	Month and Day.			Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.	Ch. Ver.
783	30 A.D.	{ Sunday eve'g, April 9th, or 17th of Nisan. }	201.	immediately vanishes out of their sight.....	.....	16:	12:24; 13:32.	
			202.	They return at once to Jerusalem, and find the eleven and others gathered together, who meet them with the announcement that the Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared unto Simon. Nevertheless some disbelieve their accounts of having met the Lord on the way to Emmaus...	.....	16:	13:24; 33-35.	
783	30 A.D.	{ Sunday, April 16th, or 24th of Nisan. }	203.	While they were yet speaking Jesus himself stood in their midst, although the doors were shut, and saluted them. He convinces them of the reality of his bodily presence by showing them his hands and his feet, and by eating before them. He breathes upon them and says unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. He openeth the Scriptures to their understanding.....	.....	16:	14:24; 36-48	20:19-23
783	30 A.D.	{ Latter part of April, or begin- ning of May. }	204.	After eight days Jesus again appeared to the assembled apostles, Thomas, who had before been absent, now being with them. By showing him the prints of the nails and the spear, as he had demanded, and desiring him to touch them, the Lord convinces him of the reality of his resurrection; and Thomas acknowledges him as his Lord and his God.....	.....			20:24-29
			205.	The apostles having returned to Galilee, the Lord appears to seven of them while engaged in fishing on the lake. The miracle of the great draught of fishes is repeated. After he had eaten with them, he asks Peter, three times, whether he loved him, before he commissioned him to feed his flock.....	.....		21: 1-23	*
				[About this time, it is most probable, our Lord was seen of James. (1 Corinthians xv, 7.)]				
			206.	After this the Lord meets the great body of his disciples, (1 Cor. xv, 6,) upon a mountain in Galilee, and commands that the Gospel be preached throughout the world.....	23: 16-20	16: 15-18		
783	30 A.D.	{ Thursday, May 18th. }	207.	A few days after the meeting upon the mountain the apostles return to Jerusalem, accompanied by Jesus' mother and brethren. Upon the fortieth day after his resurrection Jesus gathers the eleven at the Mount of Olives, and, leading them toward Bethany, ascends to heaven. (Compare Acts i, 9-12.).....	.....	16:	19:24; 49-51	
				The apostles go back to Jerusalem, and there wait for the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost.....	.....	16:	20:24:52, 53	

D. A TABLE

FOR FINDING THE CHRONOLOGICAL PLACE IN THE SYNOPSIS OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY
OF ANY PASSAGE IN THE GOSPELS.

MATTHEW.

CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.
I.	1-17	Genealogy.	XII.	46-50	67	XXII.	41-46	159
	18-25	5		1-53	68		1-39	160
II.	1-12	12	XIII.	54-58	77	XXIII.	1, 2	163
	13-15	13		1, 2	80		3-51	164
III.	16-18	14	XIV.	3- 5	45 NOTE.	XXV.	1-46	164
	19-22	15		6-12	79		1- 5	165
IV.	23	16	XV.	13-21	81	XXVI.	6-13	148
	1-12	20		22-34	82		14-16	165
V.	13-17	21	XVI.	35, 36	83	XXV.	17-19	166
	1-11	22		1-20	86		20	167
VI.	12, 17	45	XVII.	21-28	87	XXVII.	21-25	168
	13-16	46		29-39	88		26-29	169
VII.	18-22	47	XVIII.	1- 4	89		30	172
	23-25	50 NOTE.		5-12	90		31-35	170
VIII.	59			13-20	92		36-46	172
	59			21-28	93		47-56	173
IX.	59		XIX.	1- 9	94	XXVII.	57-66	174
	1	59		10-13	95		67, 68	175
X.	2- 4	51	XX.	14-21	96	XXVII.	69-75	174
	5-13	60		22, 23	97		1, 2	176
XI.	14-17	49		24-27	98		3-10	177
	18-22	70	XXI.	1-35	99		11	178
XII.	23-27	71		1	108		12-18	179
	28-34	72		2	114		19-23	180
XIII.	1	73		3-12	140		24-31	181
	2- 8	52		13-15	141		32	182
XIV.	9	53		16-30	142		33-38	183
	10-17	74		1-16	143		39-44	184
XV.	18-26	75		17-19	144		45-49	185
	27-34	76		20-28	145		50-56	186
XVI.	35-38	78		29-34	146		57, 58	188
	1- 4	58		1-11	150		59-61	189
XVII.	5-42	78		12-17	152		62-66	190
	1	78		18, 19	151		XXVIII.	1
XVIII.	2-19	63		20-22	153		2- 4	192
	20-30	63 NOTE.		23-46	154		5- 8	195
XIX.	1- 8	54		1-14	155		9, 10	197
	9-14	55		15-22	156		11-15	199
XX.	15-21	56		23-33	157		16-20	205
	22-45	66		34-40	158			

MARK.

CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.
I.	1- 8	20	III.	7-12	56	VI.	17-20	45 NOTE.
	9-11	21		13-19	58		21-29	79
II.	12, 13	22		20, 21	61		30-44	81
	14, 15	45		22-30	66		45-53	82
III.	16-20	47		31-35	67		54-56	83
	21-28	48	IV.	1-34	68	VII.	1-23	86
IV.	29-34	49		35	69		24-30	87
	35-39	50		36-41	71		31-37	88
V.	40-45	51		1-17	72	VIII.	1-10	88
	1-12	52		18-20	73		11, 12	89
VI.	13, 14	53		21-43	75		13-21	90
	15-22	74		1- 6	77		22-26	91
VII.	23-28	54		7-13	78		27-30	92
	1- 6	55		14-16	80		31-38	93

MARK—CONTINUED.

CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.
IX.	1	93	XII.	28-34	158	XV.	2	178
	2-10	94		35-37	159		3-10	179
	11-13	95		38-40	160		11-14	180
	14-29	96		41-44	161		15-20	181
	30-32	97		1, 2	163		21	182
	33-50	99		3-37	164		22-28	183
	1	108		1, 2	165		29-32	184
X.	2-12	140	XIV.	3-9	148	XVI.	33-36	185
	18-16	141		10, 11	165		37-41	186
	17-31	142		12-16	166		42-45	188
	32-34	144		17	167		46, 47	189
	35-45	145		18-21	168		1	191
	46-52	146		22-25	169		2-4	193
	1-11	150		26	172		5-8	195
XI.	12-14	151		27-31	170		9	196
	15-19	152		32-42	172		10, 11	198
	20-26	153		43-52	173		12	200
	27-33	154		53-64	174		13, 14	201
	1-12	154		65	175		15-18	205
	13-17	156		66-72	174		19	206
	18-27	157	XV.	1	176		20	207

LUKE.

CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.
I.	1-4	Preface.	VIII.	4-18	68	XVI.	14-31	132
	5-22	1		19-21	67		1-10	133
	23-25	2		22	69		11	135
	26-38	3		23-25	71		12-19	136
	39-56	4		26-37	72		20-37	137
	57-79	6		38, 39	73		1-8	138
	80	19		40-56	75		9-14	139
II.	1-5	7	IX.	1-6	78	XVII.	15-17	141
	6-7	8		7-9	80		18-30	142
	8-20	9		10-17	81		31-34	144
	21	10		18-21	92		35-43	146
	22-38	11		22-27	93		1	146
	39, 40	16		28-36	94		2-28	147
	41-51	17		37-42	96		29-44	150
III.	52	18		43-45	97		45-48	152
	1-18	20		46-50	99		1-18	154
	19, 20	45 NOTE.		51	108		19	155
	21-23	21		52-56	109		20-26	156
	24-38	Genealogy.		57-60	70		27-40	157
	1-13	22		61, 62	110		41-44	159
	14, 15	45		1	111		45-47	160
IV.	16-31	46		2-16	112	XXI.	1-4	161
	32-37	48		17-24	113		5, 6	163
	38-41	49		25-37	115		7-38	164
	42-44	50		38-42	127		1-6	165
	1-11	47		1-13	116		7-18	166
	12-16	51		14-36	117		14-18	167
	17-26	52		37-54	118		19, 20	169
V.	27, 28	53	XII.	1-12	119		21-23	168
	29-39	74		13, 14	120		24-30	167
	1-5	54		15-34	121		31-38	170
	6-11	55		35-59	122		39-46	172
	12	57		1-	123		47-53	173
	13-16	58		10-17	124		54-62	174
	17-49	59		18-21	124 NOTE.		63-65	175
VI.	1-10	60	XIV.	22-30	125	XXIII.	66-71	176
	11-17	62		31-35	126		1	176
	18-35	63		1-	129		2-4	178
	36-50	64		1-32	130		5-19	179
	1-3	65	XVI.	1-13	131		20-24	180

LUKE—CONTINUED.

CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.
XXIII.	25 26–31 32–34 35–43 44, 45 46–49	181 182 183 184 185 186	XXIII.	50–52 53–56 1, 2 3–9 10, 11 12	188 189 193 194 198 197	XXIV.	13–32 33–35 36–48 49–51 52, 53 207	200 201 202 206 207

JOHN.

CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.	CHAPTER.	VERSES.	NUMBER.
I.	1–18 19–28 29–34 35, 36 37–40 41, 42 43–51	Introduction. 23 24 25 26 27 28	V.	17–47 1–14 15–21 22–71 1 Comp. vi, 4 2–10	44 81 82 84 85 100	XIII.	31–38	170
II.	1–11 12, 13 14–17 18–22 23–25	29 30 31 32 33	VI.	11–13 14–31 32–53	101 102 103	XIV.	171	171
III.	1–21 22 23–36	34 35 36	VII.	1–11 12–59	104 105	XV.	171	171
IV.	1 2 3 4–26 27–42 43–45 46–54	37 35 37 38 39 40 41	IX.	1–38 39–41	106 107	XVI.	171	171
V.	1 2–9 10–16	41 42 43	X.	1–21 22–42	127 138	XVII.	1 2–12	172 173
			XI.	1–54 55, 56 57	134 135 134	XVIII.	13–27 28–38 39, 40 1–16 17	174 178 179 181 182
			XII.	1–9 10, 11 12–19	148 159 150	XIX.	18–24 25–27 28, 29 30 31–37	183 184 185 186 187
			XIII.	20–50 1–17 18–30	162 167 168	XX.	38 39–42 1, 2 3–18 19–23 24–31 1–25	188 189 194 196 202 203 204

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

INTRODUCTION
TO
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

§ 1. ITS AUTHORSHIP.

THE superscription is "The Gospel according to Matthew." The four records of the life and discourses of our Lord, the historical foundation of the Christian religion, were by the primitive Church called *The Gospel*, that is, the good news or glad tidings, and they were considered not so much as four specifically-different histories or gospels, but as *one* history, *one* gospel from four different stand-points, designated by Irenaeus (Adv. Haer., III, 11, 8) as τετράμορφον τό εὐαγγέλιον. When the name of the respective author was afterward added to each, the authorship was very properly expressed by the preposition κατὰ, according. If by this preposition it had been designed to express a more remote relationship, not direct authorship, it would be unaccountable, why the Gospels according to Mark and to Luke should not have been designated as Gospels according to Peter and Paul, inasmuch as the general tradition asserted them to have been published under the direction and authority of these apostles.

That the apostle Matthew wrote a Gospel has never been called into question, as we see from the unanimous testimony of the Fathers from the beginning to the close of the second century. (See §§ 8 and 9 of our General Introduction.) But whether this Gospel was originally composed in Hebrew or in Greek is a point on which scholars and critics are still divided. From Eusebius (H. E., III, 39) we learn that Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in the beginning of the second century, declares Matthew to have written in Hebrew τὰ λόγια, a term by which we can not well understand any thing else than an account of the life as well as the sayings of our Lord, inasmuch as Papias explains the term, when he speaks of Mark, by adding τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἦ λεχθέντα ἥ πραχθέντα. Though Papias was a man of weak judgment, as Eusebius expressly says, we find his testimony on this point indorsed by Irenaeus, Origines, Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, and others. Yet

Papias may have mistaken the heretical gospel according to the Hebrews for a supposed Hebrew original of Matthew, and those writers may have been misled by him. There is evidence, at least, that Jerome once believed the Hebrew MS. in the Caesarean library to be the original Gospel of Matthew, but subsequently found reason to doubt this. But those who maintain a Greek original rest principally on the internal evidence furnished by the Gospel itself, as Alford shows on the following grounds:

"1. The present Greek text stands on precisely the same footing as that of the other Gospels, is cited as early, and as constantly as they are."

"2. The hypothesis of a translation from the Hebrew altogether fails to account for the identity observable in certain parts of the text of the three synoptic Gospels. For the translator must either have been acquainted with the other two Gospels — in which case it is inconceivable that in the midst of the present coincidences in many passages such divergences should have occurred — or unacquainted with them, in which case the identity itself would be altogether inexplicable."

"3. A further observation of the coincidences and divergences is said to confirm the view of a Greek original. The synoptic Gospels mainly *coincide* in the *discourses and words of our Lord*, but *diverge* in their *narrative portions*; and while verbal identity is found principally in the former, the latter present the phenomena either of independent translations from the same original, or of independent histories."

"4. Again, whereas the Evangelists themselves, in citing the Old Testament, usually quote from the Hebrew text, our Lord in his discourses almost uniformly quotes the Septuagint, even where it differs from the Hebrew. This is urged as tending to establish the Greek original of Matthew; for if the Gospel were really written in Hebrew for the use of the Jews, it is not conceivable that the citations would be given in any but the Hebrew text; and equally inconceivable that the translator would have rendered them into the language of the LXX in our Lord's discourses, while he retained the Hebrew readings in the narrative."

"5. But the same fact would also tend to establish that our Lord *spoke usually in Greek* — that Greek was the language commonly used and generally understood by the Jews of Palestine — and, consequently, that the

composition of a Hebrew Gospel for the early Jewish-Christians would be unnecessary and in the last degree improbable."

For a further critical examination of the arguments on both sides we must refer the reader to Alford's *Prolegomena* and other learned works. Even if the question should be decided in favor of a Hebrew original, the canonical authority of our Greek Matthew would not be affected by it, for it maintained that authority undisputed from the first. The disappearance of the Hebrew original, provided it ever existed, can easily be accounted for, inasmuch as the Greek language soon supplanted the Aramaic Hebrew, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem; and the heretics corrupted at an early period the supposed Hebrew Gospel of Matthew to such an extent that it lost all canonical authority.

Dr. William Thomson, Archbishop of York, in his article on "*The Gospel of Matthew*," in Dr. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, closes his discussion with these words: "With these arguments we leave a great question unsettled still, feeling convinced of the early acceptance and the apostolic authority of our 'Gospel according to St. Matthew;' and far from convinced that it is a reproduction of another Gospel from St. Matthew's hand. May not the truth be that Papias, knowing of more than one Aramaic gospel in use among the Judaic sects, may have assumed the existence of a Hebrew original from which these were supposed to be taken, and knowing also the genuine Greek Gospel may have looked on all these — in the loose, uncritical way which earned for him Eusebius's description — 'as the various interpretations' to which he alludes? It is certain that a gospel, not the same as our canonical Matthew, sometimes usurped the apostle's name; and some of the witnesses we have quoted appear to have referred to this in one or other of its various forms or names. The Christians in Palestine [not all] still held that the Mosaic ritual was binding on them, even after the destruction of Jerusalem. At the close of the first century one party existed who held that the Mosaic law was only binding on Jewish converts — this was the Nazarenes. Another, the Ebionites, held that it was of universal obligation on Christians, and rejected St. Paul's Epistles as teaching the opposite doctrine. These two sects, who differed also in the most important tenets as to our Lord's person, possessed each a modification of the same Gospel, which, no doubt, each altered more and more as their tenets diverged, and which bore various names — the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel of Peter, or the Gospel

according to Matthew. Enough is known to decide that the Gospel according to the Hebrews was not identical with our Gospel of Matthew. But it had many points of resemblance to the synoptic Gospels, and especially to Matthew. What was its origin it is impossible to say; it may have been a description of the oral teaching of the apostles, corrupted by degrees; it may have come in its early and pure form from the hand of Matthew, or it may have been a version of the Greek Gospel of St. Matthew, as the Evangelist who wrote especially for the Hebrews. Now, this Gospel did exist; is it impossible that when the Hebrew Matthew is spoken of, this questionable document, the Gospel of the Hebrews, was really referred to? Observe that all accounts of it are at second-hand — with a notable exception: no one quotes it; in case of doubt about the text, Origen even does not appeal from the Greek to the Hebrew. All that is certain is, that Nazarenes or Ebionites, or both, boasted that they possessed the original Gospel of Matthew. Jerome is the exception; and him we can convict of the very mistake of confounding the two, and almost on his own confession."

On the genuineness of the Gospel, in general, see General Introduction §§ 5, 6; that of the first two chapters, which have been assailed by some critics who admit the apostolical antiquity of the rest, is satisfactorily established on the following grounds: 1. All the old MSS. and versions contain them; and they are quoted by the Fathers of the second and third centuries, and the day has passed, it may be hoped, when a passage can be struck out, against all the MSS. and the testimony of early writers, for subjective impressions about its contents. 2. Their contents form a natural part of a Gospel intended primarily for the Jews. 3. The commencement of chapter iii is dependent on ii, 23; and in iv, 13, there is a reference to ii, 23. 4. In construction and expressions they are similar to the rest of the Gospel.

§ 2. PERSONAL NOTICES OF THE AUTHOR.

In Mark ii, 14, his father is called Alpheus; from this some have supposed that he was a brother of James the Less; but as *Alpheus* was a very common name, and as in none of the lists of the apostles (Matt, x, 3; Mark iii, 18; Luke vi, 15; Acts i, 13) Matthew is grouped together with James the Less, there is no ground for this supposition. From a comparison of Matthew ix, 9, with Mark ii, 14, and Luke v, 27, it appears plainly that the two names Matthew

and Levi belong to the same person; for Levi, who is undoubtedly called to the apostleship, is found in none of the lists of the apostles, and his place can not be supplied by any other than Matthew, who appears in all the lists. Following a pretty general custom of his countrymen to change their names at decisive epochs of life, Levi assumed at his call to the apostleship the name of Matthew, and this new name supplanted the old name altogether, as was the case with Peter and Paul. According to Gesenius the names Matthaios and Matthias are both contractions of Mattathias — meaning, gift of Jehovah — a common Jewish name after the exile; but the true derivation is not certain.

There is no doubt that, as he lived at Capernaum, he had heard Jesus, and believed in him, before he was called to the apostleship. He was so greatly rejoiced at his call, that he made a great feast for his fellow-publicans, to which Jesus was invited with his disciples. Dr. Lange remarks, "that a man who shows the mind of so true an Israelite and so thorough an acquaintance with the Old Testament, as Matthew, would never have accepted the despised office of a Roman custom officer in utter disregard of the national prejudices, if he had not learned very early to distinguish between the outward form and the substance of the Mosaic economy, and that he was thereby peculiarly qualified to write the first Gospel, designed mainly for Jewish believers."

Of his apostolic labors the New Testament is silent. Clement of Alexandria says that he preached the Gospel at Jerusalem for fifteen years after the ascension. Eusebius writes, that he then left Judea and preached the Gospel to other nations. According to Heracleon, who wrote in the second century, he died a natural death, and this is implicitly confirmed by Clement, Origen, and Tertullian, who mention only Peter, Paul, and James the Greater as *martyrs* among the apostles.

§ 3. THE TIME WHEN HE WROTE HIS GOSPEL.

The precise time when Matthew wrote his Gospel can not be determined. The primitive Church, however, held unanimously that Matthew wrote first of all the Evangelists. Clement of Alexandria, although dissenting from the present order of our Gospels, yet assigned the first place to Matthew. From the remarks of the Evangelist, in chapters xxvii, 8, and xxviii, 15, we may infer that a considerable series of years must have intervened between the resurrection

of our Lord and the time when the Evangelist wrote. There is, on the other hand, internal evidence, that the Gospel was written sometime before the year 66, when the Jewish war broke out that terminated with the destruction of Jerusalem. For it is psychologically inconceivable, that the Evangelist could have given us the discourse of our Lord in chapter xxiv, in the manner he has, if the detailed prediction concerning this fearful catastrophe had already begun to be fulfilled when he wrote. Among the conflicting statements of the Fathers, that of Irenaeus, that Matthew wrote his Gospel while Paul was at Rome, is the most probable. This would bring the date between 50 and 60.

§ 4. THE PECULIAR CHARACTER AND OBJECT OF THE FIRST GOSPEL.

The Gospel itself tells us by plain internal evidence that it was written for Jewish converts, not only in Palestine, but all over the world. Its diction is more Hebraistic than that of the other Gospels. A full acquaintance with Jewish customs and manners, with the geography and topography of the Holy Land, is, with a few exceptions, (chap. i, 23; xxvii, 8; xxxiii, 46,) presupposed, while Mark and Luke generally add explanatory notes. The chronology is taken, unlike that of Luke, from the Jewish, not from universal history. Jerusalem goes by the august name — the Holy City. The etymological reference in i, 21, and the typical use of the word *Nazar* in ii, 23, were intelligible to Jewish readers. Only a few names of extraordinary importance are explained, (i, 23; xxvii, 33,) and the cry of Christ on the cross is translated, (xxvii, 46.)

These linguistic peculiarities are in full consonance with the object which the author evidently had in view; namely, to furnish ample proof to the Jews *that Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament*. This is seen in the very beginning, the genealogy of Jesus being traced only to Abraham, on which Lange remarks: "The first Gospel connects the New Testament most intimately with the Old, not by a list of the books of the Old Testament, *but by the Old Testament genealogy of Jesus*. In this way the union between the Old and the New Testament is made indissoluble, and the truth is set forth, that Divine revelation was carried on, not merely through written documents, but also through living personalities — the seed of Abraham — till it found its completion in the incarnation of the Son of God."

In developing this fundamental idea the author adds to this genealogy the proofs that in Jesus the Messianic prophecies have been fulfilled. Jesus Christ is the son of David and the seed of Abraham, (i, 1; comp. ix, 27; xii, 23; xv, 22; xx, 30; xxi, 9, 15;) is born at Bethlehem of a virgin, (i, 22; ii, 6;) must flee to Egypt, and be recalled thence, (ii, 15;) groweth up in Nazareth, (ii, 23;) has John for his forerunner, (iii, 3; xi, 10;) labors in the despised Galilee, (iv, 14;) his power to heal was a promised mark of his Messianic office, (viii, 17; xii, 17, etc.,) and so was his mode of teaching in parables, (xiii, 14, 35;) he holds his Messianic entry into Jerusalem, (xxi, 5-16;) is rejected by his people, (xxi, 42,) and deserted by his disciples, (xxvi, 31-56) — *all according to the prophecies of the Scriptures*. He is, therefore, the great King of Israel, of whom David was but a faint type; to Him is given all power in heaven and on earth; and He is that seed of Abraham in whom all nations should be blessed; he, therefore, commands his apostles to go into all the world and disciple all nations, promising to them and their successors to be with them to the end of time, and raising the typical kingdom of Israel to the universal kingdom of God. Jesus Christ is thus the center and end of all theocratic developments, in whom are fulfilled the prophecies, types, and shadows of the old dispensation, and who is himself the fulfiller of the law and the prophets, (v, 17-19; vii, 12; xxii, 40.) For this very reason there must be an irreconcilable conflict between him and the degenerate Judaism of his times, which culminates in his total rejection. The all-pervading idea of Matthew is, in short, "The complete fulfillment of the Messianic idea of Israel in the person and history of Jesus Christ, appearing in constantly-increasing opposition to the corrupt Judaism of those days."

Olshausen compares this Gospel with that of John as follows: "In the Gospel of Matthew, considered as a whole, we behold its author as a man that is completely carried away by the overwhelming grandeur of Jesus' whole appearance. The Son of God, whom Matthew, as well as the other apostles, beholds in Jesus of Nazareth, is represented by him as the King of Israel; while in the portraiture of John he appears in flowing robes of light, corresponding to the glory of the beloved Son of the Father. As this can not be said of the Gospel of Matthew, the ancients were not wrong in calling the Gospel of Matthew the bodily, and that of John the spiritual — Gospel — by which name, however, they did not design to detract from Matthew's Gospel; but as the Redeemer was the Logos incarnate, it was necessary for a complete exhibition of this holy life to delineate not only its Divine, but also its human and

national side, and this is done in the first Gospel." To this we add the remark of Ebrard: "Matthew embodies in his Gospel the substance of what the twelve apostles had preached by word of mouth to the people of Israel, furnishing the proof that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised seed of Abraham, (Gen. xv,) and the promised son of David, (2 Sam. vii;) in other words, the Messiah. To the apprehension of this truth the Israelites had first to be brought, before the mystery of Christ's eternal Godhead could be more fully set forth. First his historical relation to prophecy — then his higher relation to God, to the universe, and to universal history! This accounts fully for the Christology of Matthew's Gospel, which sets forth prominently the human side of the Redeemer, and that from a Jewish stand-point."

§ 5. THE ARRANGEMENT AND DIVISION OF ITS CONTENTS.

In his narrative of facts and sayings of our Lord the Evangelist is not governed by the chronological sequence. He generally groups together what is nearly related to each other in substance, frequently without regard to the connection in which the events took place.

It seems to have been the peculiar gift of the Spirit to him to record most fully the longer discourses of the Lord, and especially those which set forth the character and privileges of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Of this description are the Sermon on the Mount, the parables recorded in chapter xiii, and the other polemical and prophetic parables in chapters xxi-xxv, also the apostolic commission, (chap. x,) the discourse concerning the Baptist, (chap. xi,) that on blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, (chap. xii,) and that on some characteristics of the Church, (chap. xviii.) The whole Gospel falls into four principal divisions; namely, 1. The history of the birth and childhood of Jesus, (chaps. i, ii.) 2. The preparation for his public ministry, (chaps. iii-iv, 11.) 3. His public ministry in Galilee, (chap. iv, 12-xviii, 35.) 4. The last journey to Judea, the close of his public ministry, his death, and resurrection, (chap. xix-xxviii, 20.)

In our Commentary we have divided the whole Gospel into sections, each of which contains — with but few exceptions — *only one discourse or event*, so that the reader can find, at a glance, in the index, whatever subject he wishes to examine.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

VERSES.

§ 1. The Genealogy of Jesus Christ	1-17
§ 2. An Angel announces to Joseph the Supernatural Conception of Jesus	18-25

CHAPTER II.

§ 3. The Visit of the Magi	1-12
§ 4. The Murder of the Infants of Bethlehem, Flight into Egypt, and Return to Nazareth	13-23

CHAPTER III.

§ 5. The Preaching and Baptism of John	1-12
§ 6. The Baptism of Jesus	13-17

CHAPTER IV.

§ 7. The Temptation of our Lord in the Wilderness	1-11
§ 8. Our Lord's Formal Opening of his Ministry in Galilee, and the Call of Simon, Andrew, James, and John into his Permanent Service	12-25

CHAPTER V.

§ 9. The Sermon on the Mount

- A. The Fundamental Condition of entering into and participating in the Kingdom of God 1-16
- B. The Righteousness required by the Law to be fulfilled in the Kingdom of Christ 17-20
- C. The right and genuine Fulfillment of the Law as opposed to that taught and practiced by Pharisees 21-48

CHAPTER VI.

- D. The True Motive in Good Works — a lively Sense of God's Omnipresence and Omniscience 1-18
- E. The Righteousness of the Kingdom of God, the Supreme Good and the Highest Object of Life, to which every Thing must be subordinate 19-34

CHAPTER VII.

- F. Warning, addressed to the Disciples of Christ especially, against Censorious Judging and Indiscriminating Charity 1- 6
- G. Various Concluding Remarks 7-29

CHAPTER VIII.

§ 10. Jesus heals a Leper	1- 4
§ 11. Jesus heals the Centurion's Servant	5-13
§ 12. Jesus heals Peter's Mother-in-Law, and Cures many that are Sick and possessed of Devils	14-17
§ 13. Jesus instructs Two Men that desire to follow Him, and Calms a Storm	18-27
§ 14. Jesus heals Two Demoniacs in the Land of the Gergesenes	28-34

CHAPTER IX.

§ 15. Jesus heals a Paralytic	1-8
§ 16. The Call of Matthew and the Conversation of our Lord with some Pharisees and Disciples of John at Matthew's Feast	9-17
§ 17. Jesus heals a Woman diseased with an Issue of Blood, and raises the Daughter of Jairus	18-26
§ 18. Jesus heals Two Blind Persons and a Dumb Demoniac ..	27-34
§ 19. Christ pities the Shepherdless People and exhorts to Prayer for Laborers	35-38

CHAPTER X.

§ 20. The First Mission of the Apostles	1-4
§ 21. Our Lord's Instructions to the Apostles	
A. Instructions of the Lord with regard to the Mission of the Apostles confined to Israel	5-15
B. Christ's Instructions with reference to the Persecutions awaiting the Apostles	16-23
C. Christ's Instructions, as to the Course to be pursued by his Disciples, continued — Reasons why they should be perseveringly faithful amid Trials and Sufferings	24-42

CHAPTER XI.

§ 22. The Message of John, and the Discourse of Jesus on the Occasion	
A. The Mission of John's Disciples to Jesus	1-6
B. Christ's Testimony of John	7-19
C. Woes pronounced by the Lord on the Cities of Galilee	20-24
D. The Savior's Invitation to all that labor and are heavy laden	25-30

CHAPTER XII.

§ 23. The Disciples pluck Ears of Corn on the Sabbath Day	1-8
§ 24. Jesus heals a Withered Hand on the Sabbath	9-21
§ 25. Miraculous Cure of a Man that was Blind and Dumb — The Blasphemy of the Pharisees, and their Demand of a Sign from Heaven — Our Lord's Warning against the Unpardonable Sin	22-45
§ 26. Jesus declares who are his True Kindred on the Occasion of a Visit from his Mother and Brothers	46-50

CHAPTER XIII.

§ 27. The Seven Parables of the Kingdom of God	
A. The Parable of the Sower	1-23
B. The Parable of the Tares among the Wheat . .	24-30, 37-43
C. The Parable of the Mustard Seed	31, 32
D. The Parable of the Leaven	33-36
E. The Parable of the Treasure hid in a Field . .	44
F. The parable of the Pearl of Great Price	45, 46
G. The Parable of the Draw Net	47-52
§ 28. Jesus is rejected at Nazareth the Second Time	58-58

CHAPTER XIV.

§ 29. John the Baptist is Beheaded	1-13
§ 30. The First Miraculous Feeding	14-21
§ 31. Christ walks upon the Lake	22-36

CHAPTER XV.

§ 32. A Discussion with the Pharisees concerning the Traditions of Men	1-20
§ 33. The Canaanitish Woman	21-28
§ 34. The Second Miraculous Feeding	29-39

CHAPTER XVI.

§ 35. The Pharisees and Sadducees require a Sign from Heaven — Christ warneth his Disciples against their Leaven ..	1-12
§ 36. The Confession of Peter and Christ's Declaration concerning his Church	13-20
§ 37. The Savior predicts his Death and Resurrection, and enjoins upon his Followers to take up his Cross	21-28

CHAPTER XVII.

§ 38. The Transfiguration of Christ	1-13
§ 39. Jesus heals a Lunatic Boy, made Dumb and Deaf by a Demon, whom his Disciples were unable to cast out	14-21
§ 40. The Lord's Second Announcement of his Death and Resurrection — Payment of the Temple Tax	22-27

CHAPTER XVIII.

§ 41. Christ enjoins upon his Disciples that which should ever characterize the Members of his Church	
A. Humility, the Source of True Brotherly Love	1-14
B. Of Evangelical Church Discipline, and Christ's Promise to those who meet in his Name	15-20
C. The Gospel Law of Forgiveness, illustrated by the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant	21-35

CHAPTER XIX.

§ 42. Christ's Exposition of the Marriage Relation	1-12
§ 43. Jesus blesses Little Children	13-15
§ 44. Answer to the Inquiry of a Rich Young Man, and Discourse thereupon	16-30

CHAPTER XX.

§ 45. The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard	1-16
§ 46. Christ foretells once more his Death — The Ambitious Request of the Mother of the Sons of Zebedee	17-28
§ 47. Restoring Sight to Two Blind Men	29-34

CHAPTER XXI.

§ 48. Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem	1-11
§ 49. The Cleansing of the Temple	12-17
§ 50. The Barren Fig-Tree Withered, and its Lesson of Faith ..	18-22
§ 51. Christ's Answer to the Question of his Authority	23-32
§ 52. The Parable of the Wicked Husbandman	33-46

CHAPTER XXII.

§ 53. The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son	1-14
§ 54. The Insidious Question concerning Tribute to Caesar ..	15-22
§ 55. Reply to the Sadducees respecting the Resurrection	23-33
§ 56. The Great Commandment	34-40
§ 57. Our Lord's Question concerning the Messiah and David .	41-46

CHAPTER XXIII.

§ 58. Christ's Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees	
A. Warning against the Example of the Scribes and Pharisees	1-12
B. The Seven Woes against the Scribes	13-28
C. Conclusion, and Lamentation over Jerusalem	29-39

CHAPTER XXIV.

§ 59. Our Lord's Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple, and the Disciples' Inquiry about that Event	1-3
§ 60. Our Lord's Answer to the Question concerning his Coming	
A. A General Survey of what must precede Christ's Judicial Coming	4-14
B. The Premonitory Signs of Christ's Judicial Coming .	15-28
C. The Judicial Coming of the Son of Man the Virtual Beginning of the Final Judgment	29-36
D. Closing Exhortations	37-51

CHAPTER XXV.

§ 61. The Parable of the Ten Virgins	1-13
§ 62. The Parable of the Talents	14-30
§ 63. The Final Judgment of all Nations	31-46

CHAPTER XXVI.

§ 64. Our Lord foretells the Time of his Death, while his Adversaries are yet at a Loss how to bring it about	1-5
§ 65. Jesus is anointed at Bethany	6-13
§ 66. Compact of Judas with the High-Priests to betray Jesus .	14-16
§ 67. The Preparation for the Passover	17-19
§ 68. Our Lord eats the Passover and points out his Betrayer ..	20-25
§ 69. The Institution of the Lord's Supper	26-30
§ 70. Christ foretells the Dispersion of the Disciples and the Fall of Peter	31-35
§ 71. Christ's Agony in Gethsemane	36-46
§ 72. Jesus arrested in Gethsemane	47-56
§ 73. Jesus before the High-Priest	57-68
§ 74. Peter's Denial and Repentance	69-75

CHAPTER XXVII.

§ 75. Jesus is led away to Pilate — Remorse and Suicide of Judas	1-10
§ 76. Jesus before Pilate	11-30
§ 77. Jesus on the Cross	31-50
§ 78. The Signs and Incidents following the Death of Christ — His Burial	51-66

CHAPTER XXVIII.

§ 79. Christ is risen from the Dead	1-10
§ 80. The Sanhedrim's Fraudulent Suppression of the Soldiers' Testimony	11-15
§ 81. Appearance of the Lord on a Mountain in Galilee — The Great Commission	16-20

A Dissertation on Christian Baptism

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

§ 1. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE prophets having announced the Messiah as the seed of Abraham and the son of David, the genealogy of Jesus forms an important portion of Gospel truth. Matthew gives us the lineage of Joseph, the *reputed* father of Jesus, but no intimation of the relation of Mary to the house of David, nor have we any express declaration to this effect in the other Gospels. Whether Luke's genealogical table is intended to give the lineage of Mary is not certain, as we shall show in our comments on Luke iii, 23. The early Church generally ascribed both genealogies to Joseph, and modern scholars are about equally divided on this point. However that may be decided, the reasons why Matthew, writing for the Jews, gives prominence to the Davidic descent of Joseph and is silent respecting the family of Mary, are obvious: 1. We must assume that the child Jesus was presented in the Temple and recorded in the national register and tables of genealogy as the lawful son of Joseph. Had the Jews been informed in his lifetime of his supernatural generation, they would certainly have made it the subject of reproach. But in all their questions and cavils at his doctrine, in their indignation at his testimony and rejection of his claims, there is no allusion to what they would readily have stigmatized as evidence of imposture. 2. To have said that Mary was of the house of David, and to have cited her genealogy, would in the eyes of the Jews not have sustained a legal claim of Jesus to a descent from David, as it was a rule of the Rabbins, and one universally recognized, that the descent on the father's side only shall be called a descent; the descent by the mother is not called any descent. To prove that Jesus was the rightful heir to the promises made to Abraham and to David, it must be established that Joseph, Jesus' legal father, was of David's house, for only as the legal son of Joseph could he lay such a claim to the Messiahship as the Jews would admit. It was, therefore, of the greatest importance, that the legal relation in which Jesus stood to Joseph, as

his adopted son, should be set in the clearest light, and for this purpose the lineage of his mother was of no importance.

But the question arises, whether the fulfillment of the promise to David concerning his seed (2 Sam. vii, 12; Acts ii, 30; xiii, 23; Rom. i, 3) does not demand for our Lord a line of natural descent from David through his mother. A writer in the April number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* of 1861 — George M. Clelland — denies this, and urges the following ingenious argument: "The human ancestry of Jesus could not ascend higher than his mother. There was no power in any human descent, or in all humanity together, could it have been concentrated as one, to give birth even to the human nature of Jesus in the manner in which it was conveyed to him — though the same in substance as that of all men — and still less to his whole person. Nor was there any such power in Mary of herself, any more than in any other of the daughters of the race; for in no respect was she in essence different from or superior to any one of them. It was pre-eminently 'a new thing' which 'the Lord created in the earth.' (Jer. xxxi, 22.) While the Son of God could not have taken hold of the human nature in reality without a mother, the words 'the seed of the *woman*' imply, even in regard to his humanity, the original and undervived source of Jesus. The Messiah could have no natural grandfathers or line of human ancestry; he was the seed of no man in this sense. And it is remarkable that the far-sighted wisdom of God, by which the Scriptures provide for every emergency, had set aside any supposed rights of his mother by means of the rule of the Jewish polity, which forbade a woman of herself to head a family or to appear in a genealogy. How, then, could Jesus be of the seed of David according to the flesh, as Scripture required him to be and represents him to have been? In no other way than through his being the son of Joseph according to the law, in consequence of Joseph's union with Mary, his mother. This was the result of the law of the flesh — that is, of earthly humanity under the Jewish law — above that of mere physiology, and constituted the nearest possible approach our Lord could make as a person to be of the seed of David according to the flesh, and it made him legally of that seed. Before the birth of Jesus, Joseph was commanded to take Mary to his house as his wife. It is not enough to say, that this was in order to protect Mary. Joseph and Mary, previously joined together by the act of espousals, by this further act became perfectly one in God's sight, and it conferred on Joseph the title of father, according to the law, of the child about to be, and some time afterward born

of Mary. The gift of a son, in a most important sense, was to Joseph as well as Mary. And God, in so dealing with Joseph's wife, doubtless intended that it should be so. God could give Joseph such a gift, and he could accept it, and its character and relations the law was at hand to define and maintain. It may be proper to notice the light indirectly thrown by the Scriptures on the subject. By a provision of the Jewish law, (Deut. xxv, 5-10,) when a brother died childless, his surviving brother was commanded to marry the widow; 'and it shall be that the first-born son which she beareth shall succeed in name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.' By this means the Jews were familiar with the idea of an heir being given to one who was not the real father. In their eyes the heir from such a source was as truly such as if born naturally to the deceased. We are inclined to think that there is something more than a mere analogy between the point of this Jewish law and the gift of a son to Joseph on the part of God. The grand truth of Christianity is, that man being dead through sin, and incapable by himself of recovery, God gave redemption and salvation by sending his own Son, the Lord of Life, into his nature, to serve as a quickening seed therein by his Spirit to all who should receive him. Of this truth the Scriptures teem with types and illustrations, and it was interwoven with the whole law and customs of the Jews. What more apt figure can we find of it than in Joseph, the husband after the flesh, of her of whom the Messiah was to be born, taken as representing either the fallen man after the flesh or the Jew under the law, or both of them, to whom, as in himself impotent for good, and dead in trespasses and sins, God as the living One raises up the true seed who shall save and perpetuate the race about to perish."

The above argument deserves much consideration, whether Mary herself was or was not a descendant of David. The argument does not force us to the conclusion that she was not, but that, if she was, her descent from David was not of so much importance as that of Joseph. We shall state in Luke the reasons for and against the opinion of his genealogy being that of Mary, and show, at the same time, that the apparent inconsistency between the two genealogies, if they both should be that of Joseph, may be explained. Before passing to another point, we add the following interesting remarks of Mr. Andrews, in his "Life of our Lord:" "Whether Joseph and Mary were the only surviving descendants of David, we have no positive data to decide; but it is not probable; for if they had been the sole survivors, this very fact, which could not have been unknown, must have made them conspicuous. . . . Yet, on the other

hand, the expectation that the Messiah should spring from the house of David was strong and general. If the people were really looking for a Messiah descended from that family, must not all who were known to be members of it have occupied a large space in public attention? Perhaps the following may be the just solution of the difficulty. The promise made to David and his house respecting the throne of Israel was not absolute. Its fulfillment was to depend upon the condition of obedience. Yet if the condition failed the promise was not withdrawn, but its fulfillment was suspended, and the kingly claims of the descendants of David were in abeyance. After the return from the captivity of Babylon, the house of David, at first prominent in Zerubbabel, fell more and more into obscurity. Other families began to be prominent. At last the Maccabees, through their wisdom and valor, won the highest place, and became the acknowledged heads of the nation. After their decay the family of Herod, through Roman favor, became dominant. During four hundred years no one of David's lineage seems to have drawn to himself public attention. Nevertheless, the Messianic hopes of the Jews had, during the wars of the Maccabees, and under the usurpation of Herod, been constantly gaining in depth and strength. Every-where they began to turn to their Scriptures, and to read them with new earnestness and faith. And as the expectation of the Messiah became more and more prevalent, it was naturally connected with the promise to David. Yet among his descendants there was no one to whom public attention was turned as in any way likely to fulfill their hopes. Hence, while a general belief existed that the Messiah should be of that family, its individual members continued to live in obscurity. And as it was also firmly believed that Elijah, the prophet, must personally come as the forerunner of the Messiah, this belief would naturally prevent any special attention being turned to them till that prophet actually appeared. Thus Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, might have been known to be of David's line, and even the legal claimant of the throne, and yet live unhonored and unnoticed."

It is to be presumed that the Evangelists took their genealogical tables from documents which the Jews deemed authentic, and which, if they contained any unessential inaccuracies or discrepancies, the Evangelist did not feel at liberty to correct. Of the existence of genealogical public registers we have a striking incidental proof in the fact that, when Augustus ordered the census of the Empire to be taken, the Jews immediately went each to his own city; that is, to the city to which his tribe, family, and father's house belonged. The mention of

Zacharias, as "of the course of Abia," of Elizabeth, as "of the daughters of Aaron," and of Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, as "of the tribe of Aser," are further indications of the same thing. And this conclusion is expressly confirmed by the testimony of Josephus in the opening of his Autobiography. After deducing his own descent, not only from the race which is considered the noblest among the Jews, that of the priests, but from the first of the twenty-four courses — that of Jehoiarib — and on the mother's side from the Asmonean sovereigns, he adds: "I have thus traced my genealogy as I have found it recorded in the public tables." From all this it is abundantly manifest that the Jewish genealogical records continued to be kept till near the destruction of Jerusalem. But it may be safely affirmed that the Jewish genealogical system then came to an end. Essentially connected as it was with the tenure of the land on the one hand, and with the peculiar privileges of the houses of David and Levi on the other, it naturally failed when the land was taken away from the Jewish race, and when the promise to David was fulfilled and the priesthood of Aaron was superseded by the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God. Nor can it be doubted that the authentic records were destroyed with the destruction of Jerusalem, and since no Jew can now show his descent from David, we have another proof how utterly groundless the expectations of the Jews concerning a coming Messiah have ever been since that event.

To prepare the reader for the solution of some difficulties, which each of the genealogies of Christ presents, we premise a few remarks, taken from Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, with regard to the nature of the genealogical records in the Old Testament. They had respect to political and territorial divisions as much as to strictly genealogical descent, and it will at once be seen how erroneous a conclusion it may be that all who are called "sons" of such or such a patriarch must necessarily be his very children. Just as in the very first division into tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim were numbered with their uncles, as if they had been sons instead of grandsons of Jacob. (Gen. xlviii, 5.) So afterward the names of persons belonging to different generations would often stand side by side as heads of families or houses, and be called the sons of their common ancestor. For example, Genesis xlvi, 21, contains grandsons as well as sons of Benjamin, and Exodus vi, 24, probably enumerates the son and grandson of Assir as heads, with their father, of the families of the Korhites; and so in innumerable instances. If any one family or house became extinct, some other would succeed to its place, called after its own chief father. Hence, of

course, a census of any tribe, drawn up at a later period, would exhibit different divisions from one drawn up at an earlier. Compare, e.g., the list of courses of priests in Zerubbabel's time (Neh. xii) with that of those in David's time. (1 Chron. xxiv.) The same principle must be borne in mind in interpreting any particular genealogy. The sequence of generations may represent the succession to such or such an inheritance or headship of tribe or family, rather than the relationship of father and son. Again: where a pedigree was abbreviated it would naturally specify such generations as would indicate from what chief houses the person descended. In cases where a name was common, the father's name would be added for distinction only. These reasons would be well understood at the time, though it would be difficult now to ascertain them positively. Another feature in the Scripture genealogies, which it is worth while to notice, is the recurrence of the same name, such as Tobias, Tobit, Nathan, Mattatha, and even of names of the same signification in the same family.

Verses 1-17

(1) THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son ^[1] of David, the son of Abraham. (2) Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; (3) And Judas begat Phares and Zara ^[2] of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; (4) And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; (5) And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; (6) And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife of Urias*; ^[3] (7) And Solomon begat Roboam; ^[4] and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; (8) And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; (9) And Ozias ^[5] begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; ^[6] (10) And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; (11) And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, ^[7] about the time they were carried away to Babylon: (12) And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; ^[8] (13) And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; (14) And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; (15) And Eliud begat Eleazar; and

Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; (16) And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. (17) So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

[1 The word "Son" with the Jews means not only a son proper, but also *any descent*. "Son of David" was one of the special designations of the Messiah.]

[2 Phares and Zara are mentioned together, because they were twins.]

[3 Bathsheba became, after the death of Urias, the lawful wife of David, so that Solomon was their legitimate son.]

[4 Or Rehoboam.]

[5 Or Azariah, (2 Kings xv, 1.)]

[6 Or Hezekiah, (2 Kings xvi, 20.)]

[7 The reading of several good manuscripts is, "And Josias begat Jehoiakim and his brothers; and Jehoiakim begat Jechonias at the time of the Babylonian captivity." Compare 1 Chron. xiii, 13-15.]

[8 Or Zerubbabel, (Ezra iii, 2.)]

VERSE 1. The phrase **βίβλος γενέσεως** is correctly rendered "the Book of the Generation." *Generation* is evidently used in a passive sense, and "the Book of the Generation" means the record of the birth of Christ and the circumstances attending it. In this sense it would be the appropriate heading of chapters i and ii. It may, however, also mean, in uniformity with Old Testament usage, (Gen. vi, 9; xxv, 19; xxxvii, 2,) where historiography consisted, to a great extent, in filling up genealogies, the history of the whole life of Jesus. In this sense it would be the heading of the whole Gospel, whose very object is to prove that Jesus is the son of David, and, through David, of Abraham. — The Old Testament begins with the account of the creation of the world, the New with that of the incarnation of Him who created the world, who, though "his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," was to be born of a woman when the fullness of time had come. — JESUS CHRIST, or, more correctly, Jesus the Christ. The word "Jesus" is synonymous with our word

Savior and the Hebrew *Jeshua*, abbreviated from Jehoshua or Joshua; that is, "Jehovah helps or delivers." Our Lord was so named by express command of the angel. (Verse 21; Luke i, 31.) This name was borne, 1. By the son of Nun, the conqueror of the promised land; 2. By the son of Iosedech, the high-priest, who brought the people back from the Babylonian captivity. (Ezra ii, 2; Hag. i, 1.) Both of these were called, by the Hellenists, Jesus. (Heb. iv, 8.) The word "*Christ*" — Greek Χριστός, Hebrew Mashiach, German Messias, English Messiah — signifies "*the Anointed*," and is the official name of Jesus, with reference to his prophetic, priestly, and royal offices. (Psalms ii, 2; Dan. ix, 25; Isa. lxi, 1.) Under the old dispensation the kings, high-priests, and sometimes the prophets, were consecrated to their respective offices by anointing them with oil. This anointing symbolized the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus, "the Son of man," received without measure, and whose influence upon believers is called, by John, the "*anointing*." In a similar sense in which Jesus was called "*Christ*," believers are called "*Christians*," "*Anointed ones*."

VERSE 2. JUDAH AND HIS BRETHREN. Judah is here named prominently, because the Savior was to spring from his seed; yet his brethren are also mentioned, because they had an equal right with Judah to the theocratic privileges.

VERSE 5. That RACHAB was the mother of BOOZ is not stated in the Old Testament. The Evangelist must have known it from the private family records of the house of David. According to Jewish tradition, eight prophets and priests descended from her. The high consideration in which she was held by the Jews appears also from the mention which the New Testament makes of her. (James ii, 25; Heb. xi, 31.) Since Rachab lived between 300 and 400 years before the birth of David, most commentators suppose that several members are omitted in this part of the record, a phenomenon that is by no means rare in the Old Testament genealogies. If we take, however, into consideration the great age of Jesse, as indicated 1 Sam. xvii, 12, as well as the reasonable conjecture that God may have granted to Boaz and Obed, on account of their piety, an unusually long life, it appears by no means impossible that Rachab was literally the great grandmother of David. — A writer in the Journal of Sacred Literature, 1856, remarks on the differences besetting this part of the genealogy: "Between Naasson — who was Prince of Judah at the time of the Exodus — and the birth of David there intervened four generations, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse. Now, this interval is computed by some at

480 years, and by none at less than 405 years, thus to make each generation to exceed over at least 100 years. Assuredly this is quite beyond the limits of probability; but in Lord Hervey's work we find a fair attempt at reconciling the chronology with the genealogy. After an elaborate examination of the genealogies which bear on this point, and by certain probable conjectures regarding the corruption of the Hebrew numerals — sundry examples of which he gives from the Old Testament — he is able, with much appearance of truth, to lessen the whole period from the Exodus to the death of David, which was not computed at less than 455 years, to 240 years, and so giving an average of 48 years to each generation. This theory is confirmed by Sir G. Wilkinson in his work on the Egyptians, and by Dr. Lepsius in his Letters from Egypt. The latter shows that the cruel King Pharaoh, mentioned in Exodus, is the same as Ramases I, and, therefore, lessens the interval between him and David by about 200 years. The latter, after careful investigation, comes to the conclusion that the interval which, we said above, was reckoned by some as 480 years, is at least 180 years too great."

VERSE 8. The names Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, which, in 1 Chron. iii, 11, 12, occur between JORAM and OZIAS, are here omitted, probably for no other reason than because they were missing in the public records. The ground of this omission is found by some expositors in their descent from Jezebel, the wicked daughter of Ethbal, and in their own apostasy from Jehovah. As such they were not worthy to be numbered with the theocratic princes. — In the same way the tribe of Dan is omitted in Revelation vii, 5-8, probably from its idolatrous character. Ozias was the son of Amaziah, yet it is here said that Joram begat Ozias. This is in perfect keeping with the custom of the Jews, to call not only sons proper, but also grandchildren and great grandchildren, *sons*. Accordingly, a man is said to beget a child that was by several generations removed from him. (Comp. Isa. xxxix, 7.)

VERSE. 11. Between JOSIAH AND JECHONIAS there should stand, according to 2 Kings xxiv, 6, and 2 Chron. xxxvi, 8, Jehoiakim. Josiah had four sons, Johanan or Jehoahaz, Eliakim or Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Sallum. After the death of Josiah, the people made Johanan king; but since the crown, by right of two years' seniority, belonged to his brother Jehoiakim, Johanan was deposed after a reign of three months, by Pharaoh Necho, and carried captive into Egypt, where he died, and left the crown to Jehoiakim, who had one son, Jeconias. Ebrard, Lange, and others maintain that Jehoiakim is omitted for

good reasons, because, under him, the country lost its independence, (2 Kings xxiv, 4,) and the sovereignty of the theocratic kings ceased. These scholars say that, for this reason, Jechonias was inserted in place of his father Jehoiakim. In this exposition, "his brethren" is taken in the wider sense of "kindred," here for his paternal uncles. Other commentators are of the opinion that by the "Jechonias" of this verse Jehoiakim is meant, who had either likewise the name Jechonias or was, through an oversight of the Greek copyist, confounded with Jechonias. This might easily happen, since, owing to the slight difference between the Hebrew Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, either of these names might be rendered, in Greek, Jechonias. According to this view the words "about the time" mark the time, when the people were led into captivity, only approximately. For the Babylonish captivity was not consummated at once, but in three acts, at different times, of which the first took place in the fourth year of Johoiakim, the son of Josias, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, and carried to Babylon a great number of captives; the second under Jechonias, the son of Jehoiakim; the third under Zedekiah. — All the difficulties of this passage, however, are easily and satisfactorily removed by adopting, with Dr. Clarke, Dr. Strong, and others, the reading given in foot-note 7.

VERSE 12. According to 1 Chron. iii, 17, SALATHIEL was Jechonias's natural — not legal — son. If this Salathiel is identical with the one mentioned by Luke, which is very probable, we have to take Neri either for the father-in-law or the grandfather of Salathiel, through the wife of Jechonias. Several passages of the Scriptures favor this view. It would seem that Zorobabel was the son of Salathiel's brother Pedaiah, by the widow of Salathiel, who had died without issue. (1 Chron. iii, 19.)

VERSE 13. ABIUD, ELIAKIM, AZOR, are not found in the Chronicles, but quite different names stand in their place. (1 Chron. iii, 19, 20.) The author of "Chronicles" has, probably, introduced only those of Zorobabel's posterity, who enjoyed public renown, and to this class the ancestors of Joseph did not belong. In like manner the other names given in the genealogy do not occur in the Old Testament, because they were humble members of the fallen family of David, and could be found only in the genealogical records extant in those days.

VERSE 16. Matthew says, purposely, not as in the preceding cases, "Joseph begat Jesus," but calls Joseph only the "HUSBAND OF MARY, OF

WHOM WAS BORN JESUS." As Jesus passed among the Jews for a son of Joseph, his foster-father, Divine Providence has arranged it, that this foster-father of Jesus was a descendant of David.

VERSE 17. It has given commentators a great deal of trouble to make out the fourteen generations in the second and in the third periods. The most natural division is, either to commence the third group with Jehoiakim, according to the reading in foot-note 7, or to count David twice, which, as Alford remarks, seems to be demanded by the text. The whole passage is set in the clearest light by Dr. J. A. Alexander in his Notes on the Gospel of Matthew: "The meaning can not be that there were really, in point of fact, just fourteen generations in the several intervals here mentioned; for we know from the Old Testament that four names are omitted in the second period, and have reason to believe that others may be wanting in the third. It rather means the contrary; namely, that, although there were more generations in the actual succession, only fourteen are here given, for the sake of uniformity, in each of the three periods. So far from being a mistake or an intentional misrepresentation, it is really a caution to the reader against falling into the very mistake which some would charge upon the writer. As if he had said: 'Let it be observed that this is not a complete list of all the generations between Abraham and Christ, but that some names are omitted, so as to leave fourteen in each great division of the history of Israel.' *All the generations*, if extended to the whole verse, may then be understood to mean all that are here given; but if restricted to the first clause, which is a more probable construction, it may have its strict sense — absolutely all — and give a reason for selecting fourteen as the measure of the periods; namely, that there were really just fourteen generations in the first, and that the others were assimilated to it, either by the genealogist, from whom the pedigree was borrowed, or by the Evangelist himself. But it still remains to be considered, why they are thus divided at all. Some say that this was a customary formula appended to the ancient genealogies, designed to aid the memory, and here retained by the Evangelist without change, as a part of the original document which he is quoting. Others suppose a mystical allusion to the name of David, or to the Scriptural use of seven as a sacred number. Besides these mnemonical and mystical solutions, there is a chronological one; namely, that the periods are equal in years, though not in generations, and two of the great cycles having been completed, he who was born at the close of the third must be the Christ. The only other supposition that need to be stated is, that the writer's purpose

was to draw attention to the three great periods in the history of Israel as the chosen people, one extending from Abraham as its great progenitor to David, its first theocratic sovereign; another to the downfall of the monarchy and loss of the national independence; and a third from this disaster to the advent of Messiah. Thus understood, the verse may be paraphrased as follows: 'The foregoing table is divided into three parts, the first of which embraces fourteen generations, and the other two are here assimilated to it, by omitting a few names, in order to make prominent the three great eras in the history of Israel, marked and divided by the calling of Abraham, the reign of David, the Babylonian exile, and the birth of Christ, the end to which the previous succession pointed.'"

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

THE Gospel of Matthew begins with a long list of names. But let none look upon the first sixteen verses as unimportant. As there is nothing in nature that does not answer some purpose, be it even the smallest insect or plant, so every thing in the Bible has its particular purpose and meaning. From the genealogy we learn:

1. That God always keeps his promises. Though the descendants of David had been so far reduced in their outward circumstances that it almost seemed as if God had forgotten his purpose, yet he carried it out at a time and in a manner least expected. Let this strengthen the faith of the Christian that God will fulfill all his promises. Let the sinner also learn from this that God will surely execute the sentence of death pronounced upon him, "The soul that sinneth shall die," unless he repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. — "The genealogy of Christ," says H. W. Beecher, "serves to connect Jesus and his teachings with all God's revelations and promises that had been given before. It binds all generations together in one moral system, showing us that there is, for all generations, one God and one religion, whose principles do not change. It proclaims that it has come, not to tell men of an unknown God, but of Him 'who made a covenant with Abraham and an oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and unto Israel for an everlasting covenant;' the same God to whom David poured out his psalms of praise; the same God whose will, whose principles of government, all the prophets had made known. It introduces not a new religious system, but only the clearer and completed

revelation of that by which all good men in former ages had lived and died — demanding the same kind of faith which was imparted to Abraham for righteousness, so that all believers in Christ are called the children of Abraham — requiring the same kind of penitence as that which David uttered in the 51st Psalm, and the same kind of obedience which God demanded of Israel, saying to them by the prophet, 'What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' The prediction that the seed of David should reign over all the earth, and that in the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed, had waited long for its fulfillment; and at last we have 'the book of the generation of Jesus Christ,' 'the son of David, the son of Abraham;' and every one of those strange Jewish names is a link in the chain of evidence which demonstrates the truth of God's promises, and gives the world assurance that he will be faithful to his word."

2. We recognize in this genealogy God's special providence; for how could it be known beforehand, without Divine guidance, in which of the innumerable collateral branches of a father the great Descendant should be born? The genealogy of the Bible, brought down to Jesus, is evidently a distinction of the Son of man from all others. Every thing is designed to point to him, and his lineage was made known long before his birth. — But the Biblical genealogies have still another important design; namely, to furnish us with a true history of our race and its origin, in opposition to the fictions and myths of ancient and modern heathens about the origin of man. The further back we trace the mythologies of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, the more obscure and absurd they become. They speak of the carnal intercourse of gods with men, which gave rise to hero-worship and idolatry. — The table of Christ's genealogy, standing at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, fixes in our minds, at the very outset, the impression that we are reading the history of a real person, who actually lived here in this world of ours. No one who was writing a fiction would have dared to give it a beginning seemingly so dry as this list of names.

3. The genealogy shows us the sinfulness and depravity of human nature. How many pious parents named in this catalogue had wicked children! The parents of Rehoboam, Joram, Amon, and Jechonias were pious. Piety and the grace of God are not necessarily inherited by children from their parents. The children of God are "not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." — When we consider how polluted our nature is,

how infinite is the condescension and mercy on the part of the Son of God, to be born of a woman, to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh. — Some of the names contained in this table remind us of base deeds and sad events; but at the close of all the names stands the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although he was the eternal Word, yet he took upon himself human nature for the purpose of making us again the children of God. This infinite condescension of Christ should inspire us with profound gratitude. It teaches us that whoever partakes of human nature has claims on Christ's redemption. Even if our sins are as many and as heinous as those of some of the above-mentioned ancestors of Jesus, they will not shut the gate of heaven against us, if we repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus become ingrafted unto him as fruit bearing branches to the glory of the Savior of the world.

4. Dr. Lisco in his "Predigt-Entwurfe" gives the following excellent sketch of a homily on this section, which offers both to the general reader, and especially to the preacher of the Gospel, ample material for profitable reflection:

HOW FAR HAS THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS A BEARING ON OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH?

I. *By showing the historical connection of Christ with the human family.*

1. By tracing his pedigree to Adam. (Luke iii, 38.) He is the Savior of the whole race.

2. By tracing it to Abraham. (Matt. i, 1.) Salvation is of the Jews.

3. This connection runs through the three principal epochs of the history of the Jews, (verse 17;) namely:

(1.) Through the time when the promise was general, from Abraham to David. (Verses 1-6.)

(2.) Through the time from David to the Babylonian captivity, the time of particular promises. (Verses 6-11.)

(3.) Through the time intervening between the Babylonian captivity and the birth of Christ, the time when the voice of prophecy was hushed, and the Promised One was eagerly desired and looked for. (Verses 12-16.)

4. This connection further shows:

(1.) Not only how in Christ the prophecies of all times were fulfilled, but, also,

(2.) How they proceed from an inward necessity.

II. By a deeper apprehension of the history of the world, for which his genealogy prepares us.

1. The central point of the world's history is the redemption of the human family through Jesus Christ.

2. An ardent desire of this redemption has pre-eminently characterized the children of Israel.

3. This fact accounts for the possibility of preserving, for thousands of years, the genealogies of those that are considered heirs of the promise.

4. Not in Israel alone, but even in the whole race, there existed a faint hope of the great Deliverer.

5. All violent commotions and convulsions in history prior to the advent of Christ must be considered as expressions of this vague and unsanctified longing.

§ 2. AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES TO JOSEPH THE SUPERNATURAL CONCEPTION OF JESUS.

MATTHEW'S narrative concerning the conception of Jesus bears the stamp of the highest simplicity and brevity. In attacking its historical character, infidel writers have claimed the right to put it on an equal footing with the myths of heathen nations, which represent their great men also as the sons of virgins. But this blasphemous comparison shows only the firm historical basis on which the Gospel account rests; for in these mythological tales a god becomes a man, not in order to give existence to a being of superhuman purity, but in order to gratify the vilest lusts. Such conceptions were abominations upon which the Jews looked with the utmost abhorrence. Besides, when the gods of the heathen became incarnate, they took only the form of what they represented, but acted in direct contradiction to the nature which they apparently assumed. Not so in the incarnation of the Son of God. He was very man, as well as very

God, and even in this awful mystery the God of Revelation carried out his own perfect laws. If, however, any latent truth is to be recognized in these myths, it is this, that they bear witness to the correct idea, that by the way of natural generation *the perfect man* could not be born. They may, moreover, be considered as the expression of the universal longing after the fact, of which Matthew gives us a well-authenticated account. That in the person of Jesus this universal, unconscious longing has been fulfilled, his whole life testifies, infinitely superior as it is to any thing that could proceed from sinful mankind. (See General Introduction, §§ 28, 29.) Very significantly says Moses, in his account of the generations from Adam to Noah, (Gen. v, 3:) "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." Hence, if Jesus was a *real*, yet *sinless man*, as his mediatorial office required, and as the New Testament expressly declares him to be, he can have been exempted from depravity only by virtue of his supernatural conception, as expressly stated by two Evangelists and taken for granted in all the books of the New Testament.

Verses 18-25. (COMPARE LUKE i, 26-28; ii, 1-21.)

(18) **NOW the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:** When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. (19) Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. (20) But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. (21) And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (22) Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, (23) Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (24) Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: (25) And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name JESUS.

VERSE 18. NOW THE BIRTH OF JESUS WAS ON THIS WISE.

Literally translated the clause reads, "But of Jesus Christ the origin was thus." The Greek word for birth, in the received text, γέννησις, the being generated or conceived, corresponding to the verb ἐγέννησε, begat, repeated so often in the genealogy. There is another reading, γένεσις, origin in a more general sense. The difference in the sense is scarcely perceptible. The words form evidently a contrast to what has preceded. As if the Evangelist had said: All these, from Isaac to Joseph, were begotten in the natural and ordinary way; *but* Jesus Christ was begotten in an entirely-different way. This the Evangelist had already indicated negatively in verse 16, and adds now the positive statement of the manner of his origin. — WHEN AS HIS MOTHER MARY WAS ESPoused TO JOSEPH. Literally, *for* his mother Mary being espoused. The particle *for*, omitted in the English version, explains how Jesus was begotten differently from his ancestors. — WAS FOUND WITH CHILD. Her condition became known to herself, and, probably through her, to Joseph. It is evident that the discovery was not such as to expose the Virgin Mother to any disgrace; for among all the slanders heaped upon the Savior by the Jews, there is not the least trace of any touching his birth. — Most of the German commentators place the discovery of Mary's condition and Joseph's taking her unto him as his wife, before her journey to Elizabeth. But Mr. Andrews refutes this supposition very satisfactorily as follows: "With it Luke's statement, (i, 19,) that she went *with haste* into the hill country, is inconsistent; for going with haste can not refer merely to the rapidity of the journey after it was begun, but to the fact that she made no delay in commencing it. Hug refers to a traditional law that virgins should not travel, and that, therefore, Joseph must previously have taken her home as his wife. Alford says that "as a betrothed virgin she could not travel," but cites no authority. But if any such law were in force, which is very doubtful, Mary may have journeyed in company with friends, or with a body of neighbors going up to the Passover. That no unmarried female could journey, even to visit her friends, is incredible. 'The incidental mention of women and children in the great assemblies gathered around Jesus,' says Thomson, (The Land and the Book, vol. II, page 84,) 'is true to Oriental life, strange as it may appear to those who read so much about female seclusion in the East. In the great gatherings of this day, at funerals, weddings, feasts, and fairs, women and children often constitute the largest portion of the assemblies.' Ebrard's supposition that Mary continued at Nazareth till certain women, the pronubae, becoming suspicious, informed Joseph of her condition, and that

then God made known to him what had occurred, has nothing in its favor. As little basis has the supposition of Lange that she told Joseph of the visit of the angel. The narrative plainly implies that Mary, without communicating to him or any one else what had taken place, departed immediately to seek Elizabeth. That, under the peculiar circumstances in which she was placed, she should greatly desire to see Elizabeth, was natural, and it is very improbable that she should wait several weeks, when all this time she could have no communication with Joseph, except through these pronubae. The whole narrative shows that neither Elizabeth nor Mary rashly forestalled God's action. Both, full of faith, waited in quietness and silence till he should reveal in his own way what he had done. The interval that had elapsed between the annunciation and Mary's return from Judea, was sufficient to make manifest to Joseph her condition. That she at this time informed him of the visit of the angel and of the Divine promise is not said in so many words, but is plainly implied. The position in which Joseph was now placed was one of great perplexity, and, as a just man who desired to mete out to every one that which was his due, he was, on the one hand, unwilling to take her under such imputation of immorality, yet, on the other hand, unwilling to condemn her where there was a possibility of innocence. He, therefore, determined to put her away privately, which he could lawfully do, and so avoid the necessity of exposing her to public disgrace, or of inflicting upon her severe punishment. While yet in doubt as to his proper course, the angel of the Lord, in a dream, confirmed the statement of Mary. Agreeably to the Divine commandment, Joseph takes Mary at once to his own house as his wife." — The idolatrous worship paid to Mary by the Roman Catholic Church has perhaps induced Protestants too much to overlook her exalted character, which so gloriously shines forth from various circumstances. She must have been a woman of superior mind and deep piety, timid and modest, yet thoughtful and firm, peculiarly qualified to bear the mysterious trials and the high honor that fell to the lot of no other mother. — OF THE HOLY GHOST. These words have, of course, no reference to the discovery, but are simply added by the Evangelist, to declare the fact.

VERSE 20. THESE THINGS; namely, those related in the two preceding verses. — THE ANGEL OF THE LORD. The name of the angel is not given, as in Luke i, 19, 26; he may have been Gabriel. The word "angel" properly signifies a messenger, and is chiefly used in Scripture to designate "*a spiritual being sent by God on some supernatural errand.*" The existence of

intermediate beings between man and the Father of all spirits is not only not repugnant to human reason, but is rather almost a postulate of reason, since all the visible creatures of God form a rising scale, proceeding, step by step, from the lower to the higher. Very pertinent is the remark of Dr. Whedon on this point: "During the four hundred years intervening between the Old Testament and the New, prophecy, miracle, inspiration, and angelic inspiration had ceased. This interval of cessation and silence was broken by the preparation for the appearance of Jesus, the Savior. The first phenomenon, opening this new dispensation, was the appearance of the angel Gabriel in the Temple, announcing to Zacharias the birth of John the Baptist, forerunner of the Messiah. This epiphany was followed by a profusion of miraculous display of every variety of nature, preceding the birth, attending the ministry, and following the ascension of the Son of God. Angels appear in their splendor, devils in their malignity; dreams, miracles, and Divine operations of various nature surround and attend the sacred person of the Lord. It was a miraculous dispensation, a supernatural epoch, in which the powers of heaven and hell came forth in manifestations extraordinary and unparalleled, and not to be tested by the experience of ordinary ages. It is not for us to say, who live in the common level of human history, that angelic appearances and demoniacal possessions did not transpire during the period in which *God's love was incarnate*. The greatest of miracles might well imply and properly be attended by a retinue of inferior, but kindred facts." — The Church of Christ stands no longer in need of angelophanies in order to perceive the will of God, having, as she does, in God's full self-revelation laid down in the Scriptures, and in the Holy Spirit which is promised and given unto her, the never-failing source of all light and truth. — IN A DREAM. The same God who has warned us expressly against false dreams (Jeremiah xxiii, 32; xxix, 8,) has nevertheless often spoken to men "in a dream, in a vision of the night." (Job xxxix, 15.) Every dream from God, intended to reveal some supernatural truth, brought also an evidence of its Divine origin, and is conditioned by purity of heart; for the impure in heart constantly see and hear falsely if they in an unauthorized manner seek supernatural information. God had often before revealed his will to patriarchs and prophets in dreams. Such dream-visions, however, are a lower kind of revelations than visions had in a state of waking. — Delitsch, in his Psychology, says on this subject: "Dreams have also a spiritual side, and can become the means of a direct intercourse of God with man for special or general purposes. We divide this kind of dreams into dreams, 1. Of conscience; 2. Of revelation.

The latter are dreams by which the special will of God — such as can not be learned from his written Word or from motives presented by the conscience — is revealed unto man either through a divine or angelic voice; or those dreams through which a man obtains a knowledge of future events, far beyond the limits of the foreboding faculty. Examples of such dreams are those of Jacob in Bethel, (Gen. xxviii, 12, etc.,) and in Haran, (Gen. xxxi, 10-13,) that of Solomon in Gibeon, (1 Kings iii, 5, etc.,) those of Joseph, the husband of Mary, (Matt. i and ii,) and the visions of Paul, (Acts xvi, 9; Isaiah xi, 27, 28,) provided the apostle had them while sleeping." — FOR THAT WHICH IS CONCEIVED IN HER, ETC. The humanity of Jesus differed from that of all other men in this, that it was not derived from a descendant of fallen Adam, but was the immediate production of the Holy Spirit, a miracle not greater than Adam's creation by God without a natural father and mother. Through the conception in the womb of the Virgin, and the nourishment which his body drew from the mother, he became like other men in all things, sin alone excepted, so that he was within the reach of pain and suffering and subject to the laws of physical development. (2 Cor. xiii, 4; Luke ii, 40.) We clearly see from this that the sinlessness of Jesus did not require a sinless nature on the part of his mother; for "that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost," was of a holy and divine nature, and necessarily sanctified the nourishment which his body received from the mother. Hence the dogma of the Pope that Mary herself was conceived by her mother without sin is absurd, because her immaculate conception would have required the same miracle which took place in the conception of Jesus. Why our Lord, during his sojourn on earth, only hinted indirectly at his supernatural origin, (John iii, 5, 6; x, 35,) and did not plainly teach it, is self-evident. — On the incarnation of the Logos see the exposition of Luke i, 35, and John i, 14.

VERSE 21. What was designated in the neuter gender, in the preceding verse, is now called *a son*. The angel, however, did not say, as he had done in the case of Zachariah, "She shall bear thee a son," but merely, "She shall bring forth a son." The angel, moreover, emphasizes both the name "*Jesus*" and the high destiny of the child. It is also worthy of note that both the office and work of Christ were so fully explained to Joseph, and the redemption to be accomplished by Jesus as announced by the angel is as deep and comprehensive as it is anywhere else represented by the synoptic Evangelists. (See Homiletic Suggestions.)

VERSE 22. NOW, ALL THIS WAS DONE. Dr. Alexander considers verses 22 and 23 to be words addressed by the angel to Joseph, and gives the following reasons for his view: "Here again, as in verse 18, the word translated *now* is the usual connective δέ, corresponding to our *and* or *but*, and continuing the sentence, without interruption, from the verse preceding. The expression *all this*, or, retaining the exact form of the Greek phrase, this whole matter — namely, the conception of Mary — is more natural if uttered by the angel at the time than if added by the Evangelist long after. The verb, too, is in the perfect tense, and properly means *has [now] come to pass*, and not *did come to pass* at some former time. This distinction between the perfect and the aorist is clearly marked, not only in the theory of the Greek verb and the practice of the classical Greek writers, but also in the usage of the New Testament, where the perfect tense of this verb occurs more than sixty times, and, with a few exceptions, must be rendered by our perfect to express its full force, although usually rendered by the simple past tense or the present passive. That the two tenses are not simply convertible in either language may be seen from Rev. xvi, 17, xxi, 6, where *it is done* means *it has come to pass*, and could not be exchanged for *it was done*, *it happened*, or *it came to pass*. — **THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED** — ἵνα πληρωθῇ. Ellicot, on Ephesians, says on the conjunction ἵνα: "The uses of this particle in the New Testament appear to be three: 1. *Final*, or indicative of the end, purpose, or object of the action — the primary and principal meaning — and never to be given up except on the most distinct counter arguments. 2. *Sub-final*, occasionally, especially after the verbs of entreaty — *not* of command — the subject of the prayer being blended with and even, in some cases, obscuring the *purpose* of making it. (See Winer's Gr., English translation, § 44, 8, p. 299.) 3. *Eventual*, or indicative of result, applicatory, in a few instances, and due, perhaps, more to what is called Hebrew teleology — that is, the reverential aspect under which the Jews regarded prophecy and its fulfillment — than grammatical depravation. Comp. Winer's Gr., §, 53, 6, p. 406." Winer himself — Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Sprach=idioms, 5te Auflage p. 541 — says, *ad locum*: "There can be no doubt that, in the mouth of Jesus and his apostles, the formula ἵνα (ὅπως) πληρωθῇ has the meaning *in order that*. At the same time, their meaning is not that God had brought about an event, much less compelled men to a certain course of action, in order that a prophecy might be fulfilled; but it is: God has foretold a certain event, and the Divine prophecies being true, the event had necessarily come to pass. Intervening events, the free

acts of men, God foreknows, and on this foreknowledge, which does not in the least interfere with man's free agency, he based his prophecies. This connection of events, however, the Jews, who framed this formula, did not conceive with scientific clearness." — The sense, accordingly, is not that all this was done for the purpose that a prophecy might be fulfilled; but God's providence brought it about in order to give to his people a proof of his omniscience, omnipotence, truth, and faithfulness in the fulfillment of the prophecy. — No where in the New Testament does the expression, "Here is fulfilled," or, "That it might be fulfilled," merely mean, "Here we may fitly apply this or that passage of the Old Testament." In this sense the Jewish rabbins applied many passages of the Old Testament, and put constructions on them unwarranted by the connection in which they occurred. Some have charged the Evangelists with having quoted from the Old Testament in a similar manner, but, as we shall presently see, without sufficient cause. Dr. A. Clarke says: "Matthew seems to quote the prophecies from the Old Testament as fulfilled according to the following rules: 1. When the thing predicted is literally accomplished; 2. When that of which the Scripture has spoken is done, not in a literal, but in a spiritual sense; 3. When that which has been mentioned in the Old Testament as formerly done, is accomplished in a larger and more extensive sense in the New Testament; 4. When a thing is done, neither in a *literal* nor *spiritual* sense, according to the fact referred to in the Scripture, but is *similar* to that fact." The rule mentioned last was evidently practiced by the rabbins, but certainly never by an inspired writer. When the Evangelists say, "This was done that it might be fulfilled," we must take it for granted that the passage quoted from the Old Testament as fulfilled, is actually *fulfilled in and by Christ*.

VERSE 23. Rationalistic, and some orthodox, commentators restrict the prophecy in question to the time of Ahaz, and say, its natural and literal meaning is: "If from this day a virgin marries and brings forth a son, she may call him Immanuel; for in his time God will be with us. Before the child shall be four years old, Syria and Israel shall be conquered, and Judah be delivered from its enemies." According to this, the typical element in this prophecy would be, that the child of that virgin shall simply bear the name Immanuel, while the Son of the Virgin Mary, in virtue of his nature, shall be, "God with us." Olshausen says: "Isaiah gives Ahaz the sign that his spouse, that is soon to be his (second) wife, shall bear him a son, who shall be called Immanuel. This accords very well with the symbolic names, which the prophet gave his sons. The name of the oldest,

Shear-jashub — 'the remnant shall return' — is very significant, and the second receives, by Divine command, (Isaiah viii, 9,) in addition to the name 'Immanuel,' another, 'Maher — Shalal-hashbaz' — that is, 'hastening to the spoil, he speeds to the prey' — with reference to the fulfillment of the following threatenings. Matthew, therefore, is right in referring the event of the birth of this Immanuel to the birth of Christ, because that parallelism was intended by the spirit of the prophecy." But this interpretation is untenable, for the following reasons: 1. What is said of the son of the prophet, (Isaiah viii, 1-4,) is a different word of the Lord to the prophet, and is not addressed to the house of Ahaz or the kingdom of Judah, but to the kingdoms of Israel and Syria. 2. There is no real point of comparison between the woman who should bear a son in Ahaz's time and the Virgin Mary. The former event possessed no typical and supernatural element, as, e.g., the birth and offering of Isaac. It is equally unaccountable why the prophet should have given the name Immanuel to a child born in Ahaz's time of an unknown woman in a natural way, and address the child as the lawful owner of the law, as he does when he says concerning Israel's enemies, "And the stretching out of his [their wings] shall fill the breadth of the land, O Immanuel!" (chap. viii, 8,) and then finds the final deliverance of the country from its oppressors in the fact that Immanuel is its possessor. For he addresses the enemies, "Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for [here is Immanuel,] God with us." (Chap. viii, 10.) If we consider, in connection with this, the glorious prophecy of chap. ix, 6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the Government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," we can not but believe that the prophet understood the same supernatural personage by the "Immanuel." 3. The Hebrew original reads not: "Behold, *a* virgin shall conceive," etc. — that is, a person that is now a virgin shall subsequently conceive — but it literally reads: "*Behold the Virgin [pregnant or with child]* gives birth to a son;" the only person that answers to this description, being virgin and mother at the same time. — The Hebrew word *almah* — here rendered "*virgin*" — is derived from the verb *alam*, signifying "to hide," "to conceal," "to cover," in the passive voice, "to be not known" — by a man — and in the Holy Scripture, it is always applied to unmarried women. (Gen. xxiv, 43; Ex. ii, 8; Ps. lxviii, 26; Song Sol. i, 8; vi, 8.) Moreover, this term "*almah*" is here translated *πάρθενος* by the LXX, the strongest Greek term for a pure virgin. 4. What kind of a sign would it have

been to Ahaz, that a young woman should give birth to a son in the natural way? God deemed it necessary to impress upon Ahaz the reliability of his promised help by an extraordinary sign. For this end he unfolded before him the grand theater of heaven and earth, that he might choose from out of the countless, stupendous works of the universe, one that would dispel all his misgivings concerning the promised help in this hour of need. Refusing to choose one himself, it pleased God to give him a sign, which was certainly not inferior to what he had been offered; that is, a real miracle. Is it credible that God should have given him, in lieu of it, an every-day's occurrence? What impression could this possibly have made upon him? 5. If the prediction of the prophet had referred to a then living virgin, it would not have been calculated to allay Ahaz's fears and apprehensions and to forestall their consequences; for long before a virgin might conceive and bear a son, and Ahaz be informed of the birth and name of the child, the siege might have been raised or the city taken, and thus the pernicious tendencies of Ahaz's fears and cowardly offer to the Assyrian king have been fully realized. — The direct application, however, of the prophecy to the Messiah is objected to on the ground that an event, which was to take place about seven hundred years afterward, could not possibly be a sign to the desponding Ahaz and the house of David, of being delivered from their present danger. To this we reply: 1. Not only present events, but also such as are hid in the far distant future, may be signs of what already is or is soon to be, provided they are divinely accredited. An example or two will illustrate our meaning. We read, in Genesis xv, that Abraham was greatly troubled by the probability that he would die without issue. God, to console him, promised him a posterity as numerous as the stars of heaven, and confirmed this promise, along with other assurances, by the prediction that his descendants — the sons of his grandson Jacob — would emigrate to a foreign country — Egypt — return after an absence of about four hundred years, and then take possession of the land of Canaan. Here the event near by — the birth of a son to Abraham — is confirmed by the fate of his far distant posterity, inasmuch as this posterity involved a son of Abraham. So in the case before us. Ahaz was troubled that the whole family of David might be swept away. He is reminded of a previously-given promise, that the Messiah is to be of the family of David, and a new feature, his miraculous conception, is added to the Messianic prophecy. (Comp. Exod. iii, 1, 2; 1 Sam. ii, 3, 4.) 2. The attending circumstances of the sign in question, the reason *why* and the object *for which* it was given must not be lost sight of. Ahaz had doubts about God's power to

liberate him from two powerful enemies, according to his promise. He receives, accordingly, the assurance that God can do much greater things; namely, that by Divine interposition a virgin, as such, should conceive and bear a son. See a similar case in John ii, 18, etc.: a sign was demanded of Christ to prove his authority to do in the Temple what he had done. The Lord referred his questioners to his future resurrection from the dead, correctly intimating that he who had the power to raise his own dead body into life had also the power and authority to restore the order of the Temple service. 3. It is customary with the prophets, in their promises of temporal blessings to the children of Israel, never to lose sight of the promised Messiah as the foundation of all promises. It is, moreover, probable that, even in those days, people had, from the passage, Genesis iii, 15, which modern Jews also refer to the Messiah, some faint notion that a woman (Gal. iv, 4) would conceive and give birth to the Messiah, not knowing a man. — This remarkable prophecy was uttered by Isaiah during the first or second year of the reign of Ahaz, King of Judah, 743-742 before Christ, when Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel, had entered into a league to take Jerusalem, and to dethrone the royal house of David. The king and all the people trembled. They had no confidence in the Divine promise given to Jacob, "that the scepter should not depart from Judah, before Shiloh [the Messiah] had come." King Ahaz had made up his mind to surrender to the King of Assyria. (2 Kings xvi, 7.) The Lord, therefore, sent the prophet Isaiah to him in order to promise him Divine deliverance, and thereby dissuade him from the prosecution of his ruinous plan. The prophet bade the despairing king to ask of God a sign of the promised help. The king refusing to do so, the prophet turned away from him to the house of David, and addressed it with these words: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign." This sign was a new, significant prophecy concerning the Messiah, who, of course, could not have come at all if the house of David and the kingdom of Judah had ceased to exist. But if this interpretation is correct, how are verses 15 and 16 of chapter vii of Isaiah to be understood? The generally-received interpretation is best expressed by Dr. Whedon: "Before this ideal child, beheld in vision as *now* being born, is able to know good from evil, these two invading kings shall disappear. Isaiah takes the growth of the infant, conceptually present, as the measure of the continuance of the invading kings. That Immanuel, the predicted *seed* of the woman, the prophet sees as already being born; he is being fed on nourishing food — namely, butter and honey — to bring him to an early maturity; but in a briefer period than his growth to intelligence shall require,

these invading kings shall be overthrown, and Israel be rescued." — An entirely-different and very interesting exposition of this difficult prophecy is given by Prof. Schultz, in the "Studien und Kritiken" of 1861, the substance of which we subjoin, in a condensed, free translation: "The prophecy that Immanuel, or Messiah, should not be begotten by a king of the house of David, but be the son of a virgin mother, proclaims a purpose of God, which had its first typical fulfillment in the time of Ahaz and his contemporaries. Isaiah speaks of the Messiah and his virgin mother in such a manner that they also typify a general principle, which conditioned the continued existence of Israel as a people. While their faithless king forsakes them, the true Israelites shall, through Divine interposition, bring forth from out of themselves a new and holy seed, which shall both prove and cause God's continued presence with his people, (Immanuel.) The same idea is hinted at already in chapter vi, 13, where the remnant of the people, after the execution of the terrible judgments of God, are compared to 'a teil tree, and to an oak, whose substance is in them.' The strength left in these shattered trees is a type of the Virgin, and the holy seed a type of the Immanuel of the New Testament. In order to understand this view of the prophecy, it is necessary to bear in mind that, in prophecy generally, but especially in Messianic prophecies, beginning and end appear as one whole, simultaneous in all its parts. While, e.g., Jacob beholds the royal scepter of Judah, (Gen. xlix, 10,) to which the nations shall submit, while Balaam (Numb. xxiv, 17,) describes Israel, that is to smite the nations round about, both of them prophesy of the Messiah in such a manner that David and the other types constitute, with their glorious antitype, one whole, and the prophecy finds a partial fulfillment in David. Yet the prophet's eye dwells less on temporal and earthly objects than on the heavenly ideal and its final perfect realization. Thus Isaiah also, in his prophecy of the Virgin bearing a son, sees at once the ideal, and from thence looks down on minor points, which lay nearer in point of time. These minor points, constituting the sign given to Ahaz, consist in this: The seed of God's people, that is born from out of the true Israel amid the greatest dangers and in spite of the entire despondency of the king, will speedily be delivered from the Syrians and Ephraimites in such a manner that the king himself, his whole house, and the whole apostate Israel shall fall a prey to their deliverers. Most expositors understand, by the eating of butter and honey, mentioned in chapter xvii, 15, coarse and scanty food, such as hard and troublesome times afford; but very improperly. Butter and honey are rather the best food, especially for children, which the land of Canaan yields. (Deut. xxxii,

13, 14.) Nor are these articles plenteous in times of distress and war. When an enemy invades a country, cattle are stolen, fields and meadows are laid waste, and, accordingly, honey and butter fail; but when the war is over, when the earth yields her produce again, when the number of the consumers is small in consequence of the war, then honey and butter become plenty. Immanuel's time will be a time of refreshing, such as God's children always enjoy, after the thunder of his judgment is spent. Those very troubles that changed the carnal security of the people, during Uzziah's and Jotham's reign, into consternation and despondency under Ahaz, (Isa. vii, 2,) must have strengthened the better portion, who saw therein the incipient fulfillment of the prophetic word, in their trust in God, and instead of being destroyed, as the unbelieving portion apprehended, they were spared and even increased, to the great astonishment of their faithless king. And when, shortly afterward, the Syrians and Ephraimites were humbled by the King of Assyria, (2 Kings v, 29; xvi, 9,) the surviving believers alone enjoyed the fruits of the deliverance, seeing therein not the result of Ahaz's vain efforts, but the hand of Jehovah, in whom they trusted. This had, of course, the happiest effect on the children of God. The king himself derived no benefit from the intervention of the Assyrians, which he had solicited; for, in the first place, they delivered him only from the Syrians and Ephraimites, not from the Edomites and Philistines, who turned their chance to good account, (2 Chron. xxviii, 17, 18; 2 Kings i, 8; and Isa. xiv, 28;) and, in the second place, Tiglath-pileser, the Assyrian king, robbed him of all his treasures, both of the royal palace and the Temple. — According to this view, the introduction of the virgin son, the Messiah, in this connection, is intelligible and natural. The prophet sees the growth of the people of God and of the Messiah as one event, altogether simultaneous. The beginnings, though small, still were beginnings, and, at the same time, the fruitful germs of greater events. The small beginnings, the development and growth of the Divine seed in Israel without the favor of royalty, now a historical necessity in consequence of Ahaz's wickedness, were speedily realized, and thus furnished conclusive evidence that the whole prophecy, in all its grandeur, would, in God's appointed time, be gloriously fulfilled." This interpretation agrees with the one given above, with regard to the time, before which the prophecy would be fulfilled *in its beginnings*; before the period transpires in which a child, conceived now and born in due time, shall be so far developed that it can distinguish between good and evil, the two invading kings shall have left the country in confusion and dismay. — THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL. In the Hebrew text it reads: She

shall call. "He shall be called" is here, as in other places, equivalent to "He shall be." The name Immanuel is the most accurate and complete description of his person: he was in reality, God with us, God with man, the God-man.

VERSE 25. TILL SHE HAD BROUGHT FORTH HER FIRST-BORN SON. The natural inference of this expression is, that Mary, after the birth of Jesus, in the natural way conceived and bore children. Yet neither the particle **Ἐως** — till — nor the term "first-born" forces us to the conclusion that other children were subsequently born of Mary. The supposition seems, however, to be confirmed by the frequent mention of Jesus' brothers and sisters. Of these we shall speak Matt. xiii, 55. Neander remarks: "The religious stand-point of Joseph and Mary does not warrant us to find it improbable that Jesus should have had younger brothers and sisters; nor is such an assumption forbidden from the Christian stand-point, which declares the state of matrimony to be a holy institution of God, and the genuine traditions of the apostolic age contain nothing that contradicts this view." This much is certain, that if the perpetual virginity of Mary after the birth of Christ had been necessary for the purity of her character, as the Church of Rome pretends, the Evangelist, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, would have chosen a different phraseology. Those Protestant commentators that are unwilling to assume that Mary gave birth to other children than Jesus, account for the obscurity of the Gospel expressions on this point, by supposing that it was employed for the very purpose of giving no ground to the sanctity which the Church of Rome ascribes to a state of celibacy. In this sense Olshausen understands the words of the Evangelist. He says, *ad locum*: "After such developments, Joseph was perfectly justified to believe that his matrimonial connection with Mary had other purposes than to have children by her. The phraseology of the Evangelist, however, is perhaps purposely employed, in order to forbid every inference against the holiness of the matrimonial state, which might possibly be drawn from this event. At the same time, it appears quite natural to us that the last female member of the house of David, the one that gave birth to the Messiah, should close her line with this last, eternal descendant of David's family."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. The name "*Jesus*" means a deliverer from sin, a Savior. Sin is the source of all misery, the greatest of evils. The great object of the incarnation of

the Son of God is to make a reconciliation for sin and to put away sin. (Heb. ix, 26.) Deliverance from the guilt, power, and pollution of sin is the privilege of every believer in Jesus Christ. To expect less would be to curtail the Gospel promises. Christ saves us from the guilt of sin through the merits of his death, and from the power and pollution of sin, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ did not come to save us *in*, but to save us *from*, our sins — not to purchase us liberty to sin, but to redeem us from sin and all unrighteousness. (Titus ii, 14.) The glory of the Gospel is not to make an apology for sin, but to make the pardon of sin consistent with the justice of God; it does not wink at, but puts away sin.

2. Jesus could not be our Savior if he were not "God with us, *Immanuel*" — God manifested in the flesh. He was the Son of God, and yet like unto other men in all respects, sin alone excepted. The personal union of the Divine with the human nature is, indeed, a mystery that transcends human reason, but does not contradict it; for it has too limited a knowledge of the Divine nature to be able to say why the Word which was with God, and was God, could not become flesh without losing his divinity. With Him that has called the universe into being nothing is impossible. For the very reason that, in the person of Christ, the Divine is united with the human nature, he is the only mediator that can reconcile us with God. (1 Tim. ii, 5; iii, 16.) In his mediatorial capacity he is also the Head of the Church, his body, and as such sustains a real life-union with his members, the believers, making them partakers of the Divine nature and temples of God. (1 Cor. iii, 15.) The personal union of the Divine with the human nature in Jesus Christ is also the sure pledge of the final glorification of human nature in the righteous at his second coming, "when they shall see him as he is, and shall be like unto him." Jesus is, thus, Immanuel, God with us, in his incarnation, in his vicarious death, in his glorious resurrection and ascension. He is God with us; that is, he is on our side as our Intercessor, Friend, and Protector, our Comforter in life, in suffering, in death — God with us and in us, through his Holy Spirit, his Word and sacraments.

3. *On the mental difficulties of Joseph* the Homilist, a British homiletical journal of great value, from which we shall quote from time to time, has the following excellent sketch:

"I. God knows the mental difficulties of good men. Mary's position was a trying one; her virtue was under a cloud; and the eye of suspicion was turned

at her; but the inner energy of conscious rectitude, then, as ever, would nobly bear up her spirit. Events soon cleared the mist, and brought her forth as the spotless and honored heroine of ages. *Suspected virtue can afford to wait.* But Joseph's trial seems greater. Strong attachment and high principles of honor and piety were battling within him; high hopes were blighted, and long-cherished purposes were broken up. What soul-stirring thoughts would start in that breast of his! There was ONE who observed the workings of his anxious mind — who understood his 'thoughts afar off.' *Thoughts are heard in heaven.*"

"II. God removes mental difficulties in connection with conscientious thoughtfulness. While he 'thought on these things,' the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream. He did not act from impulse; he paused in the use of his reason — inquired for the right course; and the almighty Spirit came to his help. Thus he always guides man. He directs the planets by force — brutes by instinct — man by reason. He controls all men, but guides none save the *thoughtful*. He who would 'follow Providence' must become an earnest thinker — 'inquire in his temple.'"

"III. God removes mental difficulties by disclosing his redemptive plan. 'And she shall bring forth a Son,' etc. In the disclosure made to Joseph, the birth of Jesus is represented as supernatural, the mission of Jesus as remedial, and the nature of Jesus as divine. This disclosure was quite satisfactory. A knowledge of God's redemptive plan will solve all moral problems. In all the intellectual difficulties of spiritual life — amid interwinding paths, and under skies cold and dark with doubts, when forced by urgent questionings and conflicting sentiments well-nigh to a fearful crisis — let us, with Joseph-like thoughtfulness, pause, even on the margin; turn devoutly the eye and ear of reason up to the All Knowing: 'He shall send from heaven,' and help. Some kind angel shall course his downward way, and shall dispel all clouds, leaving the scene in all the serenity, beauty, and promise of a Summer's day."

CHAPTER II.

§ 3. THE VISIT OF THE MAGI.

THE first question is, what it was precisely that led the Magi to connect the birth of a King of the Jews with the appearance of a star. The answer to this

question is not difficult. That they were acquainted with the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, especially with that of Balaam, of a star out of Jacob, (Num. xxiv, 17,) and with that of Daniel's seventy weeks, we may infer from the seed of revealed truth left by the Jews during their Babylonish captivity. Add to this that, according to the testimony of Suetonius, (Vesp., c. iv,) and Tacitus, (v, 13,) a general expectation pervaded, at that time, the East, that a King should arise in Judea to rule the world. But above all, we must take into consideration that these men were the subjects of an especial Divine illumination, as we see from verse 12. Various are the ways by which God worketh with man. To the illiterate shepherds the announcement is made in direct and plain terms, and minute circumstances are related to enable them at once to find the Savior. To the learned Magi it was made by a phenomenon, by which God condescended to their natural wisdom. In a similar manner Jesus adapted himself, during his whole public ministry, to the position and capacities of his hearers, in order to lead them to a knowledge of salvation; fishermen he impressed with their future calling by the miraculous draught of fishes; the sick he drew to himself by healing their diseases; the scribes he convinced out of the Scriptures, and his general hearers he instructed by parables taken from their daily pursuits and employments.

The next question is: What have we to understand by the star, which these astronomers had seen, and in which they recognized the star of the new-born King of the Jews? Was it a supernatural, luminous appearance, in the form of a star, or a phenomenon in the regular movements of the heavenly bodies? The German commentators: almost without exception — and, among the English, Alford and Strong — adopt the last-named view. This opinion was first advanced by the celebrated astronomer Kepler, who, from a constellation observed in 1603, computed that a remarkable conjunction of the planets of our system took place a short time before the birth of our Lord. During the year 747 of Rome, the planets Jupiter and Saturn came three times — in May, October, and December — into near conjunction, so as to seem one body of surpassing splendor, while in the ensuing Spring the planet Mars also came into conjunction with the other two. The conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn occurred in the sign of the Fishes. Of the astrological significance of this constellation the learned rabbi Abarbanel, who wrote half a century before Kepler, and knew nothing of the conjunctions of 747, says that no conjunction could be of mightier import than that of Jupiter and Saturn, which planets were

in conjunction in the year of the world 2365, three years before the birth of Moses, in the sign of the Fishes, and thence remarks that that sign was the most significant one for the Jews. All this, however, has been considered by some an unworthy connection of the superstitions of astrology with the Divine purposes. But why may not such a remarkable concurrence, resting upon high scientific authority, teach us that, about the time of Christ's birth, a great astronomical period closed, and that, as Neander remarks, the greatest event in the history of the world should be indicated in the movements of our planetary system? In confirmation of this supposition Alford remarks: "The expression of the Magi, 'We have seen his star,' does not seem to point to any miraculous appearance, but to something observed in the course of their watching the heavens." The Magi were students of the heavens, and such remarkable phenomena would naturally attract their attention.

Nevertheless, the view we have presented is rejected by most of the English commentators. It is objected that, "what is said, in verse 9, of the star going before them, can not have reference to a conjunction of planets, or to any ordinary movement of the stars." To this objection we may reply, that the words of the Evangelist, relating to an astronomical phenomenon, and given, as Alford remarks, as the report of the Magi themselves, need not be so rigidly interpreted. Some latitude of expression must be allowed the sacred writers on scientific subjects. On the supposition that the star, which the Magi had seen in the East, and which went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was, was not a meteor in the shape of a star, created by God for this very purpose, but either the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, or the planet Mars, which was added in the following Spring, or some comet, which, according to some Chinese astronomical records, was visible about that time — what is said in verse 9 of the motion of this star, may be explained in the following manner: "In their native country the Magi saw what they call a star in the wider astrological meaning of the word, and by its position in the sign of the Fishes, in connection with information from other sources, they were induced to set out for Jerusalem. From Jerusalem they went to Bethlehem, *not* because the star went before them, *but* because Herod had directed them to Bethlehem, and they could have no difficulty in finding the public road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem without a supernatural guide. But while on their way, traveling, no doubt, by night, as the Orientals generally do, they saw the star again. This agrees well with the fact that the constellation in question appeared and

disappeared several times. Its appearing again was a Divine sign to them that they were now on the right way to the Messiah, whom they had erroneously expected to find at Jerusalem. It stood now in the south, and, according to the well-known laws of optics, it seemed to go with or before them. When Matthew, therefore, says, 'The star went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was,' his object is not to represent the going and standing still of the star *as the cause* of the going and standing still of the Magi. He only portrays vividly how, at the desired end of their journey, when they had reached the edge of the table-land, which separates Jerusalem from the valley of Bethlehem, they saw the star shine in its full luster and brightness over the village, and, as it were, over the house where the child was. They were greatly rejoiced at seeing the star, not because it served them as a guide, but because it was a proof to them that they were coming to the right place." This explanation, however, is considered too forced, and it is contended that we must understand by the star an extraordinary meteor, standing at such a low elevation from the earth as to indicate a particular house. But if we take the word ἀστὴρ in this sense, we depart from the literal meaning of the word just as much as if we understand by it a constellation — another objection urged against our view. As to the forced construction of the passage, the charge seems rather to lie against those who suppose the star to have been a miraculous phenomenon, and we fully agree with the principle of interpretation which Alford lays down on this occasion. He says: "We know the Magi to have been devoted to astrology; and, on comparing the language of our text with this undoubted fact, I confess that it appears to me the most ingenuous way, fairly to take account of that fact in our exegesis, and *not to shelter ourselves from an apparent difficulty by the convenient but forced hypothesis of a miracle.* Wherever supernatural agency is asserted, or may be reasonably inferred, I shall ever be found foremost to insist on its recognition, and impugn every device of rationalism or semi-rationalism; but it does not, therefore, follow that I should consent to attempts, however well meant, *to introduce miraculous interference where it does not appear to be borne out by the narrative.* The principle on which this commentary is conducted is that of honestly endeavoring to ascertain the sense of the sacred text, without regard to any preconceived systems and fearless of any possible consequences. And if the scientific or historical researches of others seem to contribute to this, my readers will find them, as far as they have fallen within my observation, made use of for that purpose." — Another objection to the view to which we give the

preference is, that the constellation in 747 does not agree with the otherwise-ascertained data concerning the time of the birth of Christ. But this objection has not much weight, because we have no means to know whether the first appearance of the constellation was designed to signify the actual birth or the incarnation, which the early Church connected with the annunciation — not with the nativity — nor at which of the successive appearances of the constellation the Magi set out on their journey, and how long it took them to reach Jerusalem. In conclusion, those who understand an extraordinary meteor by the star going before the Magi on their way to Bethlehem, ought to concede this much, that the attention of the Magi was first arrested by the planetary conjunctions, and that they were thus prepared to watch the heavens with deep interest for further signs, which God might, possibly, have given them by some extraordinary luminous appearance in the form of a star.

Verses 1-12.

(1) Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea ^[1] in the days of Herod the king, ^[2] behold, there came wise men ^[3] from the east ^[4] to Jerusalem, ^[5] (2) saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. (3) When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. (4) And when he had gathered all the chief-priests ^[6] and scribes ^[7] of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. (5) And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, (6) And thou Bethlehem, *in the land of Juda*, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. (7) Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. (8) And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. (9) When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. (10) When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. (11) And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell

down and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures,^[8] they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense,^[9] and myrrh.^[10] (12) And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

[1 There was another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, near the Sea of Galilee. (Josh. xix, 15.) The name Bethlehem-Judah is used, Judges xvii, 7, 8, 9; 1 Sam. xvii, 12. Another name for our Bethlehem was Ephrath, (Gen. xxxv, 19; xlvi, 7,) or Ephrata. (Mic. v, 2.) It was six Roman miles to the south of Jerusalem, and was known as "the city of David," the origin of his family. (Ruth i, 1, 19.)]

[2 This Herod, surnamed the Great, was the son of Antipater, an Idumean and Jewish proselyte, who, having been appointed procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar, on the defeat of Pompey, made his younger son, Herod, Governor of Galilee. But on the invasion of the Parthians, who supported the claims of Antigonus, the representative of the Asmonean dynasty, he fled to Rome, where, by his own energy and the aid of Mark Antony, he obtained from the Senate the title of King of Judea, which was confirmed to him by Augustus. He sought to strengthen his throne by a series of cruelties and slaughters. Hyrcanus, the grandfather of his wife Mariamne, the last descendant of the line of Maccabean princes, was put to death shortly before his visit to Augustus. Mariamne herself was next sacrificed to his jealousy. One execution followed another, till at last, 6 B.C., he was persuaded to put to death the two sons of Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, in whom the chief hope of the people lay. Two years afterward he condemned to death Antipater, his eldest son, who had been their most active accuser, and the order for his execution was among the last of Herod's life; for he died himself, most miserably, five days after the death of his son, in the same year which marks the true date of the birth of Christ. (See General Introduction, § 35.)]

[3 In Greek μάγοι — Magi — the name of an influential class of learned priests among the ancient Medians. They retained their high position after the union of the Median and the Persian empires. In Jer. xxxix, 3, one among the princes at the Court of Babylon is called Rab-mag, the chief of the Magi, holding, perhaps, the same place which was occupied by Daniel, (ii, 48.) This name lost, however, in later times, its honorable signification, and was applied to all who made pretensions to the occult sciences, astrology, etc.]

[4 An indefinite term.]

[5 Its earliest name was Salem — peace. (Gen. xiv, 18; Psalms Ixxvi, 2.) Melchisedek resided there in the times of Abraham. Afterward the place fell into the hands of the Jebusites, who built a strong fortress, which they called Jebus, and although the Israelites took possession of the adjacent country,

and the place belonged to the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, (Joshua xviii, 28,) yet the fortress remained in the hands of the Jebusites (Judg. xix, 10, 11) till David took it from them. (2 Sam. v, 6-9.) Henceforth it became the political capital of the Jewish nation and the seat of the theocracy. The word Jerusalem is a compound of Jebus and Salem, with a change of the letter *b* into *r.*]

[6 Chief-priests is the plural of the word elsewhere translated high-priest. According to the law of Moses, this office could be held by only one person during his lifetime; but in the course of the Gospel history we meet with several high-priests at one and the same time, because the Romans had usurped the power to appoint and depose the high-priest at pleasure. Here, however, we have to understand, by the chief-priests, the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the priesthood was divided, who were, probably, all members of the Sanhedrim.]

[7 The scribes of the New Testament were the successors of Ezra, and had the charge of transcribing the sacred books, whence naturally arose their office of interpreting difficult passages, and deciding in cases of ecclesiastical jurisprudence. A select number of these scribes was associated with the chief-priests to constitute the Sanhedrim or supreme legislative body of the Jewish nation.]

[8 Their chests or bales, containing their treasures.]

[9 A gum from the trunk of a tree, obtained by slitting the bark. It was used for incense in worship, and is very fragrant when burned. It is found not only in Arabia, but also in Persia.]

[10 An aromatic gum, exuding from a thorn-bush in Arabia. It was valued chiefly for embalming the dead.]

VERSE 2. WHERE IS HE THAT IS BORN KING OF THE JEWS?

"*The [one] born. already,* as the past participle in the Greek text denotes. They assume the fact of his nativity as certain, and merely inquire for the place, as something not revealed or ascertainable from astronomical phenomena. *King of the Jews* is the title applied to the Messiah in the New Testament by Gentiles, (see chap. xxvii, 29, 37, and compare John xviii, 33,) while the Jews themselves call him King of Israel. (See chap. xxvii, 42, and compare John i, 50; xii, 13.) After the downfall of the kingdom of the ten tribes, and particularly after the return from exile, the whole nation being merged in Judah, the name *Jew* became a general one, especially with foreigners, and is applied, in the New Testament, not only to the people of Judea, in the strict sense, but to those of Galilee, in reference both to their religion and their natural descent, as

in Luke vii, 3; John ii, 6; Acts x, 28, and elsewhere. As the throne of David had been vacant now for ages, the inquiry of the wise men had respect not to the actual sovereign, who was not an Israelite at all, but to the hereditary, rightful sovereign, who had just been born." (Alexander.) — TO WORSHIP HIM. The word worship is often used in the Old and New Testaments where real adoration is not meant. It is, however, very truly remarked by Dr. Alexander, that a mere civil homage could not well be the sole object of these Magi, and would have been wholly out of place upon the part of Herod. (See verse 8.) There must, therefore, be meant a religious homage to the Messiah.

VERSE 3. *Herod* was troubled, because he apprehended the overthrow of his throne. *The inhabitants of Jerusalem* were troubled, partly because some of them belonged to the party of Herod, and partly because they feared the cruelties of Herod, which he would most likely commit against them in his efforts to maintain his power. Well does Dr. Whedon remark on this verse: "It was a bold and alarming question put by these new-comers. It would have been treason to the reigning king, if there were not some superhuman authority in it."

VERSE 6. The prophecy (Micah v, 2) is quoted freely. There is internal evidence, as we shall presently show, that the difference in the quotation, both from the Hebrew text and from that of the LXX, is to be attributed to the Evangelist, not to those to whom Herod had addressed the question. In the place of the words, "Thou art not the least among the princes of Judah," the text in Micah reads: "Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah." The meaning of the two expressions is evidently the same. The prophet says that Bethlehem was, indeed, small, and scarcely able to take a place among the ruling divisions of the land, but was, nevertheless, destined to become great; namely, as the God-ordained birthplace of the Messiah. The Evangelist expresses the same idea, only with this difference, that he speaks of Bethlehem's insignificance as something past: "Thou wast, indeed, once small, but art so no longer, having already obtained what must render thee great and renowned." Nor is there any discrepancy between the expressions: "among the princes of Judah" and "among the thousands of Judah." The Jewish people were divided into families or chiliads, (Judges vi, 25,) at the head of which were princes or leaders. (Exod. xviii, 21; Numb. i, 16.) These princes are named by Matthew in the place of the families themselves, and these families in the place of the cities where they resided. — It is very remarkable that Bethlehem is not

named among the cities of Judah in the Hebrew text of Joshua xv, 59, although inserted with ten others by the LXX, who, to make the text and context uniform, subjoin the summary, "Eleven cities, with their villages." However we may account for it, it is a proof of the obscurity of Bethlehem. — FOR OUT OF THEE SHALL COME. This means evidently that Bethlehem should give birth to the person described. It is, therefore, not applicable to Zerubbabel, or to any other person than our Lord Jesus Christ, as is irrefutably proved by the additional clause in Micah, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." To quote this clause was not required by the occasion, either on the part of the Sanhedrim or on that of the Evangelist. — A GOVERNOR, THAT SHALL RULE MY PEOPLE ISRAEL. More correctly translated: "*A Leader, who shall pasture my people.*" There is reference to the office of a shepherd, (comp. Isa. xl, 11; Ezek. xxxiv, 23,) which includes protection and control as well as feeding.

VERSE 7. Herod examined the Magi as to the time when the star had appeared unto them, in order to learn thereby the age of the child for the purpose of killing it. Relying implicitly upon the simple-hearted Magi, from whose minds he had, as he supposed, removed all suspicion, he neglected to send spies with them, and thus his prey escaped from him. Thus the greatest cunning is often visited with blindness in the decisive moment.

VERSE 11. AND WHEN THEY WERE COME INTO THE HOUSE. The cause why the parents had sought shelter in a stable, or cave, existed no longer. The arrival of the Magi of Bethlehem we must fix immediately after the presentation of the child in the Temple. (Introductory remarks of § 4.) The greater part of the people, who had come to Bethlehem to be taxed, had left again, and in this way the holy family had succeeded in finding more convenient lodgings. — THEY PRESENTED UNTO HIM GIFTS. The ancient Fathers ascribed symbolical meanings to these gifts. The gold has been thought to refer to his royal office, the incense to his divinity, the myrrh to his death. Again: from the three kinds of gifts which were presented, it has been inferred that the visitors were three in number; and, with reference to the prophecy in Psa. lxxii, 10, and Isa. lx, 6, the tradition arose that they were kings from three different countries. The nature of the gifts furnishes no ground to believe that they came from Arabia; for these gifts were general products of the East, not confined to any particular country. — Whether the Magi themselves ascribed any symbolical meaning to their gifts is very doubtful; nor have we any reason to

suppose that they had a conception of the mystery of the incarnation. But the homage which they paid to the infant, found in poverty and obscurity, proves conclusively that they recognized in him the great and holy Priest-King of the Jews, "the desire of all nations."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. The Savior was scarcely born when the words of old Simeon were fulfilled, that he was a light to lighten the Gentiles, (Luke ii, 32;) for the Magi were not Israelites.

2. God has true worshipers and servants, also, without the pale of the visible Church. Such were undoubtedly these Magi. The conduct of the scribes, on the other hand, shows that those who enjoy the brightest light often improve it least. The scribes knew that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, yet they did not consider it worth their while to travel the short distance from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, while the Magi, with infinitely less light, had undertaken a long and laborious journey in order to find him. We ought to shun neither labor nor expense to attain to a saving knowledge of Christ.

3. The Magi have also set an example worthy to be imitated by all the wise men of this world. Like the Magi, these ought not to be ashamed to seek Christ and to bow to him. Genuine philosophy leads to Christ. Science should be the handmaid of religion. Learning and religion are perfectly consistent with each other; yet without the light of faith all our knowledge is fragmentary, and without the Word of God all the stars of heaven leave us in the dark. But whoever follows the light he has, however faint it may be, is brought, by God's grace, to the full knowledge of the truth. Without the Word of God and the enlightening influences of his Spirit, Christ and his kingdom can not be found. God's Word is the star that points to Christ, and if we follow it we shall infallibly come to Christ. (2 Peter i, 19; 2 Tim. iii, 7.)

4. The mere knowledge of the letter of the Bible avails but little. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." These very scribes act, on a subsequent occasion, contrary to their better knowledge, saying: "When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." (John vii, 27.)

5. Although no one else paid any regard to the infant child at Bethlehem, and although the Magi saw nothing but a weak, helpless child, yet they did not suffer themselves to be prevented thereby from paying their homage to him whom God had proclaimed to them by the star as the King of the Jews.

6. When even the appearance of Christ as a helpless child caused consternation, what will be the effects of his coming to judgment? The coming of Christ's kingdom is always terrible to the ungodly. But how great is the joy of the pious when the light rises in darkness!

7. The Magi paid homage only to the child, without taking any further notice of Mary, his mother, while the Church of Rome pays, to this very day, a degree of respect to Mary that is not due to any created intelligence.

8. Herod's motive in directing the Magi to Bethlehem was malice and treachery; but God knows how to foil all the cunning devices of worldly men. He can cause even the wrath of men to work out his sovereign will. The accomplishment of his purposes is safe in the hands of devout, upright men. "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous." (Prov. ii, 7.) Or, as the German has it, "The Lord gives success to men of honest purpose."

§ 4. MURDER OF THE INFANTS OF BETHLEHEM — FLIGHT INTO EGYPT AND RETURN TO NAZARETH.

THE salvation of the world depended on the life of an infant threatened by Herod, a tyrant, whose dagger had always reached its victim. At the very entrance of the eternal light into our benighted world, it was to become manifest that the incarnate Son of God would achieve his final triumph only through the sorest trials and the severest sufferings. So intense was the hatred of the world against God and his Christ, that, shortly after the birth of the latter, innocent children were on his account put to death. But the eyes of his Father watched over the infant Savior, and the world was not permitted to touch his life. Neither in the Old nor in the New Testament was the "child Israel" to suffer harm. (Hos. xi, 1.)

According to Luke ii, 39, Joseph and Mary came back to Nazareth, after having presented the child in the Temple, but, according to Matthew, not before their return from Egypt. It is self-evident that the presentation did not

take place between the visit of the Magi and the flight into Egypt; nor can we suppose that it was deferred till after the return from Egypt. The language of Luke ii, 21 and 22, compared with verse 39, plainly intimates that as the circumcision took place on the eighth or legal day, so did the presentation on the fortieth. Till this day the mother was regarded as unclean, and was to abide at home. It is, therefore, in the highest degree improbable that the adoration of the Magi and the flight into Egypt should have previously taken place. This supposition is, moreover, inconsistent with Matthew's statement, that after Joseph had heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea, he was afraid to go thither. How much less would he have dared to go to Jerusalem, and enter publicly into the Temple! Finally: if Mary had received the gifts of the Magi before she presented her child, we may suppose that she would not have offered the offering of the poor, but would have used the gold to provide a better offering. There is, therefore, an *apparent* discrepancy between Matthew and Luke, but it is easily explained. Luke, in describing the events preceding the birth of Christ, had mentioned Nazareth as the residence of Mary, and his notice, in chap. ii, 4, that Joseph resided also in Nazareth prior to his journey to Bethlehem, came thus in very naturally; yea, it followed as a matter of course from chap. i. Now, as the residence in Bethlehem can have lasted only a few months, and as Luke does not mention the visit of the Magi and the flight into Egypt — which could likewise not have lasted long, since Herod died a few months afterward — it is very natural for him to make the general remark, that the parents of Jesus did not make Bethlehem their permanent residence, but returned again to Galilee. Matthew, on the other hand, for whom the Savior's birth at Bethlehem was very significant as the fulfillment of a prophecy, but who had found no occasion to state the circumstances which had brought about the journey to Bethlehem, describes Bethlehem as the residence of Joseph, and that correctly, as this really seems to have been his design, and having said nothing of a previous stay at Nazareth, the Evangelist could not call Joseph's going to Nazareth for the purpose of living there a "*return*"; and, attaching great importance to the fact that, by Jesus' residence in the despised Galilee, a prophecy had been fulfilled, it was but natural for him to state the special providence which had brought about the settling of Jesus' parents in Nazareth. As he says, however, that Joseph selected Nazareth without giving any reasons for this choice, he takes it evidently for granted that these reasons were well known to his readers; namely, that Joseph had resided there before, as Luke expressly states.

Verses 13-23.

(13) And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, ^[1] and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. (14) When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: (15) and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. (16) Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children ^[2] that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. (17) Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, (18) In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. (19) But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, (20) saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. (21) And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. (22) But when he heard that Archelaus ^[3] did reign ^[4] in Judea ^[5] in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee. ^[6] (23) And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: ^[7] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

[1] Egypt, although subject to the Romans, was beyond the reach of Herod, and was extensively populated by Jews, who had there a number of synagogues and even a temple.]

[2] Namely, all male children, the sense being limited to one sex by the masculine adjective and article.]

[3 "Archelaus was the eldest son of Herod the Great, by his Samaritan wife Matthace, to whom he bequeathed his crown and royal title; but Augustus only partially confirmed the will, confining his dominions to Judea, Idumea, and Samaria, and requiring him to bear the title ethnarch till he should prove himself worthy to be called a king. After reigning eight or nine years, he was summoned to Rome to answer charges of oppression and cruelty, and afterward banished to Vienna, in Gaul." (Alexander.)]

[4 Literally, "reigns." The Greek word here used means to reign as a king. This was true of Archelaus immediately after his father's death, before his will was broken by Augustus. The word has, however, also the general sense "to rule."]

[5 *Judea*, also called "*Jewry*," derived its name from the patriarch Judah. At the time of our Savior, the "promised land" formed a part of the Roman Empire, and was divided into four parts: 1. Judea; 2. Samaria; 3. Galilee; and, 4. The land beyond Jordan, Peraea. Judea was the most southerly, lying mainly between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean.]

[6 See foot-note to chapter iv, verse 15.]

[7 Stanley gives the following account of Nazareth: "It is one peculiarity of the Galilean hills, as distinct from those of Ephraim or Judah, that they contain or sustain green basins of table-land just before their topmost ridges. Such, above all, is Nazareth. Fifteen gently-rounded hills 'seem as if they had met to form an inclosure' for this peaceful basin; 'they rise round it like the edge of a shell to guard it from intrusion. It is a rich and beautiful field' in the midst of these green hills, abounding in gay flowers, in fig-trees, small gardens, hedges of the prickly pear; and the dense, rich grass affords an abundant pasture. The village stands on the steep slope of the South-western side of the valley. From the crest of the hills which thus screen it, especially from that called 'Nebi-Said,' or 'Ismail,' on the western side, is one of the most striking views in Palestine. There are Tabor, with its rounded dome, on the north-east, Hermon's white top in the distant north, Carmel and the Mediterranean Sea to the west, a conjunction of those three famous mountains, probably unique in the views of Palestine. And, in the nearer prospect, there are the uplands in which Nazareth itself stands, its own circular basin behind it; on the west, inclosed by similar hills overhanging the plain of Acre, lies the town of Sepphorich, the Roman capital. On the south and south-east lies the broad plain of Esdraelon, overhung by the high pyramidal hill which, as the highest point of the Nazareth range, and thus the most conspicuous to travelers approaching from the plain, has received, though without any historical ground, the name of the 'Mount of Precipitation.' These are the natural features which, for nearly thirty years, met the almost daily view of Him who 'increased in wisdom and stature' within this beautiful seclusion. It is the seclusion which constitutes its peculiarity and its fitness for these scenes of the Gospel history. Unknown and unnamed in the Old Testament, Nazareth first appears as the retired abode of the humble

carpenter. There, secured within the natural barrier of the hills, was passed that youth, of which the most remarkable characteristic is its absolute obscurity."]

VERSES 13, 14. It is plain that the flight into Egypt took place immediately after the departure of the Magi. A journey to Egypt on the much-traveled high-road took only a few days; and the gifts of the Magi may have served to defray the expenses.

VERSE 15. Herod died a few months after this flight, of a fulsome disease, of which Josephus has given us a detailed description, (Hist. of Jews, xvii, 6.) The words of the prophet, to which the Evangelist refers, are: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." (Hos. xi, 1.) The prophet spoke here of the recall of Israel from out of Egypt. The people of Israel is called, in the Old Testament, the son of God, (Ex. iv, 22; Deut. xix, 5,) because God begat him, (Deut. xxxii, 6, 18,) to be the people to which he desired to reveal his name, in whose midst he desired to dwell, that were to worship him according to his own direction, whose development he guided by special providences. Enlightened through the revelation of Jehovah, Israel was to become the servant that carries the light of the true God to the Gentiles, the firstborn that leads the other nations to the worship of God, "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." (Ex. xix, 5, 6.) But this high and sacred calling of Israel found its complete fulfillment only in the incarnation of the Son of God. Israel was in this sense a historical type, by its typical history a prophecy concerning the Messiah. This typical relation between Israel and the Messiah we find alluded to in many passages of the Old Testament, especially in the prophet Isaiah, (Isa. xlii, 1-8; xlix, 1-13.) Thus the history of even the childhood of our Savior was so directed by Divine Providence that it became the antitype of the typical history of Israel. As God led Israel into Egypt, in order to preserve it there from death by famine, and led it out again thence, that it might fulfill its calling, so the infant Jesus was taken to Egypt and back again, the antitype of the whole typical history of Israel.

VERSE 16. Herod waited, in all probability, several days for the return of the Magi, and so Joseph had time enough to reach a place of safety. — FROM TWO YEARS OLD AND UNDER. This expression is indefinite. It may include only those who had begun the second year. As more or less time had

elapsed between the first appearance of the star and the setting out of the Magi, Herod fixed upon this age in order not to miss his prey. As Bethlehem, however, was a small place, the number of the children murdered can not have been very large, and the silence of Josephus is not surprising. The crime was but one of the innumerable and equally-atrocious acts of Herod, and it may never have come to the knowledge of the Jewish historian; and, if he had heard of it, he may have passed it over in silence, to avoid every thing that drew attention to the Messianic hopes of his people. Still less surprising is the silence of heathen historians.

VERSES 17, 18. Here, as well as in verse 15, the Evangelist speaks of the fulfillment of a type, not of a prophecy proper: (See Jer. xl, 1; comp. with chap. xxxi, 15, 16.) Rama was a town of the tribe of Benjamin, not far from Bethlehem, a city of Judah. Much as the two events vary which caused mourning and lamentation, yet the Evangelist had good reason to refer the latter to the former. Herod was the second Nebuchadnezzar, who expected to accomplish by inhuman cruelty what the Chaldean conqueror fondly dreamed to have accomplished; namely, to have destroyed forever the expectations of Israel. When the latter, after the destruction of Jerusalem, led the few remnants of the people captive away from Rama, he fancied that he had struck the fatal blow against Israel. And Herod thought that he had accomplished the same end by murdering the infants of Bethlehem, and with them the Infant King of Israel. As Rama was in the territory of Benjamin, the prophet introduces the pro-genitrix, Rachel, as mourning and lamenting her slaughtered, enslaved descendants. How appropriate is, therefore, the application of her lamentations to the heart-rending grief, that came so unexpectedly upon the mothers of Bethlehem!

VERSE 20. FOR THEY ARE DEAD. These words, which were originally addressed to Moses, (Ex. iv, 19,) were to remind the parents of the typical character of that great man of God, and thus call their attention to the rich consolation and promise embodied in the providence exercised over the infant Jesus.

VERSE 23. "The very use of the plural, 'BY THE PROPHETS,' ought to prepare us to expect what we find to be the case, that this is no citation from any particular prophet, but expresses the declaration of several. 'By saying *prophets*, not *prophet*, the Evangelist shows that he quotes the Old Testament,

not literally, but as to its meaning.' (Hieron., in Loc.) We seem justified, then, in assigning to the word 'Nazarene' all the meanings legitimately belonging to it, by derivation or otherwise, which are concurrent with the declarations of the prophets in reference to our Lord. We may, therefore, both with the early Hebrew Christians, (see Jerome,) and apparently the whole Western Church, trace this prophetic declaration, 1. Principally and primarily, in all the passages which refer to the Messiah under the title of the *Branch* (*nezer*) of the root of Jesse, (Isa. xi, 1; comp. Jer. xxiii, 5; xxxiii, 15; Zech. vi, 12;) 2. In the references to the circumstances of lowliness and obscurity under which that growth was to take place, (comp. Isa. liii, 2;) and perhaps further, 3. In the prophetic notices of a contempt and rejection, (Isa. liii, 3,) such as seems to have been the common, and, as it would seem in many respects, deserved portion of the inhabitants of rude and ill-reputed Nazareth." (Ellicott's Life of Christ, page 86.)

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. God suffers the plans of the wicked to succeed only so far as they do not hinder his own designs. Thus he permitted — that is, did not prevent — the murder of the infants of Bethlehem, because neither the work of redemption nor the victims themselves sustained thereby any lasting injury. They died for Jesus in order to live only for him; while he lived in order to die for them. No price of blood and tears is too dear for the preservation of Jesus' life, because this life is the price by which the whole world is rescued from destruction.

2. The princes of this world favor but rarely the cause of God. They persecute the Church, because they can not comprehend that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world. It met with bloody persecution both in the beginning and during its progress. But neither the malice nor the power of men lasts long; the final victory is God's. Death carries away the enemies of Christ quickly; but the Lord and his Word abide forever.

3. The visit of the Magi was followed by the flight into Egypt. Special strengthenings of faith are followed by sore trials. Joy and grief are near neighbors. We are scarcely born again, when persecution arises against us. The Lord, however, knows how to snatch his children, in due time, from impending harm, and to defeat the designs of his enemies. If the members of thy own

household drive thee away from them, God will prepare a place for thee among strangers. The wise men of this world can not protect the life of Jesus nor of his Church; for this purpose God employs the angels of heaven, and lowly members of his kingdom.

4. As Christ spent thirty years in seclusion and obscurity in the despised Nazareth, before he revealed his Messianic dignity, so his Church fares. (2 Cor. vi, 9.)

CHAPTER III.

§ 5. THE PREACHING AND BAPTISM OF JOHN.

BETWEEN the closing scene of the second chapter and the event which opens the third lies the whole period of Jesus' infancy and youth, passed over in silence by Matthew. Only one instance of it is related by Luke, (ii, 41, etc.;) namely, that Jesus, in his twelfth year, went with his parents up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover, and returned with them thence to Nazareth. So we learn, also, from Mark vi, 3, that he staid at Nazareth with his foster-father, working at his trade, till he entered upon his public ministry. "*In those days*," in which John commenced preaching, means, therefore, the time when Jesus was still at Nazareth, at least six months before he entered upon his ministry and left Nazareth as his place of residence. Luke, by naming the year of government of several temporal and ecclesiastical rulers, enables us to determine with precision the time when John entered upon his mission. It was, as we shall show in our notes on Luke iii, 1, 2, during the Summer of the year 779. According to Wieseler, this was a Sabbatic year, (Exod. xxiii, 11) — if it was observed by the Jews according to its original intent — a most appropriate time for the Baptist to begin his labors. John had then reached his thirtieth year, at which time he would have been admitted to the Temple service as the son of a priest, according to Numbers iv, 3. Trained by his parents for the austere calling of a Nazarite, (Numb. vi,) according to the directions given by the angel, (Luke i, 15,) he had spent his youth in the deserts, (Luke i, 80;) the high ground, probably, west of the Dead Sea, mostly uninhabited and untilled. On the locality of John's baptism see foot-note.

By no writer has the office of John the Baptist, as the forerunner of the Messiah, been set forth in so lucid and comprehensive a manner as by Mr. Andrews in his "Life of our Lord." He says:

"His work was threefold: *First*, he was to announce that the kingdom of God was at hand and the Messiah about to appear. In this announcement he especially displayed his prophetic character. *Second*, he was to bring the nation to repentance, and 'make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' Here he especially manifested himself as a preacher of righteousness. Of this righteousness the law was the standard, and by the law must the nation be judged. Hence, John was a preacher of the law. The burden of his message was, 'Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.' As a wicked, disobedient people, they were not ready for that kingdom. True, they were 'Abraham's children,' and 'sons of the kingdom,' but this did not suffice. They had broken the holy covenant, they had not hearkened to God's voice, and he had punished them terribly in his anger. The Baptist came to awaken them to a sense of their guilt, to make them see how by their unbelief and sin they had frustrated the grace of God, and thus move them to repentance. Comparing the promises of God with their fulfillment, they might see how little he had been able to bestow upon them, how little they had answered to the end for which he chose them. How glorious the promises, how melancholy the history! Their national independence was gone; the covenant with the house of David was suspended, and that royal family had sunk into obscurity. Their high-priest was appointed by the Roman Governor for political ends, and was a mere tool in his hands; the priesthood, as a body, was venal and proud; the voice of prophecy had long been unheard, and for the teachings of inspiration were substituted the sophisms and wranglings of the Rabbis; the law was made, in many of its vital points, of none effect by traditions; the nation was divided into contending sects; a large party, and that comprising some of the most rich, able, and influential, were infidels, open or secret; some, aspiring after a higher piety than the observance of the law could give, wholly ceased to observe it, and withdrew into the wilderness to follow some self-devised ascetic practices; still more were bigots in their reverence for the letter of the law, but wholly ignorant of its spirit, and bitter and intolerant toward all whom they had the power to oppress. The people at large still continued to glory in their theocratic institutions, in their Temple, in their priesthood, and deemed themselves the only true worshipers of God in the world. They were unmindful that almost every

thing that had constituted the peculiar glory of the theocracy was lost by sin; that the Visible Glory that dwelt between the cherubim had departed; that there was no more response by the Urim and Thummim; that the ark, with its attendant memorials, was no more to be found in the Holy of Holies; that all those supernatural interpositions that had marked their early history had ceased; in short, that the whole nation 'was turned aside like a deceitful bow.' To the anointed eye of the Baptist the unpreparedness of the nation for the Messiah was apparent. He saw how in it was fulfilled the language of Isaiah: 'The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores;' and he would, if it were possible, awake the people to a sense of their real spiritual condition. Unless this were done, they could not receive the Messiah, and his coming could be only to their condemnation and destruction. Deliverance was possible only when, like their fathers in Egypt, they became conscious of their bondage, and began to sigh and cry for deliverance. (Ex. ii, 23.) And as the elders of the people gathered themselves together unto Moses and co-operated with him, so must now the priests and Levites, and all who, by God's appointment, held any office among the people, be co-workers with Jesus. In this way only was it possible that the promises of the covenant could take effect, and the predictions of the prophets be fulfilled. To awaken in the hearts of the Jews a deeper sense of their sins and of the need of cleansing, John established the rite of baptism in the Jordan. He taught that this rite was only preparatory, a baptism of repentance, and that the higher baptism of the Spirit they must still receive at the hands of the Messiah himself, who was speedily to come. All whom he baptized came confessing their sins. Thus the extent of his baptism was an index how general the repentance of the people, and, consequently, how general the preparation for the Messiah. *Third*, John was to point out the Messiah personally to the nation, when he should appear. This was the culminating point of his ministry, and would naturally come at the close of the preparatory work."

"Let us now survey for a moment the Baptist's ministry as narrated by the Evangelists, and see how far its purpose was accomplished. First, he aroused general attention to the fact that the Messiah was at hand. Second. his preaching brought great numbers to repentance. Multitudes from every part of the land came to his baptism. But of these it is probable that many did not understand the significance of the rite, or truly repent of their sins. Perhaps with

comparatively few was the baptism with water a true preparation for the baptism with the Holy Ghost. And it is to be specially noted, that those thus coming to John to be baptized were mostly, if not exclusively, of the common people, and not of the priests, or Levites, or members of the hierarchical party. Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to be spectators of the rite, but only with hostile intent; or, if some received baptism at his hands, we find few or no traces of them in the subsequent history. (Matt. iii, 7; Luke vii, 29, 30.) In the hearts of those who sat in Moses' seat, the spiritual rulers and guides of the nation, no permanent sense of sin was awakened, and they could not submit to a baptism of which they felt no need. To all his exhortations they had the ready and, as they deemed, sufficient reply: 'We have Abraham to our father.' Thus John did not effect national repentance. The highest proof of this is seen in the deputation that was sent him from Jerusalem to ask him who he was, and by what authority he acted. (John i. 19-27.) It is plain from the narrative that he was wholly unable to satisfy the Jewish leaders that he was divinely commissioned, or that his baptism had any validity. It followed, of course, that they paid no heed to his prophetic or personal testimony to the Messiah. As his last official act, he pointed out Jesus in person to the nation as the Messiah. He whom he had foretold was come. Henceforth they must see and hear him."

Verses 1-12. (COMPARE MARK i, 1-8; LUKE iii, 1-17.)

(1) IN those days came John the Baptist, ^[1] preaching ^[2] in the wilderness of Judea, ^[3] (2) and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (3) For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, ^[4] saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4) And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, ^[5] and a leathern girdle ^[6] about his loins; and his meat was locusts ^[7] and wild honey. (5) Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, ^[8] (6) and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. (7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees ^[9] come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, ^[10] who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (8) Bring forth therefore fruits meet for ^[11] repentance: (9) and think 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. (10) And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (11) I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes ^[12] I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: (12) whose fan ^[13] is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, ^[14] and gather his wheat into the garner; ^[15] but he will burn up the chaff ^[16] with unquenchable fire.

[1 Or, the Baptizer.]

[2 The Greek verb, translated preaching, signifies to make a public announcement or proclamation of something, as heralds do. The preaching mentioned in the Gospel history is not to be understood in the modern sense of the word.]

[3 The wilderness of Judea was a level tract of land to the east of the tribe of Judah, toward the Dead Sea. It was not exactly a desert, but thinly inhabited, and used for pasture. The extent of the region designated by this term was, however, not clearly defined by it, nor was the ministry of John the Baptist confined to this wilderness, as appears from Luke iii, 3, 4, and from the fact that he was imprisoned by Herod Antipas, whose jurisdiction did not extend to Judea.

[4 Isaiah xl, 3.]

[5 A raiment of coarse sackcloth, made of camel's hair, such as Elijah wore. (2 Kings i, 8.)]

[6 The girdle was used for fastening the robe that hung loose around the body. John's consisted of a strip of untanned hide.]

[7 A sort of grasshoppers, permitted to be eaten by the law of Moses. (Lev. xi, 22.) That they were used as food by the poorer classes is testified not only by ancient writers, but also by modern travelers. Burkhardt, as quoted by Thomson, says: "I have seen, at Medina and Tayf, locust shops, where these animals were sold by the measure. In Egypt and Nubia they are only eaten by the poorest beggars. The Arabs, in preparing locusts as an article of food, throw them alive into boiling water, with which a good deal of salt has been mixed. After a few minutes, they are taken out and dried in the sun; the head, feet, and wings are then torn off: the bodies are cleansed from the salt and perfectly dried, after which process whole sacks are filled with them by the Bedouins. They are sometimes eaten boiled in butter, and they often contribute materials for a breakfast, when spread over unleavened bread mixed with butter.]

[8 The Jordan is the principal river of Palestine. It has its sources at the southern slope of Lebanon and at Hermon. At a distance of about seven miles it flows through the Lake Merom, from whence it proceeds for about nine miles to the Lake of Tiberias, and has a fall of four hundred feet. In passing through the lake the waters of the river do not mingle with those of the lake. From thence to the Dead Sea it flows rapidly in a tortuous channel, with a fall of about one thousand feet. Its breadth, when it comes out of Lake Merom, is about twenty paces, after passing through Lake Tiberias eighty, and when it enters the Dead Sea from two to three hundred, with a depth of channel of about three feet, which is, however, much increased by the Spring rains.]

[9 The names of two parties in the Jewish Church. As they are here mentioned for the first time in the New Testament, we subjoin a description of their respective principal tenets, adding also, in order to make the picture complete, those of the sect of the *Essenes*, who are, indeed, not mentioned in the New Testament, but are well known from Josephus. I. *The Pharisees* claimed to be the orthodox party, and were more numerous and influential than their opponents, the Sadducees. Their name is derived from the Hebrew verb *Pharash*, which means to separate. When, after the return from exile, many Jews commenced to leave the law of their fathers and to imitate the customs of the Greeks and Romans, those that opposed these innovations were called Pharisees; that is, *Separatists*. It would seem that their zeal for the law and the religion of their fathers was at first sincere and genuine; but in the course of time they attached as much importance to the traditions of the elders as to the law itself, and by multiplying the former, and insisting more and more upon the mere letter of the law, and especially upon the ceremonial law, they became self-righteous, sanctimonious, and hypocritical. Their principal tenets were as follows: Every thing comes to pass by Divine predestination, yet so as not to destroy entirely the freedom of the human will; the souls of men are immortal, and, beyond the grave, either happy or miserable; the dead are raised; there are good and bad angels; the Jews have a legal right upon the especial favor of God, and are justified by the merit of Abraham or by their own fulfillment of the law. In consequence of their self-righteousness they were proud and overbearing, and despised the common people. (John vii, 49.) They aspired to the high offices of state, and pretended to great personal dignity. They acquired great political importance by being scattered over the whole country and constituting the majority in the Sanhedrim. In political conflicts they generally played the demagogue. They prided themselves on their scrupulous observance of the outward duties of religion, prayed at the corners of the streets, and strove to acquire the favor of the people by giving alms. They attached, also, great importance to ablutions and ceremonial cleanliness. Some of the laws of Moses they kept very strictly. In addition to the written law they had the so-called traditions, professedly handed down from Moses, to which they attached the same importance as to the written law. In obedience to these traditions they washed themselves before every meal: they fasted twice a week; namely, on Monday, on which day they believed

that Moses had come down from Sinai, and on Thursday, on which day they believed that he had gone up; they wore wide cloaks, with large borders, to which they affixed passages of the law; they coveted the first seats at meals and in the synagogues. On the whole, they were a corrupt, hypocritical, and vain set of men; but there were also honorable exceptions to this rule. (Acts v, 34; Mark xv, 43; Luke ii. 25; xxiii, 51; John xix, 38.) In the days of Jesus they were doctrinally divided into two schools, that of Hillel and that of Shammai — the former representing moderate, the latter strict Pharisaism. During the closing years of the Jewish polity the Pharisees were the ecclesiastical rulers of the people, although the highest posts of honor were, at times, held by the Sadducees. They fostered that feeling of discontent which led to several rebellions against the Romans, and finally brought on the downfall of their polity and the destruction of Jerusalem. II. *The Sadducees.* Their name is generally derived from a certain Zadok, who taught about 260 B.C., and is considered the founder of this sect. Zadok was a disciple of Antigonus Lochaeus, President of the Sanhedrim, who had taught that we must serve God from pure, disinterested motives, without expectation of reward or fear of punishment. Zadok, who did not correctly understand the teaching of his master, drew the inference from it that there was no future state of retribution. Their other tenets were: 1. There is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit. (Matt. xxii, 23; Acts xxiii, 8.) 2. They rejected the doctrine of the Pharisees concerning fate. and, 3, all tradition. They were less numerous than the Pharisees, but counted their adherents generally among the great and the wealthy, and were admirers of Grecian philosophy and manners. Their infidel and libertine principles met with but little favor among the people, for which reason they were very reserved in professing their principles. Yet some of them held the high-priesthood. After the resurrection of Christ, the hostility to the apostles arose mainly from the Sadducees. (Acts iv, 5.) But their denial of the resurrection of the dead was a point which Paul knew how to turn to good account. (Acts xxiii, 6.) With the destruction of Jerusalem they completely disappear. III. *The Essenes* formed a community by themselves in the desert near the Dead Sea. They had their property in common; they wore a white garment of the order, and followed very strict rules in diet, labor, and public worship. They were divided into four classes, that were strictly separated from each other. Only one of these classes was permitted to marry. They were in great repute for veracity, chastity, and industry. Their religious principles resembled those of the Pharisees more than those of the Sadducees. The fact that they are not mentioned in the New Testament is readily accounted for: they lived away from the rest of the people, did not cherish their Messianic hopes, and were, therefore, not noticed by our Lord. There is a strong resemblance between these Essenes and monkery, that afterward developed itself in the Roman Catholic Church.]

[10 The viper is beautiful to the eye, while it is full of venom; its outward appearance is that of harmlessness. Vipers measure in length about four feet,

and in thickness more than an inch. They are of a dirty gray color, spotted, and very venomous.]

[11 An obsolete expression for "worthy of."]

[12 The shoes of the Orientals were sandals, mere soles of wood or hide, covering the bottom of the foot, and fastened on with thongs. Within the house they are laid aside by visitors in the antechamber. With the Jews, Greeks, and Romans it was the duty of menials to bear the sandals of their masters. John's meaning, therefore, is: I am not worthy to do the least service to him that comes after me.]

[13 In the Orient, grain is thrashed out and then thrown by a hand-scoop against the wind.]

[14 By the Oriental threshing-floor we have to understand a piece of the field, circular and beaten hard, on which grain was thrashed out, either by oxen or by a threshing-wagon pulled by oxen. Here floor stands, by metonymy, for the grain on it, which was not yet separated from the chaff.]

[15 Or granary. Grain was kept in the Orient, for the most part, in subterraneous vaults.]

[16 Chaff was burned with the straw, either on the field or used as fuel.]

VERSE 2. Repent — **μετανοεῖτε**; that is, change your mind, or have an afterview. The Greek word does not only mean to feel sorrow, but also to change one's view or purpose, both being the effect of greater light having been poured on the soul. In Hebrews xii, 17, it means the change of Isaac's purpose with regard to the blessing pronounced upon Jacob. Its leading idea is a return from evil to good, a change of mind, that is, of views and purposes. This change of mind includes the conviction of having done wrong, to feel sorry for it, and to resolve to leave off sinning; all of which man, as a free moral agent, has to do in order to be saved. The word **μεταμέλεσθαι**, likewise rendered by *repenting* — as in the case of Judas — signifies simply a change of feeling, sorrow, though it leads to despair; while **μετανοεῖν** always means grief connected with a change of heart. The "*repentance*" to salvation (2 Cor. vii, 10) is **μετάνοια**, not **μεταμέλεια**. — What Luke (xiii, 10-14) quotes from the preaching of John shows that he understood by the **μετάνοια** required of the Jewish people not yet that change of heart in its full spiritual sense, which the Holy Ghost works, declaring expressly, as Neander observes, "that, in order to bring about that total moral change which admits to a participation in the kingdom of God to be established by the Messiah, a Divine, creative power

is required, which he was unable to bestow." And as those to whom John preached repentance could not change their hearts themselves, in the Gospel sense of the term, so man, to this very day, is unable to do this. Evangelical repentance, including a thorough change of heart, is, in the nature of the case, indispensably necessary for man's salvation; and it is, therefore, made his solemn duty to repent, not as if he could do it of his own accord, but, being convinced of its absolute necessity, he is to seek supernatural assistance. Praying to God, then, for the needful influences of the Spirit, with a heart painfully conscious of its entire sinfulness, this prayer is heard and answered, and the Spirit of God accomplishes the great work of changing the heart. — FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND, literally, the kingdom of the heavens, in Greek, the plural "heavens" is used in imitation of the usage of the Hebrews, who understood by the "heaven of heavens," or "third heaven," *the residence of Jehovah*, as distinguished from the sky or aerial heavens, and the firmament, the place of the stars and other heavenly bodies. This term, "kingdom of heaven," is peculiar to Matthew; the other Evangelists use for it, "kingdom of God;" that the two terms are, however, identical in meaning appears from a comparison of Matthew iv, 17; v, 3; xi, 11; xiii, 11; xix, 4, with Luke vi, 20; Mark i, 15; Luke vii, 28; Mark iv, 11; x, 14; John iii, 3. These two expressions have two leading ideas or meanings; namely, the kingdom of glory, as Matthew v, 10-12; vii, 21, 22, 23; Mark ix, 46, 47; but for the most part, the kingdom of Christ on earth, of whose establishment the prophet Daniel had prophesied, (ii, 44:) "and in the day of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." Of this kingdom the Old Testament theocracy, in which Jehovah was King of Israel, and Israel his people and kingdom, was a type. This kingdom of God, however, was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles, (Matt. xxi, 43,) because they rejected in their carnal hearts the true Messiah, expecting a temporal one, who would come with signs from heaven, make war upon and conquer the nations, especially the Romans. In diametrical opposition to these false notions John announced the nearness of the Messianic kingdom as a spiritual kingdom, into which no one could enter without a change of mind. In this sense the term is also used, Matthew iv, 17; x, 7; Luke x, 9; xvii, 21; Mark i, 14; Luke xvi, 16; almost in all the parables, and in Matthew xi, 12; xiii, 11, 19, 52; xvi, 19; xxiii, 13; Mark xii, 34; Luke xiv, 15. In other passages it seems more to mean the kingdom of glory than that of grace, or both, as, e.g., Matthew v, 3, 19, 20; vi, 33; viii, 11; xix, 12, 24; xx, 21; Mark x, 19, 15, 23; Luke xviii, 29; xxii, 29.

The leading idea of the "kingdom of God" is, that God reigns in it supremely; not, however, by physical force, as in the kingdom of nature, but by his grace in the hearts of the believers, who are thereby changed and sanctified. To this fundamental idea of the kingdom of God it is owing that it is spoken of at times as something inward and already present, (Luke xix, 21; Col. i, 13; Heb. xii, 28,) at other times as something future, (Matt. vii, 21; Acts xiv, 22; 1 Cor. xv, 50.) Of the many parables used by our Savior to illustrate the nature of the kingdom of God, some set forth more particularly the time of its establishment, others the blessings and privileges dispensed to the members thereof, others its institutions, others, again, its outward, visible completion on earth, which, however, will not take place till the Church shall have spread over the whole earth, and been thoroughly sanctified from within.

VERSE 3. In John was fulfilled, what two prophets of the Old Testament (Isa. xl, and Mal. iii) had prophesied of the herald who should go before the Lord. As it was customary in the Orient for kings, who wanted to take a journey through desert or thinly-settled regions, to send heralds in advance, in order to make the roads passable, and to remove all obstacles, so John the Baptist was sent to preach repentance, and remove thereby all obstacles that were in the way of the reception of the coming Messiah; that is, those false views, worldly notions, and carnal expectations of the Jews concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, and thus to prepare for the Lord the way to the hearts of his people. By connecting repentance with the kingdom of heaven, John shows plainly its spiritual character.

VERSE 4. How well adapted was John's whole appearance to stir up the consciences of the people! Every thing connected with him preached repentance—the desert, his raiment, his meat. He was a faithful copy of Elijah, (2 Kings i, 8;) for which reason, Malachi, (iv, 5,) beholding the character of the forerunner of our Lord in the image of Elijah, calls him Elijah himself. With the description of John and his public ministry given by the Evangelist, the Jewish historian, Josephus, agrees in substance, simply translating the term "repentance" into language intelligible and palatable to his Greek readers. He says, (Ant., XVIII, 5, 2,) that he exhorted the Jews to practice virtue, justice toward each other, and piety toward God, and to come together in order to be baptized by him. That Josephus notices only the moral element in John's preaching, and says nothing of his testimony of the Messiah, is not surprising. The contrary would give just reason to suspect the genuineness of his

statement, for Josephus ignored the Messianic hopes of his nation in his whole history, perhaps apprehending to give offense to the Romans.

VERSE 5. The powerful impression which the Baptist produced is shown by the vast concourse of people, not only from the regions about the Jordan, but from *all the parts* of Judea — for this we have to understand by "*all Judea*" — and even from Jerusalem, whence the Sanhedrim sent an official delegation to him. Although many came not with singleness of heart, as was the case with the scribes and Pharisees, and although but comparatively few of those that were baptized by John actually received Christ, yea, although some of John's disciples assumed afterward a position hostile to the Gospel; yet we can safely say, that John by his preaching laid the preparatory foundation for the Church of the New Testament, for not only a part of the apostles, but most probably a majority of those five hundred brethren spoken of, 1 Cor. xv, 6, were brought to Christ by John.

VERSE 6. AND WERE BAPTIZED OF HIM. This was a new ordinance enjoined upon John by a special command of God, as we learn from John i, 33; Luke iii, 2, 3; vii, 30; and especially from Matthew xxi, 24-27; and was acknowledged as such by the people, (Matt. xxi, 26.) The question asked by the Pharisees, (John i, 25,) "Why baptizest thou then?" proves also, conclusively, that the baptism of John was not derived from the baptism or lustration of proselytes at their admission into the Jewish Church, a practice which was of later origin, and totally different in its form. Such proselytes were circumcised, and had to bring an oblation, preceded by a Levitical lustration; when the oblation ceased, with the destruction of the Temple, the lustration alone was left as a memorial of it. John's baptism was, like the symbolical washings prescribed by the Mosaic law, an emblem of that moral renovation which was to be the condition of participating in the Messianic kingdom now near at hand, for which reason, John says, (v. 11,) "I baptize you with water unto repentance;" and Mark and Luke call his baptism a "baptism of repentance," with the addition, "for the remission of sins;" that is, with the promise that the remission of sins would be granted by him who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. — The baptism of John was not intended to take the place of circumcision, which remained the sign of the covenant till the institution of the Christian baptism; for this reason John did not baptize whole families, as the apostles did, but only adults; it was only a preparatory, (John i, 31,) transient institution. Those whom John baptized made no profession of their

faith in the Messiah as having already come, and we may infer from this, that when they were afterward admitted into the Christian Church they were baptized in the name of Jesus, like the disciples of John mentioned Acts xix, 1-6. It is true, there is no indication, and no probability whatever, of the apostles themselves having received the proper Christian baptism, which they administered unto others; but this is not to be wondered at, since their personal intercourse with the Savior, their calling to the apostleship, and their receiving the Holy Ghost in a manner different from all other believers, made any other introduction into the Church of the New Testament unnecessary to them. — IN JORDAN. Inasmuch as the Jordan had a double bed, or two banks, this expression does by no means indicate that they were immersed. "If it be asked why John chose proximity to the Jordan, unless it was to obtain a depth of water adequate to the performance of this rite by immersion, it may be replied, that, in a country like Palestine, where water was not always and in all places found in sufficient quantity for the wants of large gatherings of people with their beasts of burden, it became necessary to select a location near some river or lake. The wilderness of Judea, where John had spent much of his life, had no lake, fountain, or stream more suitable for the wants of a large concourse of people, like that which thronged around him, than the Jordan itself." (Owen.) What is more natural than to suppose that they came to the edge of the river, and were there sprinkled, or had the water poured upon their heads, as some ancient pictures really represent the transaction? See more on this, verses 11 and 16. But even admitting that John baptized by immersion, it follows by no means from this, that immersion is every-where an indispensable ingredient of Christian baptism. As baptism is merely a symbol of the inward cleansing, and as this can be symbolized by sprinkling and pouring just as well by immersion, we have no reason to believe that the quantity of water used at baptism, or the method of its application, is a necessary ingredient of a valid baptism. To suppose that Christ made immersion, which is in many countries almost impossible, at all events very difficult and dangerous to health, indispensably necessary for Christian baptism, is hardly consistent with the spirituality of the Gospel, which never makes the form or ceremonial part of any act of public worship something essential, nor with its universality, from which we may conclude that its few external rites would be only such as can be observed in all countries and at all times. — CONFESSING THEIR SINS. This must not be understood as if every one had confessed his individual sins, but only that

they confessed publicly and fully their guilt before God. The confession seems to have been similar to those recorded in Ezra ix, Nehemiah ix, and Daniel ix.

VERSE 7. The Pharisees, whom John addresses here more especially, fancied in their self-righteous and vain trust in their theocratic descent, that so far from being objects of Divine displeasure, God could not dispense with their services. — It is very strange that the Sadducees presented themselves also as candidates for baptism; they did so, undoubtedly, in order to increase their popularity with the people. Josephus says that they often followed the principles of the Pharisees against their own convictions, in order to rival them in popularity. — From Luke vii, 30, it would appear, either, that from the great number of the Pharisees and lawyers, only a comparatively small number came to John for baptism, or that they were deterred from being baptized by his sharp rebukes. — O GENERATION OF VIPERS! or, as the Rhemish version has it, *brood of vipers*. There seems to be an allusion to the *seed of the serpent*, (Gen. iii, 15.) — WHO HAS WARNED YOU TO FLEE? "Retaining the strict sense of the aorist, *who warned you* just now, or before you came out hither? The Greek verb elsewhere rendered forewarn, originally means to show secretly or partially, denoting a slight intimation or suggestion, as distinguished from a full disclosure. The infinitive which follows may be construed as denoting either the necessity of flight, or possibility of rescue. 'Who has shown you that you must flee?' or, 'who has shown you that you can escape?' In either case, the words express surprise; on the former supposition, at their having been alarmed; on the latter, at their venturing to hope. The first is the most probable." (Alexander.) WRATH TO COME. The word wrath does not denote exclusively the punishment of the wicked in the world to come, but every impending manifestation of the punitive justice of God. It is not to be overlooked that the Baptist speaks here in the character of the true prophet, foretelling the wrath soon to be poured upon the Jewish nation.

VERSES 10-12. John predicts the great process of sifting in the kingdom of God, by which all that would not bring forth fruits meet for repentance would be cut off, cast out, and rejected, while all those that had been prepared for the kingdom of God by genuine repentance, symbolized and inculcated by his baptism, would be baptized with the Holy Ghost and gathered as wheat in the garner of God. The effects of the first and second coming of Christ are here, as in similar prophecies of the Old Testament, (Isa. xl, 10, 11; Mal. iii,) blended together. The Baptist sees the coming of Christ in its whole perspective

development. The process of sifting to be completed by the second coming of Christ, has indeed commenced already with his first coming. Judgment and redemption, which our narrow dogmatics have too far put asunder, are, in the Scripture sense, correlate ideas. Coupled with the highest grace is always the highest punishment, which God inflicts upon the despisers of his proffered mercy. — AND THE AX IS LAID, ETC. In order to enforce his exhortation, he reminds them that they had no time left to put off their repentance, God's long-suffering with the Jewish people being almost exhausted. If they would continue — according to Luke the words were addressed to both the people and Pharisees — in their present state of impenitence, in utter disregard of God's extraordinary dealings with them, and reject the Messiah, the Divine judgments hanging over their heads would be executed at once; and in order to set this the more clearly before them, he compares them to a tree doomed to be cut down, unto whose roots the ax is already laid. By this ax Dr. A. Clarke understands the Romans. As early as 63 B.C. this ax was laid to the Jewish polity; Pompey then took Jerusalem, and made Judea a Roman province; yet the country might still be considered as being in the hands of the Jews, although it was tributary to the Romans. About forty years after this warning of John the ax did its work; the tree, of which, by earlier judgments, only some branches had been cut off, was now really cut down; with the destruction of the Temple and the city the Jewish polity and Church ceased to exist. But this judgment was, at the same time, the type of the coming wrath of God, which will on the great day of retribution be poured out upon all that have not become obedient to the Gospel of Jesus Christ during the dispensation of grace. — HE SHALL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND WITH FIRE — literally *in* (*ἐν*) the Holy Ghost and fire. The Baptists appeal to this in proof that *baptizing* ought to be rendered by *immersing* here. But the meaning of the Greek preposition *ἐν* is not restricted to locality; and if **βαπτίζειν** meant immersion here, the preposition *εἰς* would have been used for *ἐν* at all events, *ἐν* proves nothing for immersion, because Luke (iii, 16) uses no preposition at all, but the dative instrumenti, **ὑδατί**, which can be rendered only "with water." Moreover, the baptism of the Holy Ghost is described, not as immersing, but as *falling on*, *pouring out*, *descending*, and *sending down*, (Acts ii, 16-18, 32, 33; x, 44-46; xi, 15, 16; 1 Pet. i, 13; John i, 32.) The verb **βαπτίζειν**, when used in the New Testament of a religious act, means to *wash* or *cleanse* with water, without determining whether this is done by sprinkling, pouring, or immersing. (A full and elaborate examination of

the meaning of **βαπτίζειν** the reader will find in our comment on Matthew xxviii, 19.) Water baptism, or the cleansing by water, merely symbolizes the internal and real cleansing by the Holy Ghost. — AND WITH FIRE. These words are generally understood as referring to the manner in which the Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost; but the application of the term "fire" to this event is not warranted. Most commentators consider fire as a symbol of the purifying power of the Holy Ghost, as if John meant to say, "As water cleanses metal only from without, but fire purges it from within, removing all impurities, so my baptism can only symbolize and urge a change of heart, but the heart-renewing power can be communicated only by the power of the Holy Ghost." But although the Holy Ghost may fitly be compared to fire, yet it would seem that John understood here by fire something else; namely, the consuming fire of Divine judgments, in which sense the word is evidently used in the following verse. If he had intended to use the term "fire" merely as the antithesis of water, and as the symbol of the Holy Ghost, he would have said, "He shall baptize you with fire and the Holy Ghost." It is worthy of special notice, that Mark and John, who, in relating the Baptist's words, do not mention the Divine judgments announced by him, omit, also, the words "with fire;" in the same way, our Lord, (Acts i, 5; comp. Acts xi, 15, 16.) The objection, that we are not authorized to understand by "you" two classes of persons, penitent and impenitent, is not of sufficient importance. Moreover, by referring the "fire" to the consuming fire of the Divine judgments, its application to those that are baptized with the Holy Ghost is not fully excluded. The two views have the *consuming property of fire* in common. Where the fire of the Holy Ghost consumes the impurities of the heart, there is a judgment that is painfully felt; and hence would follow another contrast between water and fire baptism; namely, this, that hypocrites may submit to water baptism, because it does not necessarily include, like baptism by the Spirit, the painful death of the old man.

VERSE 12. We have shown, already, that this verse refers primarily to the sifting process to which the theocracy was to be subjected. Lange thinks that by the *chaff* must be understood both the temporary forms of the Old Testament economy which had been serviceable to the growth of the wheat, and its members, who, by mistaking the outward forms for the substance of religion, had become worthless chaff themselves. As Christ sifted, at his first coming, the Jewish Church on earth, so he shall sift his visible Church at his

second coming. It is worthy of notice, that the Baptist, as well as Christ and his apostles, represent the punishment of those that are thrust out of the communion of God's people, after the time of grace, as being of endless duration. (John xv, 6; 2 Thess. i, 9.) — "To what amounts it," says Dr. Whedon, "that the fire is *unquenchable*, if the sinner may be snatched from it at any moment? what cares he for the phantasm of a hell *forever empty*, though forever burning? Moreover, what sense in supposing a hell forever preserved flaming, yet forever void? But, in fact, hell is the penal condition of the condemned sinner, and the fire the penal essence itself; hell has no existence save as a penalty for guilt. Terminate the penalty, and the fire has gone out."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

Like John the Baptist, the preacher of the Gospel ought, 1. To remind men of their sins, and convince them of the absolute necessity of a change of heart, showing its genuineness by fruits meet for repentance. For by nature we are all blind and dead, and but too prone to take the outside for the substance of religion. John insists upon fruit, not upon leaves. The only safe criterion of genuine repentance is a change of heart and conduct. Spurious repentance consists in mere wishes, sighs, resolves, regrets, or outward exercises.

2. To direct every man to the Lord Jesus Christ, as him in whose blood alone we can find the forgiveness of sins, and who will come to judge the world.

3. To teach plainly and distinctly, that man, in order to be saved, must be a partaker of the Holy Ghost. We need not only what Christ has done *for us*, but also the work of the Holy Ghost *in us*, not only a claim upon heaven through the merits of Christ, but we must also be made meet for the inheritance of the saints through the Holy Ghost. May, therefore, no one rest satisfied with water baptism alone, but strive to receive also the baptism of the Spirit!

4. To warn the impenitent of the imminent danger, to which they are exposed, of falling under the wrath of God, and to be condemned to everlasting fire. While humbly adoring God's long-suffering and mercy, we must not lose sight of his punitive justice, and constantly bear in mind, that there is not only a heaven, but also a hell.

5. To comfort the believers by pointing them to the garner into which Christ will gather all his elect.

§ 6. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

FROM the record of Mark i, 9, it would seem that Jesus staid at Nazareth to the moment of his entry upon his public ministry. But when his hour had come, which he recognized in the light of the Spirit with infallible certainty, he came, when about thirty years of age, as Luke tells us, to John at the Jordan, in order to be introduced by this herald of God into his Messianic office. The adverb "*then*" (*τότε*) which introduces this section does not imply that Jesus came to the river at the close of the preceding discourse, but it merely means that Jesus came while John was still preaching at the Jordan. From the manner in which the Baptist speaks (John i, 32) of the heavenly witness at the baptism of Jesus, and from a close examination of verse 16, where it is said, "The heavens were opened unto him," and again, "He saw," etc., we may infer that the opening of the heavens, the descent of the Spirit, and the voice of the Father did not take place before the assembled multitude, but that these heavenly manifestations came within the perception of Jesus and John alone. From this it would follow that Jesus was not baptized before the assembled multitude, which seems most probable to us; or, if this was the case, the multitude may, indeed, have had some perception of a miraculous transaction, they may have seen and heard, as the companions of St. Paul, (Acts ix, 7,) or as the multitude when the voice came from heaven, (John xii, 29,) something strange and inexplicable, without understanding, however, the whole phenomenon.

Additional light will be shed upon this solemn transaction by considering the object of the baptism of Jesus and of the consequent witness from heaven. Both were destined for John and for Jesus himself. John was to receive, through the baptism of Jesus, and especially through the coming down upon him of the Holy Ghost, the infallible assurance that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah. The Baptist declares this expressly when he says, (John i, 31:) "That he [Christ] should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing you with water;" and, verse 33: "I knew him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with

the Holy Ghost." But this baptism was also proper for Jesus as the Son of man. It was for his own self-consciousness, as it was for that of John, the ordination for the Messianic office. See more on this point in the exegetical notes. "As Jesus," says Neander, "followed, in his public ministry, always the Divine call addressed to him through surrounding circumstances, through the preparative course of historic development, so he did also at the opening of his ministry. For his outward calling and solemn introduction into office he looked to him who, as the last of the Old Testament prophets, was to appear in order to form the point of transition from the Old Testament to the Messianic dispensation. His baptism by John was the symbol of the preparatory consecration for the establishing of the kingdom of God. But this general idea could apply in a twofold manner; that is, with regard to those that desired to become members of this kingdom and with reference to Him that was to become the founder and ruler of this kingdom. If in the case of the former a confession of their sins took place, and their baptism had a close relation to repentance, all this was, as a matter of course, excluded in the case of Him who was revealed to John, in the very moment of his baptism, as the Messiah, as the Redeemer from sin."

Verses 13-17. (COMPARE MARK i, 9-11; LUKE iii, 21, 22; JOHN i, 31-33.)

(13) THEN cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. (14) But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? (15) And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so now*: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. (16) And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (17) and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

VERSE 13. TO BE BAPTIZED OF HIM. As to the object and significance of the baptism of Jesus see the introductory remarks.

VERSE 14. BUT JOHN FORBADE HIM. This statement of Matthew, according to which John knew Jesus even before his baptism, is perfectly

consistent with the Baptist's declaration, (John i, 33:) "I knew him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." It is, indeed, in the highest degree probable that John knew Jesus personally before the latter came to be baptized. But this personal acquaintance and what John might have heard from his mother about the extraordinary circumstances that had taken place before and after the birth of Jesus, would not have justified John in introducing Jesus to the people solemnly as the Messiah. For before John had received, in the descent of the Holy Ghost on Jesus, the promised infallible assurance that Jesus was the Messiah, he was not authorized to bear witness of him as the Messiah, and in this sense John said: "I knew him not." Other expositors, Watson, e.g., and Ebrard, however, think that, by a special interposition of Providence, John and Jesus did not know each other prior to the latter's baptism, lest there might be any room for suspicion that there had been a collusion between them. But as soon as John saw Jesus he received the positive witness of the Spirit, with which he was filled from his mother's womb, that this was the Messiah. The promised outward sign came to this, to seal the inward revelation. They say that it was quite natural that, on subsequent occasions, when John pointed out Jesus to his disciples as the Messiah, he did not appeal to his inward assurance, which he received at the first sight of Jesus, but to the outward sign.

VERSE 15. SUFFER IT TO BE SO NOW. The Lord does not contradict what John says about his person, but directs him as his inferior, to submit, for the time being, to the Divine arrangement, even without understanding it. Jesus refers John, the servant of the law, to the Divine commandment to baptize all Israelites that desired to enter into the Messianic kingdom. In what sense and for what purpose this baptism was to be administered to him also, who knew no sin, was set forth by the following sign from heaven. — **FOR THUS IT BECOMES US TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS.** This confession of righteousness forms a lofty contrast to the confession of sin by all others that came to be baptized. (Verse 6.) To fulfill all righteousness means, "To observe to do all the commandments of God, as he has commanded us." (Deut. vi, 25.) This no one in Israel could say of himself, and for this reason John preached, at the close of the dispensation of the law, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. But he that applies now for baptism is no sinner, but the Righteous One, that is not in need of either

repentance or forgiveness. Born of a woman, and put under the law which is given for sinners, he had already, up to this time, observed to do all the commandments of Jehovah, given to Israel. Although born without the foreskin of the heart, yet he had received circumcision. Although he was himself the sacrifice for the sins of the world, yet a sacrifice was brought for him as the first-born; although the real Paschal Lamb, he is to keep the Passover. Fulfilling all the ordinances prescribed by the law, he submits also to the divinely-ordained baptism, as the last commandment of the old dispensation, by which it passes over into the New. It became him, who knew no sin, to present himself with sinners for baptism, because he was to take upon himself their sins. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by being introduced into his Messianic office by baptism. John, by baptizing Jesus, fulfilled also all righteousness; for by baptizing him he did what was part of his office.

VERSE 16. AND JESUS, WHEN HE WAS BAPTIZED. Literally, *having been baptized*. — WENT UP STRAIGHT-WAY OUT OF THE WATER. These words are also quoted in proof that **βαπτίζειν** means immersion. But the Greek preposition **ἀπό**, here rendered "*out of*" means *from, away from*, rather than *out of*, as in Matt. xxvii, 40, *down* from the cross, not out of the cross; or in Luke ix, 37, *down* from the mountain, not out of the mountain. If the Evangelist had wished to convey the idea that Jesus was immersed, he would, in all probability, have used the preposition **ἐκ** for **ἀπό**. After having been baptized, Jesus went up from the bed of the river, in which he had been standing, whether the baptism was administered to him by immersion or affusion, and then the heavenly vision took place. — AND, LO, THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED UNTO HIM. The opening of the heavens we must understand, as Acts vii, 55, as a visible manifestation of the glory of the Lord, (Shekinah.) In its outward appearance it may not have been unlike the dividing of the clouds at the flash of lightning. — LIKE A DOVE. Luke says: "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him." It was, consequently, not a real dove that came down from the opened heavens and alighted upon Jesus. As God appeared in the Old Testament at times in human form, at times in fire and smoke, so the Holy Ghost made himself here visible in the shape of a dove. On the apostles the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of cloven tongues, like as of fire, indicating, thereby, that he would illuminate and purify them; but in the case of Christ, who stood in need of neither illumination nor purification, he came down in the shape of a

dove, the symbol of *purity* and *innocence*. The dove belonged to those animals which God had declared clean in the Old Testament, and was considered a holy bird by many nations of antiquity. Christ himself uses it (Matt. x, 16) as the symbol of purity and gentleness. — The question whether the transaction in question was a *vision*, as many of the early Fathers and some modern commentators, as Neander and Bleek, etc., have maintained, or a *real transaction*, as those who dissent from this view call it, can in this form not be answered. It was a vision, but a vision of objective reality. Man, however, in his natural state has no organs of perceiving, or coming into contact with, such outward manifestations of the Deity. For this end his internal sense must be quickened; in other words, he must enter into an ecstatic state in order to perceive such Divine manifestations. Man, in his natural state, does either not perceive any thing at all, or he bears a meaningless sound and sees a shapeless sight; so the companions of Paul on his way to Damascus: they *heard* the voice, but *understood* it not; they saw the *light*, but not *Christ* in the light. So the multitude, when a voice spoke to Jesus from heaven; they said: "It thundered;" others: "An angel spake with him;" evidently not understanding the meaning of the heavenly voice. (John xii, 29.) — AND LIGHTING UPON HIM. Jesus, the incarnate Logos, did not receive the Holy Ghost as other men do. He descended upon him to indicate his official relation to Jesus — to testify that Jesus was the Son of God. In a similar manner did the Holy Ghost enter, on the day of Pentecost, into a new relation to the apostles, upon whom the Savior had breathed the Holy Spirit before his ascension. Neander remarks: "As the Holy Ghost is represented as soaring over him in the shape of a dove, and remaining to the end of the vision, the idea that he came now for the first time upon Jesus is altogether precluded, and a higher union of the divine and the human in Jesus, dating from the very beginning, and not commencing now, is evidently presupposed." Gess takes a somewhat different view. He says: "For what purpose did Jesus need the outpouring of the Spirit, seeing he carried in himself the fullness of Divine life? To say that the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the human nature of Jesus does not explain the matter; for it is evident that the Divine fullness of the Logos might have communicated itself to the human soul of Jesus. What end, therefore, answered the baptism of the Holy Ghost coming down from heaven? Without admitting the full force of the Scripture doctrine, that the Logos divested himself, at his incarnation, of his fullness of life, we can not understand this fact in the development of our Lord's life. Jesus sustained, indeed, an uninterrupted intercourse with the Father, and his whole

life, before and after his baptism, was an uninterrupted receiving of the Holy Ghost. He had recognized himself as the Son of God and as the Messiah before his baptism. But he needed, in addition to his inward conviction, a Divine seat of his Messiahship, coming from without, similar to the one he received afterward, shortly before he set out on his last journey to Jerusalem, on the mount of transfiguration, and again after his entry into Jerusalem. As soon as we fully realize the true humanity of Christ, we must conceive of Christ's career as a career of faith, and we shall understand how appropriate such tokens of Divine favor were to the incarnate Logos." Gess further thinks that it was the spirit of official wisdom and power of performing miracles with which Jesus was endowed at his baptism.

VERSE 17. For "THIS IS" Mark and Luke say, "*Thou art.*" Matthew gives either only the sense of the Divine voice, and Mark and Luke the very words the *verba ipsissima* — that were addressed to Jesus, or the voice addressed itself first to Jesus, then to John. If the words of the Father, like those of the Son, (Acts xxvi, 14,) were not spoken in Greek, but in Hebrew, the expression is elliptical — that is, without the copula "thou art" or "he is" — and one or the other can be supplied. The slight variation of the Evangelists, however, in reporting the words used on this occasion as also in many other passages is fully justified by the universally-admitted principle "that one witness may report the substance and another the exact form, without any inconsistency or violation of the truth." From the silence of John concerning the heavenly voice, in his testimony of Jesus, (John i, 32-34,) Strauss finds another proof that John differs from the Synoptics. But this *argument e silentio* has no force whatever, as no one will contend that the Baptist was obliged, whenever he appealed to any fact, to mention in detail all the attending circumstances. It is sufficient that, according to the Gospel of John, the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the Son of God, and this testimony was necessarily based on the voice from heaven, which declared him to be the Son of God. — THIS IS MY BELOVED SON. Literally, this is my Son, the beloved one: that is, as the only-begotten Son, loved by me in a higher sense than all others that are for his sake adopted and beloved. (John xvii, 24, 26; Eph. i. 6; Col. i. 13.) God loves, in reality, only the only-begotten Son of his love, as the original has it, (Col. i. 13,) with all his eternal, infinite, and immeasurable love, and whomsoever else he loves, he loves only through him and for his sake, only with reference to the beloved one, only in proportion as he is beloved by the Son. — IN WHOM

I AM WELL PLEASED. On this passage Dr. Alexander has the following excellent note: "*I am well pleased* is in Greek a single word, the aorist of a verb used sometimes to express volition, and then construed with a following infinitive, but sometimes perfect satisfaction or complacency, the object of which is then denoted by a noun or pronoun following. According to the theory and usage of the Greek verb, both in the classics and in Scripture, the aorist (**εὐδόκησα**) is to be confounded neither with the present, *I am (now) well pleased*, nor with the perfect, *I have (ever) been well pleased*, but has respect to a specific point of time, *I was (once) well pleased*. Although the deviations from this strict rule are sufficient to authorize a liberal construction when required by exegetical necessity, the latter is precluded in the case before us by the obvious allusion to the Son's assumption of the Mediatorial office, which is here presented as the ground or reason of the Father's infinite complacency or approbation, as distinguished from what may be called, for want of any better term, the natural affection or intense love which enters into our conception of the mutual relation of paternity and sonship. There is therefore no tautology in these two clauses; but the first describes our Lord as the beloved Son of God from all eternity, the second as the object of his infinite complacency and approbation as the Son of man, the Mediator, the Messiah. In this voluntarily-assumed or adopted character, the Son of God was recognized and set forth at his baptism. This sublime and solemn recognition of our Lord in his official character involves a striking exhibition of the threefold personality in the Divine essence, the Father audibly addressing and the Spirit visibly descending on the incarnate Son, as he assumes his Messianic office."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

Jesus now appears in public for the first time. Stupendous issues depend upon that mission, into which he is now publicly inaugurated by that baptism which he receives at the hand of John. Now, although the mission of Jesus was *sui generis*, every man has as truly a mission as he had. There is not one possessing a rational nature who has not some portion of Divine work, which he is both fitted and required to do. Upon the right fulfillment of our individual missions depend our true greatness and well-being, as well as our utility to the universe and our acceptance with God. Now, there are two things which Christ possessed at his inauguration, as here recorded, which every man must have

if he would rightly "fulfill his course" — *a spirit of self-renunciation* and *a special connection with the Spirit of God.*

I. *A spirit of self-renunciation.* When Jesus made application for baptism, John, conscious of his personal inferiority, modestly "forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" To this Jesus replied, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness;" as if he had said, Baptism is a Divine institution; and, although it is a ritual enactment, and not a moral principle, as it is not yet abrogated, and as I am "made under the law," it is binding on me. Whatever is duty, positive or moral — however apparently trivial or momentous — I shall obey. This is the spirit of duty — the spirit that now penetrated Christ in entering on his public mission, and which was the inspiration of his life and the soul of his history. And, my friend, wouldst thou be initiated into the grand business and blessedness of being? Wouldst thou start rightly on the course of an interminable existence? Wouldst thou be divinely inaugurated into the high offices of God's spiritual universe? If so, thou must have that spirit which Jesus expressed to John on the banks of the Jordan, when he said: "IT BECOMETH US TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS."

II. *A special connection with the Spirit of God.* There are three things in this wonderful scene which indicated Christ's special connection with God at this time. First, the *vision* of the opening heavens: "Lo! the heavens were opened unto him." An impressive expression this of the fact mankind have ever overlooked; namely, that behind the veil of matter there is a spiritual universe which is deeply interested in the doings and destinies of a holy man. How would this vision strengthen the heart of Christ for the stupendous mission he had undertaken! He would feel, as his trials multiplied, and the nation grew in wrath against him, that up those heavens — where the vulgar could discern nothing but the quiet seas of blue, the swimming clouds, and the twinkling lights of night — there were spirits bent in earnest affection over him, and ready at any moment to throw open their glorious pavilion, and welcome him to their home. Secondly. The *visit* of the holy dove. In the symbolization of the Bible, certain animals — such as the lamb, the lion, the camel, the bull — are frequently employed as the representation of character. In this hieroglyphical system the dove is the emblem of purity; and its descending and abiding upon Christ now, indicated that he was the temple of the Spirit of holiness. This Spirit with Christ was not a transient visitant, as in the case of Saul, Samson, and

others, but a permanent resident. The "dove abode" on Christ. Thirdly. The *voice* of the everlasting Father, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This approving voice was the greatest blessing of all. Now, all these things, indicating a special connection with God, are as necessary for every man who would happily realize the great purpose of being, as they were for Christ. Yes; every man must have such a Divine *vision*, *visitant*, and *voice*. *The heavens must open*; the thick vail of matter must be drawn aside; the sensuous firmament of the heart must be rent asunder, and a deep and imperishable impression of a spiritual universe must be made upon the heart, and the whole man must be brought under the powers of the world to come. *The heavenly dove* must descend as the spirit of *purity*, not to pay a transient visit and wing its way again, but as a permanent resident, consecrating the entire nature as its everlasting temple; and the *approving voice of Heaven* must verberate in the depths of conscience, that we may go forth, not with "doubts and fears," but with a cheerful spirit and courageous heart. "O, that thou wouldst rend the heavens!" — unvail to us the spiritual world; "that thou wouldst come down" — descend on us as the permanent visitant of purity, and as a VOICE, "bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God!" (Abridged from "The Homilist.")

CHAPTER IV.

§ 7. THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD IN THE WILDERNESS.

RATIONALISTIC commentators regard the temptation of our Lord, recorded by three Evangelists, not as an actual occurrence, but either as a parable, in which Jesus intended to teach his disciples certain principles of his kingdom and certain fundamental maxims to guide them in their mission, or as a mythus, a tradition, which arose from the intention of glorifying Christ as the conqueror of evil. It is not necessary to say any thing on the mythical interpretation, after the elaborate discussion to which the whole theory in all its aspects has been subjected in our General Introduction. The view which regards the narrative as a parable has been given up, even by those who had supported it. The entire character of the narrative, and especially the position it occupies between the baptism and public appearance of Jesus, show clearly that the Evangelists meant to narrate a matter of fact, and not a parable. Or can we suppose that the apostles misunderstood their Master on this subject, taking

that to be actual history which he meant to be a parable? This would imply a stigma upon the teaching of Jesus himself, as if he had presented the matter to them in a very unintelligible way; and Matthew was certainly well skilled in distinguishing parables from narratives. When Jesus spoke in parables the fact is always expressly stated by the Evangelist. Besides, as a parable, this account would have an unusual aspect, such as no where else occurs. Finally, when we reflect that it was involved in the human nature of Christ that he should be tempted, that the New Testament throughout knows nothing at all of a Savior who was not actually tempted, and that it lay in the nature of the case, that that which could be a temptation to him should present itself with special force at the commencement of his career, we are constrained to regard the account as the record of an actual fact in the life of Jesus.

But even those who believe that Jesus was actually subjected to temptation, differ widely in their explanations of the mysterious transaction. The chief ground of these different and more or less forced explanations, is the personal appearance of Satan as the tempter of Jesus. It is argued that the bodily appearance of the devil is never elsewhere hinted at in the New Testament, and that the personal appearance of the devil, even if disguised in a human form — to which the text makes no allusion whatever — must at once have taken from the temptation all its force; for the Son of God must have recognized him at a glance, and in order that evil may tempt at all it must take the alluring form of that which is good, and pleasant, and beneficial.

Some have supposed that the temptations presented themselves to the Lord *in a state of ecstasy, or in a dream*. But would the Lord have imparted to the Evangelists a mere vision or dream in the form of a historical narrative? Would a temptation experienced in an ecstasy be a real temptation? And how unworthy is the conception that the second Adam should have resisted the temptations of Satan only in a vision or dream, not in a wakeful, conscious, and responsible condition!

More plausible is the interpretation which represents the event as a mental experience, undergone in a state of perfect self-consciousness. According to this view, Satan is made to represent the false and carnal idea of the Messiah which was prevalent in the world around him, but which his pure spirit repulsed with perfect decision and without hesitation. This false idea of the Messiah, it is said, originated with Satan, and must have presented itself to Jesus when he

was on the point of coming forward as the Messiah. Since, to his mind, the precise end for which the Father had sent him into the world stood clearly defined, so, with equal clearness, must he have taken cognizance of that which stood opposed to this his mission. This inward experience Jesus is supposed to have afterward communicated to the disciples in the more intelligible form of an outward temptation, in which he holds up to their view the process of thought through which he passed. In support of this view there may be quoted Scriptural representations of a similar symbolical character; yet it is unworthy of our acceptance. The temptation is thus made either a real conflict in the soul of Jesus, which is inconsistent with his purity, or a merely-theoretical choice between a false and a true conception of Messiah, which would deprive the temptation of all force and significance. Besides, this interpretation does too much violence to the text. The Evangelists speak evidently of a *personal* tempter acting upon Jesus from without, in order to seduce him from the way of truth, and, more particularly, from that way which, as Messiah, he was called to walk in. Some who acknowledge this, but who, at the same time, wish to get rid of the idea of the tempter having been the devil, substitute for him some human tempter, whether an individual or a body of men, and have imagined that it was by a priest or a Pharisee, or by a deputation from the Sanhedrim, that the seductive propositions were made to Jesus. But, to say nothing of the lack of all evidence for such a supposition, it is precluded by the words of the text. Occurring without the article, the word διάβολος might mean a tempter generally, human or other; but with the article it can only be understood of the chief of evil spirits; and the same is true of πειράζων with the article. Besides, in the mouth of a *man* these temptations would be curious, strange, inadmissible, especially the demand to be worshiped, and the promise of dominion conjoined therewith.

Accordingly, nothing remains to us but to understand the tempter to be Satan, as the Evangelists represent. Yet, even with this conclusion, we have an alternative presented to us. The one is to assume an outward, embodied appearance of Satan standing before Christ. This is defended by Ebrard, who says: "It pertains to the dignity of Jesus that the prince of this world should appear to him without a mask, neither as a deceptive juggler, nor as a specter, nor as an angel of light, but in the shape of the fallen angel-prince. How this shape was constituted I know not, and it were foolish to desire to know. Only this much is certain: 1. That it was no goat-footed caricature of a beast, derived

from Germanic heathenism, but a shape analogous to the body of man, since all angels have appeared to men in a shape analogous to the human; and, 2. That all the seductiveness of Belial, as well as all the terribleness of the malignity of Satan — the former enticing, the latter threatening in case of the failure of the enticement — was manifested in his appearance before Christ. The idea of Jesus being bodily in the power of Satan has been considered inadmissible; but it is no more so than that, at a later period, he should be, by voluntary submission, in the power of the children of Belial. The Spirit of his Father drove him into the wilderness, in order to endure the temptation. In being tempted he was entirely passive, but so much the more active in refusing to be led astray."

The other alternative is to recognize Satan in the tempting personality, without admitting his outward visible appearance. Since the prince of darkness is a spirit, the opinion that his assault upon Jesus was of a purely-spiritual nature is not contradictory to the text, and is, on the whole, the most probable. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are. But to us Satan does not appear in bodily form, but tempts us through the suggestion of evil thoughts. The objection that if the temptation had taken place only in the mind of Jesus, it would be difficult to distinguish it from one arising out of his own heart and mind, has no weight at all; for if we consider the words of the temptation as thoughts thrust in by Satan, the temptation comes upon Jesus from without as really, and leaves Jesus as much unstained, as if Satan in corporeal presence had spoken the words. The only weighty objection to this interpretation appears to lie in the words, "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the Temple," (v. 5,) and "The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain," (v. 8.) But Dr. Stearns, in an article in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, has very ingeniously removed this difficulty without putting a forced construction upon these words. His argument is as follows. With reference to the first suggestion of Satan to change the stones to bread, the Redeemer, in a moment, recognized it as a temptation, and repulsed it instantaneously, because such an act would have manifested distrust in God, who had supported him during the forty days' fast, as well as impatience under afflictions which he should endure till his Father should be pleased to release him. In the second temptation we have to distinguish between the going to Jerusalem and the ascending of the pinnacle of the Temple, on the one hand, and the challenge to throw himself down, on the other hand. The former, as well as the latter, appears to have been a suggestion of Satan; for it is said:

"The devil taketh him." But the first part of the suggestion had nothing wrong in itself, and the Redeemer might not have recognized it as coming from the tempter. Many good reasons might have inclined Jesus to go to Jerusalem, and to ascend the pinnacle of the Temple. These reasons, though suggested to him from without, he might, as man, not have recognized as the suggestions of the invisible tempter, but followed them innocently. So soon, however, as the thought to throw himself down, in order to astonish the multitude by a miracle, and to rely, in doing it, on the promise of the Scriptures — so soon as this thought presented itself, the Redeemer discerned instantly that this proposal, involving the greatest presumption, came from the devil, and it was at once rejected. So, in the third temptation, it could not be sinful to ascend a mountain in order to view the surrounding countries. It is evident that what Luke says of the devil "showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time," *can not* be taken *literally*. It must, then, have been through a working of Satan upon the imagination of Jesus. That Satan was permitted to hold before the soul of Jesus a picture of fancy, those also must admit who maintain a visible appearance of Satan; for there is no mountain from which all the kingdoms of the world can be seen. To suppose that Satan held up a picture to the imagination of Jesus, is totally different from the attempt to resolve the whole narrative into a vision. By beholding this picture the soul of Jesus was not defiled, nor does the temptation thereby lose any of its force. So soon, however, as the proposal came to receive all the kingdoms as a gift at the hands of Satan, the Savior hesitated not a moment to repel the ignominious and blasphemous proffer with the words: "Get thee hence, Satan."

If none of all the explanations given is entirely satisfactory, we must not forget that we have here to do with a subject which must remain shrouded in mystery. This much, however, is plain, that whoever admits what the Scriptures teach us of the existence of the devil and of his influence over men, will find no difficulty to believe that he actually tempted our Lord. *How* Satan approached the Savior, *what* was the *status* of the *tempter*, is not revealed to us.

There are, however, other questions of too much importance to be passed unanswered. The temptation of our Lord forms an important part in the plan of our redemption, but belongs, at the same time, to the most difficult problems of theology. We are first met by the question, *whether we must not ascribe to Christ an impossibility of yielding to temptation, and, if so, whether the temptation could have had any reality for the Son of God.* The answer

generally given to this question is, that it was the human soul of Christ, in itself and apart from its union with the Divine Logos, that was tempted, and might have sinned; but that through this union sin became impossible. But such a separation of humanity from Divinity, in the person of Christ, is inadmissible. The fact stated in the Gospel records is, that the Word made flesh — that is, the Son of God as man — not *a mere man* — was tempted; and the full, practical import of this temptation lies in this very point, that the eternal Son of God entered into our *very* condition, and was tempted in all points like as we are, not only to succor us out of his own experience, but to show us that sin is no part of human nature in its original state; that God required of the first Adam no more than he — the second Adam — was willing to do and encounter himself. It is only from this point of view that we can draw proper encouragement in the imitation of the example which our Savior set before us in his temptation. Because he manifested Divine virtue under truly-human conditions, our human virtue may become divine. While the humanity of Jesus differs from common humanity in this, that he presents, in his person, the true and ideal man which is sinless and perfect, we, the fallen progeny of the first Adam, are to be conformed to the image of the second Adam, by being born again of the Spirit of God. Regarding, then, as we do, the union of Godhead with manhood in the one personality of Christ to be such, that in him the Divine nature never excludes the human, nor the human the Divine — in other words, that what is Divine in Christ is, at the same time, human, and what is human in him is Divine — the question how the temptation could have had any reality for the Son of God, presents to us a difficult problem. Let us see how the German Christologists solve it. Ebrard expresses himself as follows: "Since the Godhead assumed in Jesus the mode of human existence, it follows that his holy will assumed the form of choice between possibilities presented to his understanding; in other words, the holiness of the God-man must manifest itself, as a constant choice of what is good. The possibility, therefore, nay, the constant actuality of temptation, was the necessary result of the incarnation of the Son of God. His human holiness consisted not in an absolute inability to sin — *non posse peccare* — but in a continual, genuinely-human, free decision for good; and therein lay the possibility of his being tempted." Ullmann says: "The plan of redemption ordained of God, aforetime prepared for execution through thousands of years, and through thousands more designed to work out its results, could not fail of its end. Yet this must have happened, if we suppose that he who was appointed Redeemer might himself fall away from God

through sin. In this view it becomes a wholly-inadmissible, yea, monstrous thought, that Jesus could have actually sinned. Thereby the plan of God would have been frustrated, and the pure center of light for the world's history would have been extinguished. It appears, indeed, to be a necessity, intrinsic and wrought into the moral order of the world, that Jesus should not sin. In him, however, necessity and freedom coincide. He *could* not be otherwise, but, at the same time, he *would* not be otherwise than sinless. With perfect freedom, in submission and self-renunciation, he conformed to that higher necessity which was fulfilling itself in his manifestation. Both necessity and freedom must be so associated in our conception that neither shall invalidate the other. The necessity of a goodness thus perfect is, at the same time, free and voluntary; it is not doubtfully choosing and vacillating, but firmly and victoriously directed to what is good. But this freedom does not exclude the possibility of evil in the abstract. Being human freedom, it does not lose itself in the Divine necessity; there is a possibility of evil, but it is only external, abstract, simply cogitable — eine bloße Denk=barkeit. The possibility of evil exists, but is never realized. Like a mathematical quantity evolved in calculation, which is not actually used, it is every moment eliminated by that which is higher, the consciousness and pure love of the Divine." More concisely and clearly does the pious Steudel express himself: "Although the idea of Christ as Redeemer implies that in him the possibility of sinning was never realized, yet is he the sinless one only in so far as it was possible for him to sin. He could not have been the Redeemer if he had sinned, and, as Redeemer, it is inconceivable that he should have sinned; but the idea of a Redeemer can only be realized by one who, though he might have sinned, did not sin. In a word, he is the Redeemer of men, not as one who had not the ability to sin, but as one who, though he had the ability to sin, did not sin." Gess, upholding the side of human freedom more strongly than that of Divine necessity, says: "How could Jesus be an example to us who, in the course of this earthly life, must decide for God's will amid the pressure of the world's temptation, if his will had been decided *a priori*, through an antemundane determination of the Logos, if, therefore, his self-determinations within his earthly life were but the natural and necessary working of the antemundane determination? The free disobedience of Adam has brought us into the state of sin; and only the free obedience of the second Adam can place us in the state of righteousness. (Rom. v, 19.) The first Adam was not willing to learn obedience, *though he was only a man*; the second, *though very God*, as well as very man, was ready to learn obedience even unto death."

Another theological or philosophical difficulty is urged by the question, *whether Jesus could be really tempted, and yet remain absolutely sinless.* This question is based upon the presumption that an incitement to sin — which temptation necessarily implies — presupposes, on the part of the tempted, some affinity to sin. This confounding of temptability with a *penchant* toward sin is thoroughly refuted by Ullmann. He says: "In order to answer this question, we must investigate the idea and nature of temptation. By temptation we mean all that which acts on a free personality in such a way as possibly to give its life a direction away from the good and toward the evil. That which tempts may lie either in the man himself, as the lust of which James speaks — this kind of temptation presupposes already a germ of evil within the man himself, and is, of course, not predictable of Jesus — or the temptation may be presented from without, in the shape of a motive to sinful action. Still, a temptation coming from without must enter the mind through the medium of thought, or imagination, or sensual impression. To be tempted, then, means to receive an impression which may move to evil. Every being is liable to temptation whose nature is, on the one hand, susceptible of good, and, on the other, does not necessarily shut out the possibility of evil. God can not be tempted, because the possibility of sinning is forbidden by the absolute necessity of his nature. The idea of a God who could sin, or who could even be tempted to sin, were an absurdity. God and sin are two conceptions which absolutely exclude each other. Irrational creatures can not be tempted, because, being incapable of moral good, they are also below temptation. Man alone, free to choose, can be tempted; for he may be bent in both directions. Temptation begins for him when evil is presented, at some point of his inner or outer life, in such a way that he can directly take it up into his own being. But man is exposed in two ways to the seductive power of evil. On the one hand, he may be drawn to actual sin by enticements, and, on the other hand, he may be turned aside from what is good by threatened, as well as by inflicted, suffering. Moreover, temptation assails us at different points, in order to gain possession of our will. Hence, we may be tempted as truly through thoughts presented to our minds as through outward objects presented to our senses, and in each case the temptation may be either a seduction to evil or a preventive from good."

"Where, then, is the point in temptation at which sin begins, or at which temptation becomes itself sin? It is there where the evil which is presented to us begins to exert a determining influence on the heart — an influence which,

extending onward to the will, leads it to act in a manner opposed to the Divine order. Then we find that a conflict is awakened in man which is inconceivable without the presence of sin, be it only in the least degree. Disorderly desire and inward bias toward evil are themselves the beginning of sin; and if such desire had its root and source in our own inner being, it presupposes the ground of our life to be already corrupt. At this stage it is sin itself that entices to sin: sin as a condition leads to sin in act. But temptation does not imply sin when the evil, as a thing coming from the world without, merely offers its allurements, and is kept at a distance by the indwelling energy of the spirit, or when we are shaken by sufferings, whether of the body or soul, and, instead of giving way to ungodly states of feeling and tendencies of the will, endure patiently, and are sustained by our inner moral power."

"It is thus plain how the Redeemer might be tempted, and yet remain free from the least stain of sin. He was tempted in all points; that is, he was tempted in the only two possible ways specified above. On the one hand, allurements were presented which might have moved him to actual sin, and, on the other hand, he was beset by sufferings which might have turned him aside from the Divine path of duty. But in the face of both kinds of temptation, his perfect agreement with the will of God remained pure and unimpaired. Temptations of the first order were concentrated in the attack made on Jesus by Satan. Temptations of the second order assailed him most severely during the struggles of Gethsemane, and when he felt himself forsaken by God on the cross."

Ullmann proceeds, further, to show the *twofold* significance of the several temptations of our Lord. While he was tried prominently in his character of *Messiah*, he was also assailed as a *man*. His temptation had, therefore, a general human, as well as a special Messianic character. The thorough analysis of these points by the distinguished theologian to whom we are indebted for the greater part of these introductory remarks, we shall give in the exegetical notes on verses 3-10. The prominently-Christological significance of the temptation is elegantly set forth by Dr. Krummacher in a sermon, of which we will quote the main points, though we have to dissent from some of them, as the reader will see in the notes:

"Compare the situation of our Lord with that of our first parents before the fall. There is the garden of Eden, here the gloomy desert; there are the trees lovely to behold, with fruit inviting to the taste; here are thousands of thistles,

the harvest from the sowing of sin; there is the eternal Father walking in the garden; here Satan is unfettered. Though in both cases the tempter is heard to say, 'Has God said?' yet in the one case the tempter is victorious, and in the other he is vanquished; there a curse is visited on the earth, here the curse is banished and the blessing restored. Forty days and forty nights did the Savior spend, as did Moses on Mount Sinai, without food and drink, in unbroken meditation and prayer. Then, at last, and doubtless with excruciating hunger, that weakness of his human nature, which of itself is sinless, asserted itself. This condition served Satan as a medium for his first temptation. In the full consciousness of his power, the prince of darkness advances, and repeats, in substance, the same temptation that had proved so successful in paradise. His 'If thou be the Son of God' is nothing else than a disguised 'Has God said?' alluding to the voice from heaven at the baptism. It involves the demand that he should prove himself to be the Son of God. 'Show it that thou art the Son of God. It is unbecoming for a being of thy dignity to be in want and to suffer hunger. Make use of thy power, and help thyself. Why wilt thou perish? Spare thyself for thy great work. For thy own good and that of the suffering nation, employ thy miraculous powers, and begin thy work of the world's transformation. Every thing waits for it. Show thyself greater than Moses. Change the stones into bread, the thorns into vines, the thistles into fig-trees. Expel want, and sighing, and tears from the earth; and, in order that the world may know who has appeared in thee, give order to the blasted paradise that it bloom again.' The Lord, without condescending to answer directly the question whether he was the Son of God, referred the devil to the manna given the people of Israel in the wilderness, and gives him to understand that he had not come into the world for personal enjoyment, but to suffer want as long as it was the will of God, who could sustain him without natural means. But, at the same time, this answer implies the truth: I have come to furnish the perishing people with another and more substantial bread than that which thou invitest me to produce from the stones of the wilderness; and thou canst not turn me out of the way of my mission, though it be a painful one. Yet Satan repeats the attempt in the second and third temptation. The leap from the Temple's summit, perhaps at the time of a feast, when the Holy City was thronged with priests, and scribes, and pious pilgrims — what mighty effects would it produce! A visible descent from the abrupt hight of the pinnacle, a safe arrival amid the wavering people, according to the Divine promises, would instantaneously scatter all doubt as to the Messiahship, and extort from every one the

confession: 'This man must have come from heaven. The angels of God bear him on their hands. He must be the Messiah, and it behooves us to do homage to him, and acknowledge him as our king.' But Jesus knew that an entirely-different course was divinely ordained for him, in order to find faith on the earth. As Moses had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so should he be lifted up, and thus draw all men unto him. To appropriate the promises of the Father to himself in any other way, would be tempting God. The Messiah must not expose himself to peril, presumptuously trusting in the miraculous help of God. So the devil was again confounded. Yet he makes another desperate assault. Mindful that, according to the Messianic programme, the Messiah should have not only Israel, but also the heathens for an inheritance, Satan, as the ruler of heathendom, ventured to offer to the Lord his co-operation in the conquest of the immense territory. The thought of Satan, expanded to its full dimensions, was this: 'Grant me the honor to receive at my hands the programme of the world's conquest. Confiding in me you will be able, without painful effort, to ground the new order of things upon the old, and to graft Christianity upon the stock of heathenism. The nations will then throng to you, and, with their noble and wise men, bow themselves with awe before thy scepter.' In this last temptation Satan displays himself as 'the ruler of the whole world,' attempting to make Jesus his organ, to transform Christ into antichrist, by endeavoring to dazzle him through the promise of dominion over the world, and the manifestation of its splendor. He makes, with his offer, the covert insinuation that, by virtue of his dominion in heathendom, he has the power to turn the whole world against Jesus, if he rejects the proposal. In this temptation Satan appeared undisguised, and Christ addresses him as such."

Verses 1-11.

(1) THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.^[1] (2) And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward a hungered. (3) And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. (4) But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (5) Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the Temple,^[2] (6) and saith unto him, If thou be the

Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: ^[3] and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (7) Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt ^[4] the Lord thy God. (8) Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; (9) and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (10) Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, ^[5] Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (11) Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

[1 *Διάβολος* — devil. The Greek name of the prince of the fallen angels. It means an accuser, slanderer. His Hebrew name is Satan. Both terms are used only in the singular in the Scriptures. (See 1 Thess. iii, 5; 1 Cor. vii, 5.)]

[2 A pinnacle; Greek, *τὸ πτερύγιον*. Probably Herod's royal portico, which is described by Josephus as a dizzy height. (Antiq., XV, 11, 5.) The New Testament distinguishes strictly between the Temple proper — *ναός* — and the buildings surrounding it, which, with the Temple, constitute a whole, and are called *ἱερόν*.]

[3 Psa. xci, 11, 12. The words "To keep thee in all thy ways" are left out by the tempter. This omission, however, does not seem to have the design, generally ascribed to it, since, as Alexander remarks, "Our Lord makes no charge on account of it; and *ways*, in the original, does not mean ways of duty, but of Providence. Neither the tempter's argument nor Christ's reply to it would be at all affected by the introduction of the words suppressed."]

[4 The Greek verb used here for *tempt* is "an emphatic compound, meaning to *draw* out by trial, to try thoroughly. As applied to God, it means to put him to the proof, to demand further evidence of what is clear already, as in this case by requiring him to show his watchful care by an extraordinary intervention in a case of danger, willfully and needlessly incurred." (Alexander.)]

[5 Deut. vi, 13; Ex. xx, 3-5; Ps. lxxxii, 10.]

VERSE 1. The Evangelists state expressly that the temptation of Christ took place immediately after his baptism, by which he was solemnly introduced into his Messianic office. Mark says: "The Spirit driveth him into the

wilderness," while Matthew and Luke say: "He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness." By this "Spirit" the Holy Ghost alone can be meant. — INTO THE WILDERNESS. This word is here used not in its wider sense, as in iii, 1, but means a dreary desert, on which account Mark adds: "He was with the wild beasts." According to tradition, it was a place only a few miles from Jerusalem, between Jericho and Bethany, called the wilderness of Jericho, in Josh. xvi, 1. — TO BE TEMPTED. The express purpose of "he was led up." The Greek word for *tempting* — πειράζειν — means to try, to put to the test. In a material sense, the term is applied to metals; in a moral sense, to human character, either with a good purpose, as in John vi, 6; Gen. xxii, 1; or with a bad purpose; namely, to incite to sin, to seduce. (1 Cor. vii, 5.) In the latter sense it is said of God, that he tempts no one; that is, he incites no one to sin. When it is said that he tempts men, the meaning is that he puts them to the test by giving them an opportunity to overcome evil and to show their faithfulness and love to God. Christ was led into the wilderness as our prototype and Redeemer, that he might endure and overcome the most violent assaults of Satan. — OF THE DEVIL. The first Adam fell through the temptation of the serpent, which is called in other places the old dragon, the devil, and the first promise with regard to the Messiah was, that he was to bruise the serpent's head. This is not the place to discuss the existence of fallen spirits. No believer in the Bible can deny that God created besides man other intelligences, that some of these intelligences apostatized from God, and that a purely-spiritual being can exert an influence upon the human spirit. The Bible teaches plainly the existence of good and bad angels, and the discourses and explicit declarations of Christ (Matt. xiii, 39; John viii, 44; xiv, 30) confirm the doctrine that the kingdom of God is opposed by a kingdom of Satan or kingdom of darkness. Christ calls its head and leader "devil," "prince of this world," and "prince of darkness," and his accomplices "servants" or "angels of Satan." This head of the fallen spirits, himself a fallen, powerful spirit, but possessed of no Divine attributes, neither omniscience nor omnipotence, is the tempter of Christ. The rationalists understand by the devil nothing else than the principle of evil. They might as well deny the personality of Christ in this whole transaction.

VERSE 2. The term "FASTING" here means not a partial, but a total abstinence from food, as is indicated by the "FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS," since the Jews used to eat by night during their usual fasts. This appears also from the words of Luke iv, 2: "And in those days he did eat

nothing; and when they were ended, he afterward hungered." This fasting, which reminds us of the fasting of Moses, (Deut. ix, 9-18,) and of Elias, (1 Kings xix, 8,) was not undergone by our Savior for the purpose of bodily mortification; but he was so overwhelmed by the magnitude of his mediatorial office, into which he had just been introduced by John, that, for forty days and forty nights, he felt neither hunger nor thirst. In proof that a total abstinence from food for such a length of time is not *physically* impossible, learned physicians have adduced some well-attested cases. The proof, however, is unnecessary, as the fasting of the God-man is altogether unique in its nature.

VERSE 3. AND WHEN THE TEMPTER CAME TO HIM. Literally, The tempter, coming to him. The question arises here, what sense the devil attached to the term "Son of God," or what knowledge he had of the real divinity of Christ. Inasmuch as it is highly improbable that he would have dared or thought it possible to tempt a Divine person, we have to assume that he used the word "Son of God" in that lower sense in which it was sometimes applied to angels and to extraordinary men. He recognized in him the Messiah, but had, we may presume, very indistinct conceptions concerning the mystery of the incarnation. — The first temptation implies that the person to whom it was addressed was, on the one hand, so constituted that he could feel a want of food, which, in that moment, could not be gratified in any ordinary way, and that he was, on the other hand, one who was supposed to possess the power of satisfying that want in an extraordinary and miraculous manner. The temptation consisted, therefore, in this, that a person endowed with a power to work miracles was called upon to exercise that power to satisfy his human wants, at a time when he was hard pressed by physical need.

VERSE 4. Jesus replies to the tempter in words taken from Deuteronomy viii, 3. The majority of commentators understand the meaning of these words to be this: The preservation of the life of man is not necessarily connected with the ordinary means of subsistence; but it can be sustained without bread by the Word — that is, commandment that proceeds from the mouth of God — in an extraordinary way, as the Israelites were sustained by manna in the wilderness. This explanation does certainly correspond with the meaning of the words, as they occur in Deuteronomy, taken along with their context. Yet we have good ground for asking whether this sense must necessarily attach to the words as quoted by Jesus. There can be no doubt that Jesus and his apostles often gave to passages of the Old Testament a more general application, and raised them

into a higher sphere. And there is reason to suppose that this is the case in this passage. The antithesis is not, as is generally supposed, between bread and any other means of life, but between it and the Word of God — in other words, between bodily nourishment and spiritual nourishment. Thus, when Jesus is asked by the tempter to make his power to do miracles available for supplying his physical wants — to use the higher, God-given faculty in the service of mere human self-gratification — he replies: No; for there is a higher life, which is not upheld by any outward nourishment, but which lives by all that comes from the mouth of God. In these words he says essentially the same thing which he afterward expressed thus: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

VERSES 5-7. The summons addressed to Christ to cast himself from the pinnacle of the Temple, goes, like the first temptation, upon the assumption of a peculiar personality in Jesus; namely, that the tempted was, as "the Son of God," under the special care and protection of Jehovah. The tempter appeals not so much to the wonder-working power of Jesus himself, as to the miraculous help of God. Jesus is not called to perform some unheard-of miracle, but to do something apparently dangerous. This view is confirmed by the Scripture passages quoted both by the tempter and by our Lord in his answer. The passage quoted by the tempter (Psa. xci, 11, 12) refers solely to the Divine protection, under which the Beloved of Jehovah stood. The reply of our Lord, taken from Deuteronomy vi, 16, is also without any reference to a miracle, and only points out how impious and vain it would be to tempt Providence by throwing one's self needlessly in the way of danger. The enticing element in this temptation was the idea of calling forth the Divine protection, of proving whether God would preserve his anointed Son in circumstances of most imminent danger, and a danger which did not come in the simple, God-appointed path of duty, but was arbitrarily and vaingloriously incurred. There can be no doubt that a temptation like this has a certain charm for men who feel penetrated with a consciousness that they have a special mission to perform; and many a one whom an idea like this has blinded, has precipitated himself from the pinnacle of the Temple into the abyss of perdition. Thus the attempt might well be made with Jesus, who, though the Son of God, was yet truly *man*, to test whether the thought of putting the Divine protection to the utmost proof had no attractions for him; and this constitutes the second temptation. In it we have vividly brought before us what a contrast there is

between a true and sound confidence in God, by the strength of which one who is conscious of a high mission is enabled to walk in the God-appointed way of his calling, and that false assurance by which a man may be led, in the vain idea of a higher protection, arbitrarily to select for himself paths of danger.

VERSES 8-10. The temptation which is mentioned by Luke as the second, is rightly put last by Matthew; for it is the most trying and the most alluring of the three, and in it the tempter appears in a form undisguised. The devil calls upon the Savior to worship him, and promises that, if he does so, he will give him all the kingdoms of the world. This temptation has been generally held to consist in the invitation to found an *earthly* kingdom. But another view has also been maintained. It has been said that what the temptation really consisted in was the thought of employing a bad means in order to gain an end which might in itself be good. This exposition is correct, if we are to confine our view to the words spoken by Satan. But this we can not do. We must contemplate these words in the connection in which they stand. Immediately before, we read that Satan had shown our Lord the kingdoms of the world and their glory. To go no further than this expression, the "glory" of the kingdoms of the world points to a kingdom, not of self-denying love, but of splendid dominion, and thus to a mere outward kingdom. Besides, Satan appears here as the prince of the world, (compare John viii, 44; xii, 31; Eph. ii, 2; vi, 12,) and offers to transfer to Christ his sovereignty over it. Now, such a kingdom as *he* could possess and offer, must, from its very nature, have been a mere earthly, *ungodly* kingdom. We see, then, that in this temptation a kingdom of outward glory is offered to Jesus, as one who was fully conscious that he was destined to be a king. And the great point here brought out is the antagonism between these two kingdoms — a kingdom of the world, which could be set up only by the use of worldly means, and a kingdom of God which is not to be established in any carnal way, but must have its foundation in the pure worship of God alone. — We must regard it as highly significant that the power which tempts is brought before us in the unity of a person in the form of Satan; (that is, of him to whom are given over the kingdoms of this world.) We are thereby taught that not merely this or that form of sin, not only some individual evil, but the very principle of evil itself assailed Jesus, and was overcome by him. From this point of view both the temptation and victory of Jesus acquire a universal character and application. In the person of Jesus *he* was tempted whose destiny it was to be the founder of the kingdom of God. In the decisive

rejection of the false and the adoption of the true idea of the Messiah, in the refusal of a worldly kingdom and the choice of the kingdom of God, a triumph was gained over the power of evil generally, and this achievement not only evinced the capability of Jesus to found a Divine kingdom, but constituted him, for all times, the prototype of victory over every species of temptation. — We have contemplated the three temptations in their Christological significance. But we must not overlook that, while Jesus was tried in his character of *Messiah*, he was also assailed as *a man*. It could not be said of him that he was tempted in all points like as we are, if his temptations had only a special Messianic, not a general human character. They exhibit the spiritual Head of our race as tried like our natural, physical head, but with contrary results. The temptation, in the individual suggestions, seems to have consisted partly in that which would prove seductive to human nature in its usual forms, and partly in that which is peculiarly alluring to men of a higher order, who are called to a higher vocation. The first temptation may be regarded as a common, a universal human temptation, if for the power to do miracles we substitute God-given faculties which every man possesses, and which every man may either turn to purposes of selfishness and self-love or use in the service of a higher life. The second temptation can apply more particularly only to that smaller circle to whom, by reason of great mental endowments or a high position in life, a peculiar mission has been assigned. And yet it may be viewed as in a sense applicable to all; for all, even the humblest, have a work to do and a God-appointed way to follow. The third temptation also has a special application only to the very small number of those who are called to a position of sovereignty; and yet the general principle of the superior glory of inward and spiritual dominion to mere outward dignity and power may have some import for all. All the temptations have thus a more general application; for in one form or another there is in all men some point assailable to their attack, and it is equally evident that the principles put forth by Jesus in opposition to the tempter are of universal application.

VERSE 11. The devil having left him, angels came and ministered unto him. After the powers of darkness had retired, the angels of light surrounded him and celebrated with him his victory. The tempter demanded of Jesus to serve him. Instead of this the angels served and paid their homage to Jesus, declaring thereby that he is the King of the kingdom of light. Some understand by the ministering of the angels that they brought refreshments unto him, such

as his suffering nature stood then so much in need of, similarly as Elijah had been fed by angels. (1 Kings xix, 5.)

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

The temptation of our Savior inculcates admonitions that ought to be pondered well by every Christian. Let us learn from it:

1. What a powerful enemy it is with whom we have to deal. He hesitated not to assail even the Lord Jesus Christ, and not satisfied with being repulsed once, he repeated his assaults. It was Satan, that introduced sin into the world, who assailed Job and caused Peter and David to fall; it is Satan, who never sleeps nor slumbers, but is constantly at work to drag men into ruin. There is no more dangerous enemy than he, whom we can not see, and who can approach us every-where and at all times. Let us constantly be on our guard against him by watchfulness and prayer.

2. As Satan dealt with the Lord in the wilderness, so he deals with his followers, and, alas! but too often success crowns his efforts. He approaches the afflicted child of God in disguise, and whispers: "Art thou a child of God, and art in more destitute circumstances than the children of the world? thou hast not the necessaries of life, and art exposed to the storms of the elements and of man; help thyself and God will help thee." And but too many take his advice and go to work to convert stones into bread; that is, in order to help themselves they have recourse to unauthorized expedients, and thus fall a prey to Satan, whose yoke they had thrown off. Others, instead of waiting patiently for the help of the Lord, suffer shipwreck of their faith, saying: "There is no reality about Christ and his religion." Let such backsliders be a warning to you, and bear in mind that while you are to be purified in the crucible of affliction, the Lord knows how to preserve his people; for he has said to them: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (Isa. xl ix, 15.) God is never at a loss how and whence to supply all our wants. — If the devil can not approach thee from the one side, he tries it from another. If he does not succeed to fill you with mistrust and discouragement, he tries to entice you to presumption. To expose ourselves to danger when neither the honor of God nor duty to our fellow-men calls upon us to do so, is presumption.

3. The devil and wicked men promise much to those who will serve them, but their wages is ruin. Whoever sets before others the things of this world, riches, honor, etc., as the objects of life, acts toward them the part of the devil. How often is this the position of parents toward their children! — All compromises with the world must be unconditionally rejected, and this can be done only by a firm resolution to serve God alone. The greater and harder the struggle, the more glorious and blessed the victory. At no other time is a man more contented and happy than when he has come victorious out of a great struggle. When the temptation is over, God's holy messengers visit us, tranquillity and peace fill the heart.

4. Every Christian must expect temptations. In themselves they are not sinful; but to yield to them, to give them room in the heart, is sinful. No one, not even the most advanced Christian, is exempted from temptations. The disciple is not greater than his Master, nor the servant greater than his Lord. Human nature, in the present stage of probation, has inclinations, wishes, desires, and passions, which are liable to abuse.

5. The main weapon to vanquish Satan with, is the Word of God. By what means did Jesus repel the assaults of Satan? Not by a superhuman, miraculous, but by a moral power — by faith in God, by whom alone we can live — by faith in man's solemn obligation to serve God alone, and especially by faith in God's Word. How important is it, therefore, that we should daily search the Scriptures! The Word of God enables us to repel every attack of Satan, no matter in what form it is made. It is the sword of the Spirit, and those that understand to wield it best are most successful in their struggles with Satan. It is the lamp for our feet. How necessary is it, therefore, that we should be thoroughly familiar with the Scriptures, that we should read and meditate upon them daily!

6. In all our temptations we can with certainty calculate upon the sympathy of our great High-Priest, "for in that he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." He is a powerful friend, who sympathizes with his people in all their trials. Are they tempted by Satan to doubt God's love and tender care for his people? So was Jesus. Are they tempted to expose themselves unnecessarily to danger in presumptuously trusting in supernatural help? So was Jesus. Are they tempted to give heed to a false interpretation of a Scripture passage as an excuse of a forbidden act?

So was Jesus. He is the very Deliverer of those who are tempted. To him they must take refuge; before him they must pour out their hearts; his ear is always open to hear; his heart is always ready to sympathize with them, and his power is able to succor them.

7. Preachers of the Gospel especially may learn important lessons from the temptations of Christ. Their entry upon their office is often a time of trial in every respect, and Satan is not disposed, during their whole career, to let any opportunity pass unimproved, either to tempt them to presumption or despair, or to try to insnare them by the charms of this world. They can not reach the goal without being exposed to the fiery darts of the adversary. But let them, like their Lord and Master, commence their work with fasting and unceasing prayer, and spend much of their time in secret.

8. In the temptation of Christ the Church has the dangers clearly marked out, to which she is exposed in the service of the Lord. She apostatizes when she strives to attain to influence and power by compromising with the spirit of the world, when she attempts to change the world into the kingdom of God by placing her spiritual power at the disposal of Satan.

§ 8. OUR LORD'S FORMAL OPENING OF HIS MINISTRY IN GALILEE, AND THE CALL OF SIMON, ANDREW, JAMES, AND JOHN INTO HIS PERMANENT SERVICE.

INASMUCH as it is not Matthew's design to follow a chronological order in his Gospel, he evidently does not intend to represent what he now relates of our Lord's ministry in Galilee, as being immediately preceded by the temptation in the wilderness. The fact that he explicitly confines his narrative to what happened after the Baptist's imprisonment, of which event he gives us the particulars in chap. xiv, 3-5, refutes, for itself, the frivolous charge of Strauss that "Matthew is here in contradiction with John's Gospel." His statement that "*Jesus departed into Galilee when he heard that John was cast into prison,*" forces the reader to the conclusion that the Evangelist had wittingly omitted all those events that had preceded John's imprisonment. Luke also speaks of Jesus as *returning* to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, (iv, 14;) that is, in the power of the same Spirit which he had manifested elsewhere. The many important events that took place between the temptation of our Lord, and his (second)

return to Galilee, the reader will find in the synoptical table of the Gospel History, (Nos. 23-45.)

Robinson and all other harmonists, so far as we know, except Andrews, put our Lord's leaving Judea for Galilee, spoken of Matt. iv, 12, Mark i, 14, and Luke iv, 14, soon *after the first Passover*, and assume it to have been occasioned by our Lord's hearing of the Baptist's imprisonment. Under this supposition the call of Simon, Andrew, James, and John to become his constant attendants, (Matt. iv, 18-22; Mark i, 16-20; Luke v, 6-11,) would fall into the *first* year of our Lord's ministry. This view Mr. Andrews refutes, and contends that, when our Lord left Judea for Galilee, after his first Passover, it was not in consequence of the Baptist's imprisonment, but in consequence of the Pharisees sowing dissensions between the disciples of the Baptist and his own, according to John iv, 1-3. According to this view, the departure for Galilee, spoken of by John, is not mentioned at all by the Synoptists, while, on the other hand, John makes no mention of our Lord's leaving Judea for Galilee after the second Passover, in consequence of the Baptist's imprisonment, to which the Synoptists refer. That this is the correct view Mr. Andrews makes very clear by the following irrefutable arguments: 1. From John iv, 1, (compare iii, 23, 24,) we learn that, when Jesus retired into Galilee, the Baptist's work was still in progress. He could, therefore, not yet have been cast into prison. 2. If we compare the account of what followed the return of Jesus to Galilee, as given by the Synoptists, with that given by John, (iv, 43-54,) it is evident that there is a reference to two different periods. According to the Synoptists, (Matt. iv, 12-25; Mark i, 14-21; Luke iv, 14, 15,) so soon as Jesus heard of John's imprisonment, he began his labors in Galilee, gathering a body of disciples, working miracles, and teaching in all the synagogues. His fame spread immediately through the whole region, and wherever he went crowds followed him. According to John, Jesus went to Galilee, not to begin his public ministry there, but to find retirement. It is true he did not find the privacy which he sought, because the Galileans had seen all the things that he had done at Jerusalem at the feast, and held him, therefore, in honor. Very soon after his arrival in Galilee the nobleman from Capernaum sought his aid; but, aside from this, there is no indication that he performed any miracles, or engaged in any public teaching. No disciples are spoken of as with him, nor any crowds of people. And when he goes up to the feast, spoken of by John, (v, 1,) the second Passover, he does not appear to have been attended by any disciples.

3. When Jesus heard of John's imprisonment he was in Judea, and there is no reason to suppose that, after he gave up baptizing and retired into Galilee, he came again into Judea till the feast. (John v, 1.) It was at this time — April, 781 — that he heard at Jerusalem of John's imprisonment, to which he alludes in his address to the Jews. (John v, 35.) We may, therefore, place the imprisonment of John a little before this feast — about March, 781.

To put the return to Galilee, of which the Synoptists speak, after the second Passover, as Mr. Andrews does, is not only of great chronological importance, but it also sets the relation of the Judean to the Galilean ministry in the right light, and gives us the best reason that may be assigned for the silence of the Synoptists concerning our Lord's ministry in Judea. This deeply-interesting subject is thoroughly discussed by Mr. Andrews, (*Life of our Lord*, pp. 120, 121; 124-130; 186-192,) who makes the essential distinction between our Lord's work in Judea, and that in Galilee, to consist in this, that the former, having reference to the Jewish people in their corporate capacity, as a nation in covenant with God, aimed to produce a national repentance, while the Galilean ministry was based upon the fact that the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews would not receive him, and had sought to kill him, and that, therefore, our Lord went to Galilee, the place designated centuries before, as the prominent scene of the Messianic ministry, in order to organize there a body of disciples, by whom the foundations of the New Testament Church were to be laid, into which the Gentiles were to be invited and ingrafted, and which was to take the place of the Jewish Church, if she persevered in her rejection of the Messiah. If we look in this light upon the first year of our Lord's ministry in Judea — a subject which we will more fully discuss in the Gospel of John — it is not surprising that the Synoptists should pass it over in silence, as being of a merely-preparatory character, and failing of accomplishing its end, the national recognition of the Messiah, and that they should, therefore, date the ministry of our Lord from his departure into Galilee after the imprisonment of the Baptist; for this event was really, as they represent it, the turning-point, the dividing-line between the old and new covenant. So long as the Baptist was yet at work, our Lord takes no step toward the formation of a Church on a new foundation.

For other reasons which may be assigned for the omission of the Judean ministry by the Synoptists, see § 32 in the General Introduction. Entirely untenable and unsatisfactory is the reason given by Alford; namely, "that the Synoptists' sources of information, till the last visit to Jerusalem, seem to have

been exclusively Galilean, and derived from persons who became attached to our Lord at a later period than any of the events recorded in the first portion of John's Gospel."

Verses 12-25.

(12) Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; (13) and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum,^[1] which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: ^[2] (14) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, (15) The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by the way of the sea,*^[3] beyond ^[4] Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;^[5] (16) the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. (17) From that time Jesus began^[6] to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (18) And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee,^[7] saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. (19) And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (20) And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him. (21) And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship^[8] with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. (22) And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. (23) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,^[9] and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. (24) And his fame went throughout all Syria:^[10] and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils,^[11] and those which were lunatic,^[12] and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. (25) And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis,^[13] and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.^[14]

[1] According to the best readings, Καφαρναόνυμ — *Kapharnaum* — that is, the town of Nahum, or, as some of the Fathers translated Nahum, town of

comfort. As the place is not mentioned in the Old Testament or Apocrypha, it probably arose in the century before Christ. Josephus mentions the town once by the name of Cephar nome, and also a fountain Kapharnaum. Its exact site has been much contested. As nothing hangs on the decision, we pass over the discussion on this point, which can be of interest only to those who visit the Holy Land, or can identify the different spots by accurate descriptions. It was in the land of Gennesaret, (Matt. xiv, 34,) that rich, busy plain, which we know, from the descriptions of Josephus and other sources, to have been, at that time, one of the most prosperous and crowded districts in all Palestine. Being on the north-west shore of the lake, Capernaum was lower than Nazareth and Cana of Galilee, from which the road to it was one of descent. (John ii, 12.) It was of sufficient size to be always called "a city" — πόλις — had its own synagogue, in which our Lord frequently taught — a synagogue which was built by the Roman centurion. (Luke vii, 1.) Besides the Roman garrison, it had also a custom-station, where the dues were gathered, both by stationary and itinerant officers. If the "way of the sea" was the great road from Damascus to the south, the duties may have been levied not only on the fish and other commerce of the lake, but on the caravans of merchandise passing to Galilee and Judea. The main interest attaching to Capernaum is that it was the residence of our Lord, (Mark ii, 1,) and of Andrew and Peter, James and John, and probably of Matthew.]

[2 Zebulun and Naphtali were the names of two of Jacob's sons, (Gen. xxx, 8, 20,) and of the tribes descended from them. (Num. i, 8, 9.) The slight difference in orthography between these and some other names in the Old and New Testaments results from their difference of sound in the Hebrew and Greek.]

[3 That is, near, adjacent to the Sea of Galilee.]

[4 "Beyond" is in Hebrew a noun, originally meaning *passage* or *crossing*, then the side or bank of a stream, whether the nearer or the further side. In the Old Testament it usually means the country east of Jordan, but in some cases no less certainly the west side. As here used it is understood by some to mean the country east of Jordan — called, in Greek, *Perea* — and to describe a different tract from those mentioned in the previous clauses. But, more probably, it means here the country lying along Jordan, on the west side, and is in apposition to what goes before; that is, descriptive of the same tract or region; namely, the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, which was partly adjacent to the Sea of Galilee and partly to the River Jordan." (Alexander.)]

[5 Galilee — Hebrew, *Galil* — means circle or circuit. The "circuit of the Gentiles" was called the upper part of the country of Zabulon and Nephthalim, which, by the old division of the tribes, bordered on the Sea of Galilee. (Gen. xl ix, 13.) Even as early as in the days of Isaiah, Galilee's population was a great deal mixed. This mixture had since greatly increased, whence the expression, "Galilee of the Gentiles." All non-Jews were called Gentiles. The population,

especially in the northern part — Upper Galilee — consisted, to a great extent, of Egyptians, Arabs, and Phoenicians.]

[6 Namely, more publicly and regularly. He had preached before, both in Galilee and Judea.]

[7 It was called, in the Old Testament, the "Sea of Chinnereth" or "Cinneroth," (Num. xxxiv, 11,) from a town of that name, which stood on or near its shore. In the later Hebrew its name is "Ginesar." Josephus calls it "Lake of Gennesaris" — *Γεννησαρῖτις λίμνη*. At its north-western angle was a beautiful and fertile plain, called "Gennesaret," (Matt. xiv, 34,) from which the name of the lake was taken. In the New Testament the lake is called "Sea of Galilee," from the province of Galilee, which bordered on its north-western coast, and "Sea of Tiberias," from the celebrated city on its south-west shore. Through its center, from north to south, runs the River Jordan. On both sides of its inlet, at the northern extremity of the lake, stood the double town of Bethsaida; further west, Chorazin and Capernaum; south-west of the latter, the plain of Gennesaret; still further south, the city of Tiberias. On the curve of the shore, south-east of Bethsaida, was most probably the grassy plain of Butaiha, where the five thousand were miraculously fed; further down, on the eastern shore, Gergesa, the place of the two demoniacs and the possessed swine. The lake is of an oval shape, about thirteen geographical miles long and six broad. Its most remarkable feature is its deep depression, being no less than seven hundred feet below the level of the ocean. On the east the banks are nearly two thousand feet high, destitute of verdure and of foliage; on the north there is a gradual descent from the table-land to the valley of the Jordan, and then a gradual rising again to a plateau of nearly equal elevation, skirting the mountains of Upper Galilee. The western banks are less regular; yet they present the same general features — plateaus of different altitudes breaking down abruptly to the shores. In Summer the heat is intense, and the vegetation is almost of a tropical character. Snow very rarely fails. The water of the lake is sweet, cool, and transparent. The lake abounds in fish now, as in ancient times; but the fishery is greatly neglected.]

[8 A small fishing-boat.]

[9 Synagogues were the places of religious assembly among the Jews after the return from the captivity. Tradition and the Targums ascribe a very early origin to synagogues; and Deut. xxxi, 11, and Psa. lxxiv, 8, are cited as testimonies to it. But the former passage does not necessarily imply it, and it is doubtful whether that Psalm was not itself written after the captivity. They are generally supposed to have originated in Babylon, and thence to have been brought, on the return, into the mother-land. (See Neh. viii, 1-8.) At the Christian era there was a synagogue in every town, and in some larger towns several. (See Acts ix, 2, 20.) In Jerusalem, according to the Rabbinical writings, there were upward of four hundred and fifty, (Acts vi, 9.) The people assembled in them on Sabbath and festival days, and, in later times, also on the second and fifth day of each week, for public prayer and the hearing of

portions of Scripture. (Luke iv, 16; Acts xiii, 15.) The officers of the synagogues were: 1. The ruler, (Luke viii, 49; xiii, 14; Acts xviii, 8, 17,) who had the care of public order and the arrangement of the service; 2. The elders, (Luke vii, 3,) called rulers of the synagogue by Mark, (v, 22,) seem to have formed a sort of council, under the presidency of the ruler of the synagogue; 3. The legatus or angelus ecclesiae, who was the reader of prayers, and also secretary and messenger of the synagogues; 4. The ὑπηρέτης, (Luke iv, 20,) the chapel clerk, whose office was to prepare the books for reading, sweep, open and shut the synagogue. Besides these there appear to have been alms-gatherers. The synagogue was fitted up with seats, of which the first row was an object of ambition with the scribes. (Matt. xxiii, 6.) A pulpit for the reader, lamps, and a chest for keeping the sacred books appear to complete the furniture of the ancient synagogue. Punishments — e.g., scourging — were inflicted in the synagogues. The catechising also of children seems to have taken place there, as also disputationes on religious questions. (Abridged and quoted from Winer, by Alford.)]

[10 The term seems here not to be used with geographical exactness. Mark says: "Throughout all the region round about Galilee." Syria was a Roman province, extending from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, from the mountains of Taurus and Amanus in the north to the borders of Egypt in the south.]

[11 On demoniacs see the notes on chap. viii, 28.]

[12 Or *moonstruck*; persons afflicted with epilepsy. The name originated from the opinion that this disease was subject to the influence of the moon.]

[13 Literally, *ten cities*. They are enumerated by Pliny and Ptolemy; but the names of some are uncertain. It was a district east of Jordan, and not far from the Lake of Galilee, inhabited, for the most part, by Greeks.]

[14 That is, Perea, the country east of Jordan, between the rivers Jabbok and Arnon. (Jos., Bell. Jud., III, 3, 3.)]

VERSE 12. This journey to Galilee is the one referred to in Mark i, 14; Luke iv, 14 — not the one mentioned by John iv, 1-3. See on this and on the time of the Baptist's imprisonment, the introductory remarks to this section and § 37 in the General Introduction.

VERSE 13. AND LEAVING NAZARETH. In Luke iv, 16-31, we are informed of the circumstances of his visit to Nazareth, and his rejection by his fellow-townspeople. — HE CAME AND DWELT. "This is not a pleonastic or superfluous expression, but a distinct statement of the fact that he not only went to Capernaum, as he often did at other times, but that he now took up his abode

there. What is here recorded is our Lord's adoption of Capernaum, instead of Nazareth, as the center of his ministry, from which he went forth on his missions or official journeys." (Alexander.)

VERSE 14. THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED. The meaning is, that Jesus went to Galilee in order to fulfill the purpose of God, which he had declared through the prophet; namely, to send the bright light of the Gospel to this benighted and despised country.

VERSES 15, 16. The Evangelist gives the prophecy (Is. ix, 1, 2) in an abbreviated form, beginning with the last words of a sentence, which he introduces to identify the subject. That part of the memorable prophecy, which Matthew quotes in an abbreviated form, will be better understood in the translation of Lowth:

"But there shall not hereafter be darkness in the land which was distressed:
In the former time he debased
The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali;
But in the latter time he made it glorious:
Even the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles,
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light;
They that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Unto them hath the light shined."

The prophet then continues to describe the kingdom of the Messiah, the Prince of Peace. The night of ignorance and sin had been constantly on the increase during the seven centuries that had elapsed since this prophecy was first uttered, and the Evangelist was, therefore, fully justified in saying that, prior to the coming of the Savior, they *sat* in — that is, they were for some time in a state of — darkness. Olshausen remarks: "Of the inhabitants of these northern provinces it could very properly be said, that they dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, partly because they were far removed from the theocratic center, Jerusalem and the Temple, where the knowledge of God that was enjoyed by the nation mainly centered, and partly because they came into frequent contact with their heathen neighbors, and were, therefore, legally unclean. But these Galileans, whom the strict Jews despised as semi-Gentiles, were, at the same time, best prepared for the new doctrine of the kingdom of God, having been freed, by their intercourse with the surrounding nations, from all Jewish exclusiveness, and their deplorable condition making the want of redemption the more keenly felt. In like manner, as the penitent sinner is nearer

the kingdom of God than the self-righteous moralist, so the Lord revealed himself to the poor Galileans before the other inhabitants of Palestine."

VERSE 17. FROM THAT TIME JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH. That is, the regular Galilean ministry dated from the imprisonment of John and the departure into Galilee that immediately followed it. In what sense this preaching was distinguished from our Lord's previous labors, we have shown in the introductory remarks of this section. "Luke seems plainly to intimate that the first teaching of the Lord in the synagogues was that which he records at Nazareth. That his enemies at Jerusalem regarded his labors as first taking positive form and character in Galilee, appears from their accusation, (Luke xxiii, 5:) 'He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.' (See also Acts x, 37.) As God had ordered that Galilee should be the chief theater of his teaching, so he providentially overruled the political arrangements of the time, that there he could labor without hinderance, since the tetrarch Herod Antipas did not trouble himself concerning any ecclesiastical movements that did not disturb the public peace. And here the people were also less under the influence of the hierarchy, and more open to his instructions." (Andrews.)

VERSE 18. From John i, 35-42, we learn that the four disciples mentioned by Matthew were already acquainted with Jesus. It is worthy of note that John mentions only Philip as having been expressly called, on that occasion, to follow Jesus. Though all those disciples mentioned by John became, at that time, followers of Jesus, recognizing in him the Messiah, they became not, at that time, his personal and constant attendants, but returned, after having attended the Passover, to their occupation as fishermen. Their actual vocation to the apostleship is here described; but even this is to be distinguished from their proper ordination or installment into the apostolic office, narrated chap. x, 1-4; Mark iii, 14; Luke vi, 13-15. Neander observes: "Christ suffered the first impressions produced by his personal appearance, his teaching, and his miracles upon the hearts of these susceptible young men, to develop themselves, and attached them permanently to his person only after he had thus impressed them a number of times." The call of the four disciples is also recorded by Mark, (i, 14-20,) and by Luke, (v, 1-11.) The three accounts evidently refer to the same transaction, notwithstanding some seeming discrepancies in the details. The principal discrepancy lies in this, that Matthew represents Simon and Andrew as still engaged in casting out their nets when

Jesus came to the Sea of Galilee, while, according to Luke, they had left their boats by that time. But this discrepancy will at once disappear if we bear in mind that Matthew records simply the coming of Jesus to the coast, without saying whether he made there a longer or a shorter stay, while we have to infer, from Luke's statement, that the Savior staid for some time on the shore. The fishermen may have been still engaged in fishing when Jesus arrived at the shore; but the boats may have landed soon afterward, and the fishermen gone ashore. Meanwhile the people had gathered around him, according to Luke, and, pressed by them, he entered into one of the boats, that was Simon's, thrust out a little from the land, and taught the people from out of the boat. And though Luke does not mention, by name, Andrew, who was, according to Matthew and Mark, with his brother Simon, he distinctly intimates that there was some one with Simon in the boat. "Launch out into the deep" is the singular, but "let down your nets" is the plural, (v. 4.) Simon answers, (v. 5:) "We have toiled, and have taken nothing;" and in verse 6 it is said: "*They* inclosed a great multitude of fishes." Luke's object was to give prominence to the impression produced by Jesus, and as this impression appeared most plainly from the words of Peter, Luke mentions him alone. But it is further objected "that, according to Matthew, the two brothers, Simon and Andrew, followed Jesus at his word; according to Luke, in consequence of the miraculous draft." In this there is certainly no contradiction whatever. Matthew does not mention the miraculous draft at all. His sole object was to record what seemed most important to him; that is, the calling of the apostles. But Luke goes into details, and gives the concomitant circumstances. After the draft had been done, and the boats been brought to land, as Luke states, the Lord said the words: "Follow me." Sooner he could, at all events, not have said them. Another discrepancy is found in this, that, according to Luke, Simon called James and John to help him in pulling out the net, while, according to Matthew, the Lord, "going on from thence," met these two brothers "mending their nets." But what is more natural than to assume that the two brothers, James and John, returned to their boat after they had helped Simon and Andrew, and that the Savior, proceeding further, came to the place where they were, and called them also? In short, all the alleged discrepancies consist in this, that Matthew and Mark mention facts which Luke has not noted, and Luke introduces circumstances which the others omit. That the miracle which Luke records occurred at the time of the call of the disciples, narrated by Matthew, is apparent from the manner in which the three Evangelists relate the call, and

from the fact that this call can not be supposed to have occurred on more than one occasion.

VERSE 22. Mark adds: "And straightway he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him." It seems that he mentioned the hired servants for the purpose of accounting thereby for the conduct of the two brothers; namely, *how* they could leave their father so suddenly without embarrassing him and neglecting their filial duty. It appears, moreover, from this little item, as well as from other incidental remarks in the New Testament, that the family of James and John was, by no means, in indigent circumstances. The same may be said of the family of Simon and Andrew, who owned a house in Capernaum. The fisheries on the Galilean lake are to this day very lucrative.

VERSE 23-25. This is to be considered a general description of our Lord's itinerary in Galilee, though the parallel passages (Mark i, 35-39, and Luke iv, 42-44) seem to point it out as our Lord's setting out for his first circuit. Matthew makes no mention of the demoniac's cure, and relates, also, the cure of Peter's wife's mother out of the chronological order. Compare the Synoptical Table.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. Of the Galilean ministry Mr. H. W. Beecher makes the following practical improvement: "By commencing his work in Galilee, Christ established a precedent, in some respects, for his Church to follow. He has shown not only that his Gospel is needed by the poorest and most ignorant, but that it is adapted to them, and that they are often more ready to be won to Christ, and more faithful, earnest, simple-hearted in doing his work, than those who look down upon them, proud of their superior intelligence and station. The first successes of Christianity, as it was proclaimed by Jesus himself, and some of its most glorious and most permanent fruits, were among the degraded and the poor. And if the Church in the present day, or the Gospel, as it is held and administered by the Church, is failing to gain like successes and to gather in like fruits, if it is failing to reach and to relieve, to raise up and instruct the multitudes in Christian lands, who occupy the same positions that the Galileans did among the Jews — the heathen at home — must we not begin to think that there is

some element in the Gospel of Christ which is wanting, or at least is but very imperfectly developed, in *our* Gospel? or that in some way, by our traditions and philosophies, we have overlaid and stifled the simplicity of the truth — teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and so making the Gospel of God's infinite grace repulsive to the minds of men, blocking up, instead of making easy, its access to their hearts, and failing to convince them that it has any gifts to bestow which they either need or desire? When we see how little impression, in the large cities of every Protestant land, the Church makes upon the mass of more than Galilean depravity and darkness that is increasing around it, and when we see that not in the large cities alone, but almost every-where, the class of those who are utterly without God in the world, strangers to Divine worship and to the influences of Christianity, is growing larger and larger, must we not feel that something has brought a cloud over the great light which shone in Galilee, and which was designed to shine upon all people that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death? And if, by seeing how Jesus did his work in Galilee, we can learn how to do ours — if, by learning the religion he taught and practiced there, we can understand the religion we ought to teach and to practice here — if, in the principles and spirit of our Christian labors, we can imitate him who went about all Galilee, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people — in other words, giving sympathy and aid to *all* their wants, temporal and spiritual — then we may be sure that the great light and power of Christ himself will shine upon us, and much darkness will be scattered before it."

2. On the call of the Galilean fishermen to the apostleship Neander remarks: "It may, indeed, seem strange, that Christ chose for his particular organs men, whose training for their future calling imposed on him so persevering and strong efforts, when he might have chosen others that would seem to have been better prepared by a thorough acquaintance with Jewish theology. Christ had weighty and good reasons for doing as he did. We hear him thank his Heavenly Father for having hid the great mysteries of the kingdom of heaven from the wise and prudent. For the very reason that these illiterate men attached themselves to him with childlike confidence, they were best prepared to become the receptive organs of his spirit, to receive and propagate with the simplicity of children what he revealed unto them. All they could teach had come to them from the new creation through the Spirit of Christ. This would not have been the case with those who would have come to him with a

previous training derived from other sources. Although the disciples also were beset with carnal notions, which they had to lay aside before they could rightly apprehend the doctrines of Christ, yet owing to their childlike willingness to learn they presented by no means so great an obstacle as a previous systematic training of the mind would have been. Yielding with the full susceptibility of children to the influence which their constant intercourse with their Master exerted upon them, they could not fail to be more and more spiritualized in their whole mode of thinking by receiving into their inmost life the image of their Master spotless and free from any admixture of their own. But to develop the revelations, received passively by the first organs of Christianity, Divine Wisdom saw fit to add a man like Paul, who was enabled, by a previous thorough discipline of mind, to digest and systematize by the force of independent thought the subject-matter of the revealed truth, under the guidance of the same Spirit of Christ." These remarks of the great Church historian go far to confirm the principle, that a man must be born again and have a special calling for the ministry before he can be prepared for it in the higher schools of learning. These higher institutions of learning answer great and important purposes, but to prepare young men for the ministry without the call and qualification of the Spirit of God, is neither their object nor within their power. From the fact that a man has received a good moral education and thorough mental training, it follows by no means that he has the necessary qualifications for the Gospel ministry; nor is it true that a man without a classical education is at no time and under no circumstances qualified to discharge the duties of the Gospel ministry successfully.

3. The weaker the instruments appeared which Christ chose, and the greater the work was, accomplished through them, the more it was made manifest that the work was wrought by Divine power, (1 Cor. i, 25; ii, 1,) and that the glory of it was due to God alone. The religion of Jesus Christ must be the true religion of heaven, or it could never have spread over the earth. A religion that did any thing but flatter the rich, the great, the learned — a religion that is so diametrically opposed to the carnal, sinful inclinations of the human heart — a religion whose first teachers were poor fishermen, without wealth, without position in society, without power — such a religion could not possibly have taken roots and spread upon earth if it had not been divine.

CHAPTERS V-VII.

§ 9. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

So many difficulties beset the question respecting the identity of the sermon in Matthew with that given in Luke vi, 12-49, that Alford, in his critical commentary, simply states them without attempting a solution. All the objections which are made against the identity of the two discourses, in Matthew and Luke, may, however, be summed up and answered under three heads:

1. It is contended "that *the variance between the two Evangelists*, if we assume them to report the same discourse, *is so great as to be incompatible with their being inspired writers*. Nor could the difference be satisfactorily explained by regarding Luke's report as an epitome of Matthew; for while he passes over a large part of the discourse reported by Matthew, he adds much which the latter has omitted, and brings some of the sayings of our Lord into a different connection." This objection must, indeed, be an insuperable one to those who hold to *verbal* inspiration in the *strictest sense*; namely, to the notion that the Holy Ghost constrained the Evangelists at all times to report the events and the discourses to their full extent and in the most exact order, just as they took place or were spoken. But that this theory of inspiration must give way before an accurate examination of the Gospel records, we have shown in our General Introduction to the Gospels, § 33. If we, on the other hand, dispense with this theory, holding to such plenary inspiration as prevented the Evangelists from attributing to the Lord any words of their own imagination, and as enabled them to record, in the freedom of the Spirit, not in the bondage of the letter, the sayings of our Lord, we shall find no difficulty in accounting for their variance in their report of the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew, as well as Luke, gives us our Lord's discourse in an abbreviated form, with this difference, that the former gives a much fuller epitome than the latter. The Evangelists wrote independently of each other. The selection and arrangement of the subject-matter were left to human agency, under Divine guidance, and corresponded with the special object which each Evangelist had in view. While conceding so much to human agency in the inspired records, we are not willing to admit the supposition that Matthew collected into a systematic discourse various sayings of our Lord spoken on different occasions. Such a supposition can not well be reconciled with the inspired character of the Gospel; and, apart

from this consideration, there are internal evidences against such a hypothesis. This is conceded even by rationalistic writers, like Baur, who says "that the discourse, breathing throughout the spirit of vital polemics against the Pharisees, makes undoubtedly the impression of being original and immediate." With regard to the objection "that many parts of the sermon, as recorded by Matthew, are found in Mark and Luke, connected with quite different occasions," Stier remarks very properly: "It was, in every respect, worthy of the Great Teacher, and in accordance with his Divine wisdom and human condescension, to repeat his sententious sayings on different occasions," and he adds: "This custom of our Lord should make some preachers blush, who are vain enough to think it is incumbent upon them, whenever they speak in public, to say something new."

2. *The difference in the order of time*, assigned by Matthew and Luke, is urged against the identity of the two discourses. According to Luke it follows the selection of the twelve apostles, while in Matthew it seems to have preceded that event. How improbable, it is said, that Matthew should report this most important discourse prior to his own call to the apostleship, if our Lord has delivered the Sermon on the Mount after the selection of his apostles! A sufficient reply to this objection is the acknowledged fact, that Matthew, for some reason or other, does not mention his call to the apostleship in the proper chronological order, as Mark and Luke do. He does, in general, not bind himself to a precise chronological order, rather arranging his subject-matter in groups, according to the nature of the subjects narrated. That he should assign so early a place in his Gospel to that sermon in which our Lord for the first time fully developed the fundamental principles of his kingdom, need not surprise us; but that our Lord delivered this discourse not before the middle of his ministry, is indicated by Matthew's remark, (iv, 23-25,) and by the open manner in which Jesus attacks the Pharisees and declares himself to be the Messiah.

3. Against the identity of the two discourses, there is further urged the difference of *some local circumstances* attending the delivery of the discourse. According to Matthew, Jesus went up into a mountain and was sitting in delivering his sermon; but Luke says, he came down from the mountain and stood on the plain. These variances, however, may easily be reconciled. By "mountain" we are most probably to understand one of the high plains so common in Palestine, and his descending refers to a hill, overhanging this high plain, to which he had before ascended for solitary prayer, a circumstance not

mentioned by Matthew. As regards the position of Jesus while delivering this discourse, the standing may have occurred a few moments before he commenced his regular discourse, while the multitude was pressing around him. Even if we had not the statement of Matthew respecting our Lord's sitting down to teach, we would have to complete the statement of Luke by supposing that Jesus, standing at the beginning, soon after sat down, because the Jewish teachers usually delivered their instructions sitting. From the difference of these local circumstances Lange draws the following inference: that Matthew reports a discourse which Jesus held on the top of a mountain, in the secluded circle of his proper disciples; and that Luke gives a succeeding discourse, delivered on a declivity of the same mount to the multitude which had followed him. To corroborate this supposition, he remarks, that the sermon recorded by Matthew would have greatly endangered the work of Christ, if spoken before the masses at that time; that the presentation of the fundamental doctrines of his kingdom, as we find them in Matthew, was adapted only to his real followers. The discourse in Luke, on the contrary, being condensed, lively, figurative, and concrete, had all the characteristics of a popular address. We object, however, to this theory of Lange for the following reasons: 1. Matthew must have understood by the term "disciples" (v. 1) more than the small circle of the twelve, for he says, (vii, 28,) "when Jesus had ended these sayings, *the people* were astonished at his doctrine." 2. That our Lord should have delivered in immediate succession two sermons with such identical conclusion, is improbable in the highest degree. The other remark of Lange needs no formal refutation.

Having seen that all the objections against the identity of the discourse, reported by Matthew and Luke, can be removed, we find the identity positively proved, 1. By the striking resemblance of the whole discourse, and especially of the exordium and conclusion; 2. By the fact that according to both Evangelists the same events follow the discourse — namely, our Lord's entering Capernaum and healing the Centurion's servant; 3. The selection of the apostles, immediately preceding this discourse according to Luke, gave our Lord the most appropriate occasion to make that open and full declaration respecting the nature of his kingdom, and the terms of admission which characterizes the Sermon on the Mount, as we find it in Matthew; and although that Evangelist does not connect it with the choice of the apostles, yet we find

several passages (v, 13-14; vii, 6) evidently referring to persons previously called to the ministry.

Having examined into the time and place of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, let us proceed to consider its scope and character. Following closely the selection of the apostles, it is an inaugural address both to the disciples and to the people at large. Ebrard remarks: "Our Lord had cured the sick, raised the dead, and in enigmatical words and allegories had spoken of the kingdom of God which he was going to establish. The ears of the people were open; all had, with more or less confidence, conceived the hope that Jesus was the promised Messiah; they followed him, and were willing to take a part in his kingdom. The time was now come that he should fully enlighten these undecided, perplexed masses respecting the nature of his kingdom and its requirements." The Sermon on the Mount has been called the Magna Charta of the kingdom of God. It is a practical commentary of the repentance which the Baptist preached, (iii, 8,) and presents to all the disciples the unchangeable principles, from which the new life of faith must proceed. Neander says on this point: "There runs through the whole discourse, implied where it is not directly expressed, a rebuke of the carnal tendency of the Jewish mind, as displayed in its notions of the Messianic kingdom, and of the requisites for participating therein, the latter, indeed, depending entirely upon the former. It was most important to convince men that meetness for the kingdom of God depended not upon alliance to the Jewish stem, but upon alliance of the heart to God. Their mode of thinking had to be corrected accordingly. A *direct* attack upon the usual conceptions of the nature and manifestation of the kingdom would have been repelled by those who were unprepared for it; but *to show what disposition of heart it required, was to strike at the root of the error.*"

It is proper to speak here, also, of the relation which the Sermon on the Mount bears to the Evangelical doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. The Socinians and rationalists appeal to this discourse as sustaining their position that our Lord did not inculcate the belief of mysterious doctrines, that he insisted only upon the practice of the great moral duties, "not perceiving that the practice of these great moral duties is only required as the fruits of the grace so kindly offered in the exordium; that the preacher on the mount is the personification of that grace, which, indeed, was not fully manifested before the work of redemption had been completed; and, finally, that Christ indirectly refers to this redemption as to the instrumental cause of the righteousness

required by him when he promised to the poor in spirit the kingdom of heaven, and to those who hunger after righteousness full satisfaction. What else is this but that, by faith in him, there shall be given the power to fulfill that righteousness which he demands, and which exceeds that of the Pharisees? How could the Messiah have justified the hopes of his people if, by his advent, he only had raised the requirements without imparting a higher power?" (Stier.) That the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel are not expressly mentioned in this discourse is certainly not surprising. As yet our Lord's hearers were not able to understand these truths. Even the apostles themselves, before the resurrection of their Master, had no true conception of his atonement and of its effects, justification and regeneration. These fundamental articles of the Christian faith refer to the great facts of the incarnation, the sufferings and death, the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, and could not be fully taught before the completion of the plan of salvation. That, however, which these doctrines presuppose — that is, the doctrine of the depravity of the human heart, and the necessity of regeneration — our Lord sets forth and inculcates in his sermon in the clearest and most forcible manner; the more so as he speaks less as a *teacher* of the law than as *the king and only lawgiver*, condemning those who oppose his reign and reject his salvation. He presents his laws in their bearing on the future and eternal condition of men, on which condition he throws more light than Moses, Solomon, or all the prophets; for, in accordance with his triple office as prophet, priest, and king, he declares himself to be not only the *true expounder or teacher of the law*, but the *fulfiller* of the same, so as to redeem his people of its curse, and the *final judge*.

The connection between the different parts of the sermon, as recorded by Matthew, has been very differently apprehended. Stier discovers in its progress from the gracious invitation of the exordium, where the kingdom of heaven opens wide for the poorest, to the terrible threatenings at the close, where the strait gate is firmly closed against the transgressors, that progress which every sermon ought to have, *from promise to requirement, and hence to warning*, and from this stand-point he divides the sermon into three parts. The first part he makes to close with the twentieth verse, and traces in this portion again the same progress: First, promises, (3-12;) then requirements on the ground of the promises, (13-16;) then a reference to final judgment, implying warning, (17-20;) but the key-note of the first part is the word of promise: I am come

to fulfill. In the second part — from v. 21, to vii, 14 — Stier thinks, our Lord represented to his disciples the righteousness he requires in three great contrasts, *not like the Pharisees*, (v, 21 -vi, 18;) *not like the Gentiles*, (vi, 19-34;) *not like unsound disciples*, (vii, 1-14.) In the third part, (vii, 15-27,) though predominantly warning and threatening, Stier observes again the above-mentioned progress: First, a repetition of promise, in what is said about the planting of the good tree, (15-20;) then the repeated enjoinder of the Divine requisitions, (21-23;) upon which follows the sublime and terrific contrast between the great fall of the house built upon the sand and the unlimited, gracious invitation with which the discourse begins. Ingenious as Stier's analysis is, it seems somewhat too intricate, and also inconvenient for practical purposes. The division which we have adopted is constructed on the basis of Tholuck's, but departs from his in several particulars, especially in the seventh chapter.

A. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONDITIONS OF ENTERING INTO AND PARTICIPATING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I. THE BEATITUDE OF THOSE THAT LONG, IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD, (VS. 3-6,) SHOW THE FRUITS OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THEREOF, (VS. 7-9,) AND WILLINGLY TAKE UPON THEMSELVES THE PERSECUTIONS OF A HOSTILE WORLD, (vs. 10-12.)

II. THE HIGH CALLING AND DIGNITY OF THE TRUE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST OR OF THE MEMBERS OF HIS KINGDOM, (vs. 13-16.)

Chapter V, 1-16.

(1) **AND** seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: ^[1] and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: (2) and he opened his mouth, ^[2] and taught them, saying, (3) **Blessed are the poor in spirit:** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (4) **Blessed are they that mourn:** for they shall be comforted. (5) **Blessed are the meek:** for they shall inherit the earth. (6) **Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after**

righteousness: for they shall be filled. (7) Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (8) Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God. (9) Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (10) Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. (12) Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (13) Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (14) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill can not be hid. (15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,^[3] but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

[1 In Greek, "*The mountain*," which may either mean the one above the place where the people were assembled, or the mountainous region, as distinguished from the lowlands of Palestine. Tradition points to a mountain situated within a beautiful region, with an extensive plain at its base, two and a half miles from Mount Tabor. At present it is called "Mount of Beatitudes" — from the event — or "the Horns of Hattin."]

[2 Expressive of a solemn and important discourse.]

[3 The Greek word for bushel has, in the text, the definite article before it, to designate that it was a vessel found in every house. It held about a peck, according to our measure.]

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON 3-12.— Before we contemplate the beatitudes in the light in which they appear to the Christian reader, who possesses the perfect revelation of the New Testament, and is filled with the Spirit of Christ, a sound and thorough exegesis will lead us first to inquire into the circumstances and stand-point of those who heard the discourses of Christ, so that we may ascertain their primary bearing upon them. An application of this exegetical rule will throw much light upon the exordium of our Lord's sermon. Tholuck remarks: "From Josephus, as well as from the New

Testament, we learn that the Jews, in the time when Jesus entered upon his public ministry, were anxiously waiting for the blessings of the promised Messiah. The people in general, however, understood the prophecies of Isaiah (xli, 1; lxi, 1; lxiii, 4, 6) to refer to a political deliverance and a divine vengeance upon their temporal oppressors. The more spiritual Israelites, like Zacharias and John the Baptist, expected the Messiah to establish a spiritual kingdom, a reign of righteousness. Nevertheless, they connected with it the idea that he would sit on David's throne and subject to his scepter the Gentile nations." If we take into consideration this state of mind among the hearers, how perfectly adapted to it appear the spiritual benedictions, with which our Lord commenced his discourse! "Glancing at the poor," says Neander, "who probably comprised most of his congregation, Christ says: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy are they who feel the spiritual wretchedness of the theocratic nation, who long after the true riches of Messiah's kingdom, who have not stifled the higher cravings of their souls by worldly delights, by confidence in their Jewish descent, by the pride of Pharisaic righteousness and wisdom; but are conscious of their spiritual poverty, of their lack of the true riches of the Spirit and the kingdom. Such are they to whom the kingdom of God belongs. Christ then describes the concomitants of that poverty of spirit, and promises dominion over the world to that disposition of heart which is most averse to it; a contrast which serves to point out the peculiar *kind* of world dominion promised, as distinguished from the prevailing Jewish ideas on the subject."

After these remarks, let us consider the consecutive order of the beatitudes, and their strict internal connection, which has been most profoundly apprehended by Stier, whose exposition we follow in the main. Verses 3-12 exhibit all the Christian graces in their gradual development, yet so that each succeeding grace presents the former in a new phase and preserves inviolate all the previously-received ones. No step on this ladder may be leaped over, no link in this chain must be lacking; and yet, we must not, on the other hand, separate the beatitudes by an abstract, mechanical succession of time. Origen compares them "with a cluster of grapes, of which the one having first ripened remains while the last one is ripening." No single one of the spiritual states here described, as for instance the first one, is to be considered a mere transition state; each one remains a fundamental feature of the Christian character, an essential ingredient of the righteousness which Christ requires and imparts. The

first condition of salvation is the consciousness of spiritual poverty. Every subsequent requirement is made only because the grace previously imparted enables man to comply with it. As soon as the kingdom of heaven, which is offered to us as a free gift, begins to be established in the soul, fully awakened to a consciousness of her poverty before God, so soon the germ of all that the kingdom of heaven implies is planted. Man never mourns spiritually, before the Spirit of grace has convicted him of his poverty. From the mental conviction of poverty springs the painful feeling of guilt as the cause of that poverty, and from this godly sorrow springs that meekness, with which James exhorts us to receive the Word of God. It is only when the conviction of spiritual poverty has properly influenced our affections and volitions, that the soul, in the full sense of the word, hungers and thirsts after righteousness. The righteousness which satisfies this hunger and thirst will beget the exercise of mercy to the souls and bodies of our fellow-men, and accordingly as the Christian exercises mercy he will purify himself, even as He is pure; he will become perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect; and again, the more the heart is purified, the more will he become a peacemaker in the highest sense of the word, the more successful will he be in beseeching the world to be reconciled to God. But as the world will misconstrue this endeavor, the Lord adds, that his followers even as peacemakers shall meet with persecution. — The first four beatitudes may be said to represent the strait gate, or the seeker of salvation; the succeeding four the narrow way, or those who, having obtained mercy, perfect holiness in the fear of God. To each state of mind upon which the Savior pronounces a benediction, there is promised a corresponding blessing; with this difference, that in the first four beatitudes the conditions of the promised blessings are *spiritual wants*, and the promised blessings are *the supply of these wants*. In the succeeding beatitudes the promised blessings are *gracious rewards* for the faithful use of previously-received blessings. "The merciful" have obtained mercy before they exercise mercy; but only if they continue to exercise it, shall they obtain mercy in the day of judgment. "The pure in heart" became such, when they first believed, and have thereby attained already to a spiritual knowledge of and communion with God; but only if they retain and perfect that purity, shall they see God in glory. "The peacemakers" are already children of God, but only if they execute their mission, and remain faithful to their holy calling, shall they be fully acknowledged to be the children of the Most High before the assembled universe of created intelligences.

VERSE 3. THE POOR IN SPIRIT. Some of the fathers have translated: "Blessed in spirit [that is, in temper and disposition] are the poor," as if the Lord had pronounced a blessing upon voluntary poverty. The erroneousness and arbitrariness of such interpretations are self-evident. Blessedness — true happiness, happiness in its highest sense — is not to be found in any outward circumstances, but is pronounced by Christ upon certain states of the heart, that are the very opposite of those with which the world is wont to identify happiness. Who is it that pronounces blessed? He who has come to *make* blessed, and who imparts this blessedness as he saves from sin. The blessedness increases at every step of the road, which the Savior has pointed out; for the further we proceed, the more our capacity for blessedness increases. It is self-evident, that the consciousness and feeling of spiritual destitution, not the destitution in itself, is pronounced blessed here. The prodigal son was not to be pronounced blessed, when he had wasted all his substance, and before the sense of his destitution had produced in him a longing after the riches in his father's house. Poor is he who has not as much as he needs for sustenance. Spiritually poor is, consequently, he who has not what he needs before God. He who knows and feels *this*, who becomes thus conscious of his moral destitution and helplessness, is poor in spirit and to be pronounced blessed, because the consciousness of his state makes him humble and anxious to find what he lacks. Humility stands at the head of all the benedictions, because it is the foundation of all religion. He that is a stranger to poverty in spirit, understands nothing of Christianity. The poorer a man feels himself in the sight of God, the richer he becomes in God. "He fills the hungry with good things, and sends away empty the rich." The gate and way that lead unto life are, consequently, not strait and narrow in themselves, but become so for those who, instead of coming naked and needy, desire to enter the kingdom of heaven "rich and increased with goods." None can pray acceptably without a sense of his poverty. — The very opposite of those that are poor in spirit, are on the one hand the indifferent, who are not sensible of being destitute of that which God requires of them, who have never thought it worth their while to meditate upon their own guilt and God's righteous claims; on the other hand, those who would fain persuade themselves that they have abundantly what they need before God, and claim the ability to do even more than God really requires of them. — **FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.** On the kingdom of heaven see notes on Matthew iii, 2. *The kingdom of heaven* here means the blessedness which commences in the kingdom of grace by faith.

Worthy of note is the expression: "the kingdom of heaven is theirs" — that is, has come to them — and not as in v. 20: "they shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." The seeker of salvation may and shall claim at the very outset the promises of the Gospel.

VERSE 4. THEY THAT MOURN are, in the first place, those that weep over their own sins and those of others; they are also those in general whom chastisements have made susceptible of Divine consolation. Lange understands by this mourning that state of the mind in general, which is no longer satisfied with any thing that the world can afford. Wretched is he who has never shed tears, who has never wept over his own sins. Blessedness is not only not inconsistent, but actually connected with the deepest spiritual sorrow, in as far as the heart has thereby been brought into harmony with the will of God. The very opposite of such mourners are the merry ones, who having never seriously reflected on the destiny and object of their lives, are running from one sensual enjoyment to another and suppressing every feeling of want or danger. — FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED; this comfort will be, of course, in consonance with the nature of their mourning. The forgiveness of sins is the foundation of this consolation, yet the promise includes also the removal of the causes of their mourning by the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, promised to the poor in spirit.

VERSE 5. We have seen how the conviction of spiritual poverty affects the emotions and produces godly sorrow. We are now taught that those who are brought to feel their misery, learn also to surrender their self-will. The *meekness* here under consideration refers, like the preceding poverty and mourning, to man's relation to his God, and is that frame of mind in which man submits fully to God's law and dealing; in short, a cheerful and willing obedience to God in contrast with the stubborn self-will of the natural man. It is the same meekness which James requires, (i, 2,) and which is thus described by Rambach: "It is a fruit of the spirit that is found on the field of spiritual poverty, sadness and sorrowing, a noble flower, that grows from out of the ashes of self-love on the grave of pride, when man feels, on the one hand, his total depravity, his worthlessness and wretchedness, but sees, on the other, the friendliness and condescension of God in Christ, whereby the heart is made soft, pliant, and tractable, and loses its natural hardness and stubbornness." — FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH. This is a promise of the Old Testament, (Ps. xxxvii, 11; xxv, 13; Isa. lvii, 13; lx, 21,) and has primary

reference to the land of Canaan, which was for the Jews the object and sum total of all Divine promises and blessings. But the earthly Canaan was only a type of the kingdom of God, which is to extend over the whole world, (Rom. iv, 13,) and in which only the meek can have a part. This promise forms, therefore, a contrast to the carnal expectations of the Jews, that the Messiah would subdue the whole earth by force of arms, as their forefathers had conquered Canaan. The kingdom of God is to extend its sway more and more over all men and all human affairs, till all the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of God, and *meekness* is the power which will accomplish this end. The full import, however, of the promise seems to be the possession of the new earth, which God will create with the new heaven, (Isa. lxvi, 22,) and which is the realization of the original destiny of Adam. Thus the benediction reaches into the far distant consummation of all things. — The kingdom of God is a gift for the poor, a consolation for those that mourn, a power for the meek. How striking is the contrast with the pharisaical pride, the Sadducean worldliness and the perversion of the natural mind in general as contained in these three benedictions! — Those that refer the meekness in question to man's relation to his fellow-men, draw from the third benediction the moral application, that while the world fancies to possess the earth and to protect its own by using force, Christ teaches us that we possess the earth through meekness. While one act of violence only calls forth another, meekness disarms wrath, and God vindicates the rights of the meek in spite of fraud and malice. Moreover, whatever He gives to the meek, be it much or little, is perfectly satisfactory to them, because God wills it thus, so that they can with truth be said to possess the earth. In the hope of faith, in the power of the Spirit, it is now already said to the children of God: "All things are yours." (1 Cor. iii, 22.) The moralist, the man of genius, or the conqueror, stalks about and domineers a short time with his guilty conscience on the earth, till he is hurled down into the pit; but the meek of Jesus' school have a rightful claim upon the earth, which God will vindicate to them at last.

VERSE 6. Only he that has learned to know his own poverty, and has, thereby, become humble; he who has experienced the wretchedness of his sinful state and in meekness suffers his heart to be transformed by Divine grace, can sincerely desire righteousness — that is, a perfect agreement with God's holy and righteous will — and this desire is not a weak and transient wish, but becomes a *hungering* and *thirsting*. Hunger and thirst are the strongest

impulses of our nature, and when excited once, they increase in strength till they are satisfied by food and drink. There is in man a hunger and thirst which is not implanted by God, but has arisen in consequence of the fall; after a momentary gratification it proves an illusion and must forever suffer the pains of unsatisfied craving. But the hunger and thirst after righteousness, wrought by God and having God alone for its object, carries in itself the certainty that it will be completely satisfied and is the sure criterion of the new spiritual life. As natural life and health are supported by food and drink, partaken of in obedience to the calls of hunger and thirst, so the spiritual health and life depend on the spiritual food that is partaken of to satisfy this hunger and thirst after righteousness. — FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED — that is, abundantly satisfied. This must not be understood as if this hunger and thirst would ever cease in this world, but each new sensation of hunger and thirst will be removed by a corresponding new measure of the desired food. The perfect fullness, however, shall not be received before the resurrection of the body, (Phil. iii, 20, 21;) on the new earth, where righteousness dwelleth, (2 Pet. iii, 13,) we shall neither hunger nor thirst any more.

VERSE 7. By being MERCIFUL we must not understand, as Nitsch says, "that effeminate sentimental sympathy, to which even ungodly selfishness is not a stranger, and which would fain palm itself off for true religion — not that false clemency to others, which goes hand in hand with unrestrained indulgence toward one's own dear self," but the genuine love of our neighbor, which is described by Paul, (1 Cor. xiii, 4-7,) and has reference to the spiritual as well as bodily wellbeing of our fellow-men. It is the first and necessary fruit of the Spirit, and is intimately connected with genuine faith, which the apostle describes as "working by love." In the same sense John says: "He that loveth not his brother, whom he has seen, how can he love God, whom he has not seen?" Thy mercifulness is the touchstone, by which thou canst know whether thou hast really passed through all the stages of the new life mentioned before, whether thou art really renewed in the spirit of thy mind; if thou art not merciful, the gate of Divine grace will be shut against thee and thou canst not enter heaven, for thy spiritual poverty was only imaginary, or thou hast lost it again. "Be ye, therefore, merciful, as your Father also is merciful," says our Lord, according to Luke. Every act of mercy imparts to him that performs it present blessedness. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Nevertheless, God has added special promises to the merciful. (Isa. lviii, 6-11.) — The promise,

"THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY," is applicable both to the day of judgment and to the present world, both with regard to God and our fellow-men. He who practices mercy will obtain mercy of God day by day, and in like manner will he, who has relieved his suffering fellow-man to the extent of his ability, find relief for himself in time of need. The merciful is honored and loved even by the world.

VERSE 8. THE PURE IN HEART. The Lord looks at the heart. (Comp. Ps. lxxiii, 1; li, 8, 12; xxiv, 4, 6.) This benediction implies a contrast both to the Levitical cleanliness, on which the Pharisees insisted, and to an outward morality, which was the boast of the heathen philosophers. By the purity of heart here spoken of, some understand freedom from all violations of the seventh commandment, others freedom from the polluting influence of sin in general, but neither is in keeping with the context, the former being too limited, the latter too indefinite. Purity in heart means here guileless sincerity opposed to all impure and hypocritical motives. This purity of heart is an essential trait of character in the regenerate. The pure heart is for the spiritual life, what the sound heart is for the natural life. In the same manner as the functions of life proceed from the physical heart, the central organ of the circulation of the blood, so all the vital motions of the soul proceed from and react upon the moral heart. (Prov. iv, 23.) And because the heart is the central organ of all spiritual knowledge, feeling, and volition, the mysterious hearth of the life of the spirit, the seat of conscience, the Scriptures say that God looks at the heart. What is done from the heart, shows what a man is in reality, in opposition to mere outward appearance. (Rom. vi, 17; Comp. Matt. xv, 8; 1 Tim. i, 5.) The natural heart is depraved. What is really good in man is the new heart, created by the Spirit of God. — The pure in heart are to be pronounced blessed in the first place, because it is easy for them to do the will of God, and because all things are pure to them — that is, sanctified by God. There is, moreover, given to them the promise: "THEY SHALL SEE GOD." By this seeing God we must understand not merely the spirit's communion with God by faith, but the actual real sight of him in the resurrection body. (1 John iii, 2; Rev. xxii, 4.) We can realize and know God only so far as we have become partakers of the Divine nature; but the saints' final perfect knowledge of God will be a real sight of God, of course of God's face in the Son, through whom alone God has, from the beginning, manifested himself to his creatures. Passages such as Exod. xxxiii, 20; John i, 18; vi, 46; 1 Tim. vi, 16, are not in conflict with the promise

of an actual sight of God, because they speak of seeing God with the natural eye.

VERSE 9. A PEACEMAKER is he who seeks to reconcile parties that are at variance with each other whether he is one of them or not. All such contentions proceed from sin, selfishness, avarice, ambition, vindictiveness, and envy. To restore the peace destroyed by sin, Christ, the great peacemaker, came. By the peacemakers here we have, therefore, to understand not only those peaceable characters, that hate all strife, wrangling, and contention, and, therefore, take pains to restrain the violent passions of men, and to reconcile parties that are at variance, but rather those who make it their business to unite men through the peace that comes from God, the peace-messengers of the New Testament, so called from their personal, not official character. It is likewise worthy of note, that the pure in heart are mentioned before the peacemakers, and we are reminded of the words of James, (iii, 17,) "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable." True peacemakers do not cry peace where there is no peace; they make no spurious peace, which merely covers but does not remove sin. In this sense the great Prince of Peace says, (Luke xii, 51,) "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." He who enters the lists for truth and combats error must not be called a disturber of the peace; on the contrary, the zeal which he displays for the truth and against error, proves that he has the true and abiding peace at heart. Peace that is not based on truth is worth nothing. The temporary discord that is generally produced by the defense of the truth, is more than compensated for by the peace which follows the acknowledgment of the truth. On the other hand, it will not do to hold up to a lost, wicked world, the testimony of the truth haughtily, without love and humility. *The pure in heart alone can offer the world the true peace out of the good treasure of their hearts.* Corresponding with their lofty character is the promise: THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD. What they *are*, and what the name they even now bear indicates, will be fully and authoritatively declared by the God of peace. It is worthy of note, that the rapid spread of Christianity in the first centuries was mainly owing to the fact, that the heathens had to exclaim in astonishment: "Behold, how these Christians love each other," while on the other hand, the kingdom of God has suffered more from the wranglings and contentions of the Christians, than from any other causes. It is, therefore, no wonder that the peacemaker occupies here the highest stage of religious

development. When the disciples of Christ shall have attained this stage, and when the prayer of their Master shall be fulfilled, that they are one, as the Father and Son are one, then the great promise will also be fulfilled, that "one nation shall not lift up the sword against another, and that they learn war no more." (Isa. ii, 4.)

VERSE 10. The eighth benediction presents the marks of the child of God from a new stand-point, and confirms all the preceding promises. — FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE implies that the persons addressed are in the possession of righteousness — that the new life has been fully developed in them from the state of spiritual poverty to that of peace-making. There is, consequently, no new development of spiritual life introduced; the previously-received graces are simply represented as having been found equal to the severest tests. Our Lord means to say: Do not deem it strange that the world should persecute you for your benevolent intentions and actions; for this very persecution is the highest criterion of your discipleship, and seals your title to the kingdom of heaven. — FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN — and remains theirs — having been theirs from the commencement of their spiritual poverty. Thus the Lord seals his discourse by connecting its beginning and end. The declaration "IS THEIRS" is paradoxical, forming a strong contrast with their sore persecution by the world, similarly as the first promise forms a contrast to the spiritual poverty.

VERSE 11. The Lord makes now a personal application of what he had said before. The subjects of the benedictions are the disciples, in so far as they acquit themselves as disciples. The righteousness is personally represented in the Lord himself. To suffer for righteousness' sake implies, therefore, faith in him. The persecution spoken of before in general terms is here described as consisting, first, in revilings, then in acts of violence, especially in malicious calumnies. This has been fulfilled to the very letter by the treatment which the believers of all times received at the hands of the world. The first Christians were charged with heinous murders and acts of unnatural lewdness; nor has this spirit of lying and persecution been idle since their times. Witness, for instance, the treatment of the Waldenses, of Wickliffe and Huss, of the reformers, of Wesley and Whitefield. — FALSELY is wanting in some manuscripts, and seems to be unnecessary on account of the following "for my sake." Stier, however, defends it as part of the text, and implying the additional idea, "At the same time examine well whether they really lie, since men are very apt to

mistake well-merited censure for slander, and then count it an honor; be, therefore, on your guard not to give any other cause for persecution than your faith and its fruits, the purity of life."

VERSE 12. REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDING GLAD. How gloriously has this benediction been confirmed in the case of the martyrs! While the flames were consuming their bodies, the pains of the outward man were swallowed up by the superabundant inward happiness and the foretaste of heaven, so that more than one martyr exclaimed: "Be astonished, ye persecutors, for in these flames I feel no more pains than if I were lying on feathers or walking on roses."

— FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN. Here is something indicated that goes beyond the general blessedness of the saints. The Lord, who says that no cup of cold water given to one of his disciples shall be forgotten, promises here graciously to his followers a particular reward, a perfect indemnification for every suffering which they have endured for his sake. *Corresponding with your sufferings shall be your reward.* This, as well as other passages of Scripture, plainly teach that there are different degrees of blessedness and glory in heaven. The degree of our blessedness in heaven will be determined by the extent of the capacity of blessedness which we have acquired here. Two persons may hear the same piece of music, but their enjoyment may be very different. Grace is the common title to heaven for all; but the recipient vessels differ greatly in capacity as one star differs in glory from another. — To encourage his disciples still more, the Lord reminds them that the persecuted prophets constituted the true Israel of God, while the hosts of their persecutors proved by their acts their apostasy from Jehovah. By this reflection the disciples are prepared properly to appreciate what the Lord tells them immediately afterward of their high mission.

VERSE 13. Having just made a direct personal application of the preceding benedictions, and particularly that which had respect to persecution, our Lord proceeds now to define more fully the relation of his followers, as a separate body, to mankind at large. Their distinct existence as a peculiar people, if not as an organized society, had been implied already in the warning against persecution, presupposing two antagonistic parties. He now sets forth their blessed influence upon the world in two beautiful metaphors, derived from every-day experience, and admirably suited to illustrate the important truth to be communicated and enforced, (vs. 13-16.) — SALT is proverbially one of the first necessities of life. The metaphor implies, therefore, the idea that the

true disciples of Christ are an indispensable necessity for the world. The property of salt is to season that which is insipid, and to preserve that which is corruptible. Exactly corresponding to these physical effects of salt is, or ought to be, the moral influence exerted upon the world by the followers of Christ, Stier understands by the salt the inward grace, the cause of all moral efficacy, and by light its outward manifestation. To this Tholuck justly objects, maintaining that, as salt has an outward manifestation, like light, so, on the other hand, light must be inwardly possessed as well as salt, It is also well remarked by Alford that those whom the Lord calls here the salt of the earth and the light of the world, are *all* his true followers, without special reference to the ministry. Yet while all are to season and enlighten the world, we might, perhaps, by way of practical application, refer the salt to the influence exerted by the membership of the Church, the light to that of the ministry. The sphere of the efficacy of the salt is more inward, that of the light more outward, analogous to the relation between the parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven. — The term EARTH is synonymous with "world" in verse 14, and means the whole human race in its state of apostasy from God, and, therefore, exposed to moral putrefaction. — BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST ITS SAVOR. The preceding clause, by itself, supposes that the salt performs its office and accomplishes its purpose; but now the Lord suggests the possibility of failure and its necessary consequence. Whether salt can really lose its savor and become insipid or not, is a question of but little importance, because the force of the comparison, if such a case should not occur, would only be enhanced by the supposed impossibility. Any hypothesis, however, drawn by our Savior from material objects, we have reason to consider as based on an actual fact. Pure salt can, indeed, not thus degenerate, while salt mixed with foreign ingredients does. Maundrell found in the region of Aleppo salt that had effloresced and become tasteless; in the same manner the salt that is obtained in hot countries by evaporating salt water, loses its admixture of chloric magnesia, and is then no longer fit for salting meat. According to Dr. Thomson, (vol. ii, p. 44,) such salt "is not only good for nothing in itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown, and this is the reason why it is cast into the street. No man will allow it to be thrown on to his field, and the only place for it is in the street, and there it is cast to be trodden under foot of men." — WHEREWITH SHALL IT [that is, the insipid salt] BE SALTED? Wherewith shall its original strength be restored? As the persons addressed are called *the salt of the earth*, mainly on account of what *they are to be and to*

do unto others, we have here only the idea advanced, that if they lose their fitness to reform the world, there are no other human organs or instrumentalities to restore unto them this qualification. Alford paraphrases the passage: "If you become untrue to your high calling, and spiritually effete and corrupted, there are no ordinary means by which you can be brought back to your former state, inasmuch as you have no teachers and guides over you, but ought yourselves to be teachers and guides to others." Hence the exhortation: Remain true to your state of grace, to your new nature. Beware of disqualifying yourself for your high mission, and remember that, as you cease salting others you cease to remain salt. The possibility, however, of being restored again by the grace of God is here not referred to, and, on this very account, not excluded. Yet it is intimated that the loss of grace, here compared to the salt losing its savor, may attain a point, which makes a second renewal impossible. (Heb. vi, 4-6.) — IT IS HENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING BUT TO BE CAST OUT AND TO BE TRODDEN UNDER FOOT OF MEN. As insipid salt has no good properties, but is positively hurtful, so a dead profession, and especially a dead Gospel ministry, loses not merely all influence for good, but becomes a positive nuisance; nor has the world been slow, as Church history testifies, to render its verdict. Both apostate priests and people have repeatedly met the fate which our Lord here foretells them. The true professor of religion is *hated* and *persecuted* by the world, because the power of truth and righteousness is felt by it — while a dead profession, insipid salt, is the object of supreme and well-deserved contempt.

VERSE 14. Jesus Christ alone is the true light of the world, yet in his infinite condescension he gives this epithet also to his disciples, who are in reality lighted candles, candlesticks. (Phil. ii, 15.) Because they have their light from him alone, Jesus could with propriety say of them, what no merely-human teacher could have said of his disciples, without unheard-of arrogance, and it must have greatly astonished the unlearned disciples themselves, and may have given ample material for ridicule to the scribes, just as even in our days the world can ill repress a sneer, when this text is applied to the Gospel ministry. — In the nature of the case the high mission of the disciples *can not* be concealed, for where there is light it shines, every force of necessity manifests itself. In order to show the impossibility to be hid, still more plainly, the Lord uses two more comparisons; namely, that of a city that is set on a hill, and of a candle that is put on a candlestick. The first metaphor refers more to the

whole body of believers than to the ministry. As Jerusalem, from its lofty position, could be seen afar off, so the Church of the New Testament will be seen in all countries. And is the Christian Church of our time not more than ever a city set on a hill? Has she not become that large tree, under whose shade all nations of the earth seek rest, protection, and refreshing? Christianity is now recognized as the only rule of what is just and good. Its influence is felt and acknowledged in all branches of life, in literature, commerce, politics, legislation, diplomacy, etc. The destiny of the world is in the hands of the Christian nations; the as yet unchristian nations feel their weakness more and more, and manifest a willingness to receive the salt and light of Christianity.

VERSE 15. Men are not guilty of the absurdity of placing lighted lamps in such a position as to render them useless, much less does God impart the light of his Word and Spirit to be concealed. He enlightens us to the end that we should illuminate the world. He that puts his light under a bushel, virtually extinguishes it. This is applicable to every individual Christian, as well as to the Christian Church as a body. No man, filled with the glorious light of the saving knowledge of God, should hide it from a false prudence, bashfulness, fear of persecution, or a mistaken humility.

VERSE 16. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN. "The particle '*so*' is not to be construed merely with what follows — so as, so that — but with what precedes, *thus*, likewise. As men do with lamps or candles, so must you do with the light of truth in this dark world." (Alexander.) Their light is to shine, not they themselves, as being only the candlesticks for the bright light of the Heavenly Father. The idea is also included, that their light will shine, provided they do not put it under a bushel, do not hide it from men; this is not contrary to chap. vi, 1-5, since in the latter place, self-praise is the motive of action, but in our text the honor of the Heavenly Father as the author of all good works. (Comp. John xv, 8.) — THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS. By good works we have to understand not isolated acts, but the whole tenor of a man's life, his whole walk and conversation. (Eph. v, 8-13.) Prominence is given here to their good works, both because it forms the transition point to what follows, where the righteousness of the disciples is represented as the fulfillment of the law, and because external deportment is the only means by which men can judge of character. — THAT THEY MAY GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. To glorify God is to acknowledge the glory due to him. We are not to do our good works for our

own glory. That they may be promotive of the glory of God, we must join to our good works the confession of Divine grace. On this point Stier says: "The men of the world, who know not God, are apt to praise the good works of God's children as human virtue, instead of acknowledging them as the effect of Divine grace. For this reason must be united to good works the confession with the mouth by which man proclaims his indebtedness to Divine grace, saying: 'This is my Father's light through Christ, in whose name I do this.' Insufficient as a profession is without the corresponding works, are also the works without the profession. Unwarranted is evidently the common appeal to this passage on the part of those who neglect to profess Christ with the mouth, as if good works alone were sufficient. By putting our good works in the place of a proper confession, we do not promote our Father's honor, but at best our own, while by honoring God with our walk and profession we constrain men, as far as is in our power, to praise God for the grace that he has given unto us."

B. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS REQUIRED BY THE LAW — TO BE FULFILLED IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Verses 17-20.

(17) THINK not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. (18) For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot^[1] or one tittle^[2] shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (19) Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[1 "Jot" — Greek, *iota*; Hebrew, *yodh* — was the smallest letter in the two languages.]

[2 "Tittle" means either the turn of the stroke which distinguishes one Hebrew letter from another similar to it, or, in its literal meaning, a "little horn," a fine hair-stroke, which, as a sort of flourish, was added to certain letters in

Hebrew manuscripts. The least in or about the law is, consequently, important.]

VERSE 17. By what Jesus had said of the persecution of his disciples for his and for righteousness' sake, he had pointed out the contrast between the righteousness necessary for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven and that of the scribes and the Pharisees. The question, therefore, came very naturally, what position he would occupy with his doctrine concerning the kingdom of God in relation to the law and the prophets. His hearers evidently desired that he might define his position, while some had already formed an opinion for themselves. Jesus meets their case by the emphatical declaration, "THINK NOT." One party, especially the common people, indulged the false expectation that the Messiah would set them free from the stern and galling demands of the law, and establish his glorious kingdom without insisting on repentance and reformation of life. (Jer. xxxi, 31.) Others, especially the popular leaders of the Pharisaic school, charged Jesus with the design to set the law at naught, because he did not recognize their traditions and additions to the law; and as his whole life did not answer to their Messianic expectations, based on their false interpretation of the figurative language of the prophets, many apprehended that he would treat the prophets with no greater deference than the law. For these reasons the Lord emphatically declares: "I am not come to destroy or set at naught either the law or the prophets, but to fulfill; that is, to confirm and complete them." This solemn declaration of the Lord, by which he places himself in the midst, between the Old and New Testaments, as the living unity and truth of both, involves the whole doctrine concerning his person and work. The 17th and 18th verses form the center and theme of the whole discourse, and constitute, with verses 19 and 20, the introduction to the second part, reaching as far as chap. vi, 18. That we may, however, not separate the exposition too far from the text, we detach verses 17-20 from the rest. — **THAT I AM COME.** The prophets had been sent, and had prophesied of him that was to come. Jesus alone came forth from the Father. (John xvi, 27, 28.) — **THE LAW, OR THE PROPHETS.** This was the grand division of the whole Old Testament, both as to its commandments and promises. The whole Old Testament in the twofold aspect of legal requirement and prophecy is a revelation of the Divine will, requiring fulfillment and promising a future in which this fulfillment will take place. It is both a law, to which full obedience has not

yet been rendered, but which, nevertheless, insists upon a perfect obedience to its commandments; and a promise, as yet equally unfulfilled. But when this fulfillment comes, the Old Testament gives way to the New — yet the latter is nothing absolutely new, it is merely the truth and reality of the old, its fulfillment and end. Some have given to the conjunction "or" the meaning of "and," translating: "the law *and* the prophets," but the Greek particle ἢ always means "or," never "and." Others, again, understand by the "law" merely the moral law, the decalogue, since, as they say, the ceremonial and civil law of the Old Testament have actually been abrogated by Christ. This restriction, however, is not well founded, because the Jews understood by the law the whole law without distinguishing between moral, ceremonial, and civil law, and moreover, because not even the least ritual or civil enactment was abrogated by Christ in its spiritual and true import. So likewise with regard to the prophets; whatever these holy men, moved by the Holy Ghost, had written concerning the Messiah, had necessarily to be fulfilled by Him, who by his full obedience to the whole law was to become our righteousness before God. Because the law and the prophets are essentially one, the Lord says with deep significance: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, *or* the prophets — that is, neither the one nor the other. If I did not fulfill the law, neither would the prophets be fulfilled." — TO DESTROY here means to set at naught, to abolish, to declare, or put out of force, applied especially to revolutionary abrogation of laws and constitutions. This the Pharisees virtually did by making the Word of God of none effect by their traditions, (Mark vii, 13,) and "by omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," (Matt. xxiii, 23,) while they attended scrupulously to the observance of outward forms and ceremonies. For this reason Jesus, although speaking here of the whole law, confines himself, in the progress of his discourse, to the exposition of the moral law, and requires of his disciples a righteousness far exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees, who were then considered by the people the most scrupulous observers of the law. Nor was Jesus come to destroy the ceremonial law before every thing symbolized by it was really fulfilled. The ritual law, abolished after the death of Christ, (Eph. ii, 15,) was merely a barrier, necessary for the divinely-ordained pupillage of Israel. By removing this barrier, Jesus did fulfill, not destroy the law, in the same sense as a flower is not destroyed, but developed, when the leaves surrounding the bud burst and drop, or as a picture is not destroyed, when the painter fills up the original sketch. Nor did he come to destroy the prophets, which he would have done, had he confirmed the false interpretations of such

as expected the Messiah to set up a temporal kingdom in great splendor, discarding the requirements of the moral law. For these reasons the Lord emphatically adds: "I am not come to destroy, but TO FULFILL." The word "fulfill," according to the original, signifies to practice, to confirm, and to fill up or complete in opposition to destroying or abrogating. This applies to the whole law, as contained in the Old Testament, in all its bearings. Jesus is come to give by word and deed finish and completion to all that in the old dispensation was merely a foreshadowing sketch. He was the first that by doctrine and practice completed the law, developing on the one hand its spirit out of the shackles of the letter, and on the other hand fulfilling all righteousness in perfect obedience. The fulfillment of the moral law by Christ, implies, in the first place, that he completed and confirmed it by explaining its full meaning, its purity, and spirituality. Secondly, he fulfilled it in a still higher sense by *meeting in his own person, all the claims* the moral law had on human nature; and by doing so fulfilled, at the same time, the ceremonial law; for in his active and passive obedience he became the all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world, redeeming us from the curse of the law — not the law itself — that the righteousness, required by the law, might be fulfilled in us. By fulfilling the law Christ is the end of the law. We are no longer under the law, in so far as through Christ the law lives and is fulfilled in us. When he said — in this discourse — "I am come to fulfill," he had not yet fulfilled what he had come to fulfill; it was not fulfilled before he exclaimed on the cross, "It is finished." Stier, in addition to the foregoing exposition, gives to the significant declaration of our Lord the following general application: "I am by no means come to destroy or abrogate any thing whatsoever that is good or true, the object of my coming is quite the reverse; I am come to preserve, develop, and complete all beginnings and preparations for the kingdom of God in this world. Thus he goes beyond the narrow limits of Israel, and embraces also the Gentile world, which was likewise to share the fruits of his coming. The Gentiles had also a law in their conscience and fore-shadowings in their religious traditions; they had fragments of the original moral law in their civil enactments, and prophets in their sages and poets. (Acts xvii, 28; Tit. i, 12; Rom. ii, 14.) All such longings the Lord has come to satisfy, destroying nothing but sin — the work of Satan — in order to develop into life and growth every germ planted by God in the human heart. But let no one vainly imagine, that he has come for any other purpose than to establish and fulfill the will of God as declared first in the law and the prophets. Every plant that was not planted by his Heavenly Father he roots up. Let no

one look for his favor to free him from the law. Woe to the deluded disciple who fancies to be set free, not from the curse of the law, but the law itself; who fancies himself to be saved by Christ, not from, but in his sins!" Marcion, the Gnostic, who, with the other Gnostics, denied the inspiration of the Old Testament by the Supreme Being, because he could not reconcile its teachings with those of Christ and of the apostle Paul, altered our Savior's words so as to make him say: "What think ye? that I have come to fulfill the law or the prophets? I have come to destroy, not to fulfill."

VERSE 18. FOR VERILY. We hear here for the first time the word *verily* from our Savior's lips, which at the beginning of a sentence implies a solemn assurance, the same as to say, I SOLEMNLY AFFIRM; I SAY UNTO YOU. Both the prophets and the mediator or giver of the law, Moses, could only say: "Thus saith the Lord." But here speaks the Lord himself; the author of the law, and the judge, who admits into and excludes from the kingdom of God, (chap. v, 19,) and he says accordingly: I SAY UNTO YOU, ONE JOT OR ONE TITTLE SHALL IN NO WISE PASS FROM THE LAW. Here, as well as in the sequel, the Lord speaks, as we have remarked before, mainly of the moral law. — TILL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS. The heaven here is not the heaven of v. 12; as the earth here is not the earth promised in verse 5. Heaven and earth, as they now are, are transitory. They shall be changed and renewed. (Rev. xxi, 1.) But the changes which the universe is yet to undergo, being mere changes of its form without annihilation of its substance, the perpetuity of God's universe is a fit emblem of the perpetuity of his law. The meaning, therefore, can not be, that, when the present heavens and the present earth shall pass away, the law also shall be nullified, a declaration which would be irrelevant in this connection, and unsupported by reason or Scripture. Even when *all is fulfilled*, when, according to 1 Cor. xv, 28, "all things shall be subdued unto him, and the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him," then God will be all in all, and the authority of his law is then supreme to the fullest extent.

VERSE 19. WHOSOEVER, THEREFORE, SHALL BREAK ONE OF THESE LEAST COMMANDMENTS. Some refer this breaking, etc., to the division of God's moral law by the Pharisees into greater and less commandments, similar to the division into mortal and venial sins by the Roman Catholic Church in modern times, and understand by it the violation of any commandment, however little in appearance. But this view is not correct. Our

Lord understands by the least commandments, what he himself had designated as a jot or tittle, as is evident from the particle, οὖν; therefore, intimately connecting the 19th with the preceding verse as its logical consequence. — The term "BREAK" — Greek, to loose — means not so much actual violations of a commandment as rather the act of regarding it as of no binding force, and teaching people accordingly. — To make the expression, "THE LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD" synonymous with being entirely excluded from the kingdom of God, is a forced interpretation, and the point in question is the *recognition* of the *importance* of the least commandments, not the legal observance or non-observance of this or that part of the law. According to Olshausen the Lord refers here to a person, who in heart belongs to the kingdom of God, without being, at the same time, fit to teach others. Tholuck finds in the expression the general idea, that God judges man according to his treatment of the Divine law.

VERSE 20. EXCEPT YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, etc. In these words our Savior declares unto his hearers, that the real fulfillment of the law, both by expounding its full meaning and practicing it, must not be expected from their authorized teachers, the scribes and the Pharisees. Most, if not all, of the scribes belonged to the party of the Pharisees, (Luke xi, 44, 45; Acts xxiii, 9,) which passed for the straitest sect, (Acts xxvi, 5,) enjoyed, according to Josephus, the highest reputation with the common people, and had in its ranks some real Israelites, as, e.g., Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel, and the scribe mentioned in Mark xii, 21. Some commentators are of the opinion that the Lord meant this better portion of the Pharisees, because it would have been no recommendation for his disciples to go merely beyond the sanctimoniousness of the great bulk of the party, which even the Talmud reproves, and because even this better portion did not rise above the popular interpretations of the law, that are mentioned in the following verses. We must, however, reject this view, and understand by "the scribes and Pharisees" their whole sect, because it is plain from the context, that our Lord's object was to forcibly set forth the contrast between the teaching and conduct to be exhibited by his disciples and that of the scribes and Pharisees, who claimed and were by the multitude admitted to be the best exponents and keepers of the law. The righteousness taught by the scribes and practiced by the Pharisees consisted almost exclusively in the observance of ceremonies, was, moreover, hypocritical, (Matt. xxiii, 14, 25-28,) deficient in the keeping of the most

important commandments, (Matt. xxiii, 23,) and based upon impure motives. (Matt. xxiii, 5-7.) At the same time these *separatists* — for this is the import of the term "pharisees" — claimed to be much better and holier than other people. But the Lord declared unto them that their righteousness was none at all, that with it they could not enter into the kingdom of God; while the publican is justified after his first penitential prayer.

C. THE RIGHT AND GENUINE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW AS OPPOSED TO THAT TAUGHT AND PRACTICED BY THE PHARISEES, WITH REGARD,

1. TO THE PASSION OF ANGER, (vs. 21-26;) 2. TO INCONTINENCE AND ADULTERY, (vs. 27-32;) 3. TO SWEARING, (vs. 33-37;) 4. TO RETALIATION, (vs. 38-42;) 5. TO THE LOVE OF ENEMIES, vs. 43-47.)

Verses 21-48.

(21) Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [1]
(22) but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause [2] shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, [3] Raca, [4] shall be in danger of the council: [5] but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, [6] shall be in danger of hell-fire. [7]
(23) Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; (24) leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. (25) Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, [8] and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. (26) Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. (27) Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: (28) but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (29) And if thy right eye offend [9] thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not

that thy whole body should be cast into hell. (30) And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. (31) It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: (32) but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (33) Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: (34) but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: (35) nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. (36) Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. (37) But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. (38) Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: (39) but I say unto you, That ye resist ^[10] not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if any man will sue thee at the law, ^[11] and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also. (41) And whosoever shall compel ^[12] thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (42) Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. (43) Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. (44) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? (47) And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? (48) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

[1] That is, liable to the punishment inflicted by the inferior tribunal established in the cities and towns, and consisting, according to Josephus,

of seven, according to the rabbins, of twenty-three members. This judgment was liable to appeal, and could amount, in capital cases, to execution by sword.]

[2 **Εἰκῆ** — without cause — is omitted in many manuscripts and ancient versions, and not imperatively demanded by the context. Possibly it may have been intended to soften the rigor of the precept.]

[3 His fellow-man, whom he is bound to love as his brother.]

[4 Raca is a Syrian word, and means *blockhead, worthless fellow.*]

[5 The council was the Sanhedrim, consisting of seventy-two members, which decided questions of war and peace, as well as the higher crimes of false prophets. It inflicted the severer capital penalty of stoning to death. (Matt. xxi, 23; Luke xxii, 66; Acts v, 21.)]

[6 *Thou fool.* The word rendered "fool" had, in the Hebrew usage, the prominent idea of impiety, atheism, and was an epithet of the highest opprobrium.]

[7 Greek, liable into Geenna; that is, liable to be thrust, by the council, into Geenna. To the south-east of Jerusalem was a deep valley, called in Hebrew the "Vale of Hinnom," in Greek, Geenna. In this valley did the idolatrous Jews (Jer. vii, 31) burn their children to Moloch, and Josiah therefore polluted it, (2 Kings xxiii, 10;) and thenceforth it was the place for the consignment and burning of offal and the corpses of criminals. Hence, it signified hell proper — the place of punishment of the damned, where the worm does not die and where the fire is not quenched. (Isa. lxvi, 24; Jer. vii, 32, 33; Mark ix, 44, 46, 47.) Possibly it was part of the highest capital punishment that the corpse of the criminal was burned in this valley.]

[8 In ancient times the plaintiff had the right, in case of necessity, to bring the defendant by force before the judge.]

[9 The terms "offend," to "take and to give offense" mean, in the Scriptures, to make a person sin by throwing something in his way, and to sin on account of something thrown in the way. (Matt. xvi, 23; xviii, 8; Mark ix, 47; 1 Pet. ii, 8, etc.)]

[10 *Resist*, here, means to offer resistance by striking back, abusing in return, taking back again by force.]

[11 To commence a lawsuit. Whoever intends to take away by a lawsuit thy coat — the cheaper inner garment — let him have, of thy free accord, thy cloak — the more valuable outer garment — also. 12 To compel to go a mile. People were anciently impressed or compelled to go as messengers for the government, and to carry burdens, as, for instance, Simon of Cyrene.]

PRELIMINARY REMARKS. — In this part of his sermon Christ does not oppose his words as a new doctrine to the law of Moses, but merely gives the real meaning and spirit of the law. It is erroneous to say that the law required merely an outward obedience, and that it is only the Gospel which demands the disposition of love toward God and our fellow-men. True, some of the commandments had been adapted to the infant state of the people of God; yet a thorough study of the law and the polity of the children of Israel shows plainly, that the spiritual law lay throughout at the bottom, and was limited only because of the hardness of their hearts. (Matt. xix, 8.) Thus we find in the Old Testament from the very beginning the germ that was to burst, in the course of time, through its surrounding shell, and which, to some extent, actually broke through it; but the scribes and Pharisees, instead of seeking the Spirit of God to lead them into a more spiritual understanding of the law, hedged it in more and more, and confined themselves almost exclusively to its letter. In opposition to them Christ explains and confirms the law by enlarging its individual precepts. In interpreting the following expositions of our Savior, we must guard against two errors: 1. That of the Roman Catholic expounders, who maintained "that these declarations of Jesus did not contain commandments binding for every Christian, but only so-called Evangelical counsels for a particular class of persons, that aimed at an extraordinary degree of holiness." Surely, the words of Christ contain not even the least hint that some of his commandments were intended for only a portion of his followers. Nearly allied to this Romish doctrine is the view of some Protestant commentators, who will have it that these words of Jesus apply to a glorious state of the kingdom of God, not yet realized, in which there will be neither courts, nor oaths, nor divorces; and that what Christ here forbids is through necessity lawful for Christians, as long as they have to mingle with the unconverted. 2. Others err in taking each and every one of these commandments literally. Accordingly they look upon every oath, every kind of resistance, every refusal of alms, etc., as an unchristian act, thus transferring to the outward act what Christ intended for the disposition of the heart. For in these very commandments the Lord wanted to make his hearers feel, that a temporal kingdom, such as the Jews expected, was an impossibility, since a literal keeping of them in a commonwealth governed by law, which can not change the disposition, would necessarily lead to anarchy, in fact, to a complete overthrow of organized society. If, e.g., all resistance to wrong was to be given up, the spirit of violence would be encouraged and thereby we would violate the love which we owe to our own

families and even to the aggressor himself; by giving alms to all that apply for them indiscriminately, idleness and vice would be promoted. Such sayings, therefore, must be interpreted by the tenor and spirit of Christ's whole doctrine. Whenever the Christian, after a thorough examination, can truthfully say, that the honor of God and the well-being of his neighbor are the only motives of his action, then he has not only the right, but is obliged to depart from the letter of these commandments, as Christ himself and his apostles have done.

VERSE 21. YE HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID. This phraseology is owing to the fact that the Jews did not read their sacred books themselves, but heard them read and expounded by their scribes, who represented their comments on the sacred text as traditions handed down from the Fathers. — **BY THEM OF OLD TIMES** — according to the idiom of the Greek language, it ought to be rendered "to them of old times," that is, to the ancients, the generation which received the law. (Acts vii, 53.) Dr. Alexander paraphrases the whole verse thus: "You have [often] heard [it said by the scribes and Pharisees] that our fathers were commanded not to murder, and that consequently only he who murders [in the strict sense of the term] is liable to be condemned and punished under this commandment." The Pharisees, by confining themselves to the letter, reduced the Divine commandment to a mere civil law, as if it forbade nothing more than actual murder, just as if a minister of the Gospel would enforce the sixth commandment by no higher consideration than by saying: "The law of the country forbids murder — you must, therefore, not commit murder, because if you do the court will condemn you to death."

VERSE 22. By the words, "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU," the Lord represents himself as the lawgiver, of whom Moses had said, (Deut. xviii, 15:) "The Lord thy God will raise up a prophet like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." While the scribes restricted the commandment to actual murder, the fulfiller of the law teaches that it is the intent and purpose which constitute the criminality, and that the disposition or frame of mind from which the deed proceeds, is just as criminal in itself before God as the outward deed. (1 John iii, 15.) According to Christ, the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" means, "Thou shalt not hate," and is violated even by unholy anger, by harboring hatred in the heart, and still more by giving vent to it in spiteful words. Beyond this, the exhibition of the sinful frame of the mind in words, the Lord does not go, because the outward deed, the act of violence, was admitted even by the

Pharisees to be sinful. In order to set forth the different grades of guilt in the development of the sinful frame of the mind, the Lord refers to the different criminal courts among the Jews and the sentences pronounced by them — that is, death by the sword, inflicted by the lower court of seven; death by stoning, to which was, sometimes, added the burning of the corpse in the valley of Hinnom, by the council of seventy-two members. Here, however, we must bear in mind, 1. That the three punishments enumerated are all capital punishments, differing from each other in degree, not in kind. In the same manner will the sentences of death pronounced on the great day of judgment on all finally-impenitent sinners be the same in kind, but in a manner transcending our comprehension they will vary in degree according to the degree of guilt of the condemned. It is, moreover, self-evident, that by the "in danger of the judgment" and the "in danger of the council" the Lord does not understand penalties inflicted by earthly tribunals any more than by the "in danger of hell-fire." For how would a human judge take cognizance of and pronounce death upon anger in the heart? 2. The degree of guilt attaching to the terms of reproach mentioned in the text is determined by the degree of the hatred and enmity which they express. Yet the degree of guilt of the sinful emotion can not always be ascertained by its expression in word and deed. The emotion in itself may often be more heinous in the sight of God than the outward word and deed — a hastily-uttered "raca" may be less sinful in the eyes of God than anger concealed by words of flattery. If Christ had determined the degree of guilt by the outward manifestations of the sinful disposition, not by the intensity of the sinful emotion, he would, to a certain extent at least, have substituted one kind of outward righteousness for another.

VERSES 23 AND 24. A practical inference is here drawn from the foregoing declaration of our Savior. If such a doom awaits those who indulge in angry feelings and expressions, what care should be exercised not to give offense and to remove every just cause of complaint which any one may have against us! The most sacred act is to be interrupted in order to make speedy reparation of a wrong done to our fellow-man. As Christ addresses Jews, not Christians, he refers to the sacrificial worship of the Old Testament; he introduces the Jew, waiting in the outer court for the priest to receive at his hands the victim, in order to kill it in the court of the priests and to offer it upon the altar of burnt-offerings. Any thing that would cause and justify an interruption in this most solemn moment, must be of the utmost importance. It

is significantly said: "If thou rememberest that thy brother has aught against thee," not that thou hast aught against thy brother, in which case, though thy brother might have just cause of complaint against thee, you might say: "I have nothing in my heart against my brother, and can, therefore, go on with my worship." This subterfuge is cut off at once by our Savior. Not before the offended brother is really reconciled or before every thing has been done on our part to remove his cause of complaint, we can come and offer sacrifices acceptable unto the Lord. This is the further explanation of the sixth commandment — it includes not only the offender, but also the implacable. Every one that does not love is a murderer. The absence of love to our neighbor can not be atoned for by any act of worship. All worship without love is worthless. If the Jew must be at peace with his neighbor when he is about to offer an ox or a sheep, how much more a Christian when he is about to celebrate the memorial of the sufferings and death of his Savior! — AND THEN COME AND OFFER THY GIFT. This precept strikes at the root of that godless morality, which fancies that God requires nothing of man than to love his neighbor, and that, when this duty is discharged, we owe nothing more to God.

VERSES 25 AND 26. Tholuck takes these two verses correctly for an application of what goes before, as if the Lord meant to say: "Be not surprised at my insisting so positively on your becoming reconciled without delay to your brethren, for if you go out of this life, which is so short and uncertain, with an unforgiving heart, your passion, of which you did not repent, and the injury for which you made no reparation, become your accusers before the judgment-seat of God, and your punishment will then be endless." In order to set this in a still clearer light, the Lord introduces a new comparison; namely, the relation of a debtor to his creditor. The debtor, in this comparison, is the man that wrongs his neighbor, the adversary is the injured party. For the debtor it is wise and an imperative duty to make reparation of the inflicted wrong as soon as he can; for if death overtakes him while his heart is full of anger, or before he had made amends for the injury inflicted, the law of God violated in the person of the injured party will, as it were, accuse him before God, and God will be an inexorable Judge; on the day of judgment not even the least portion of his debt will be remitted. In applying the metaphor to our reconciliation with God, we must be very careful. It is taking unwarrantable liberty with the Word of God, to understand by the adversary directly the law;

by the Judge, God, or Christ; by the officer, the devil; and by the prison, hell. — Those that deny the endless duration of the punishment of hell, appeal to the conjunction "TILL" in favor of the restoration of all things; but how is it possible that the sinner should pay the least portion of his debt to God, much less all of it, as implied here by the uttermost farthing? If deliverance from out of hell were possible, it could be brought about only by grace, by a free pardon, not by a full payment of all our debts or by an endurance of the punishment due for our sins.

VERSES 27 AND 28. Having thus explained the spirit and the sanctions of the sixth commandment, our Lord proceeds to a similar elucidation of the seventh. The Pharisees taught that the violation of this commandment, as well as that of the former, consisted only in the external act, while they considered impure thoughts and desires as something harmless and not forbidden. It is not the involuntary rising of a desire, but the looking on a woman for the purpose of feeding this desire — this is the force of the Greek preposition πρὸς — that our Lord pronounces incipient adultery. He speaks here not of affections planted in our nature, whose risings we can not prevent, but of a carnal desire to which the will consents. Thus Luther on this passage: "It is impossible to prevent the devil from shooting evil thoughts and lusts into the heart; but take heed that you do not suffer his arrows to stick fast in your heart, but throw them out and do as one of the Fathers has said: I can, indeed, not prevent a bird from flying over my head, but I can prevent it from nestling in my hair!" Thus it is not in our power to escape being tempted by evil thoughts; but this is in our power, to dismiss these thoughts before our will consents to them and they become a purpose or design." He that fosters an evil desire in his heart and does not carry it out merely because time, place, and circumstances are unfavorable, is in the sight of God, who looks at the heart, guilty of the deed, although the actual deed would highten his guilt. Stier remarks that our Lord speaks here after the Old Testament usage, in which both in the seventh commandment and elsewhere adultery includes fornication, and that, therefore, fornication is here forbidden as well as adultery; for marriage being the becoming one flesh, every such union, except that after the manner and in the state appointed by God, is a violation and contempt of that holy ordinance, and the desire of such a God-forbidden union is, therefore, equally forbidden.

VERSES 29 AND 30. How difficult it is to comply with what is required in the preceding verse, in every point of view, is self-evident; but the Savior, far

from softening his statement in the least, insists on the most rigid self-denial, which he enforces by the boldest metaphors. That his language is metaphorical, not literal, requires no proof — for if the right eye were literally plucked out, the left would take its place, and the sinful desire and lust would be still where they were before, in the heart, the real seat of all evil thoughts. (Matt. xv, 19.) The command, therefore, is not to pluck out the right eye or to cut off the right hand, in a literal sense, but "to mortify the deeds of the body" (Rom. viii, 13) which correspond to these members. The eye and the hand are mentioned as being the organs of temptation — the epithet *right* means, according to the popular view, the better member. This mode of expression, putting the organ or member for the lust or desire acting through it, is very common in every language. The eye symbolizes the temptation to sin, the hand the sinful deed. Verse 29 warns against carnal desires, verse 30 against the deed. The meaning of the whole is this: If thy hand or thy eye tempt thee to sin, treat them as being not thine, oppose thine own members, hate thyself — that is, thy flesh, thine own life, when it prompts thee to sin; throw away with decision and energy every thing that entices thee to sin, even if it should cost thy life! This injunction is enforced by the further consideration that our best interests are subserved thereby; it is profitable for thee.

VERSE 31. IT HAS BEEN SAID. Our Lord passing here from a Sinaitic commandment to a civil ordinance founded on the commandment, chooses purposely the shortest, most general expression: "It has been said," or rather it was said; although it is a condensed quotation of what Moses has said. (Deut. xxiv, 1.) — **WHOSOEVER SHALL PUT AWAY HIS WIFE LET HIM GIVE HER A LETTER OF DIVORCEMENT.** The Mosaic law (Deut. xxiv, 1) was, that if "*some uncleanness*" were found in a wife, the husband might "write a bill of divorce and put it in her hand, and send her out of his house." On the meaning of the word "*uncleanness*" the schools of the two rabbins, Shammai and Hiller, differed, the former understanding by it adultery alone, the latter any defect of person or character, any thing in the woman that displeased her husband. The object of the Mosaic enactment was not to weaken, but to protect matrimony and to *allow* divorce only under certain conditions. Tradition and a false interpretation perverted the enactment and said; "Moses has commanded." (Matt. xix, 7.)

VERSE 32. CAUSETH HER TO COMMIT ADULTERY — that is, drives her to adultery — which she commits by marrying another, while she is

yet in the bonds of the first marriage; and he that marries her — thus capriciously divorced — commits adultery for the same reason. The expulsion — "*a mensa et thoro*" — from the table and the bed, is in itself not yet adultery, but the liberty to marry again Christ pronounces as adultery, and forbids it positively in all cases, except when one party by adultery has dissolved the bonds of matrimony before. The only cause which justifies a divorce is adultery. This, however, leaves the question still open, whether the other party is still in bondage, after the first has virtually dissolved the marriage-contract, which Paul answers in the negative. (1 Cor. vii, 15.) See more on this subject in Matt. xix, 3-9.

VERSE 33. THOU SHALT NOT FORSWEAR THYSELF, BUT SHALT PERFORM UNTO THE LORD THINE OATHS. This is an abridgment of the precept in Lev. xix, 12: "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God." From this precept the false inference was drawn, that no swearing was forbidden except false swearing or swearing by the name of God. This false inference Christ refutes in verses 34-37, taking for granted the criminality of swearing falsely.

VERSES 34-36. SWEAR NOT AT ALL. From this emphatic *not at all*, from verse 37, and James v, 12, some of the ancient Fathers, and more recently the Quakers, and some others have drawn the inference that every act of confirmation by oath is here indiscriminately forbidden by our Lord. It is conceded that true Christians need no oath in their intercourse with each other. God must always be so vividly present in the Christian's consciousness, that his yea and nay have both for him and other Christians the solemnity and force of an oath, for which reason no Church or denomination that claims, in the least, to be a communion of true believers, exacts an oath from its members. Christ forbids here, moreover, every oath that is taken to give our words a force and obligation, which a mere affirmation without an oath would not have even in our own eyes, as if man was not as much bound by his word as by an oath. It is also evident that it is very sinful to make an appeal to the sacred majesty of God without necessity or for selfish ends. But to suppose that our Lord meant here to forbid all appeals to God in attestation of the truth, especially when required by the civil authority and for the best interests of society in the suppression of vice and in the protection of the innocent, would be inconsistent with the Divine commandment requiring the oath. (Exod. xxii, 11; Deut. vi, 13; x, 20.) It is also to be borne in mind that Christ himself used solemn

asseverations and respected the solemn adjuration of the high-priest, (chap. xxvi, 63,) and that the apostle Paul in many passages of his epistles calls God to witness from the bottom of his devout heart. (Rom. i, 9; Phil. i, 8; 1 Thess. ii, 5-10; 2 Cor. xi, 11, 31; i, 23.) Many commentators, moreover, maintain that the injunction of the Lord "swear not at all," has no reference whatever to oaths proper, but only to profane swearing and cursing, because, as they say, the different asseverations enumerated had not the force of oaths before Jewish judicatories, and the term "conversation" means only the daily intercourse with our fellow-men, to which, therefore, all the words of our Savior must be referred. — From the various objects by which our Lord forbids his followers to swear, we learn the unparalleled frivolity of the Pharisees, who pretended that since heaven and earth would pass away, an oath by them would also pass away, and to swear falsely by them was, therefore, no perjury. This quibbling the Lord reprobates by reminding them that swearing by any thing that God has created, is to swear by the Creator himself. The reason given by our Lord why a man should not swear by his own head has its difficulty. Dr. Alexander remarks: "The difficulty may be somewhat lessened by explaining *white or black* as a proverbial expression, meaning any kind whatever, and giving to the verb its strongest sense, that of creation. 'Thou canst not make, that is, bring into existence even one hair, whether white or black.' It is, then, a denial of man's power, not to change the color of his hair, which is continually done by artificial means, but to produce one of any color, which, however trivial the effect may be, is a creative act. Being, therefore, an oath by God himself, it is the more to be avoided, because destitute of even that slight pretext which might seem to justify the oaths, just mentioned, by his throne, his footstool, and his royal city, all of which may be used to represent him in a way that is entirely inappropriate to the human head." It is, however, to be borne in mind, that though we may color our hair, the new growth of hair will not be affected by the dye, but will retain its natural color.

VERSE 37. To use solemn asseverations in their daily intercourse and business transactions always has been and still is in vogue among the Jews. (Ruth. i, 17; 1 Sam. xiv, 44, 45; 2 Sam. iii, 9.)

VERSE 38. AN EYE FOR AN EYE, etc. This is a rule laid down in the Old Testament for the administration of justice. (Ex. xxi, 23-25; Lev. xxiv, 19, 20; Deut. xix, 21.) This Mosaic law is based on the right of retaliation, which we find at the bottom of the oldest legal enactments. The violation of the law

calls for retribution — that is, as the law has been treated by the offender, so it treats him in turn in order to teach him the nature and extent of his offense. Christ's object was not to oppose this law, in itself, but only the interpretation of it by the Pharisees, who acted and taught as if the law read: "The injured party *shall* return like for like to gratify private revenge." The injured party, for whose benefit magistrates are appointed, *may* seek redress, but is under no obligation to do so. For even the Old Testament forbids this seeking of retaliation, in so far as it is based on passion and revenge. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people," (Lev. xix, 18,) and, "Say not I will do so to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work." (Prov. xxiv, 29.) The Lord, therefore, contradicts here, not what was said by Moses and the prophets, but the false application which the Pharisees made of the law, who perverted the right of retaliation into a duty, and did not always sanction even the judicial decision, merely that they might gratify their revengeful spirit. To this spirit which seeks retaliation either by judicial proceedings or by private revenge, the Lord opposes the long-suffering of love, which makes man willing rather to suffer a double amount of wrong than to be avenged. — We have shown before, that what the Lord says in verses 39-42 has reference to the disposition, not to a literal outward practice.

VERSE 39. WHOSOEVER SHALL SMITE THEE ON THE RIGHT CHEEK. Christ does not mention here dangerous injuries, as in the preceding verse, but speaks of insulting treatment, a point that may materially assist us to get at the real meaning of his words. Christ did not say nor would he have said: "Whosoever shall knock out your right eye, offer to him also the left." Moreover, Christ explains his words himself by his conduct. (John xviii, 22, 23.) To the rude officer, who struck him with the palm of his hand, he did not offer the other cheek, whereby he would merely have tempted him to highten his guilt, but he mildly reproved him. What Christ here inculcates is the very opposite of that heathenish code of honor which will not brook an insult and by which dueling has been kept up among Christian nations, even to this day. The reverse of this so-called code of honor is the Christian manliness which manifests itself in suffering and endurance. Its motto is: we will not return the blow and thus take the law and justice into our own hands. With this spirit, however, is a lawful vindication of one's rights not inconsistent. I have a perfect right to vindicate my rights and my honor in every possible lawful manner, but this can be done without a spirit of revenge. Some are of opinion that Christ

laid down here merely prudential maxims for the first Christians, who in their sorest persecution could get no redress from the magistrates, and did, therefore, best to endure to the uttermost. But such temporizing is in diametrical opposition to the character of our Lord.

VERSE 40. AND IF ANY MAN WILL SUE THEE AT THE LAW. In the same sense in which the Lord condemns the spirit of revenge for personal indignity, he condemns the spirit of litigiousness with one who designs to commit a legal wrong. To the same effect Paul wrote to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. vi, 7:) "There is utterly a fault among you. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded [*than go to law*]?" — Now, since it is only the spirit of litigiousness which Christ forbids, an appeal to the law in order to secure one's rights is not inconsistent with this precept. So Luther: "It is not forbidden to go to law and to complain of injustice and violence, provided the heart is right and equally patient as before, and the only object is to vindicate the right and resist injustice." It is, therefore, not strange to find the same apostle, who exhorts the Corinthians rather to suffer wrong than to go to law, appealing to magistrates in order to have his rights protected. (Acts xvi, 35, 40; xxii, 23, 29; xxv, 9.)

VERSE 41. The true sense of this verse is: the follower of Christ, rather than render in an angry spirit a service which is forced upon him, should from motives of love render it voluntarily, and even twice, if necessary. Such conduct, though not in all cases practicable, is the model to be aimed at; and how salutary are its effects! It disarms the oppressor and makes him blush, restores peace and prevents injustice.

VERSE 42. The parallel passage (Luke vi, 32-34) makes the import and connection of this precept perfectly clear and plain. The individual asking and wishing to borrow of thee is the adversary mentioned in the preceding verses. Alford remarks very judiciously on this passage: "Our gracious Savior, who promised his disciples that he would do whatever they might ask in his name, (John xiv, 14,) knowing what is good for us, so answers our prayers that we are never sent away empty; not always, indeed, receiving what we ask, but that which in the very disappointment we are constrained thankfully to confess is better than our wish. So in his humble sphere should the Christian giver act. To give every thing to every one, would be to act as the enemy of others and ourselves. Ours should be a wider and deeper charity, flowing from those inner

springs of love which are the sources of outward actions sometimes widely divergent, whence may arise the timely concession, and the timely refusal."

VERSE 43. THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AND HATE THINE ENEMY. The first clause of this precept is found Lev. xix, 18; the second is found no where in the Old Testament Scriptures; the false interpretations of the Pharisees culminates here in an arbitrary addition to the law, which mutilates it and completely destroys its meaning. The first step taken in this misinterpretation and perversion was to restrict the precepts of love to the Israelites and the stranger sojourning with them exclusively, (Lev. xix, 33, 34;) the second was to make "not to love" equal to hating. When Moses uses neighbor and fellow-Israelite as apparently synonymous terms, he does so because the Jew, shut up from intercourse with the surrounding Gentiles in so many ways, could ordinarily practice the commandment of love only on his fellow-Jew; but that the two terms are not synonymous, that the law of love includes the Gentile also, is proved by the Decalogue. For who can believe for a moment that the Jew would be guiltless in bearing false witness against the Gentile, or in coveting his wife, etc.? Moreover, the term *neighbor* is used with reference to the Gentiles before the law was given. (Ex. xi, 2; Gen. xxxviii, 20.)

VERSE 44. Here our Lord seems to go beyond the requirements of the old dispensation; it is true the law commanded to bring both the stray ox or ass of an enemy to his owner, or when lying under his burden to help to raise him, (Ex. xxiii, 4, 5,) forbids to rejoice at an enemy's fall, (Prov. xxiv, 17,) yea, commands to give him to eat and to drink when hungry and thirsty, (Prov. xxv, 21, 22;) but what is all this compared with Christ's command: "Love your enemies — bless them that curse you — do good to them that hate you — pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you?" The scale of love given to us by our Lord, is beautifully described by Chrysostom: "Hast thou seen how many steps He has gone up? Look back and count: the first step is, to do no wrong to others; the second, not to return evil for evil to him that has wronged you; the third, to return no revilings, but to be still; the fourth, to offer yourself to suffer wrong; the fifth, to offer more than the adversary demands; the sixth, not to hate him who has wronged you; the seventh, even to love him; the eighth, even to do good unto him; the ninth, even to pray for him. Doest thou now see the loftiness of Christian virtue?" The objection, that the command to love one's enemies involves an impossibility, inasmuch as love is an affection that is not under the control of the will, is of no weight, for love

implies more than a mere emotion. It implies just as much a conduct, arising from certain principles, and is, therefore, as proper an object of command as any other duty. The modern languages have but one word for these two kinds of love, but not so the Greek language; the first kind of love is expressed by φιλεῖν, the second by ἀγαπᾶν, and it is scarcely necessary to add, that our Savior uses the second term. The love of our enemies enjoined by our Savior, does, consequently, not mean a sentimental love, a being delighted with an enemy, but the love of benevolence, which seeks to promote the enemy's best interests as well as our own. To bless with a heart devoid of love would be an empty, hypocritical phrase; to do good without love — ostentation; and to pray for an enemy without love — an impossibility. A beautiful example of the love enjoined here is related by Cyprian. While during the rage of a pestilence at Carthage the heathens neglected their sick and suffered their dead to lie unburied in the streets, Cyprian exhorted the Christians to take care not only of *their* own sick, but, also of those of the heathen. The Christians did so, and thus saved the city from total ruin.

VERSE 45. The mild rays of the sun, which fall upon all alike that do not go out of his reach, the fertilizing shower, that extending over large tracts descends upon barren as well as fruitful fields — what beautiful emblems of God's unmerited love! — God's enemies are the wicked. It is God who makes his sun to rise and who sends rain. God hates and commands us to hate what is evil, but blesses him that does evil — this is the standard which the children of God are to imitate. The Spirit of God teaches them to distinguish between the man and the evil in him, and while they hate this, to love the man. This, love, which is divine, is not within the reach of man's own efforts, not the product of his own resolutions; it is the free gift of God, which we can obtain only by being made partakers of the spirit of Christ. Thus we are referred back to verses 9 and 16. He that makes so high demands of us is also willing to fill us with Divine love, if we hunger and thirst after it. This, however, does not preclude the effort to practice it before we have it; for it is only by these very efforts that we become fully conscious how entirely destitute we are of it by nature.

VERSES 46, 47. The hollowness of the pharisaical pretensions, their entire destitution of love is here still more exposed. "You exclude from your love not only your enemy, but even him who does not love you." No human being is so abandoned to all wickedness, no sinner so demon-like, that he has not some of whom he can say, "I love them because they love me." With the

Pharisees, who, as their very name implied, pretended to be better than others and claimed extraordinary sanctity, the Lord confronts here a class of people, who were judged by them to stand on the very lowest scale, namely, the publican and heathen. He speaks of reward, because the reward was the principal motive in all the actions of the Pharisee. Alas that even in our day many professing Christians need a warning against pharisaism! "Add to brotherly kindness charity" toward all men. (2 Pet. i, 7.)

VERSE 48. BE YE THEREFORE. Our Lord, reverting to the Divine example set forth in verse 45, teaches his followers not to copy the imperfect models, furnished by even the best of men, much less those furnished by reputed sinners, but the perfect model set before them by their Heavenly Father. Stier refers these words to the whole preceding discourse. "In order to reach the standard which Christ placed before his disciples, they must become holy, as was required even by the law. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." (Lev. xi, 45; xix, 2; xx, 7-26.) God is holy in his condescending mercy. It is said of him, he is love, not he is Omnipotence, Justice, etc. Love is *in him also* the bond of perfection, the substance of all his other attributes. Our perfection is to become merciful like him — this is the term used by Luke. — It is true, children are only perfect as children. The mark of our heavenly calling is: ye shall be holy. If even this Old Testament command to be holy, contains a promise that the Holy One purposes to make us holy, we have now in the Son thrown open to us the fullness of the Godhead, the riches of Divine love. If we believe in his name this faith is counted unto us for righteousness and we are complete (perfect) in him. (Col. ii, 10.) If we earnestly follow after holiness, seeking to apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus, we are perfect in the center or purpose of the heart, (Phil. iii, 15,) although still imperfect in actual performance, (Phil. iii, 12,) and the Word of the Lord is our warrant that we shall reach this perfection also, if we remain and grow in love. The God of peace will sanctify us wholly, (1 Thess. v, 23,) till through the perfect work of patience we have become perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James i, 4.) Olshausen comments on this passage as follows: "All attempts to substitute an artificial for the literal meaning of the word 'perfect' are nugatory, on account of the addition 'even as your Father is perfect,' and the meaning of the command can, therefore, be no other than that the image of God is to be restored in man. According to the principle, that every speaker is the interpreter of his own words, we must attach this meaning to these words, even

if we dissented from it." — This may be the right place to say a few words on the doctrine of Christian perfection. A thing is perfect if it contains every thing that by its nature and design it ought to contain. Fallen man can in this life never become perfect, as the angels are perfect, or as Adam was before the fall. For by the fall the original faculties of man both of body and soul have sustained an injury, that will not be fully repaired before the resurrection. Christian perfection, or the perfection of a Christian, consists in this, that he is what he ought to be, that for which Christ has redeemed him, and which the Gospel promises to accomplish in him through the power of the Holy Ghost. Whatever God does is perfect; in applying the term "perfect" to the work of grace in the soul, we must, however, make a distinction in its meaning. A thing is perfect which has all the parts that essentially belong to it; at the same time, it may be imperfect in degree — that is, every one of its parts may admit of a growth and development, and thus become more perfect in itself. Justification is a full pardon of all sins, both original and actual; this work is perfect both in its nature and degree — it can not become more perfect. Regeneration is also a perfect work, but only in its nature, not in degree. Just as a newly-born, healthful child can be called a perfect man, (*homo,*) having all the essential parts of the human organism, although the individual members are still imperfect, in so far as they must grow and be developed — so the new birth out of God is also a perfect work, though only in its nature, not in degree. Whoever is born of God, has all the fruits of the Spirit, faith, love, humility, meekness, resignation to the will of God; not, however, in that perfect degree in which they are possessed by the man of God that has come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, when every thing that resists the gracious operations of the Holy Ghost is removed out of the heart. Whether, and how, this state of grace is attainable in this life, we shall consider in connection with other passages of Scripture. We will here make only the additional remark, that Christian perfection includes neither a legal perfection — that is, a coming up to the demands of God's law upon an unfallen nature — nor does it exclude in the case of him that possesses it all further growth in grace. Even when the believer is perfectly redeemed by grace through faith from the guilt, power, and pollution of sin, it is his privilege and duty to increase in the new life of holiness more and more. — EVEN AS. This particle does not imply equality in degree, but approximative likeness.

D. THE TRUE MOTIVE IN GOOD WORKS — A LIVELY SENSE OF GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE AND OMNISCIENCE, (CHAP. vi, 1-18:)

ILLUSTRATED BY WARNINGS, 1. AGAINST A HYPOCRITICAL PRACTICE OF BENEVOLENCE TO OBTAIN THE APPLAUSE OF MEN, (vs. 2-4;) 2. AGAINST HYPOCRISY IN PRAYER AND THE PERVERSION OF ITS TRUE NATURE, (vs. 6-15;) 3. AGAINST HYPOCRITICAL FASTING, (vs. 16-18.)

Chapter VI, 1-18.

(1) TAKE heed that you do not your alms 1 before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. (2) Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites 2 do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (3) But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: (4) that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. (5) And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing 3 in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, 4 and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (7) But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens *do*: 5 for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (8) Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. (9) After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, 6 Hallowed be thy name. (10) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. (11) Give us this day our daily bread. 7 (12) And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (14) For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: (15) but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (16) Moreover when ye fast, 8 be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure 9 their

faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (17) But thou, when thou fastest, anoint 10 thine head, and wash thy face; (18) that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

[1 According to the best authenticated reading: righteousness. "Alms" came, in all probability, into the text as an explaining gloss, the Jews understanding by "righteousness" mainly alms giving. The correct translation, accordingly, is: "Take heed that ye do not practice your righteousness."]

[2 The Greek verb, **ὑποκρίνεσθαι**, from which the noun hypocrite is derived, means originally to appear on the stage in an assumed character, then more generally to appear and act anywhere in an assumed character, and hence to *wish* to appear what one is not. In the New Testament hypocrisy means throughout an ostentatious display of the form of godliness without its possession.]

[3 The Jews used to pray, for the most part, standing, with their faces turned toward the Temple or the Holy of Holies. (1 Sam. i, 26; 1 Kings viii, 22.) Sometimes, however, they prayed kneeling or lying prostrate on the earth. The term standing — **εστῶτες** — in itself does not imply ostentation, but this idea is expressed in, they love — **φιλοῦσιν.**]]

[4 There was in every Jewish family a place set apart for devotional exercises. The roofs of the houses are flat and were used, especially in the evening, for this purpose. They were surrounded with balustrades, three or four feet high, so that a person there had a fair view of the surrounding country without being seen himself. There was often a private apartment there, called Alijah, used exclusively for prayer; to this our Lord most probably refers.]]

[5 The nations out of Israel, which do not know the true and living God.]]

[6 Greek: in the heavens.]]

[7 The Greek term for "daily bread" is found in no Greek author before the Gospels were written, and has given a good deal of trouble to commentators; various significations have been assigned to it, the most probable of which is: food sufficient for subsistence, food convenient for man, as Solomon says. (Prov. xxx, 8.)]

[8 The voluntary private fasts are here meant, (Luke xviii, 12,) not the usual public fast. (Lev. xvi, 29.)]

[9 Literally: they hide from sight, that is, they darken their countenances by dust and ashes (Isa. lxi, 3) for the purpose of attracting the more attention. In the case before us they probably sought to accomplish this by a mournful look and a total neglect of their outward appearance.]

[10 Anointing was the expression of cheerfulness and mirth; people anointed themselves where they went to entertainments.]

VERSE 1. The first verse, if we adopt the reading given in footnote 1, forms the introduction to verses 2-18, and contains the generic, which is subdivided into three parts. Lange shows best its connection with what goes before: "After exposing the misinterpretations of the law, (chap. v, 21-32,) and the positive corruptions of doctrine (chap. v, 33-47) on the part of the scribes and Pharisees, the Lord censures the corresponding corruptions of their religious life in three instances. Alms-giving, prayer, and fasting were the three main exponents of practical piety, in which especially the Pharisees used to display their pretended sanctity, and which the Church of Rome also understands principally by good works." — "BEFORE MEN" is not forbidden in itself, (Comp. chap. v, 16,) but the ostentatious display before men, which is very forcibly expressed by the Greek πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι, for the purpose of being gazed at as a show. A respect to the recompense of reward from our Heavenly Father, vitiates by no means our righteousness, provided it is not the sole or even principal motive of our actions. Our good works must spring from a sense of duty, from a feeling of gratitude for the work of redemption, and must be done for His honor and glory, and with all this, respect to the recompense of reward is perfectly consistent, (Heb. xi, 26,) though God rewards only the good intention of the heart; the brightest deeds, if they do not come from this source, are an abomination before God.

VERSE 2. The THEREFORE (*οὖν*) deduces, as we have remarked above, the special precept from the generic given in v. 1. By the "sounding a trumpet" we understand, perhaps, best the noisy, ostentatious way in which these hypocrites bestowed their alms. Similar sayings are met with in almost all languages. Some commentators, however, take the words literally and understand by them the calling together of the poor by blowing a trumpet — but of this practice no examples can be found. — THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD — that is, they have it in full, exhaust it. The ambitious can look for no other reward than the praise of the world, and having received this he has

his reward in full; nor did he desire any other; for God's sake he has done nothing, and has, therefore, to look for no reward to him.

VERSES 3, 4. LET NOT THY LEFT HAND KNOW, etc. This phrase seems likewise to be proverbial. Privacy in the bestowal of alms is here not absolutely commanded, only the ambitious seeking of notoriety is forbidden. There are occasions where it may be the duty of the Christian to provoke others to good works by his public example, and thus to commend the religion which he professes. If Christians would do all their good works only in secret, the liberality of the non-professors would be extolled by the enemies of Christ, and the professor charged with niggardliness. Yea, there are cases when it would be absolutely sinful for the Christian to conceal his good works. Supposing a child of God is stripped of his property by unfair means, is it then not the Christian's solemn duty to show to the world that he truly sympathizes with his brother? — Since both the left and the right hand are the givers, the warning is *a personal one*. He must not behold himself complacently in his gift, since from this very source arises the desire to be applauded by others. While thy right hand giveth, be far from holding a trumpet in the left, or from stretching it out for reward or applause. The best comment we find in chap. xxv, 37. Be not at all apprehensive that your deeds may be done so secretly that God himself will take no notice of them and withhold your reward. God forgets no work of love. (Heb. vi, 10.) Alms given in the right manner will receive their reward, possibly in part in this life already, but certainly in the life to come. (Luke xiv, 14; 1 Tim. v, 25.)

VERSE 5. The Jews attached to prayer a still greater importance than even to fasting and alms-giving, but had reduced it to a mere mechanical performance. They prayed three times a day, at nine o'clock, A.M., at twelve o'clock, and at three o'clock, P.M., and resorted to the synagogue for prayer on the Sabbath, on Monday, and Thursday. Many a zealous Jew spent nine hours a day in prayer. Nor did they go for public prayer only to the synagogue, but, like the Roman Catholics, also for private prayer, because greater efficacy was ascribed to prayer in the synagogue. The Pharisees managed it so — this is implied in "*they love*" — that they were overtaken by the hour of prayer while on their way to the synagogue, that the people might see them pray and praise their piety. It is evident from the context that these remarks of our Lord are not directed against common or public prayer — a duty resting on express Divine command — but against performing private prayer in public places.

VERSE 6. BUT THOU, WHEN THOU PRAYEST, ENTER INTO THY CLOSET. Prayer in public can never take the place of prayer in the closet — without the latter the prayer in public is mere hypocrisy. Select, therefore, a spot to which thou retirest at certain hours, in order to pour out thy heart before thy Maker. We read of our Savior that he was in the habit of withdrawing to solitary places in order to pray there. (Matt. xiv, 23; Mark i, 35; Luke v, 16.) What a solemn call for Christians daily to attend to this duty! The exhortation "enter into thy closet," may, however, also be applied to public and family prayer, inasmuch as prayer, no matter where made, requires a withdrawal of the heart from all external and foreign objects, a calling in of all wandering thoughts, so that nothing may intervene between the soul and her God to disturb their intercourse.

VERSE 7. USE NOT VAIN REPETITIONS. The Greek verb **βαττολογεῖν**, translated to make vain repetitions, is a word not found in the classical Greek writers. Some trace its origin to a stammering King Battus, others to a poet Battus, whose hymns were full of unmeaning repetitions. It is most probably an imitation of the sounds uttered by stammerers. — It means to say the same thing repeatedly and imperfectly, to say things irrelevant and senseless, to multiply words, to babble, to be loquacious. The heathen, not knowing the true God, fancied to compel their gods by much speaking to listen to them. (1 Kings xviii, 27.) This heathenish error, however, is so deeply seated in the human heart that it can affect even the prayer in the closet. Our Lord forbids such vain repetitions, because they indicate a want of faith in the true God, just as if God did measure prayers by their length and was most pleased with those that contain the most words, as the rabbins said: "Only he that makes long prayers can calculate upon being heard, and a long prayer shall not come back empty." Is it not strange that this very abuse of prayer which Christ has here principally in view, has received the full sanction of the Roman Catholic Church, and that the very form of prayer which he opposes to the "vain repetitions" in prayer, is most flagrantly abused by being fifteen times repeated by the rosary? While, however, long prayers contain too often useless repetitions and unmeaning words, the Lord does, nevertheless, not forbid to pray long or to continue in praying and wrestling with God. That he did not include in his censure every repetition in prayer that is founded in a deep sense of our wants, we learn from his own example and that of his apostles. (Matt. xxvi, 44; 2 Cor. xii, 8.)

VERSE 8. FOR YOUR FATHER KNOWETH. This is another reason why true worshipers of God should not be guilty of vain repetitions as the heathens are, for they in their ignorance of the true God imagine that the Deity must be reminded of our petitions by frequent repetitions. These words of our Savior meet at the same time the objection of skepticism, that to suppose that God answers prayers would imply a constant change of his plans in governing the world. God has known from all eternity all the wants of each of his creatures, has foreseen all the turns of human liberty, and has made in his plan of government ample provisions to satisfy all wants and to hear and answer every prayer. Superstition ascribes the efficacy of prayer to the *words* of the prayer — unbelief, into which superstition is too apt to turn, rejects prayer, as availng nothing at all. Both know nothing of the living God, to whom true faith ascribes both the knowledge of our wants and a willingness to satisfy them, and which, therefore, alone enables men to pray to God as a child asks his father. But though God knows what we have need of and is willing to give us what we need before we ask him, the propriety and obligation of prayer are self-evident. They are founded in our dependence upon God. In prayer the Christian exercises his faith, gets a deeper insight into his helplessness, and is prepared to make a better use of God's blessings.

VERSE 9. AFTER THIS MANNER THEREFORE PRAY YE. After having told his hearers what they should avoid in prayer, our Lord adds a brief, simple, comprehensive prayer, which contains all that we stand in need of and are authorized to pray for. According to Olshausen the one leading idea is, the ardent longing after the kingdom of God, which constitutes the burden of all the prayers of God's children. But this one idea is presented from two points of view; 1. With reference to God's glory and fullness expressed in the first three petitions. 2. With reference to our indigence, expressed in the last four. The sententious doxology expresses the full assurance that our prayer will be answered, having the pledge of all the Divine attributes. Lange says: "The Lord's prayer expresses all possible wants of man, a whole world of holy desires in language the most concise, simple, and chaste. It is the quintessence of all Divine promises, all human wants, and all Christian duties." — With regard to the use to be made of this prayer, it is evident that our Lord intended it more for a model, by which to judge of what constitutes the spirit and proper objects of true prayer, than for a formulary of prayer, invariably to be adhered to. Yet, though no man in his sound mind will seriously maintain that we ought

to make use of no other words in prayer than those given us by the Lord in the text, still it is evident, that as this prayer is suitable for all times and under all circumstances, it was given by our Lord for permanent use by his Church. — That our petitions are to be presented to God in the name of Christ, is not mentioned expressly, because our Lord had not yet revealed himself in his mediatorial character; but though the proper time had not come to introduce the express use of his name in prayer, it is essentially implied. — **OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.** Although even the heathen may see the hand of a kind Father in the temporal blessings bestowed by a bountiful Providence, (Acts xiv, 17,) and though the Old Testament speaks in express terms of a paternal relation of God to his people, (Deut. xxii, 6; Isa. i, 2; lxiii, 16; lxiv, 8; Jer. iii, 4-19; Mal. i, 9; ii, 10;) yet it is only Christ who has taught and enabled us to call God our Father. As the Creator and Preserver, he is the Father of mankind, a fact which is so beautifully recognized even by Homer and nearly all other great heathen writers; yet it is only through Christ that this appellation became a living truth, for only through him we can regain our forfeited filial relation, and, therefore, only true children of God, genuine Christians, can say this prayer in its full import; yet how true is the remark of Luther: "God intends to allure us, that we may believe that he is our Father and wants us to be his children." We may add: "While all are invited to come to God, even as children come to a loving parent, it is but too certain that none will heed the summons and embrace the privilege, except as the spirit prompts and enables them. How impressive are the descriptions, by those who have experienced that change, of the new and strange gladness, the spirit of filial trust wrought within them, when they obtained the confidence and the affection of children in exchange for the overmastering dread which they had once felt, dragging them as in bondage, and that a bondage as intolerable as it was indissoluble." (William R. Williams' Lecture on the Lord's Prayer.) The addition, "which art in heaven," is to remind us of the infinite distance between our Heavenly Father and earthly parents, "lest we form" as the Heidelberg Catechism says, "earthly ideas of God's heavenly majesty." All nations call the pure, infinite ether, figuratively, the throne of God; the Old Testament does the same, yet teaches, at the same time, most positively God's omnipresence and exaltedness above all space. (1 Kings viii, 29.) — The Lord wishing to give his disciples a *common* prayer uses the plural "our." This is, at the same time, the mark of a true child of God, for every true Christian sincerely wishes others to enjoy what he desires for himself. — The exordium lays the broad foundation of all prayer, containing

what we must necessarily know of God, in order to pray acceptably at all. Furthermore, it points out the frame of mind in which we must appear before God. The very beginning presupposes a heart full of reverence and love, regarding God as the supreme good — *summum bonum* — and his glory the completion of his kingdom on earth, as the object of solicitude which finds utterance before any personal want is even thought of. — **HALLOWED BE THY NAME.** "When Isaiah saw in God's own temple a vision of the heavenly throne and its ministering angels, these attendant spirits responded to each other in sacred rapture: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.' From all pure and sinless worlds comes back a repetition of the strain. But from our earth the echo was broken off by the fall. We have 'sinned and come short of his glory.' We started aside from that great end and aim of our being — the divine glory — for which we were created. Whatever else of wisdom and strength the fall left, yet in some degree adhering to our nature, *holiness* was the element of human character that was *most fatally and entirely destroyed*. — As the spirit of adoption is needed to cry, in the true sense of the word, '*Abba, Father,*' so the spirit of holiness is requisite to make us competent worshipers of God's holy name." (Williams's Lectures.) *Thy name.* The name of God has reference to God, who, being an invisible Spirit and dwelling in light inaccessible, has revealed himself to and entered into covenant relations with man. (Deut. xxviii, 58; Isa. xxvi, 4-8; Ex. iii, 13, 14; Ps. xxix, 2; xxiv, 3; lxi, 5.) — *To hallow* — when applied to something unholy — means to make holy, or to set apart for holy, that is, religious use; when applied to something that is holy, it means to treat as holy, to keep holy. (Num. xx, 16; Ex. xx, 8.) The latter is the meaning of the term here, and consists of two parts; namely, first, to recognize God in his true character, to have proper views of God; secondly, to be governed by God's Spirit in our walk and conversation. (Deut. x, 3; Isa. xxix, 23; 1 Pet. iii, 13.) Stier says beautifully: "The petition refers primarily to the children of God by whom alone his name can be hallowed, but expands so as to embrace the whole world, as if to say: reveal thy name to those that are in darkness, that they may know thee; enlighten those that do not call upon thy name aright, that they may worship thee in truth; convict and convert those that profess thy name with their lips but deny thee by their works." Williams, p. 30, remarks: "Christ was the distinct, full and loud utterance of the name of God, articulate, legible, and tangible — complete and enduring. And all the institutions which Christ himself established, or which his apostles after him ordained by his authority, since those institutions bear his

name, or illustrate his character, are to be regarded as coming within the scope of the text. The Sabbath, the Bible, the sanctuary, or place of worship, the ministry and each Christian convert are found, then, to be embraced within the range and dread shadow of this great and dreadful name."

VERSE 10. THY KINGDOM COME. On this petition Williams (p. 69) says: "To pray for Christ's kingdom, is to pray for the conversion of sinners, and the edification and sanctification of disciples. It is to ask the evangelization of the Gentiles and the restoration of the Jews. It is to implore that antichrist may fall, and the idols perish from under the whole heaven. It is to profess sympathy with all that relieves and elevates and enfranchises man; and to implore the removal of all that corrupts and debases him, and that sells him, soul and body, to the service of the evil one. It is the bannered motto, the rallying word, the battle-cry of all who love Jesus. The souls of the martyrs under God's altar cry it, when they say, how long, O, Lord God! The brute creation, as it groans under the bondage of vanity, lifts to heaven a mutelyeloquent look, as it sighs to be delivered by its true king, the paramount Lord, ever kind and ever just. . . . Happy they whose lips, and hearts, and lives maintain in sweet accord, this as their continual petition, 'Thy kingdom come,' and who take up, with the full consent of their souls, the closing promise of the Bible and the prayer which attends it: Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come! Lord Jesus." — On the connection of this second petition with the first and the third, Tholuck remarks: "The work of grace begins by imparting to us the true knowledge of God, so that his name may be hallowed by us; the *means* by which this is accomplished is the kingdom of God, that was typified in Israel, substantially appeared in Christ, and is, in the course of time, brought by him to its final completion. Thus the second petition is naturally succeeded by the third, pointing to the *end* to be accomplished, the removal of all discord by bringing about a perfect harmony between the creature and the will of the Creator. Thus these three petitions sustain to each other the relation of beginning, means, and end." — When we first met the term kingdom of God, or of heaven, (Matt. iii, 2,) we gave all those significations of the term that can not be called in question. Here may be the most proper place — though it may be too long and inconvenient a digression for the reader — to state also the view of those who contend that the term in its proper Scriptural sense is not to be applied to the Church of God before the second visible coming of Christ. This view, which is held by many Evangelical divines of Germany at the present

time, and has gained of late also the assent of some of the most learned theologians of England and America, is best presented by Dr. C. A. Auberlen, in a treatise entitled: "Biblische Lehre vom Reich Gottes." We are, by no means, ready to adopt this view, and shall state our objections to it in our comment on Matt. xxiv. Yet the pre-Millenarian theory has not yet been fully met, and is certainly entitled to far more attention and examination than it generally receives. The following are the leading thoughts in Dr. Auberlen's treatise: "Jehovah had established his kingdom in Israel; on Sinai he had given the law for his kingdom and added afterward, through David, the splendor of human royalty. But the Old Testament theocracy was only a dim shadow of that kingdom of God foretold by all the prophets, (Dan. ix, 24; Isa. ix, 6, 7; xl, 9-11; Jer. xxxi, 31, etc.; Ez. xxvi, 26, etc.; Joel iii, 1, 2; Mich. v, 1, etc.; Hos. ii, 18, etc.,) which the Messiah was to establish on the basis of an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin and everlasting righteousness, and in which sin is to be abolished, the Spirit of God to be poured upon all flesh, and the Divine law written upon the tables of the human heart. *This kingdom of God* has its root in the incarnation of the Logos, in the Son of God becoming the Son of man. A new germ of life is implanted from above into the carnal race of Adam, destined to leaven humanity and to fill the whole world with the glory of God. But in order to accomplish this end, sin must first be expiated. The incarnate Son of God must first taste death for every man before he can impart his Divine life to fallen humanity. 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' (John xii, 24.) 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.' (Phil. ii, 8-11.) When he ascended to heaven, he said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." But he travels into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and then to come again as king. (Matt. xxviii, 18; Luke xix, 11, 12.) Jesus, therefore, is king. Since his ascension his kingdom has been a finished, present fact. Yet as king he is far away and invisible in heaven, like God himself, upon whose throne he has seated himself; his kingdom is not yet revealed, but will be so at his second coming. Thus the first period of the kingdom of God, during which it does not yet appear in its peculiar glory, differs from the time of its full manifestation at

Christ's second coming. (Col. iii, 3, 4; Phil. iii, 20, 21.) To this difference refers a number of parables, in which the Lord speaks of the kingdom of God. The two periods sustain to each other the same relation as seeding and harvest, labor and wages, invitation and marriage-feast, expectation and possession, serving and reigning, suffering and glory. They answer, according to several passages of the New Testament, (Matt. x, 24, seq.; xx, 21-28; John xv, 18, seq.; 1 John iv, 17; 2 Tim. ii, 11, seq.; Rom. viii, 17; 1 Pet. iv, 13,) to the two states of Christ, his humiliation and his exaltation, his suffering and his glory. The first period may also be designated as the time of the Church, the second as that of the kingdom in its full manifestation. — The first period, then, of the kingdom of God is the Church, which, placed between Christ's first and second coming, is in the world as he was in the world. As Christ was the only one that was spiritually alive in the midst of dead humanity, so his Church is the center of spiritual life in the midst of a carnal race. Therefore Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. And for this very reason the weapons of her warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and only in so far as they are so, they are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. (2 Cor. x, 3, 4.) The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. As Christ himself preached the Gospel of the kingdom, (Matt. iv, 23; Mark iv, 14,) so he has enjoined it upon his disciples as their main duty to preach, in his name, repentance and forgiveness of sins unto all nations. (Acts i, 8; Luke xxiv, 46-49; Matt. xxviii, 18-20; Mark xvi, 15, 16; John xv, 26, 27.) Whosoever with penitence toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ turns away from the world, is added to the Church of the Lord. The Church of Christ is his bride that goes to meet her bridegroom. (2 Cor. xi, 2; Matt. xxv, 1, etc.; Rev. xix, 7-9; xxii, 17.) As long as the bridegroom is absent the bride waits for him; for she knows that the full union with him takes not place before his coming to the marriage-feast. Then He will raise the Church to his own royal dignity, and she will reign with him in his then visible kingdom. (Rom. v, 17; Col. iii, 3, 4; Rev. iii, 21; xx, 4-6.) This is the reason why the Church even in the lifetime of the apostles waited for the coming of the Lord, for the revelation of his coming. For the same reason, the contrast between the Church militant and triumphant is for the apostles not identical with that between the Church below and that in heaven, but with that between the present and future *aion* — age. The whole time of the Church, be it short or long, appears as the time of inviting and gathering for the marriage-feast of the king. (Matt. xxii, 1, etc.) This goal the apostolic Church has constantly before her eyes, considering herself a *stranger and pilgrim*, as

Peter testifies. (1 Pet. ii, 11; 2 Pet. iii, 12.) The Jews wished to possess themselves of the glory of the kingdom, without qualifying themselves for it by repentance and faith, they wanted to reach the goal without running the race; the Christians, on the other hand, are on the way to the goal, but they have for many centuries, as it were, lost sight of the goal itself. The apostles rejoice in what they possess already in Jesus Christ; but they bear their cross and do their work, at the same time, with their eyes constantly turned to the coming revelation of the Lord and his kingdom. Their spiritual vision hastening away over the coming times of the Church, which can not bring any thing essentially new for the kingdom of God, fixes upon the great day of the coming of Christ. For the time of the end, in the sense of the apostles, has commenced already.

— The Church has now a history of almost two thousand years. She has extended her sway over many nations of the earth, and has become a power of great influence in the world. But while she made inroads into the world, the world made in turn inroads into the Church. Roman Catholicism is the most gigantic result of this mixture of the Church with the world, of Christianity with heathen and Jewish elements. The Reformation came and showed again to millions the true way of salvation. But even this greatest event in the history of the Church did not succeed in re-establishing the original unity and purity of the Church. The Church of Jesus Christ is now divided into many particular Churches, all of which are, as none can deny, in a smaller and greater degree inferior to the apostolic Church in fullness of the Spirit; so that notwithstanding the great amount of gratitude and fealty which we owe to the Church of the Reformation, the state of Protestantism gives to us, nevertheless, no ground for exultation. The true Church of Christ, as the little flock, is scattered among these particular Churches all over the earth, and shall be gathered at the coming of the Lord from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, (Matt. xxiv, 31,) or, as the Lord says elsewhere, be gathered as the good fishes from out of the net of the kingdom cast into the whole ocean of nations. (Matt. xiii, 47, 48.) In the mean time the Church has been exerting an ennobling influence on the world at large, and by her heavenly powers has imprinted upon the professedly Christian nations of the earth a character that, though it can not be called Christian, in the full sense of the term — that is, anointed with the Spirit — yet differs so widely from the condition of heathen nations that it may justly be called Christian in a secondary sense. The history of the world has proven, on a grand scale, that godliness is profitable unto all things, and has the promise not only of the life to come, but also of that which now is. (1 Tim. iv, 8.) Some

find the realization of the kingdom of God in the results of Christian civilization, but it constitutes only a dim type of the kingdom of God within the sphere of nature. Though Christian civilization may, in some respects, be compared to the Old Testament theocracy, we must not overlook that, far from being a Divinely-ordained state of things, it has resulted to a greater or less degree from human frailty, worldly-mindedness of the Church, and a mere outward conversion of the world to Christianity. Nevertheless, the word of the Lord is fully applicable to it: 'destroy it not, for there is a blessing in it.' (Isa. lxv, 8.) Yea, the results of modern civilization are means of increased usefulness to the Church, which needs at this period of the world also the creative genius of the arts and sciences in order to fulfill her mission in the world. Yet this whole sphere of means and effects is of a secondary, transient nature, and is, therefore, scarcely ever mentioned in the Scripture, which looks only to the substance; it is the outward dress, without which the Church can not appear and labor in the world, but which she lays aside when she shall appear in her own peculiar attire as the glorified body of Christ. The difference between the Church and the world, between the spiritual and the worldly, continues till the coming of Christ. The kingdoms of this world, with all that belongs to them, have not yet ceased to exist. On the contrary, they will once more rouse all their strength against the Church. A mortal wound has, indeed, been inflicted on the beast, so that it appeared slain, and in this respect like the Lamb; but this wound has healed again, the antichristian power of the world is quickened again, and finds its final completion in antichrist, whom the whole world shall admire and follow. (Rev. xiii, 3.) For this is the New Testament prophecy, of which we see already the incipient fulfillment, that in the last days a falling away shall come first from the Gospel, and then also from the law. (Matt. xxiv, 10, etc.; 24, etc.; 2 Thess. ii, 3; 1 Tim. iv, 1; 2 Tim. iii, 1.) The culminating point of this falling away will be the man of sin, the last world-ruler, under whom all elements of ungodliness, both on the sphere of politics and religion, shall rise in Satanic power against God and his Church. (1 Thess. ii, 3, etc.; Dan. vii, 8, 20, etc.; Rev. xiii, 3, etc.; xi, etc.; xvii, 11, etc.; Matt. xxiv, 9-21.) When the antichristian state and antichristian civilization shall be arrayed against the Church, she will be assailed even more fiercely than in the first centuries, where she was an object of ridicule for Grecian philosophy and of bloody persecution for the world-power of Rome. The end returns to its beginning. And this is, in all probability, the real cause why the vision of the apostles hastened away over the intervening periods; why they saw in the first persecutions and deceptions

the premonitory symptoms of the last. The beginning and the end — and they alone are noticed in the Scripture — are essentially the same. In those last times of distress and persecution all false, apostatized Churches are condemned. The Church of the Lord must come down from every human hight, and give up all reliance upon an arm of flesh. But when she shall be thoroughly cleansed and humbled, when she has learned, under a realizing sense of her own impotence, to confide solely in her Heavenly Master, and to cry, from the very depths of her soul, Come, Lord Jesus! then she is prepared for meeting her bridegroom, as the world is ready for the judgment. Then appears the Lord to establish, in the sole power of his own might, his kingdom of glory upon earth, that no flesh may glory. Antichrist with his power is destroyed, the Church of the Lord glorified. She resembles her Lord in this also, that her last time on earth is a passion time, which is followed by an exceedingly-glorious resurrection morning, when she will be seated upon the throne of majesty and power. — Up to the time of the second coming of the Lord the elect have been called from out of all nations and inwardly prepared for the kingdom of God. They have esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, (Heb. xi, 26.) Manfully suffering and battling, they have labored faithfully for their Master's cause, and traded with the talents committed to their charge. (Matt. xxv, 14, etc.) Now commences their day of glory, the marriage of the Lamb. (Rev. xix, 7.) The dead in Christ and those then living, the former by the first resurrection, the second by a transformation, will be glorified and made like unto Christ. (1 Cor. xv, 51, etc.) The Church reigns as queen, with her royal Lord, over the earth. The antichristian powers are destroyed; Satan is chained in the bottomless pit. The veil is taken away (Isaiah xxv, 7) from Israel, and the Gentiles and all the nations of the earth, headed again by their first-born brother, (Ex. iv, 22,) serve the living God in spirit and in truth. Then the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ. (Rev. ii, 15.) The difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world no longer exists. The world is now Christianized in the full sense of the term. This is the great palingenesia or universal regeneration, (Matt. xix, 28,) when there is no longer a small number of believers scattered here and there, as the stars in the night, but when the sun has risen to shine upon the whole earth, when the day of the Lord has come, and all the nations of the earth are born of light. (1 Thess. v, 2, 4, etc.; Rom. xiii, 11, etc.) It is the great world-sabbath, (Heb. iii, 11; iv, 1, etc.; ix,) when our race shall be freed from the oppression which it has endured from the day of the fall, and shall enjoy its

existence in festive joy. These are the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, (Acts iii, 19-21,) the better state of things ardently, though for the most part unconsciously, longed for by man since centuries. Every legitimate ideal of the universal sway of Christianity and virtue, of harmonious development, and the sanctification of all spheres of life, of individual and national prosperity, and universal peace shall then meet their fullest realization, aimed at in vain before. This is the kingdom of heaven in its full revelation, the second great stadium in the development of the New Testament kingdom of God, the millennium, as the seer John calls it. (Rev. xx, 1-6.) — On this revelation of Jesus Christ and his kingdom the eyes of the first Christians were immovably fixed. The same is spoken of not only in the Apocalypse, but also in the Gospels and Epistles. This revelation Jesus means when he speaks of his coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, to be followed by the end of the present *aion*, or world-period. (Matt. xxiv, 30, 31; xiii, 40, 41; xxv, 6, 10, 19.) This revelation James, and Peter, and Paul have in view when they speak of Christ's coming as being near at hand, and promise to his Church, immediately after the sufferings of this life, glory and dominion. (James v, 7, 8; 1 Pet. i, 5, etc.; iv, 13; v, 4; 1 Thess. i, 10; ii, 19; iii, 13; iv, 13, etc.; v, 1, etc.; 20; 2 Thess. i, 7-10; ii, 1, etc.; 1 Cor. i, 7, 8; xv, 23; 2 Cor. iv, 17; Rom, viii, 17; Col. iii, 3, 4; Phil. iii, 20, 21; 2 Tim. ii, 11, 12; Tit. ii, 13; Heb. ix, 28.) It is very natural that, of things future, those only engage our attention that are nearer in point of time and immediately concern us, and not those that are more distant. It is for this reason that the New Testament shows unto us but rarely, and in the far-distant future, the Lord's last appearing for the final judgment of the universe, (Matt. xxv, 31, etc.; Rom. ii, 5, etc.; Rev. xx, 11, etc.; comp. 1 Pet. iv, 5; 2 Pet. iii, 10,) which, however, we confound generally so completely with his coming in order to establish his kingdom, that we often lose sight of the latter altogether. With the final judgment all mundane affairs are wound up, and the end, in the fullest sense of the word, has come. (1 Cor. xv, 24-28.) Then all men and spirits that oppose God are thrown into hell; whatever could be saved is saved, and heaven and earth renewed. (Rev. xxi.) This third everlasting period of the kingdom of God bears the same relation to the preceding one as Christ's state of exaltation after his ascension bore to the forty days after his resurrection. The glorified Church reigns no more, as during the millennium, over a world not yet glorified, but every thing, nature itself, is renewed. The earth also becomes — if we continue the simile introduced above — a shining sun, the whole universe becomes spirit, life, glory: God is

all and in all. Then the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, because he has fulfilled his mission and brought back the world unto God. He is now no longer king, because royalty still presupposes at least the possibility of opposing powers that may have to be put down. He is the head, in whom all things are gathered together, and from whom life gushes forth, in undisturbed fullness and majesty, into the vast organism of the universe." — THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. This is the necessary consequence of the coming of the kingdom of God; for where the will of the king is done there is a kingdom. The kingdom of God is actualized when his holy will is done. The petition refers not to resignation in suffering, which is out of question in heaven, but to an active keeping of his commandments. "We must distinguish between God's *controlling* will, that is, his pledged and unalterable purpose to overrule all events and all agencies to the final establishment of his own decrees, and the universal extension of his own dominion; and between God's *will of command*, that is, what he requires of us and what he disapproves in us. His will of command he makes known by the voice of reason and conscience in part, but more perfectly by his written Word and by the influences of his Spirit. But God's controlling will is among those secret things which belong only to the Lord. It is said of the same event, the death of our Lord, that it was *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, and yet that the Jews did it by *wicked* hand. In God's will of command it was a crime forbidden solemnly and plainly, and the Jews doing it against conscience and Scripture and the strivings of the Spirit, did it by wicked hands; and it was the very sum and concentration of all wickedness, the world's greatest crime. In God's wonder-working wisdom and kindness, however, his will of *control* brought good out of the unexampled evil, and the same event which on the one side was the world's greatest crime, became on the other side, and in God's sovereign use of it, the world's greatest boon. With regard to God's command of will it is our duty earnestly and honestly to inquire for it in all the channels through which it is to come to us, for before we can do the will of God we must become acquainted with it, and then we must ask God to give us the grace of obedience in action. With regard to God's *controlling* will the petition is a request that, in the fullness of God's own time, all the visions of prophecy may find their accomplishment, and all the long and dark mysteries of Providence their solution and triumphant consummation." (Condensed from Williams's lecture on the third petition of our Lord's prayer.) — Wesley says on this passage in his sermons: "When we pray that the will of God may be done in

earth as it is in heaven, . . . we pray that we and all mankind may do the whole will of God in all things and nothing else; not the least thing but what is the holy and acceptable will of God. We pray that we may do the whole will of God as he willeth, in a manner that pleases him; and lastly, that we may do it *because* it is his will; that this may be the sole reason and ground, the whole and only motive of whatsoever we think, or whatsoever we speak or do." The entire fulfillment of this petition is, therefore, not to be expected before the final completion of the kingdom of God, as predicted in both the Old and New Testament (Isa. iv, 3; xi, 6; lx, 19-24; lxi, 10, 11; lxv, 24, 25; 1 Cor. xv, 28; Rev. xxi, 3, 22, 23; xxii, 3-5.)

VERSE 11. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD, "Thus far," says Tholuck, "was the petitioner absorbed in the contemplation of God; now he becomes conscious of his own indigence, and his first petition looks to his temporal wants as the basis of his spiritual life." Some of the earlier Fathers and some modern commentators understand by daily bread spiritual food, but Bengel is right when he says: "We must not wish to be more spiritual than the Spirit intends us to be, but understand God in that language in which he speaks with us and so speak again with our fellow-men." Luther says: "God gives us our daily bread even without ever asking him for it, but we ask him for it in this petition that he may teach us to look upon it as his gift and receive it with devout thankfulness." — "THIS DAY" reminds us of the uncertainty of human life, that with every "to-day" we may be at the end of our journey and have no other to-morrow, so that the rich and the poor become perfectly alike, both suppliants at the throne of God, and the cares of the poor and the security of the rich lead daily to new asking and receiving. — "OUR" involves two important thoughts; namely, on the one hand that of our obligation to work and eat our own bread, (2 Thess. iii, 12; 1 Thess. iv, 11,) on the other hand that of the duty to look upon what we have, not as our exclusive property, but as given to us in answer to our prayer both for us and our fellow-men, and of course for the purpose that we should cheerfully share it with our needy brother, instead of grasping it greedily for our own self. — We have already taken some gems from Mr. Williams's unsurpassed lectures on the Lord's Prayer, and would like to quote largely on this petition. But the lecture on the fourth petition must be read as a whole. We will, therefore, simply indicate its train of thoughts by giving an introductory remark and its parts: "How majestic is the imagery of Scripture when it presents to us our Maker and God, as feeding all the orders

of his animate creation and ministering continually what they constantly need, for the sustentation of the life which he has bestowed upon them! 'The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season: Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.' (Ps. cxlv, 15, 16.) 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.' (Ps. cxlvii, 9.) . . . To God, in this aspect of his government, the prayer now brings us. All the petitions which precede and which compose the earlier half of the Lord's Prayer, respect the *end* for which man lives — the glory, dominion, and service of his Creator. The later petitions, of which that before us is the opening one, have reference to the *means* by which we live; the *body* by means of God's supplies of food; the *soul* by means of the pardon for sin, by the victory over temptation, and by the escape from evil in all its forms and all its degrees, which we implore and which God bestows. . . . In the fourth petition we 1. Confess our *dependence*. 2. We pledge our *sympathy*. 3. We promise by implication *moderation and contentment*."

VERSE 12. AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS. The connection of this with the preceding petition lies in the consciousness of the petitioner, that he has no claims on what he asks for himself, but receives it of free grace, and that the daily bread for his body is of no avail for him, except his soul also is daily fed and refreshed by the assurance that he has obtained the forgiveness of all his sins and is reconciled to God. "We need of heaven that it both *give* and *forgive*. For if it but feed without pardoning and renewing us, then our daily bread is but fattening us for the slaughter, and like the stalled ox we go but to meet the descending ax; and our abundance is cursed like the bursting barns of the rich man whom God described as *the fool*." (Williams.) — AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS. The "as" does here not imply an equal measure of forgiveness, for if God would forgive no man to a greater extent than he himself forgives others, no man would probably be saved. The whole second-clause must rather be taken as a proof that we have already found peace with God. For the disposition to forgive is a proof of a state of grace. This is the teaching of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, which paraphrases the petition thus: "Do not impute unto us sinners our manifold sins, as we have also the testimony of thy grace within us, that it is our sincere desire to forgive our fellow-men from our hearts." Luther also says in his larger catechism that this addition is made, "That we may have a criterion by which we can know whether we are true children of God." At the same time it must not be

overlooked, that, as the Lord himself expressly declares in v. 14, our readiness to forgive is the indispensable condition of the pardon of sins, committed after justification. A man unwilling to forgive would say in this petition as much as: "O God, I am thy debtor, so I also have a debtor; now I am unwilling to forgive him, do thou, therefore, not forgive me." That the petitioner is supposed to be a child of God, not an implacable and unforgiven sinner, Stier sets forth very clearly in the following remarks: "The childlike confidence, arising from the assurance of pardon obtained, is presupposed in the address and in the first three petitions. In the month of one who, while uttering the fifth petition, becomes for the first time conscious of his sins and guilt before God, having never sought pardon in a previous act of faith and repentance, the preceding petitions and address would have been a solemn mockery, and it would certainly be more fit for such a one to commence, like the publican, with, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' in order to become first one of those who can truthfully say, '*Our Father*.'" The first pardon, the remission of *his* sins, each must seek by himself, having no warrant to expect it from simply including himself in the prayer of the children of God for that pardon, which even they daily need. The Lord does not say, as in v. 14, 'our trespasses or crimes,' but uses the much milder term, 'our debts,' meaning even the very least shortcomings of God's children in the discharge of their duties and in the use of the means of grace, as well as those imperfections which adhere even to their very best works." The objection against the doctrine of the attainability of Christian perfection, on the ground that this petition would be needless for perfect Christians, Fletcher answers in his "Checks to Antinomianism," (vol. 2, p. 502,) as follows: 1. "Though a perfect Christian does not trespass voluntarily and break the law of love, yet he daily breaks the law of Adamic perfection through the imperfection of his bodily and mental powers; and he has frequently a deeper sense of these involuntary trespasses than many weak believers have of their voluntary breaches of the moral law. 2. Although a perfect Christian has a witness that his sins are now forgiven in the court of his conscience, yet he knows the terrors of the Lord; he hastens to meet the awful day of God; he waits for the Judge; he keeps an eye to the awful tribunal, before which he must soon be justified or condemned by his words; he is conscious that his final justification is not yet come; and, therefore, he would think himself a monster of stupidity and pride, if with an eye to his absolution in the great day he scrupled saying to the end of his life: Forgive us our trespasses. 3. He is surrounded with sinners, who daily trespass against him, and whom he is daily

bound to forgive; and his praying that he may be forgiven now and in the great day 'as he forgives others,' reminds him that he may forfeit his pardon, and binds him more and more to the performance of the important duty of forgiving his enemies. And 4, his charity is so ardent that it melts him, as it were, into the common mass of mankind. Bowing himself, therefore, under all the enormous load of all the willful trespasses which his fellow-mortals, and particularly his relatives and his brethren, daily commit against God, he says with a fervor that imperfect Christians seldom feel: Forgive us our trespasses. Nor do we doubt but, when the spirit of mourning leads a numerous assembly of supplicants into the vale of humiliation, the person who puts the shoulder of faith most readily to the common burden of sin, and heaves most powerfully, in order to roll the enormous load into the Redeemer's grave, is the most perfect penitent, the most exact observer of the apostolical precept: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ; and of consequence, we do not scruple to say, that such person is *the most perfect Christian* in the whole assembly."

VERSE 13. The prayer for forgiveness is naturally followed by the petition to be preserved from new sins. The desire to avoid the seeming discrepancy between this petition and James i, 13, has given rise to various modifying paraphrases, such as, "Do not permit that we should fall into temptation," or, "Do not lead us into such temptations as we are not able to bear." It is, however, unnecessary to depart in the least from the natural meaning of the words of the petition. *God really leads into temptation*, in so far as the tempting conditions and circumstances are ordained of God. He has, moreover, the right to send us trials from which human nature shudders, as was, e.g., the temptation of Abraham. But this is by no means at variance with James i, 13, where the apostle speaks of temptation from within, whose originating cause is not God, but man's own lust. This very lust makes the temptations from without — that is, the tempting conditions and circumstances — so very dangerous, and the Christian has, therefore, a perfect right, under a keen sense of his own weakness, to pray to God that he may preserve him from new sins and guilt, although he humbly believes that God has a right to try him, and confidently trusts that he will not, tempt him above that he is able to bear. As to the seeming discrepancy between the sixth petition and James i, 13, we may state still further, that when God tempts a man, his object is to try him — that is, to give him an opportunity to prove his integrity, while the apostle speaks of a temptation whose sole and direct purpose is to lead to the commission of sin.

— This prayer checks, on the one hand, that overweening self-reliance which says with Peter: "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee;" on the other hand, that timorousness which hinders us from applying to ourselves the promise, "That the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." (2 Pet. ii, 9.) He who prays in this spirit does not court temptation, and meets it when it comes with the weapons God supplies; yea, if God sees fit to send him temptations contrary to his prayer, he looks upon them as God-ordained means to try his faith, and they become to him objects of joy in the certainty of his moral improvement, (James i, 2; Rom. v, 3; 2 Cor. iv, 16; vi, 10,) and in the brighter prospects of the recompense of reward. (Matt. v, 12; Rom. viii, 18.)

— BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. Our anxious desire to be kept out of temptation rises to a yearning for the perfect deliverance from the sin of the world with all its effects and in all its bearings. Some have translated *τοῦ πονηροῦ* from "the evil one," taking it in the masculine gender, which is grammatically admissible, but we can not believe that this is its import here. Stier remarks very justly: "The petition 'deliver us' passes over at once into the heavenly doxology: thine is the kingdom! And in this place should Christ do his conquered enemy the honor to mention him as an object of dread, and should he have enjoined it on the redeemed children of the Father to mention him at the close of such a prayer? Believe this who may, to us it appears unbecoming." Luther quotes from Cyprian: "The seven petitions are expressions of our wretchedness and indigence, and teach man what a miserable and dangerous life he lives here upon earth. For a life without God is nothing else than blasphemy against God, an exclusion from his kingdom, disobedience to the Divine law, a hungry land without bread, a career of sin, a dangerous journey full of evil." — FOR THINE IS, etc. The genuineness of the doxology that has been questioned by some critics, is vindicated by no writer so conclusively as by Mr. Williams, who says: "We know that some versions of the New Testament, and some manuscripts of the original, omit entirely the doxology. But against this omission and in favor of retaining the words as a genuine portion of the Lord's Prayer, some stress should surely be laid on the argument in its favor, from the similar burden so often found appended to other prayers of Holy Writ. Add to this its natural and close cohesion with the whole precedent portion of the Lord's Prayer, with which, as Calvin has remarked, it so aptly fits. Remember, again, that the Syriac, the oldest of all the versions of the New Testament, has preserved the clause. And lastly, observe that if the hand of forgery had been busy in this matter with the New Testament, and had

here made an addition to Matthew, it seems unaccountable why the same temerity should have hesitated to make the change uniform, by appending it also to the form in Luke. On the other hand, the interpolations which have been made in some early transcripts of the New Testament have often so evidently proceeded on the principle of making the phrases and incidents of one Gospel repeat exactly those of another, that we can very easily conceive why an early transcriber, not finding our closing paragraph in Luke, would be, in this spirit of rash and conjectural tampering to make symmetrical what God had left various, induced to omit it here, although the Evangelist, Matthew himself, the original writer, had inserted it in his Gospel. But if it be asked why should Christ, on the one occasion, use this unabridged form, and, on the other, described by Luke, repeat the prayer with such an omission, it seems a sufficient reply that Christ did often reiterate, in substance, at a new scene and to another auditory, maxims and parables, and lessons, which he had elsewhere, at greater or at less length, given to another assemblage of hearers. The form of the Prayer in Matthew, was evidently presented to the indiscriminate mass of his hearers; for their use he gave the form, closing with that general appeal to the character and rule and rights of God, which they were already prepared to receive, from similar language in the Old Testament. The other form in Luke was given to his *disciples*, and wanting this final argument with God, would leave, apparently, in their minds the impression of a vacuity — a significant and emphatic break in the current of prayer — which the instruction elsewhere given to them, to ask all of the Father in *his* name, would enable them to fill up in the appropriate manner. For that instruction explicitly to be given even to his disciples, it was not yet the fitting time, till the wonders of his crucifixion and resurrection should have fully expounded, and finally and unequivocally sealed his claims as the Christ of God, and as the way through whom only any can come to the Father. Yet another reason might be suggested for the variance and diminution of the form, as the Evangelist Luke has presented it. Foreseeing how easily, how early, and how universally his own Churches would yield to the tendency to employ the Lord's Prayer in that very formalism which he had reprehended — He, the head of the Church, might in the fragmentary shape and by the minor variations which he, on the last occasion, gave to the formulary, have meant to record, as by implication and emphatic intimation, his anticipatory protest against such idolatry of the form. He might thus choose to show that the words were not given as the rigid mold of all prayer, but as sentences to be inlaid in the ever new and varying

utterances of the one free and unerring Spirit, who maketh intercession for the saints, and in them, according to the mind of God." — THE KINGDOM, the supreme control of all created things belong to thee; AND THE POWER, (**δύναμις**) the executive power, by which the universe is governed, is in thy hands; AND THE GLORY. Some commentators refer the first and fourth petitions mainly to the Father, the second and fifth to the Son, and the third and sixth to the Holy Ghost, and they similarly find in the doxology the kingdom — taken here in a wider sense than in the second petition, and meaning God's sovereignty, as in 1 Chron. xxix, 11 — ascribed to the Father, the power to the Son, (Matt. xxviii, 18; 2 Cor. xii, 9; Phil. iii, 10; 1 Tim. vi, 14-16; Rev. xii, 10,) and the honor or glory to the Holy Ghost. The duty of all creatures is to praise God for his power and mighty kingdom and all his wondrous works. — AMEN, a Hebrew word, that, when used at the end of a prayer or doxology, means truly, certainly, so let it be. It implies a secure repose of the soul in God, springing from the full assurance that all these petitions will be granted unto every one that offers them up to God in the manner prescribed by our Lord.

VERSES 14, 15. What was presupposed in the fifth petition is here stated in the form of a condition, because not every one that offers the petition is in the state of mind presupposed. What importance Christ attaches to it that we should exercise compassion toward our fellow-men, as God exercises it toward us, we learn also from chapters v, 24; xviii, 35. An unforgiving heart must never look to God for forgiveness. O, that each and every one would often say to himself: how often and for how much do I need the forgiveness of God, and I should be unwilling to forgive my fellow-men! It matters not whether we have given our neighbor any cause for his conduct toward us or not, our duty is to forgive him if we expect God to forgive us. Yet we must not look upon our readiness to forgive as the only condition of receiving the remission of our sins. Repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ are absolutely necessary to find acceptance with God. De Wette sees in the absence of any reference to Christ's mediatorial office in this prayer one of the strongest evidences of its being authentic. The fact is, that in the nature of the case such a reference was at that time impossible, and for this reason a forgiving disposition toward our fellow-men is made here the prominent condition of our finding acceptance with God.

VERSES 16-18. Jesus now passes on to correct the errors of doctrine and practice in vogue among the Jews concerning fasting. The obligation to fast

at stated times is presupposed by our Lord, and, therefore, not inculcated; his object is to teach his disciples how this duty is to be practiced, and warn them against the spirit displayed by the Pharisees in their fasts. The term *fasting* means a total abstinence from all kinds of food for a certain length of time, and this is its Scriptural usage throughout. (e.g., Is. lviii, 3.) The Bible knows of no partial fasting. It is the expression of grief and sorrow, and has for its object to humble us, to qualify us better for meditation, to call our thoughts and senses away from the things of this life, and to fix them on the realities of the life to come. When it is a merely-outward performance, not the truthful expression of the inner man, it is worthless.

E. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD — THE SUPREME GOOD AND THE HIGHEST OBJECT OF LIFE, TO WHICH EVERY THING MUST BE SUBORDINATE.

Verses 19-34.

(19) LAY not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt,^[1] and where thieves break through and steal:^[2] (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: (21) for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (22) The light^[3] of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single,^[4] thy whole body shall be full of light. (23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! (24) No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and mammon.^[5] (25) Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? (26) Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? (27) Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?^[6] (28) And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies^[7] of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: (29) and yet I say unto you, That

even Solomon [8] in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, [9] which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, [10] shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? (31) Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (32) (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. (33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (34) Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

[1 In Oriental countries, where fashion is not so changeable as with us, the treasures of the rich consisted not only in gold and silver, but also in costly garments, finely-wrought copper, tin, and brass vessels, that could easily be destroyed in the manner here indicated. The word translated by rust (**βρώσις**) means rust that destroys copper and other vessels, smut in grains, decay of eatables, etc.]

[2 The houses in these countries, especially those of the poorer classes, were built of clay, (Job iv, 19,) dried by fire in the sun, or of loose stones, so that thieves could easily dig through the walls, and get into the interior.]

[3 In Greek, a portable light, such as a lamp, lantern.]

[4 In Greek, also, unclouded, clear, sound, opposed to the abnormal, double-seeing eye.]

[5 Mammon was, according to some, a Syrian idol, the god of riches. This supposition, however, rests on very slender ground. It is rather the personification of riches, similar to the Greek Plutus. Here we have, at all events, to understand by it riches, gold, silver, and every thing that can be procured for money, as honor, pleasure, influence, power, ease, etc.]

[6 The word rendered *stature* must, by all means, be translated *age* — time of life. The original **ἡλικία** means both age and stature. The cubit (**πηχυς**) was originally a measure of length of one-and-a-half feet, but is metaphorically also a measure of time, as we speak of an *inch* of time, the hand's-breadth of our life, etc.; for it is the object of food and clothing to preserve and prolong life, not to add to the height of the body; moreover, to add one-and-a-half feet to one's length, would be something great, while the object here under consideration, even if accomplished, is represented as something small and unimportant.]

[7 The white lily, because the official robes of Oriental kings were generally white; or, as this kind does not grow wild in Palestine, some, with more reason, think that the beautiful, purple, royal, or imperial lily is meant here. Its stem is about three feet high, dark red, and the flowers form a kind of crown, overtopped by a cluster of leaves. (Cant. iv, 5; vi, 2; 1 Kings vii, 19.)]

[8 Comp. 1 Kings x, 23.]

[9 "The grass of the field" is the general expression for herbs and flowers. The Hebrews divided the vegetable kingdom into two classes, that of trees and shrubs, and that of herbs and grasses. When the hot east wind coming from the desert blows in Palestine even for two days, every thing that has no deep root dries up, and is used for fuel.]

[10 The oven in the Orient is nothing but a large, round, earthen pot, conical in shape, from two to three feet high, that is placed on any frame, e.g., an iron plate. If it is thoroughly heated, it is covered up, and the dough put on in thin cakes. When there is no oven at hand, a hole is dug in the ground, and laid over with stones, on which a fire is kindled. As soon as the stones are heated the fire is taken away, and the dough put on the stones in the form of thin cakes.]

PRELIMINARY REMARKS. The connection with the preceding verses is not certain, as appears from the conflicting views of commentators. Stier thinks that our Lord warns his disciples, from chapter v, 21 to chapter vi, 18, against pharisaism, from verses 19-24 against the undisguised worldly-mindedness of heathenism, and contrasts in chapter vii, 19, the true with the nominal disciple. Lange infers from verses 22-24, that the Lord does not speak of heathenism proper, but of hypocritical worldliness in general, passing from the laying up of treasures by the Pharisees in a figurative sense—that is, their pretended works of piety—to their amassing wealth in reality. He thinks that the history of the middle ages, of monachism and of the hierarchy, plainly teaches how close a connection there exists between a false spirituality and worldly-mindedness, between fasting and the pampering of the belly, between long prayers and covetousness, between avarice and alms-giving. Tholuck holds the simpler view, wherein the English commentators agree with him, that the idea expressed in the exhortation to do good works only for God's sake, involves and naturally leads to the other, that we ought to make the invisible world the end and object of all our pursuits. From those works which *par excellence* are called religious works, and which really are legitimate fruits of true religion, provided they proceed from pure motives, the Lord passes on

to the ordinary transactions of common life, and shows that they require the same purity and simplicity of heart as the religious works of alms-giving, fasting, and prayer.

VERSE 19. TO LAY UP TREASURES means to desire, and labor for, a larger amount of wealth than we need to supply our personal wants, to support our families, and to carry on our business. Not the possession of temporal goods, if obtained by fair means, or bestowed upon us by a kind Providence, is forbidden, but that greedy disposition that makes the accumulation of wealth the principal, if not the only object of life. This is the great sin, the curse of the Church, which has thus far prevented the conversion of the world to God. Against the rich of this description, or such as desire to become so, many woes are pronounced in the Word of God. (See Mark x, 23, 24; Luke xviii, 24; James v, 1-5; comp. Amos ii, 6, 7.)

VERSE 20. FOR YOURSELVES. These words are worthy of our serious consideration. No one can lay up treasures in heaven for others; every one must do that for himself. Nor is there any thing selfish in a sincere desire of a personal enjoyment of God's favor; on the contrary, this very desire is the only means to banish selfishness from the heart. He that really desires to obtain heavenly treasures, is necessarily solicitous that others may share them with him.

VERSE 21. WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO. From our treasure, the realization of our aims and the object of our affections, our heart can not possibly be severed. If this treasure, therefore, is of a worldly nature, the heart will cleave to it and be worldly; but if it is spiritual and heavenly, the heart is likewise spiritual and heavenly-minded.

VERSES 22, 23. The eye is called the light, the lantern of the body, not as having light in itself, but as the organ of light, and as such it is the guide of the body. But in order to receive light and be a sure guide for the body, the eye must be healthful and clear, not abnormal, double-seeing. The application of this figure is expressed in the words: if the light — that is, the organ of light — that is in thee, is darkness — that is, gives no light, because it is evil — that is, because it receives no light in consequence of its being abnormal, how great will be the darkness that shrouds your whole body? The question now arises, what is that which the Lord compares to the natural eye? The answers to this question differ widely. Stier and others understand by it the intent of the heart.

Then the evil eye would be the divided heart, which desires to serve God and Mammon at the same time, while the single eye would mean that state of the heart that sees only one object of love — God. But this view is open to the objection that the evil eye could not be called "the light that is in thee." In order to obviate this difficulty Lange understands by "the light that is in thee," the knowledge of God, which the scribes and Pharisees had from the Old Testament Scriptures, but which in them became illusory through the perverted state of their mind, and the occasion of leading them astray, even more than the utmost darkness. Our objection to this interpretation is, that it does not suit the context. Tholuck and others understand by this "light" the faculty which man has still left after the fall, to hear the voice of God, to apprehend the truth; in other words, the principle which Paul calls the inward man, (Rom. vii, 22,) and to which Christ refers when he says, (John xviii, 37,) "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Going a step further and completing this view, we understand by the inward light, conscience. As the eye can see clearly and be a sure guide only when it is healthful and has the proper amount of light, so conscience can then only be a safe guide when the understanding is enlightened and the heart upright. There are three ideas contained in this simile; namely, 1. Man has an organ or faculty to apprehend moral truth. This organ is conscience. Without this organ man could no more have an idea of God or moral truth than a man that is born blind can have an idea of color. 2. As the natural eye can become so diseased that it can endure light no longer and misleads man, so man's moral organ of sight, conscience, can become so perverted as to be unable to apprehend truth any more. How terrible is this state! The brightest light shines in vain when there is no organ to receive it. "How great is that darkness!" 3. Nothing has so strong a tendency to corrupt the moral organ, conscience, as a selfish, avaricious disposition. This declaration of our Lord ought to make us shudder, and we ought to examine ourselves whether our hearts are supremely fixed on God and the riches of his grace.

VERSE 24. Here the connection is clear. The healthfulness of the inner eye consists in recognizing the true, supreme good, as the only one; to this must, therefore, every thing else be subordinate. If this is not the case, our will necessarily comes into conflict with the will of God; our service is claimed by two masters, who are so opposed to each other in their demands, that it is impossible to serve them both at the same time without neglecting the one or

the other. One of these two diametrically-opposed services necessarily becomes an eye-service, or what is still worse, a service that involves hatred or contempt of one of the two masters. The servant (man) will either hate the one — God, because he can not shake off his allegiance — and love the other, (Mammon,) or he will hold to the one (God) and despise the other — Mammon, since his power over him is a usurpation, which he has the ability and will to shake off. Man can have only one Master, only one supreme good, only one ruling principle of life. If man makes the love of the world the ruling principle of his heart, and attempts at the same time to worship and serve the true God, he must learn to understand that he can not possibly serve these two masters, without proving false to either of them, and that he is in this double service a traitor and hypocrite. — This whole argument is based upon the presupposed and undeniable truth, that man is under the controlling influence of a higher power, good or evil.

VERSE 25. The warning against laying up treasures on earth (v. 19) is naturally followed by the general exhortation, (v. 24,) to subordinate every thing to the highest, the true object of life, from which the cares of the necessaries of life — the common plea for worldly-mindedness — makes no exception. Nevertheless, by the care forbidden, we have not to understand a proper carefulness, but that restless solicitude, that anxiety of mind about the present and the future that virtually denies the existence of God, at least his providence. From verses 25-34 the different reasons are stated, why these anxious thoughts ought to be banished; they are, 1. He that has given the greater, body and soul, should he withhold the less, the necessary means of support? Is not life more than meat and raiment? Now, when man is ordinarily not agitated by the fear of losing to-morrow his life or a member of his body, how foolish is it to be so greatly troubled about much smaller things! Of what service would food and raiment be to you without life? (v. 25.) 2. Does God not take care of those creatures that are not as good as you and more helpless? (vs. 26, 28, 30.) 3. Human cares without God avail nothing, (v. 27.) 4. God knows of what things ye have need, (v. 32.) 5. The future is not under our control, and for the lawful care is the evil of to-day sufficient. — It needs no argument to prove that it is not our Lord's intention to advocate idleness and careless indifference about our temporal affairs; such practice is contrary to the whole tenor and spirit of the religion of Jesus Christ.

VERSE 27. By all our anxious thoughts we can accomplish nothing; we only forfeit whatever claims we might have on the Divine goodness. We can not add even a handbreadth to our lives by all our efforts.

VERSE 28. All that we are and that we have does not depend upon our anxious cares, but comes from God, from his love, goodness, and providence; and should we become as helpless as the flowers in the field, God is still able to take care of us. All our cares spring from lack of faith.

VERSE 29. Stier comments on this verse: "Lilies have so fine leaves and tunics that man can not reproduce them, and yet they have not spun them after the fashion of men. This ought to put to shame the pride of man, who makes of dress — the humbling cover of his nakedness — an object of display and ostentation. Solomon's glory is generally taken for the ideal of gorgeous apparel. But why does it not equal the beauty of the lily? Flowers have their natural covering that grows with them, not an artificial one that is hung around them by the hands of man; and herein consists the beauty of nature and innocence. The lily's place is the paradise of God, that of Solomon's glory the hotbed of art. O that men might be wise and learn what this means!"

VERSES 31, 32. It is the principle of heathenism to seek only after those things that satisfy man's natural wants and sensual desires, and this very worldliness of theirs is the cause of their alienation from God and of the perversion of their innate God-consciousness into polytheism and idolatry. Shall the Jew, who has the knowledge of the true God, shall the Christian, with the Bible in his hand, not rise above them?

VERSE 33. SEEK YE FIRST. Seek it before ye seek any thing else. If you do so no other seeking will be necessary, because all these things which we *need* shall be added unto us, and because by seeking the kingdom of God we become inwardly free from the service of Mammon. — THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. The kingdom of heaven is here called the kingdom of God, because God is represented as man's supreme good. To seek the kingdom of God is to seek its blessings as they are expressed in the Lord's Prayer; its corresponding righteousness is delineated in this very Sermon on the Mount. — ALL THESE THINGS. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (1 Tim. iv, 8.)

VERSE 34. The care forbidden here by the Lord poisons every blessing by the fear of what may come to-morrow, and thus prevents the thankful enjoyment of present blessings — this is applicable to the spiritual as well as the natural life. God gives to each and every portion of life its proper share of sufferings and trouble how foolish is it to increase that measure by unfounded apprehensions about the future! It is significantly said that the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; this means, that for each new day new resources will be discovered; this we see beautifully illustrated in the lives of Franke, Stilling, and others; in fact, it is daily confirmed by the experience of every true child of God. As God's promises are given unto us for every to-day, we must meet every to-morrow with firm confidence in God. — The future is in God's hands. It ought to be our only concern to perform conscientiously the duties which to-day imposes upon us. Every day has its duties, whose performance requires labor and effort, sufficiently taxing our strength without the additional weight of trouble about the future. To neglect present duties in order to attend better to what the future may bring is a still greater violation of God's appointed order.

F. A WARNING, ADDRESSED TO THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST ESPECIALLY, AGAINST CENSORIOUS JUDGING AND INDISCRIMINATING CHARITY.

Chapter VII, 1-6.

(1) JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. (2) For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (3) And why beholdest thou the mote^[1] that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? (4) Or how^[2] wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? (5) Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (6) Give not that which is holy^[3] unto the dogs,^[4] neither cast ye your pearls^[5] before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

[1 A *mote* — any small, dry particle, as of chaff, wood, or the like, that may get into the eye, where it causes pain or obstructs the vision.]

[2 *How* — that is, what entitles you to it?]

[3 That which is holy, an allusion to what is destined for the service of God — the meat offered in sacrifice. (Lev. xxii, 2-7.)]

[4 Dogs were ceremonially unclean animals, whose price was forbidden to be brought into the house of the Lord by any vow. (Deut. xxiii, 18.)]

[5 *Pearls* resembled in appearance peas or acorns, the usual and favorite feed of swine.]

PRELIMINARY REMARKS. — On the connection of this section with the preceding Stier remarks: "It is not improbable that the Evangelists in their records of the longer discourses of our Savior, omitted some of his remarks that formed the connecting link. Yet it must not be overlooked that the Oriental discourse lacks that close connection of its parts which characterizes ours. The teacher utters his thoughts as they present themselves from his overflowing heart, without taking great pains to connect them logically with each other, and such delivery requires a higher degree of attention on the part of the hearers. In the preceding section the Lord had told his disciples they should not be like the Pharisees or the heathen. Now he warns them against censorious judgment and improper efforts to convert others, after they themselves have commenced to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

VERSES 1, 2. Not every kind of judging others is forbidden here. Thus the Lord does not forbid, 1. That magistrates should judge criminals and condemn them on conviction; for "by me (wisdom) kings reign and princes decree justice." (Prov. viii, 15.) 2. Nor that the Church or society should judge and expel from out of its midst such offenders as prove a stumbling-block for others, for the Lord himself has commanded this (Matt. xviii, 17) with regard to those who neglect to hear the Church. 3. Nor that a believer may pass a judgment on the open and well-known conduct of his brethren, for this is commanded. (Lev. xix, 17; Rom. xvi, 17; 1 Cor. v, 11, etc.) But he forbids here all officious, rash judging, all condemning without respect to the pardoning mercy of God, in short, such judging of others as violates the law of love. This injunction of our Lord is violated in various ways: 1. By suspecting our neighbor to be guilty of a crime or misdeed, of which he is innocent. 2. By suspecting him

to be more guilty than is really the case, to which human nature is very prone. 3. By pronouncing without sufficient evidence, even in our own minds, a judgment of condemnation. Whether our suspicions are well founded or not does not alter the case, for it is absolutely wrong to condemn on mere suspicion. If we violate the law of love in judging the conduct of others, we can not expect a better treatment at their hands, yea, we provoke them to pass equally-unwarrantable judgments on us, to become our slanderers. At all events, we expose ourselves to the rigid judgment of God.

VERSES 3-5. AND WHY BEHOLDEST THOU THE MOTE? etc.

Wesley refers the practice forbidden in these verses exclusively to the treatment of the children of God by the world, and understands by the beam the impenitence, selfishness, pride, worldliness, and indifference of the man of the world; by the mote, the infirmities and errors of the children of God. But, however true it is that the infirmities of Christians are, really, only motes when compared with the beams of a censorious world, yet we must say that this idea is not contained in the text. All expositors agree that while verses 1 and 2 forbid all kinds of officious, rash judging, verses 3 and 4 condemn the spirit of fault-finding among brethren, and daily experience but too much justifies this view. This pernicious, contemptible spirit of fault-finding among brethren, the practice of examining the brother's eye in order to find some defect there, while one's own faults are readily overlooked and ignored, is too common. A truly single eye has neither mote nor beam in itself, nor suspects them in others. It is this searching for faults in others which is here so strongly condemned by our Savior. Thou oughtest to have examined thyself first, for in thine own eye there is a beam. This beam is thy officious, rash, and harsh judging of others. OR — that is, if it was not so, how couldst thou say so dictatorially to thy brother, "Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye," as if thou couldst say: "I am better than you, and, therefore, I have taken it in hand to set you right!" — THOU HYPOCRITE. This term is deservedly applied by our Savior to those that are so ready to discover and to reprove the faults of others. The disciple of Christ, in so far as he has become imbued with this spirit, ought, first of all, to humble himself before his Maker, and with a contrite spirit pray for forgiveness, that he himself may stand justified before God. But how is a man to "take out the beam out of his own eye?" Can any man do this of himself? The natural man, of course, can not, but Christ addresses here not this class of men, but his own disciples, who as such possess and know the necessary grace, though they may

have neglected to seek or to use it. Not before we are repossessed of this spirit of love are we able to examine with an unbiased eye our brother's case, and to pronounce an impartial judgment, not based upon mere appearances.

VERSE 6. The precept which enjoins leniency in judging others is very appropriately followed by the warning not to carry it to the other extreme of exercising no judgment at all on the character of those before whom holy things are brought. He that forbids judging commands the exercise of judgment. (1 Thess. v, 21.) The child of God must necessarily use his judgment in order to distinguish between what is true and what is false. From the treatment of brethren, which is the more effectual the more it breathes the spirit of kindness, the Lord passes on to the treatment of such as he calls dogs and swine. The term "dog" is applied in the New Testament to those that are hardened in heart and positively hate the Gospel. (Phil. iii, 2; 2 Pet. ii, 22; Rev. xxii, 15.) In the same way the epithet "swine" or "sow" is applied to the callous sensualist, who makes of what is holy no other use than to defile it. The meaning of our Savior's warning is, accordingly, this: as soon as it is fully demonstrated that men deserve these names, that they are determined enemies of God and the Gospel, that they are blasphemers and workers of all kinds of uncleanness and iniquity, we must not dispute with them nor bring before them religious truths for which they have no organs of apprehension, neither eyes to see nor ears to hear, and which, therefore, they can not understand in their hearts. As pearls are not thrown before swine to be trampled under their feet, so we must not bring holy things before those that would merely profane and abuse them. Such characters must be made to tremble, and if an impression can be made upon them at all, the law alone with its peremptory commands and threatening penalties will do it. By the "*giving of what is holy to the dogs*" Stier understands an indiscriminate sentimental offer of the promises of the Gospel and admission to the sacraments of the Church, and by the "*casting of pearls before swine*" holding up before the world the mysterious operations of Divine grace on the heart without regard to place and time. The warning refers not so much to the testimony of the truth itself, which we owe to all men, as to the time, manner, etc., of giving it; an indiscriminate giving, a casting, as it were, before men's feet is forbidden, because both the reception of the truth is thereby hindered, and the well-meaning but imprudent giver exposes himself unnecessarily to ridicule and persecution. Wherever we discover, however, any susceptibility, it is our duty to deliver our message of peace. (Matt. x; Luke x.)

G. VARIOUS CONCLUDING REMARKS; NAMELY, 1. AN EXHORTATION TO PRAYER, SUPPORTED BY GLORIOUS PROMISES, (vs. 7-11;) 2. THE UNIVERSAL AND INFALLIBLE RULE OF CONDUCT TOWARD OUR NEIGHBOR, (v. 12;) 3. AN EXHORTATION NOT TO SHUN THE ONLY WAY TO LIFE, HOWEVER DIFFICULT IT IS; 4. A WARNING AGAINST DECEPTION BY OTHERS AND BY ONE'S SELF, (VS. 15-23;) 5. AN EXHORTATION TO CARRY THE TRUTHS LISTENED TO INTO PRACTICE, (vs. 24-27.)

Verses 7-29.

(7) ASK, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: (8) for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it. shall be opened. (9) Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? (10) Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? (11) If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (12) Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (13) Enter ye in at the strait gate: ^[1] for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: (14) because ^[2] strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (15) Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (16) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, ^[3] or figs of thistles? ^[4] (17) Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (18) A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (19) Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (20) Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (21) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (22) Many will say to me in that day, ^[5] Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy

name? and in thy name have cast out devils? [6] **and in thy name done many wonderful works?** (23) **And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.** (24) **Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:** (25) **and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,** [7] **and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.** (26) **And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:** (27) **and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.** (28) **And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:** (29) **for he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.**

[1 Cities were in ancient times surrounded with walls, furnished with wide or strait and narrow gates, (by-doors.) The wide gates were at the principal streets, and intended for public use, while the by-doors were in retired spots, intended only for private use, and had, therefore, "only here and there a traveler."]

[2 For ὅτι (because) another reading is τί (how,) which is received by most modern critics.]

[3 The buckthorn is probably meant, which bears useless, black berries, closely resembling grapes.]

[4 Thistles have a crown of flowers not unlike figs. Thistles and thorns bear beautiful flowers, but no fruit.]

[5 That is, on the day of judgment.]

[6 In Greek, demons. The term "devil" is used in the Greek text only of the chief of evil spirits.]

[7 The rain, the floods, the winds — frequent and well-known phenomena, testing the stability of buildings.]

PRELIMINARY REMARKS. — Those expositors, in whose opinion the peroration of the Sermon of the Mount commences with verse 13 or 21 of chapter vii, connect this with the preceding section by taking what our Lord says in verses 7-11 as a further instruction on, the proper exercise of judgment;

namely, by what means his disciples might succeed in keeping the proper mean between judging rashly and acting without any judgment. But we are rather inclined to connect this exhortation to prayer with the whole righteousness demanded in the preceding part of the discourse, and we see no reason why the peroration could not commence as well with verse 7 as either of the subsequent verses.

VERSES 7, 8. To whom and for what we ought to pray is self-evident. The three different expressions constitute a beautiful gradation in enforcing intense, continual prayer. The exhortation to *seek* refers to that old promise recorded (Deut. iv, 29) that God shall be found by all that seek with their whole heart and their whole soul. To him that asks, the object of his desire appears as something that he is destitute of; to him that seeks, as something that he has lost; to him that knocks, as something that is locked up. Verse 8 greatly confirms the promises of verse 7. The words "EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH," etc., are intended as a reproof and remedy for that lack of faith, or little faith, which scarcely dares to claim any promise for its own prayer. At the same time they also intimate that he who does not ask, seek, or knock, will receive nothing from the Lord. *Ask*, become a beggar at the gate of grace, and ask with humble confidence. *Seek*: thou hast lost thy God, thy soul, thy paradise; seek, therefore, carefully and at the right place. *Knock*: be in earnest, knock hard, and again and again.

VERSES 9, 10. Verse 9 ought to be translated, "Which of you is a man? he (that is) will certainly not give a stone if his son asks him for bread," etc., our Lord declaring thereby, that he that does is no longer a man, a human being. What man will be so unfeeling and cruel against his entreating child to give it for a cake of bread a hard stone, or for a fish a noxious serpent, or, as Luke adds, a venomous scorpion for an egg? Ye, then, know how to give good gifts to your children; ye do so from that impulse of nature which God has implanted in you. How much more your Father in heaven! It is worthy of note that the Lord substitutes for the mere refusal — the offering of a stone or of a serpent. Stier sees in this a new idea. Parents know how to distinguish between what is good and evil for their children, giving them only what is good for them, and withholding whatever might be hurtful; how much more will God act thus! What is hurtful to us, or what is not conducive to our real welfare, he will withhold from us, even if we should most urgently ask him for it. To us, in our short-sightedness, it may seem as necessary as a piece of bread to a hungry

child; but God in his infinite wisdom sees, that if he should give it to us it would prove as useless as a stone to a child, or as dangerous as a serpent, and for this reason he withholds it.

VERSE 11. IF YE THEN BEING EVIL. According to Stier these words contain one of the strongest proofs that all men are naturally depraved, and that our Lord is more than a mere man, inasmuch as he exempts himself in this declaration from all other men. — The argument is: If in men who, without exception, are depraved and evil, and who lack true, unchanging love, nevertheless paternal affection is so strong that they give good gifts to their children, how much more will our Heavenly Father, whose love is infinitely stronger, whose very nature is to give, grant good gifts (Luke xi, 13, says 'the Holy Ghost') unto them that ask him!

VERSE 12. In this so-called golden rule the Lord comprehends the whole law, as far as it has a bearing on our conduct toward our fellow-men. This rule is easy to be understood, universally acknowledged to be reasonable and just, and most salutary in its effects, and would, if it were universally observed, remove most of the sufferings of mankind. The consecutive particle, "THEREFORE," refers not to what immediately precedes, but to all the precepts laid down by our Savior throughout his whole sermon. It is worthy of note, that both the rabbins and heathen philosophers had this rule in a negative form, and so it is still proverbially used, "do not do unto others what you do not wish them to do unto you." But the Lord bringing it nearer the conscience, says: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." He that does to his neighbor every thing that he may in justice and mercy demand of him, has fulfilled the law. The commandment enjoins love from a pure heart; but this purity of heart is found only where sin is pardoned through faith, by the grace of him who has come to fulfill the law and the prophets, (chap. v, 17,) and in this sense the Lord says: "This is the law and the prophets."

VERSES 13, 14. In these verses the Lord calls the attention of his hearers directly to the world to come. Corresponding to the awful contrast of heaven and hell, the final abodes of men, is the contrast between the strait and the wide gate, between the many that go in at the broad way and the few that find the narrow way. But what have we to understand by the two gates? By the *strait gate* conviction and conversion, the beginning of the new life, is generally

understood, and by the *wide gate* natural depravity. But Stier, Tholuck, and Olshausen understand by the *narrow way*, the way to heaven, as described in the whole discourse, and by the *strait gate* the entrance into the kingdom of glory, as is the case in Matt. xix, 24; Luke xiii, 24, 25. Stier remarks further: "With the words 'enter in at the strait gate,' the Lord has, indeed, represented the gate as close by, as if it were just before us, but this is the case only in the same sense in which the kingdom of glory is also represented as near. In the exhortation, the gate and the way are combined into one, because the way is at the same time the gate, in so far as he who walks in the way can not miss the gate. While exhorting us to choose the right way, he takes his language from the decisive goal, the entrance into heaven. The wide gate is the wide open mouth of hell, (Isa. v, 14; Heb. ii, 5; Prov. xxx, 15, 16,) into which men rush headlong by crowds; no one need *seek* the broad way that leads to the wide gate — it is as broad as the world, every one that is unregenerate stands and walks in it and can not possibly miss its terminus, if he but follows the impulses of his nature, since all roads, with the only exception of the strait one, form but *one* broad road leading to the gate of hell. But the narrow way is rocky and little beaten, by-roads continually branch off from it to the right and the left up to its termination, so that many leave it even when they are almost there, (Luke xiii, 24;) it must, therefore, be sought not only at the outset, but be traveled with carefulness and great circumspection, till its end is actually reached." Although there are grand truths in the extract from Stier, which ought to be pondered well by every serious mind, yet his exposition is open to the following objections. What is enjoined in "enter in at the strait gate," is an act that is neither often to be repeated nor to be continued through life, but to be done at once and forever; the imperative *aorist* (**ἔισελθέτε**) necessarily conveying this idea. That the sacred writer observed this idiom of the Greek language, appears plainly from verse 15, where by **προσέχετε**, something is commanded that forms a duty for life. The "entering in at the strait gate" means, therefore, in the case of those whom Jesus addressed, their becoming his open, professed followers, their tearing themselves loose from their carnal Messianic prejudices, from friends and kindred, who opposed their step, etc.; in the case of every human being the efforts necessary on his part for an entrance into the new Divine life — that is, repentance and conversion. Again, Stier paints the pilgrim's progress too cheerless and gloomy; though the Christian at every stage of his journey is beset by enemies and dangers, and though the abstract possibility of total apostasy at any moment is not denied, we must, nevertheless,

maintain, that the child of God receives continually such unmistakable tokens of his Father's love, that he is perfectly happy, and every doubt as to his acceptance and whether his way is the narrow one disappears. — Dr. A. Clarke remarks on this passage: "The way to the kingdom of God is sufficiently manifest — the completest assistance is promised in the way, and the greatest encouragement to persevere to the end is held out in the everlasting Gospel. But men are so wedded to their own passions, and so determined to follow the inclinations of their own hearts, that there are few who find the way to heaven; fewer yet who abide any time in it; fewer still who walk in it; and fewest of all who persevere unto the end. Nothing renders this way either narrow or difficult to any person, but sin. Let all the world leave their sins, and all the world may walk abreast in this good way."

VERSE 15. The difficulty connected with the finding of the narrow way naturally suggests the idea of guides who point it out; but there being too many among the professional guides who know nothing of the way themselves, and whose sole object is to mislead those that may confide themselves to them, the Lord warns against FALSE PROPHETS. A prophet is he who speaks in the name of God and claims to be a messenger of God. During the whole of the Sermon of the Mount the Lord had proven himself as the true prophet that was to come, (John vi, 14;) hence the exhortation: Retain firmly what I have told you; after me others will speak to you — beware of them! We find here the same idea that is expressed in John x, 8: "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers — that is, all that passing by me as the door do not really come in my name, all that will teach differently from me are thieves and robbers, to whom the sheep must not listen!" In the case of the disciples and the listening multitude the false prophets were the scribes; all subsequent followers of Christ are warned against the false teachers of every description to the end of the world, of whom Christ speaks in Matt. xxiv. By SHEEP'S CLOTHING some understand the official garb of prophets, who wore sheep or goat-skins; others the outward appearance of a true member of Christ's flock. Stier thinks that both are meant. With special reference to the frequent Old Testament warnings against false prophets the Savior means to say, "They — the false prophets — pass themselves for guides and shepherds, going before the flock, of which they must, of course, be true members before they can assume the office of guides; but they deceive you, they wear merely the dress of sheep, without belonging in reality to the flock." At the same time the

expression has also reference to the official garment of the prophets. (Zech. xiii, 4.) The Lord combines here the Old Testament phraseology with a form of expression common among other nations, so that in the simile before us AEsop's wolf in sheep's clothing, and the Jewish deceiver in the prophet's garment, fully coincide. That these disguised wolves are called "ravening," exhibits the picture in a still bolder relief, pointing out the great danger to which the poor deluded sheep are subject. (John x, 10-12; Acts xx, 29.) But what is in the application the real import of the sheep's clothing? "All good outward appearance, in so far as it forms a contrast to an inward reality; consequently, on the one hand, the enticing words of a hypocritical orthodoxy, (Col. ii, 4; Eph. v, 6; Rom. xvi, 8,) on the other hand, the form of godliness without its power; in short, whatever would fain pass for pure, genuine truth, but is in reality intermixed with error, whatever has the appearance of righteousness and purity without being a genuine fruit of the Spirit." Dr. Clarke understands by the false prophets, simple hirelings, whose walk is the opposite of their profession and teaching. But how could, then, their character and conduct be called sheep's clothing?

VERSES 16, 17. These false prophets shall be known by *their fruits*. Now, what are these fruits? Some understand by them the doctrine, others the conduct of the prophets, and others again the results of their labors; but neither of these constitutes for itself a safe criterion. True doctrine is in itself no sufficient criterion, since it may be merely the letter, committed to memory; nor the outward conduct by itself, since even false-teachers may lead an unexceptional life, as, e.g., Pelagius, and man can not look into another's heart. Even the results of a man's labors alone do not justify a conclusion as to his real character, because the absence of good results is not always the teacher's fault. We must, therefore, take all these things together and understand by the fruits all the fruit which every good tree bringeth forth, (v. 17,) the fruits of the Spirit, which are found in all true disciples, and possessed of which they can distinguish between true and false prophets. The Lord compares the false prophets to thistles and thorns, the true ones to vines and fig-trees. Beautifully says Bengel: "The fruit is that which a man puts forth like a tree from the good or evil disposition pervading all his inward powers. A doctrine learned from others and readily delivered is not fruit, but all that a teacher puts forth from his heart, in walk and conversation, as something flowing from his own inner being, like milk from the mother. Not his speech alone makes a prophet true or false,

but the whole tenor of his life, by which he leads himself and others to life or destruction."

VERSES 18-20. From verses 17 and 18 it follows, that if the tree bring forth no good fruit it certainly brings forth evil fruit. In both verse 19 and chapter xxv, 42-45, the absence of good fruit alone is mentioned as the cause of damnation; this deserves the special attention of those who in their blindness are ready to ask, "What evil have I done to merit damnation?" Verse 19 shows clearly that by the fruits, by which we are to distinguish the true from the false prophet, we have to understand the manifestations of that change of heart which Christ had clearly unfolded throughout his whole discourse, the doing of the will of God, the fruits of the Spirit. Gerlach says: "In Christianity doctrine and conduct are so intimately connected, that every one who leads an ungodly life is at the same time a false prophet, a false teacher, who has not the true doctrine; since by preaching the true doctrine he would condemn himself." This is very true; yet it also occurs that unconverted men may enter the lists of orthodoxy from selfish motives. Again many hold great errors along with some fundamental truths, and sometimes it is not easy to detect these errors. For this very reason the Lord warns his disciples not to follow the voice of strangers, (John x, 5,) and enjoins upon them such an acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures as to enable them to distinguish truth from error. (Acts vii, 11.) Dr. Clarke says: "Let us remember that as a good tree means a good heart, and the good fruit a holy life, and that every heart is naturally vicious, so there is none but God who can pluck up the vicious tree, and create a good heart. Love to God and man is the root of the good tree, and from this principle all its fruit is found. . . . To teach, as some have done, that a state of salvation may be consistent with the greatest crimes, or that the righteous necessarily sin in all their best works, is really to make the good tree bring forth bad fruit and to give the lie to the Author of eternal truth."

VERSE 21. Having pronounced the doom of false prophets, he now sits in judgment on all who at the great day shall be found wanting. A practical, full obedience to all his commandments, not a mere profession of his name, is the indispensable condition of entering into his kingdom. Rationalists have perverted this passage, as if *all public profession* of Christ was denounced, as if the Lord had said: "*Not those* who say Lord, Lord;" while he in reality says, "*Not every one* that says unto me." To confess him openly is expressly enjoined as a duty, (Matt. x, 32, 33; Luke xii, 8, 9;) but this outward

confession alone is not sufficient. — HE THAT DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER. Inasmuch as the will of the Father is fully revealed by the Son, whom he commands us to hear, all his commandments may be comprehended in that, to believe in his Son. (1 John iii, 23.)

VERSES 22, 23. In the preceding verses Christ had warned his disciples against deception by others — in these he warns them against deceiving themselves. The worst kind of self-deception is that delusion which makes the sinner confident of his final acceptance with God to the very day of judgment. This self-conceit, not an actual talking or conversation, is evidently meant here. How this false notion can last through hades to the day of judgment, the Bible does not disclose. It is, moreover, worthy of note, that the individuals that are here introduced as speaking, do not base their expectation of heaven on Christ, in whom alone there is salvation, but on their own works, upon what *they* have done. They say not a word about what Christ has done for them, but declaim what they *themselves* have done. — PROPHESYING means in the Scriptures not only to foretell future events, but also to speak from higher inspiration unto others to edification, exhortation, and comfort. (Rom. xii, 6; 1 Cor. xiii, 2, 9; xiv, 3, 4.) Its object in the latter case is not to reveal new truths, but powerfully to affect the heart by interpreting and applying the revealed truths. In a still more extensive sense every lofty, affecting, and impressive discourse may be called prophesying, and in this sense the wicked also may prophesy. Truth may powerfully affect a man's emotional nature, his imagination, and intellect, while heart and will are but little impressed. O, how many a powerful preacher of the Gospel comes under the condemnation, to preach the saving truths unto others, and to be or become himself a castaway! Dr. A. Clarke remarks that God may for his own sake, and in order to save immortal souls, bless the labors of such men, and exclaims: "Alas! alas! how many preachers are there who appear prophets in their pulpits; how many writers and other Evangelical workmen, the miracles of whose labors, learning, and doctrine we admire, who are nothing and worse than nothing before God, because they do not perform his will, but their own! What an awful condition, that a man of eminent gifts, whose talents are a source of public utility, should be only as a way-mark or finger-post in the way to eternal bliss, pointing out the road to others, without walking in it himself!" — AND IN THY NAME HAVE CAST OUT DEVILS? AND IN THY NAME HAVE DONE MANY WONDERFUL WORKS? The Greek word, **δινάμεις**, translated wonderful works, means supernatural works,

miracles. The question, therefore, arises whether the assertion of these men to have performed supernatural works may be believed, or whether they merely pretend to have done what they were unable to do? We take the ground, that supernatural or superhuman works may be performed by false prophets. It is true, miracles were intended for a criterion to judge Divine messengers by (see Matt. xvi, 17, 18, and *passim*.) Other and even more important criteria, however, were the nature of the doctrines preached and the effects of a sincere obedience to those doctrines, as well as the lives of the messengers themselves. The reality of the miracle — δύναμις — is expressly declared by Moses, (Deut. xiii, 1, 2,) for and by itself not to be sufficient evidence of the prophet's claims, but the miracle is to be estimated by the doctrine which he preached. (*Ibid.*) That through the two dispensations there are running along with Divine miracles satanic signs and wonders, is taught in so many plain passages, that he who denies the existence of the latter can, certainly, not appeal to the Bible. (See, e.g., Matt. xxiv, 24; 2 Thess. ii, 9, etc.) On this point Dr. Bushnell remarks in his "Nature and the Supernatural:" "Any invisible spirit who can do what is superhuman, can do a miracle. That there are invisible spirits we have no doubt, and what kind of access they may have to nature, in what manner qualified or restrained, we do not know. But it will never be difficult to distinguish their prodigies from any Divine operation. Their character will be evident in their works, and no one that loves the Divine truth will ever be taken by their impostures. We express no opinion of the utterances and other demonstrations which many are accepting in our times, as the effusions of spirits — they are beyond our range of acquaintance. But if these things are really done, or communicated by spirits, then they are miracles, *bad* miracles, of course; and thus we have it established as a curious phenomenon, that the men who are boasting their rejection of all *Divine* miracles, are themselves deepest in the faith of those which are wrought by demons. Nor is it impossible that God has suffered this late irruption of lying spirits to be at once the punishment and the rectification of that shallow unbelief which distinguishes our age — thus to shame the absurd folly of what is called science, and bring us back to a true faith in the spiritual realities and powers of a supernatural kingdom." Compare also General Introduction, sec. 22. Why God permits these satanic wonders is expressly stated by Moses in the passage already quoted: "For the Lord your God prover you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul;" and the child of God has abundant means to protect himself against their pernicious influences. The Divine miracle has the honor and

glory of God and the real amelioration of the condition of man for its object, which, of course, is not the case with the satanic wonder, as Satan should thereby cease being Satan. (Matt. xii, 25, 26.) The object for which a miracle is wrought, constitutes thus one of the safest criteria of genuine, Divinely-wrought miracles in distinction from satanic wonders; there are, however, still other criteria. A real miracle, involving a suspension of the God-ordained laws of nature, we consider as possible with God alone; but there are intermediate links or steps between the deeds of men with their legitimate effects, and Divine operations which transcend human powers and human knowledge. Whoever believes in the existence of a personal Satan, a being of angelic powers and knowledge of the highest order, can scarcely find any real difficulty in giving assent to the position that he may be able to do what transcends human power and knowledge. In addition to this, it must be observed that even such supernatural works as must be ascribed to Divine power may be wrought by persons not enjoying the Divine favor. Of this kind are the "wonderful works" of our text, the wonders performed by Judas, possibly also those of some other disciples, that were sent out by the Lord at different times; for he expressly teaches this possibility, where he tells the returning and rejoicing disciples (Luke x, 20) that they should not rejoice because the spirits were subject unto them, but because their names were written in heaven. A remarkable instance of the kind was also Balaam, "upon whom the Spirit of the Lord came," (Num. xxiv, 2,) though he always was and remained a castaway. (2 Pet. ii, 15.) For wise and good purposes God may bestow upon some certain extraordinary powers, or miraculous gifts, which they rashly take for a proof of their Divine acceptance, till the day of judgment dissipates their awful delusion. Jugglers and willful deceivers are evidently not spoken of in this verse, but such as really believed on the strength of their miraculous powers to belong to God's elect. Let us, therefore, examine ourselves with regard to any extraordinary gift which we may have received from God, whether we really love God and our neighbor, whether we are united with Christ by a living faith — without this the highest gifts will prove a snare, and finally an everlasting curse. — I NEVER KNEW YOU — that is, as truly and really mine, for although you have "named my name, you have not departed from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii, 19.) — DEPART FROM ME, (chap. xxv, 41,) the same Jesus whom ye have confessed and preached. — YE THAT WORK INIQUITY; their hearts had never been purified by regeneration, (Tit. iii, 5,) all their works had partaken of the nature of their hearts; moreover, they

had done works positively forbidden by God, and they were, in this twofold sense, workers of iniquity.

VERSES 24-27. From the scenes of the final judgment the Lord returns to his whole discourse to enforce it by a new simile, taken from circumstances and phenomena familiar to his hearers. It was often the case in these countries, that houses were built at the base of hills, on the banks of rivulets or brooks. But these often rose during the rainy season so suddenly and so high, that the houses on their sandy banks were swept away. Instead, however, of profiting by experience, so as to build the new houses at a greater distance from the water-beds on solid rocks, many were thoughtless enough to build again on the old spot, because it required less labor and expense than to build on a safe, distant rock. The house, says Stier, which a man builds for a safe home, for his protection against wind and storm, is the fit emblem of the salvation of the soul built upon an immovable rock. A parallel passage we find in Prov. xii, 7: "The wicked are overthrown and are not; but the house of the righteous shall stand." Those who do not think of making any preparation for their final abode are not included in our Savior's words; he speaks of those alone who fancy they will be saved by hearing without *doing*. Since man's final fate will be decided not by his profession, but by the determination and decision of his will, we have to understand by the rocky foundation the carrying into practice of Christ's whole doctrine, of which (practicing) the hearing is the first indispensable condition, since believing, praying, receiving, obeying, and doing come from hearing the word of grace and truth. Dr. Clarke says: "Talking of Christ, his righteousness, merits, and atonement, while the person is not conformed to his word and spirit, is no other than solemn self-deception. It is not the man who hears and believes these sayings of Christ, whose building shall stand when the earth and its works shall be burned up, but the man who does them. Many suppose that the law of Moses is abolished, merely because it is too strict, and impossible to be observed, and that the Gospel was brought in to liberate us from its obligations; but let all such know that in the whole of the old covenant nothing can be found so exceedingly strict and holy as this sermon, which Christ lays down as the rule by which we are to work. Then the fulfilling of these precepts is the purchase of glory?" No, it is the way only to that glory which has already been purchased by the blood of the Lamb; to him that believes, all things are possible." Gerlach also says: "He only in whom belief and purpose produce the deed has built the house of his salvation upon the rock; a mere assent of the

understanding, or mere emotions, are illusory." The rain descends from above, the floods beat against the sides and undermine the base, the winds blow violently upon the whole frame — against such attacks a rocky foundation alone can hold out. The different elements of the trial which the building has to stand are mainly intended to set forth the extent and violence of the trial. Considered by themselves they have been differently interpreted. Dr. Clarke understands by the rain, temporal afflictions, coming in the course of Divine Providence; by the floods, those trials which come from the passions of men; by the winds, the attacks of Satan. — UNTO A WISE MAN. When there is a distinction drawn between wisdom and prudence, we understand by prudence more the choosing of the proper means, while wisdom is used with reference to the choice of the end. The two words, however, are often used promiscuously.

VERSES 28, 29. WHEN JESUS HAD ENDED THESE SAYINGS, etc. Learn from these words, 1. That Jesus delivered this sermon as one connected whole, that it is, therefore, no collection of his sayings at different times. 2. What a deep impression did this matchless sermon produce on the people that listened to it with the utmost attention! They were struck with astonishment and awe. 3. The cause of this deep impression is stated. Jesus spoke with Divine authority, and his hearers recognized in him the promised prophet. (Deut. xviii, 15.) His words affected the hearts by their inward Divine power; he spoke as the fountain of wisdom; he spoke with authority. The teachings of the scribes were inventions of human ingenuity; their hearers could anticipate them and go beyond them; but here was a speaker who entered into the recesses of their hearts as only the Searcher of hearts could do. Heubner says: "The sermon of the Lord had a fourfold power, as (1) he preached in the full consciousness of his Divine commission; (2) with the full power of his own full conviction; (3) he was himself what he preached; (4) love was the only motive of his preaching. He that wishes to preach with power, must have these four conditions fulfilled in his person; where this is not the case the preaching is insipid and ineffectual."

CHAPTER VIII.

§ 10. JESUS HEALS A LEPER.

HAVING portrayed Jesus as the great prophet, in the record of his Sermon on the Mount, the Evangelist gives us now a series of miracles wrought by the Lord. "This remarkable succession of miraculous performances, uninterrupted by discourse or teaching, is sufficient of itself," as Dr. Alexander remarks, "to create a presumption that the incidents here given are not arranged in reference to the time of their occurrence, but to some other purpose in the mind of the historian; and this presumption is strengthened by the fact that several of these miracles are given in the other Gospels in a different chronological connection." For the chronological place, which appears to us the most probable to be assigned to them, we refer the reader to the Synoptical Table and to our notes on the passages which contain the reason for that chronological arrangement.

As we meet here for the first time the record of a miracle wrought by Jesus, we consider this the proper place to make some general remarks, to which the reader can, in future, conveniently refer. How absurd it is to say, "*Miracles are impossible,*" we have shown in § 22 of our General Introduction. The *verity* of the Gospel miracles has been proved by the credibility of the Evangelists and the Divine seal stamped upon the Gospel history by its subject. (§§ 24, 25, 26, 30.) How we can distinguish true, Divine miracles from the lying wonders of evil spirits, we have discussed in our remarks on chapter vii, 22. We will now add a few remarks on the peculiar nature, significance, importance, and design of the miracles performed by Christ. There are three names for miracles in the New Testament; namely, *τέρατα*, (wonders,) objects of astonishment; *σημεῖα*, (signs,) signifying the relation of what is visible, to its spiritual purpose and significance; and *δύναμεις*, literally, powers — translated *mighty works*.

One of the many features of the picture of the Messiah, drawn in the Old Testament Scriptures, is that of the gift of miracles. (See Isaiah xxxv, 4-6.) If Christ had not performed miracles, Israel would deservedly have questioned his Messianic dignity. For inasmuch as Moses had described the Messiah as a prophet like himself, (Deut. xviii, 15, 18,) the Jews felt authorized to look for miracles in the Messiah. (John vii, 31; comp., also, John ix, 30, 31, 33; iii, 2; v, 31-33, 36; x, 37, 38.)

"An objection has been made," says Dr. Bushnell — "Nature and the Supernatural," p. 363 — "that, miracles being only demonstrative of force, and having, therefore, in themselves no moral quality, there is no rational, or valuable, or even proper place for them in a Gospel considered as a new-creating grace for the world. To this we answer that it is a thing of no secondary importance for a sinner, down under sin, and held fast in its bitter terms of bondage, to see that God has entered into his case with a force that is adequate. These mighty works of Jesus, which have been done and duly certified, are fit expressions to us of the fact that he can do for us all that we want. Doubtless it is a great and difficult thing to regenerate a fallen nature. No person, really awake to his miserable and dreadful bondage, ever thought otherwise. But He that touched the blind eyes and commanded the leprosy away, He that trod the sea, and raised the dead, and burst the bars of death himself, can tame the passions, sweeten the bitter affections, regenerate the inbred diseases, and roll back all the storms of the mind. Assured in this manner by his miracles, they become arguments of trust, a storehouse of powerful images, that invigorate courage and stimulate hope. Broken as we are by our sorrow, cast down as we are by our guiltiness, ashamed, and weak, and ready to despair, we can yet venture a hope that our great soul-miracle may be done, that, if we can but touch the hem of Christ's garment, a virtue will go out of him to heal us. In all dark days and darker struggles of the mind, in all outward disasters, and amid all storms upon the sea of life, we can yet descry him treading the billows and hear him saying: 'It is I, be not afraid!' And lest we should believe the miracles faintly — for there is a busy infidel lurking always in our hearts to cheat us of our faith, when he can not reason it away — the character of Jesus is ever shining with and through them, in clear, self-evidence, leaving them never to stand as raw wonders only of might, but covering them with glory, as tokens of a heavenly love, and acts that only suit the proportions of his personal greatness and majesty."

The reader will thank us for adding to the above extract the following beautiful description of the nature, significance, and importance of the Gospel miracles by Westcott in his "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels:"

"The miracles of the Gospel are not isolated facts; they are not vain repetitions. In meaning as well as in time, they lie between the incarnation and ascension. They look back to the one event and forward to the other, now bringing God to man and now raising man to God, as signs of the full

accomplishment of Christ's earthly work. In this sense they are all one, and yet they are all different. Each has its proper lesson; each has its peculiar place. They speak to us in the various crises of life; they speak to us in the very presence of death; they speak to us in joy and sorrow, in the course of common duties, in the cares of home, in the house of God. And thus it is that they properly belong to the believer, and not to the doubter. They are a treasure rather than a bulwark. They are in their inmost sense instruction, and not evidence. And yet as the Christian rises to a clearer perception of their distinctness and harmony, as he traces their simplicity and depth, as he sees their comprehensive variety and infinite significance, they do become an evidence of his faith — an evidence of power and wisdom which issues not in the silence of repressed doubt, but in the thanksgiving of grateful praise.

"The miracles were wrought for *us*; the record was written for *us* — for *us*, and yet we live on from day to day, as if we were not heirs of blessings already realized, as if we were not cheered by the assurance of yet greater works. I do not stop to inquire how far the *form* of miracles may change, as the world itself changes, but as far as miracles are flashes of a heavenly life and power bursting through the thin vail of natural life, as far as they are revelations of the invisible, epiphanies of the Divine, they belong to all time. We may not, we dare not abjure the heritage of the Holy Spirit; and if we put it away it will be to our confusion. It is faithlessness alone, our faithlessness, which closes the period of miracles. . . . Heaven lies about us still, though we will not look beyond the clouds which hide it. Christ is still the same, the word, the light, the life to each one of us, and to the masses of which we commonly think only with cold hopelessness. The thought is one which we need to cherish for the fulfillment of our outer and our inner work. The same powers which conquered sicknesses and death are now not less mighty to overcome their spiritual antitypes, the blindness of sensuality and the leprosy of caste, the fever of restlessness, the palsy of indolence, the death of sin.

"The miracles are the sacraments of heavenly realities; and may God grant to us to carry the lessons of the miracles, the lessons of creation and Providence, the lessons of mercy and judgment, the lessons of a soul all prevailing by union with its Savior to our common duties! May he grant to us to use the power which he gives to his service, and to enjoy the future which he offers to his praise!"

As regards the different modes of miraculous power manifested by Christ, his miracles may be divided into four classes; namely, 1. Those manifesting his power over outward inanimate nature. 2. Over the world of spirits. 3. Over his own bodily organism and that of others. 4. Those manifesting his knowledge of what was absent in regard to time and space. Westcott has the following interesting classification:

I. *The miracles on Nature.*

1. Miracles of creative power. (1.) The water made wine. (John ii, 1-12.) (2.) The bread multiplied. (Matt. xiv, 15-21; xv, 32-39; Mark vi, 35-44; viii, 1-10; Luke ix, 12-17; John vi, 5-14.) (3.) The walking on the water. (Matt. xiv, 22-36; Mark vi, 48, 49; John vi, 16-21.)

2. Miracles of Providence. (1.) The first miraculous draught of fishes. (Luke v, 1-11.) (2.) The storm stilled. (Matt. iii, 23-27; Mark iv, 35-41; Luke viii, 22-25.) (3.) The stater in the fish's mouth. (Matt. xvii, 24-27.) (4.) The second miraculous draught of fishes. (John xxi, 1-23.) (5.) The fig-tree cursed. (Matt. xxi, 19, sq.; Mark xi, 20, sq.)

II. *The miracles on man.*

1. Miracles in consequence of personal faith. (1.) The two blind men in the house. (Matt. ix, 29-31.) (2.) Bartimaeus. (Matt. xx, 29-34; Mark x, 46-52; Luke xviii, 35-43.) (3.) The one leper. (Matt. viii, 1-4; Mark i, 40-45; Luke v, 12-16.) (4.) The ten lepers. (Luke xvii, 11-19.) (5.) The woman with the issue. (Matt. ix, 20-22; Mark v, 25-34; Luke viii, 43-48.)

2. Miracles in consequence of intercession. (1.) The blind. (Mark viii, 22-26.) (2.) The dumb and deaf. (Mark vii, 31-37.) (3.) The nobleman's son healed. (John iv, 46, 54.) (4.) The centurion's servant healed. (Matt. viii, 5-13; Luke vii, 1-10.) (5.) The paralytic healed. (Matt. ix, 1-8; Mark ii, 1-12; Luke v, 17-26.)

3. Unsolicited miracles of mercy. (1.) The blind. (John ix.) (2.) The fever healed. (Matt. viii, 14, 15; Mark i, 29-34; Luke iv, 38-41.) (3.) The dropsy healed. (Luke xiv, 1-6.) (4.) The withered hand restored (Matt. xii, 9-13; Mark iii, 1-5; Luke vi, 6-11.) (5.) The impotent man restored. (John v, 1-17.) (6.) Restorations to life, in the death-chamber of a girl, (Matt. ix, 18, sq., Mark

v, 22, sq.; Luke viii, 41, sq.;) on the bier of the young man, (Luke vii, 11-18;) at the tomb of Lazarus. (John xi.)

III. *Miracles on the spirit-world.*

1. Miracles of intercession. (1.) A dumb man possessed by a devil. (Matt. ix, 32-34.) (2.) A blind and dumb man possessed by a devil. (Matt. xii, 22, sq.; Luke xi, 14, sq.) (3.) The Syrophenician's daughter. (Matt. xv, 21-28; Mark vii, 24-30.) (4.) The boy whom the disciples could not heal. (Matt. xvii, 14, sq.; Mark ix, 14, sq.; Luke ix, 37, sq.)

2. Miracles of antagonism. (1.) The unclean spirit cast out in the synagogue. (Mark i, 21-28; Luke iv, 31-37.) (2.) The legion cast out. (Matt. viii, 28-34; Mark v, 1-17; Luke viii, 26-37.)

Verses 1-4. (COMPARE MARK i, 40-45; LUKE v, 12-15.)

(1) **WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.** (2) **And, behold, there came a leper^[1] and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.** (3) **And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean.** And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (4) **And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded,^[2] for a testimony unto them.**

[1] Leprosy is a disease peculiar to Egypt and the southern regions of anterior Asia, very destructive and one of the greatest plagues of the Jews also, who wished it only to their mortal enemies. (2 Sam. iii, 29.) It appears first on the epidermis, attacks then the cellular texture, the bones, the marrow, and joints, and is transmitted from the father not only to his children, but to his posterity in the third and fourth generations. Its development is favored by impure, marshy air, uncleanness, etc. Its premonitory symptoms are small spots of the size of the puncture of a needle, which gradually enlarge into tubercles covered with a scab, and spread till they cover the whole body. This disease is divided into three kinds; namely, 1. White leprosy or carrars, also called the leprosy of the Hebrews. (Exod. iv, 6; 2 Kings v, 27.) 2. The tuberculated leprosy, or elephantiasis. (Deut. xxviii, 27.) 3. The black leprosy with which Job was afflicted. Very different views are held as to the cause and nature of this dreadful disease, which is still the scourge of the Orient; thus

far it has defied all remedial agents, and it happens but rarely that a thorough cure is effected and the purity of the skin restored.]

[2 The gift to be offered as soon as the priest had pronounced the leprosy gone, consisted in two live birds, some cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. (Lev. xiv, 4.) On the eighth day the individual healed had to offer two he-lambs, without blemish, and three-tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering mingled with oil, and one log of oil, about three-quarters of a pint. (Lev. xiv, 10.)]

VERSE 2. THERE CAME A LEPER. The Old Testament contained special provisions with regard to leprosy; whoever was infected with it was banished from among his brethren, and even he who touched an infected person had for some time to avoid the society of men. Leprosy, as one of the worst diseases, was a peculiar symbol of sin and its consequences. The priests had in a special manner to watch over it — but as the law could not remove sin, so were the priests unable to cure a leper; they were the judges as to the presence of the malady, pronounced the leper unclean and banished from out of the congregation; but they could not heal him. Christ, in establishing the new covenant, was to occupy a different relation. He cleanses the impure by merely touching him. This touch, though against the letter of the law, was nevertheless in keeping with its spirit, having like the law for its object the establishment of a pure and spotless congregation. The general incurableness of the disease, the peculiar provisions of the law concerning it, and its striking spiritual analogies may have induced Matthew to relate the healing of a leper before all the other miracles of the Savior. — Though our Lord touched the leper, we may assume that the leper, when he called on the Lord for help, kept himself still at the distance required by the law. — **AND WORSHIPED HIM.** As has been remarked before, it was the custom in the Orient and among the Jews to express the reverence due to kings and prophets, by bowing the knee or falling prostrate on the face. — **SAYING LORD, IF THOU WILT.** This is expressive of the strongest confidence in the ability of Jesus to heal him. The condition he adds to it springs from humility, and expresses a reasonable doubt whether Jesus should see fit to heal a leper as well as to heal other diseases.

VERSE 3. The prayer was no sooner uttered than it was answered. The word and the deed are almost simultaneous. The answer is in the same words as the petition, but is in the Greek more emphatic. Stier says: "He does not say,

'I will do it,' in this special case, but '*I will*,' including in this individual case the condition of humanity. His majestic '*I will*,' is the response to the prayer of the whole unclean race. With this '*I will*' he entered and left the world again." (John xvii, 24.) — BE THOU CLEAN; more correctly translated, *be thou cleansed*. In this manner no prophet before him had healed. As the Lord not only declares the leper clean, but makes him clean, so his power cures the leprosy of the soul. — AND IMMEDIATELY HIS LEPROSY WAS CLEANSED. Mark and Luke say: "*And the leprosy departed from him*," thus describing the process of the cure. What the sign of convalescence was, see Levit. xiii, 13. — SEE THOU TELL NO MAN. The reason of this injunction is easily seen. The Lord recognizes the Levitical order (Lev. xiv) in its full force. This order was not yet abolished and the Lord wished, therefore, not to interfere in any wise with it, but exhorted him to a faithful discharge of his duties, by telling him to say nothing of his cure before he had shown himself unto the priest. This course of our Savior may, moreover, have been prompted by a desire on his part to procure an impartial judgment from the priest, who might easily have been influenced by hatred to deny the reality of the cure, if the import of it had reached him before the leper himself. — FOR A TESTIMONY UNTO THEM; in Greek, *for them*. By "*them*" the priests are generally understood, who were thereby to bear witness against themselves; namely, the witness that Jesus actually possessed the power to cure leprosy. Yet it would seem to be grammatically more correct to understand by "*them*" the people. The priest's declaration that the leper was really cured, given after a thorough examination of his body, was for the people the highest possible proof according to the law, that the leper had really been cured by Jesus; and for this reason also he was told to tell nobody of it before the cure was properly established.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

I. The leper is a faithful picture of the sinner. Leprosy is one of the most formidable diseases to which mankind is liable, and yet in its worst features it is but a faint picture of the true nature of sin, the leprosy of man's moral nature.

1. Leprosy has its seat in the corruption and impurity of the blood. Thus sin has its roots in the moral depravity of our nature from the first transgression.

2. Leprosy is, to a certain extent, contagious. Sin is invariably so.

3. Leprosy is a progressive evil; so is sin, defiling the whole man, poisoning spirit, soul, and body, and leaving no power or faculty unaffected.

4. Leprosy is exceedingly painful and loathsome. So is sin; its fruits are infamy, sorrow, wretchedness.

5. Leprosy is incurable by human skill. So is sin. God alone can pardon sin, renew and sanctify the heart.

6. The leper was banished from the society of the pure and healthy. Sin excludes from the kingdom of God and the communion of his saints.

7. Leprosy, if not healed, ends in death. Thus "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

II. Christ. cures the moral disease of the soul as well as the leprosy of the body.

III. In order to be healed it is absolutely necessary that we should come to Christ with humble but fervent prayer, and exercise faith in his ability to save. Such prayer of faith meets with no refusal.

IV. As the cured leper is told to show himself to the priest, (v. 4,) and to express publicly his gratitude to God for his miraculous cure, so the pardoned sinner should likewise join the congregation of God's people, and proclaim what the Lord has done for his soul.

§ 11. JESUS HEALS THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

Verses 5-13. (COMPARE Luke vii, 1-10.)

(5) AND when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, (6) and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. (7) And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. (8) The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, ^[1] and my servant shall be healed. (9) For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: ^[2] and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. (10) When Jesus heard *it*, he

marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (11) And I say unto you, That many [3] shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: (12) but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (13) And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

[1 Literally, command only.]

[2 *Centurion* was a Roman military officer, having, as the name implies, command over one hundred men.]

[3 That is, heathens, as appears from the antithesis.]

VERSE 5. AND WHEN JESUS WAS ENTERED INTO CAPERNAUM. Although Luke assigns to the performance of this miracle as well as to the Sermon on the Mount a later period, Matthew, who here groups a series of miracles without reference to chronology, fully agrees with Luke in stating that it took place some time when our Lord entered Capernaum. The reason why Matthew made this miracle the second in his series, may have been the remarkable circumstance, that it was performed at the request of a Roman officer and without personal contact. — Whether this centurion was directly in the service of the Roman Government, or in that of Herod Antipater, is not told us. But from what Luke reports that he built a synagogue for the Jews, it is probable, that though a heathen by birth, he had been led to believe in the God of Israel, both on account of the decay of the religions of heathendom, which were no more able to satisfy the religious wants of the people, and through the positive influence of true religion as manifested by Judaism. But whether he became a proselyte to the Jewish religion is uncertain. Dr. Alexander thinks that the contrast with Israel (v. 10) implies rather the contrary. — From the details, which Luke supplies, it appears that the centurion did at first not venture to come himself to Jesus, but applied to him through a number of influential Jews, and after these had set out on their errand he sent a second message to Jesus that he might not come to his house in person — he deeming himself altogether unworthy of this honor — but to heal his servant at a distance. It is likely that

he had heard of the cure of the nobleman's son, effected at a distance. (John iv, 46-54.) According to Matthew the words which the centurion addressed through others to Jesus, were spoken by himself. This is perfectly consistent with truth and amply justified by the language of the Old Testament, in which the words spoken by an individual through others are often represented as having been spoken by that individual himself. (Compare also Mark x, 35, with Matt. xx, 20.) This is, indeed, the general usage where a speaker or writer wishes simply to state a fact without its attending circumstances. Bengel says on this passage: "The Divine historiography has higher laws than the human. In spirit Jesus and the centurion actually held converse together. That the centurion was not present we can infer also from the high praise which Jesus bestows upon him. It is not probable that Jesus would have praised him in this language to his face." Out of the many praiseworthy traits of the centurion — his anxious solicitude for his sick servant, his humility, a trait of character but rarely met with among Romans, the position he occupies toward the despised Jews — the Lord instances only his faith in his person, his implicit confidence in his Divine power, which in verse 11 is made the indispensable condition of entering into the kingdom of God.

VERSE 7. I WILL COME AND HEAL HIM. "Literally, *I coming* (or having come) *will heal him* — that is, I am ready or about to do so, unless hindered, as he knew that he would be; so that the future does not express actual intention, but mere willingness." (Alexander.)

VERSES 8, 9. The centurion expresses, by a bold figure, his unbounded confidence in Jesus being able to remove a disease by a word. As my subordinate soldiers obey me by simply speaking the word, so shall my servant be healed, if thou speak only the word.

VERSE 10. HE MARVELED. The expression of surprise or wonder is only twice ascribed to Jesus, in the instance before us, and in Mark vi, 6. In the one case the occasion was the strong faith of a heathen, to believe he could heal even at a distance, an instance of which had never occurred; in the other case the Savior's surprise was called forth by entire want of faith, where there ought to have been the strongest faith.

VERSE 11, 12. The faith of the centurion causes our Savior to declare that according to the gracious purposes of God, the believing heathen would be admitted on terms of equality to the kingdom of God, promised to

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while the proud, unbelieving Jews, who as the children of the promise, had the first claim, should be debarred from it. Dr. Alexander remarks very justly: "The image here presented is commonly supposed to be that of a sumptuous banquet, representing the enjoyments of Messiah's kingdom. But although that mode of description occurs elsewhere, (e.g., Isaiah xxv, 6,) the essential idea here would seem to be simply that of near, domestic intercourse, admission to the family and all its intimate relations, as denoted by participation in its usual repasts, or as we say, sitting at the same table, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the three original patriarchs, being represented as presiding over the great family descended from them. As this family for ages was the chosen people or visible Church, the admission here predicted is not merely to national or civil rights, but chiefly to religious and spiritual advantages. This is, therefore, a distinct premonition of the great revolutionary change to be wrought in the condition of the Gentiles by the advent of Messiah. . . . The antithesis is not so much with the brilliant lights of an extraordinary feast, as with the ordinary necessary light of any comfortable home, the loss of which suggests that of all other comforts, to which our Lord adds the prediction of more positive suffering, denoted by weeping and gnashing of teeth, as natural expressions of despairing grief for what has thus been lost or forfeited. The primary conception is that of children violently torn from the table and ejected from the house of their father, and heard giving vent to their grief and rage in the outside darkness."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

It is a high privilege to be born in the Christian Church, but how many born of Christian parents are put to shame by heathens! Faith and Christian character are often found where one does not look for them, and are missing where they ought to be most expected. Every man has the ability to exercise faith. The unbeliever shall be cast out into outer darkness.

§ 12. JESUS HEALS PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW, AND CURES MANY THAT ARE SICK AND POSSESSED OF DEVILS.

Verses 14-17. (COMPARE MARK i, 29-34; LUKE iv, 38-41.)

(14) AND when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. (15) And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. (16) When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick: (17) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

VERSE 14. In John i, 44, Bethsaida is called the city of Peter, Andrew, and Philip — that is, their native place; there resided their father, and we find that Peter was there following his trade when he was called by Christ. But after he had left his trade and become with his brother a constant follower of Jesus, it is natural to suppose that he lived no longer in Bethsaida, but made his home with his brother Andrew in his Master's residence, Capernaum. Peter was a married man when he was called to the apostleship, and we learn from 1 Cor. ix, 5, that, his wife accompanied him in his travels. How can, then, the Church of Rome, which makes Peter her head, dare to forbid matrimony to her priests!

VERSE 16. From the statement of Mark it seems that it was a Sabbath on which Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law. This accounts for the fact that the sick were brought to Jesus not before evening — that is, the setting of the sun, when the Sabbath was over. Surrounded by numbers of afflicted persons, who were weighed down by bodily sufferings, the Savior exhibits, by curing their infirmities, a picture of his spiritual activity, which he exercises constantly in the hearts of men through the Holy Ghost, the fruit of his work of redemption.

VERSE 17. In the passage quoted from Isaiah liii, 4, and applied by the Evangelist to our Savior's healing of diseases, the prophet speaks of the vicarious sufferings of the Messiah. (Compare 1 Peter ii, 24.) The ground and propriety of the Evangelist's application is clearly set forth by Mr. Watson in the following remarks: "Through the atonement all our blessings come; and as all our sufferings are the consequences of sin, none of them could have been removed had no propitiation been made for sin, and the right to deliver us from

all its consequences been acquired by our Redeemer. Whatever blessings, therefore, our Lord bestowed during his ministry on earth, were given with reference to that '*bearing*' of the *penalty* of sin which he was ultimately to sustain, and by virtue of which he was to take it away in all its consequences, as to all those who should come to him in faith. And as by virtue of that anticipated atonement he, while on earth, 'forgave sins,' so by virtue of the same anticipated atonement he healed the diseases of the body, all which are the fruits of sin. Whenever, therefore, he did either of these, removing either sin itself from the consciences of men, or any of its consequences from their persons, in virtue of his being the appointed sin-offering, those words of the prophet, 'Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,' were directly fulfilled; since these were the proofs and effects of his substitution in our place as the accepted sacrifice; they were all, in a word, demonstrations of the efficacy of his atonement. Nor are we to suppose, as the criticism here objected to does, that Christ bore our griefs and carried our sorrows by actual vicarious suffering only when upon the cross. He bore them, as the penalty of sin, in his agony as well as his crucifixion; and often previously, whenever he groaned in spirit and was 'troubled.' All his humiliations, and all his mental distresses in coming into a world so full of sin and misery, formed a part of the grand sum of vicarious suffering, by which 'the sin of the world' was to be taken away; and upon his spirit the sight of that accumulated misery, so often presented by the multitudes, produced a sorrowful effect. We see this often exemplified: we see it at the tomb of Lazarus, although he was about to raise him to life. His sorrow then was not common sorrow; his groaning in spirit can not be thus explained; and the compassion of Christ on other occasions to the miserable was not the common compassion of men, but a distinct and deeper feeling, a part of the load and pressure of trouble laid upon his infinitely-tender spirit which he was to sustain. Hence after his miracles of healing we have no expressions of exultation arising from the triumphs of his benevolence; no indications of that joyous feeling which relieves the painful sympathy of merely humane persons when they have succeeded in conveying relief. The whole mass of the world's woe lay on his spirit from the beginning to the end, for as his office was to take away the 'sin of the world,' he must first bear its weight. It was in this sense that Matthew says, 'he took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.'"

§ 13. JESUS INSTRUCTS TWO MEN THAT DESIRE TO FOLLOW HIM, AND CALMS A STORM.

Verses 18-27. (Vs. 18-22, COMP. LUKE ix, 57-60; vs. 23-27, COMP MARK iv, 35-41, LUKE viii, 22-25.)

(18) Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.^[1] (19) And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master,^[2] I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (20) And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head. (21) And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (22) But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead^[3] bury their dead.^[4] (23) And when he was entered into a ship,^[5] his disciples followed him. (24) And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. (25) And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. (26) And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. (27) But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

[1] That is, the other side of the Sea of Galilee, meaning the eastern side.]

[2] Teacher — a title which Jesus accepted as belonging to himself, but gave to nobody.]

[3] The spiritually dead, not grave-diggers, as some vainly suppose.]

[4] To be understood literally, their dead friends and relatives.

[5] In Greek, *the* ship, or rather boat, meaning either one habitually used by our Lord, or one which stately transported passengers.]

VERSE 18. That the crossing of the lake and the calming of the storm took place at a later time, on the evening of the day when our Lord had delivered a series of parables, is explicitly declared by Mark. Matthew relates it in connection with other miracles, but gives no definite date. "But if it is the object of Matthew to give us a series of miracles as samples of Christ's

wonder-working ministry," it is objected, "why is the dialogue with the scribe and the other man inserted in this catalogue of miracles?" To this question Dr. Alexander gives several reasons, the best of which seems to be this: "Having in strict accordance with his customary method, cited a passage of Isaiah, representing the Messiah as a sufferer, and sharing in the sufferings of others, he shows us how far this view of his mission was from being entertained even by some who sought or offered to be his disciples." We may add, there is also a significant antithesis between the answer which our Lord gives to the scribe and the miracles following. He who says that he has not where to lay his head soon afterward proves himself Lord of the elements.

VERSE 19. The scribe who here expresses a desire to follow Jesus, seems to be in full earnest. But there is reason to believe that his resolution had its foundation more in a momentary excitement than in a solid conviction of duty; that he had not taken into proper consideration the amount of self-denial and hardship which the discipleship would entail upon him. Dr. Lange is of opinion that the individual in question had been for some time an irregular follower of Jesus, but wished now to enter the class of the intimate followers, the apostles.

VERSE 20. THE SON OF MAN. Under this name Daniel (vii, 13) describes the Messiah, as is acknowledged by the Jews, and in that prophecy both his humanity and his Divine royalty are portrayed. By applying this appellation habitually to himself, our Lord declared himself in the most humble manner to be the predicted Messiah. The peculiar epithet — applied to Christ in the New Testament by no one else besides himself, except by the martyr Stephen, when he beheld his glorified humanity — indicates that he was *very man*, and yet not a man like other men, a mere man, but the incarnated Son of God. (Compare Gen. Introduction, p. 119.) — WHERE TO LAY HIS HEAD. In these words the Lord describes himself not as suffering from poverty, of which there is no record in the Gospels, but as being without a settled home or property which he could call his own. Discouraging as this reply was, it was, notwithstanding, not intended to drive the scribe away from him; the object was rather to heal him from his erroneous preconceived notions, and it includes, evidently, the question: Art thou still willing to follow me? Hast thou looked upon the matter in this light and counted the cost?

VERSES 21, 22. As the scribe just mentioned had offered himself to Jesus as one of his followers, so the Lord himself now called upon one of his disciples to follow him. It is generally assumed that he was one of the occasional followers of Jesus, and while with him learned the death of his father. The reply of our Lord to the young man's request sounds harsh, but he must have had special reasons for answering thus, and the peculiar circumstances of the case are unknown to us. The words of the Savior contain the important truth, that obedience to the commands of Christ embraces all our other duties, not as if the latter were to be counted of small importance and to be neglected, but that every act of ours should bear its proper relation to the supreme end of life. From this point of view we may understand why the Savior may have required this young man to leave his last duty to a departed father with others; the most favorable moment for securing the high destiny of his life had come, and nothing whatever must be allowed to interfere with that. The lesson to be drawn from this occurrence would then be, that not only sins and crimes, but sometimes even the performance of legal obligations and the most tender earthly relations may prove hinderances in our following Christ. Some commentators, however, contending that the immediate burial of a deceased father could not have endangered the young man's salvation to such a degree, as to induce the Savior to forbid his request, maintain that it is not necessary to assume the father's death at the time the request was made; what the young man desired was permission to attend to his father's affairs the short time he would yet live, and to return to Jesus as soon as he was dead and buried. But the construction, put according to this view upon the reply of the disciple, is forced, and it would have been both absurd and disrespectful, as Dr. Alexander remarks, in reply to an immediate summons to have said: "I will follow thee at once, if I may first go and wait till my father dies."

VERSE 24. HE WAS ASLEEP. His human nature was refreshed by sleep like that of other men. But the disciples were in no danger by reason of this sleep, because it was perfectly subject to the will of the Savior.

VERSES 25, 26. He upbraids his disciples for their *little* faith which they showed in their *fear* to perish with the sleeping Savior, though they were not destitute of faith, being confident that he was possessed of the power to save them. Faith, however weak, is still faith, and though the Master's words administer a reproof, yet he does not put to shame their faith, but grants the

request. The storm was not only calmed, but the surface became smooth and even without showing any more signs of having been troubled.

VERSE 27. BUT THE MEN. According to Mark and Luke the disciples themselves are to be understood, but it seems to embrace all on board. Such a manifestation of power must have impressed the disciples more than the miraculous cures.

§ 14. JESUS HEALS TWO DEMONIACS IN THE LAND OF THE GERGESENES.

As this case of demoniacism is recorded by three Evangelists, with all the attending minutiae, we deem this the proper place to state briefly what the Word of God teaches in different passages on this phenomenon, as well as to bring the light of modern science to bear upon it. The different passages of the New Testament that speak of this dreadful malady, use almost exclusively the term **δαιμονιζόμενος** — possessed with a spirit, or with spirits — and call the cure effected by Jesus a casting out the demon, or demons. In Matthew iv, 24, "those which were possessed with devils" are expressly distinguished from "the lunatics," positively teaching us that in the opinion of the sacred writers these two diseases differed from each other, both in nature and origin. As to the meaning of the terms **δαίμων**, **δαιμόνιον**, it must be learned from the New Testament itself; with the heathen writers a **δάιμων** was a divinity, a tutelary spirit, delighting in assisting or tormenting men, without, however, being in any case identical with "the devils" of the New Testament, since the notion of such beings is altogether foreign to classic heathenism. In Acts xvii, 8, the word is used of heathen divinities, but as these are uniformly represented in the Word of God, as fallen spirits, it is a confirmation that the sacred writers understand by a demon an evil spirit in the service of Satan, the prince of the kingdom of darkness. The New Testament teaches that these demons entered into men, took possession of different members of the bodily organism, disabling or lettering them, so as to cause blindness, dumbness, lameness, epilepsy, etc. The cure effected by our Savior is described by such expressions as **ἐκβάλλειν τὰ πνεύματα** or **δαιμόνια** — to cast out the devils — **εἰπεῖν τοῖς δαίμοσι ὑπάγειν** — to command the demons to depart — **λέγειν, φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε** — to say to hold thy peace and come out of him, etc. From the fact that the phenomena of some natural diseases, such as lunacy,

mania, etc., resemble those of demoniacy, rationalism has drawn the inference that in distinguishing the latter from the former, the sacred writers shared the superstitious notions of their countrymen, and that even Jesus adapted himself to their erroneous opinion in order to effect a cure; as it was *a fixed idea* which had taken possession of the mind, it could not be expelled by the word of command, without being acknowledged on the part of him who spoke the word. These views scarcely deserve refutation. "Accommodation in language is admissible, when, in things indifferent, language is used which, although scientifically inaccurate, as when we say, '*the sun rises*,' yet conveys a true impression. There is no harm in our speaking of certain forms of madness as lunacy, but if we began to describe the cure of such as the moon's ceasing to afflict the maniac, or if a physician were solemnly to address the moon, bidding it abstain from injuring his patient, there would be that gulf between our thoughts and words in which the essence of a lie consists. It is also to be borne in mind that our Lord speaks of demons as evil spirits, not only in presence of the multitude, when he healed the possessed, but in his private conversations with his disciples, declaring the means and conditions by which power over them could be exercised. (Matt. xvii, 21.) Twice also he distinctly connects demoniacal possession with the power of the evil one; once in Luke x, 18, to the seventy disciples, where he speaks of his power and theirs over demoniacs as '*a fall of Satan*', and again in Matt. xii, 25-30, when he was accused of casting out demons through Beelzebub, and, instead of giving any hint that the possessed were not really under any direct and personal power of evil, he uses an argument as to the division of Satan against himself, which, if possession be unreal, would have no point. Lastly, the single fact recorded of the entrance of the demons into the herd of swine, and the effect which that entrance caused, is sufficient to overthrow the notion that our Lord and the Evangelists do not assert or imply any objective reality of possession." (Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.)

Because the demoniacs suffered under a derangement of the nervous system and the corporeal organs of the soul, rationalism asserts that demoniacism is nothing but a disease. We do not deny that it is a disease, but the question arises: by what was this peculiar disease caused? Can rationalism give us any reason why it could not be caused by evil spirits? That it was, is not only positively asserted by the inspired writers, but can be illustrated and confirmed by the results of physiological investigation. What distinguishes

demoniacism from all other diseases, is the manifestation of an influence foreign to the human constitution, dispossessing the soul of its power over the bodily organs, as in the raving Gadarene; even the power of speech was under the control of the demons, who speak not in his name, but with his organs. All the symptoms described show the distinct impression in the people around as well as in the patient, that the malady is caused by an alien influence. So great is the control which the demon has upon the soul, that he even merges the consciousness of the soul into his own. "Nothing throws so much light on demoniacism," says Dr. Delitsch in his Biblical Psychology, "as the relation existing between the magnetizer and the individual magnetized. The latter is a mere instrument in the hands of the magnetizer; the consciousness of the magnetizer is reflected in that of the magnetized, so that the individuality of the former seems to be merged in that of the latter. If the patient is pinched he does not feel it; but if the magnetizer is pinched the patient will complain of being hurt. Put rhubarb in his mouth and he does not taste it; but let the magnetizer taste it and the patient supposes himself to have taken it. If the magnetizer wants him to move he obeys at once, while he sits still as if chained if called by another to rise. From this dynamic possession of one human soul by another, we can form some idea how a spirit can not only dynamically control a human soul, but even really or substantially, as a spirit, possess a human soul. In each case the feeling, thinking, and volition of man, consequently the spiritual roots of his inward life, have become subject to a foreign power and are used as its organs." The same view is held by Dr. Ebrard, who in his article on demoniacs in Herzog's Encyclopedia says: "If it is possible for men to act upon each other through the medium of nervous influences, then the same nervous system may be susceptible of analogous influences streaming over into it from a non-human being, from a fallen angel. The influences of the latter may be different, more violent and terrible. But it is still, in every case, an excitement of *the nervous life*, and the phenomena will be similar. There is, therefore, not a single point in regard to which the teachings of Christ concerning demoniacs contradict the results of physiological investigation. Nay, both are in full harmony. There is nothing inconceivable even in the fact that a *number* of demons work together upon *one* human nervous system. Neither can it be doubted that the nervous system of *animals* is susceptible of similar, and even of higher degrees of excitement from external causes than that of man."

We may now consider the more practical and important question, in what respects these demoniacal possessions differ from the *ordinary* influence of Satan upon the *moral* nature of man, or to what degree those possessed of evil spirits were morally guilty? There is certainly a just and clear distinction to be made between a demoniac and between a Judas, into whom Satan entered, or, as Lange says, between the sphere of demoniacal suffering and that of demoniacal acting. The writer of the article Demoniacs in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, illustrates the relation of those extraordinary influences of evil spirits upon the souls and bodies of men in our Savior's time to the ordinary influence brought upon the human heart by Satan, by the relation which the extraordinary, miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost bear to the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit. In the ordinary influence which either the Holy Spirit or Satan exerts upon the human heart, the will itself yields consciously and without losing its freedom of action. It is solicited, urged, and persuaded, but not overborne from a power from without. This was evidently not the case with the demoniacs: the assault was made upon their nervous system, overpowering their reason and will, *sometimes from childhood*, though it is more than probable that in most cases a predisposition to become subject to demoniacal influences had been produced by gross sensual indulgences. Demoniacal possessions, as all suffering, were indeed the consequence and punishment of our inherited corruption, yet we are not allowed to measure the guilt of an individual by its share in the suffering resulting from the fall, and we might apply to the demoniacs, in regard of their moral guilt, what our Savior said of those Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. (Luke xiii, 2.) It is also worthy of note that the state of possession, although so awful in its wretched sense of demoniacal tyranny, yet, from the very fact of that consciousness, was less hopeless and more capable of instant cure than the deliberate hardness of willful sin. Dr. Lange remarks: "The demoniacs are in the Gospels evidently represented and treated as diseased persons, and thus plainly distinguished from those who, like Judas Iscariot and the Pharisees, had of their own free accord given themselves up to the service of the devil. In the same manner the ancient Church distinguished between Satanic criminals and demoniacs, by excommunicating the first, but trying to heal the second by exorcism. Where moral guilt attached to the demoniac, it consisted in this, that he tamely surrendered his own self-consciousness to those wicked influences from without. The same may be said of the moral side of mania, and it is much more rational to say, that there is a Satanic influence connected with some

instances of mania, than that the demoniacs mentioned in the Gospels were only maniacs."

There is one question more that deserves notice. How are we to account for the fact that demoniacism was almost exclusively confined to the Jews in the days of our Savior? This question finds its solution in the fact, that the time of our Savior was the period of the sharpest conflict between light and darkness. It is by no means surprising that God in his wisdom should see fit to allow Satan in an extraordinary manner to manifest the devastating effects of his power, in order to make the more conspicuous the Redeemer's triumph over the kingdom of darkness, and that, for the same reason for which the Divine miracles were not continued, those extraordinary manifestations of satanic power should also cease. Nor is it surprising that the latter should take the special form of possessions in an age of such universal and gross sensuality, as that which preceded the Savior's advent, and which continued till the leaven of Christianity was felt. Accordingly, "we find early Fathers alluding to demoniacism as a common thing, mentioning the attempts of Jewish exorcism in the name of Jehovah as occasionally successful, (see Matt. xii, 27; Acts xix, 13,) but especially dwelling on the power of Christian exorcism to cast it out from the country as a test of the truth of the Gospel, and as one well-known benefit which it already conferred on the empire. By degrees the mention is less and less frequent, till the very idea is lost or perverted. That round the Jewish notion of it there grew up many foolish and evil practices, and much superstition, as we learn from Tob. viii, 1-3; Jos., Ant., VIII, chap. 2, § 5, was natural, but it is clear that Scripture does not in the least sanction or even condescend to notice such things." (Compare Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, and Herzog's Encyclopedia, translated by Dr. Bomberger.)

Verses 28-34. (COMPARE MARK v, 1-20; LUKE viii, 26-39.)

(28) **AND when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils,** ^[1] **coming out of the tombs,** ^[2] **exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.** (29) **And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?** (30) **And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine feeding.** (31) **So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us**

out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. (32) And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. (33) And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. (34) And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

[1 Why the plural is used here, appears from Mark v, 9, 10.]

[2 The tombs in the Orient were mostly caverns, or vaults hewn out in rocks on the side of hills, at some distance from their cities and villages.]

VERSE 28. Matthew mentions in his record two demoniacs, but Mark and Luke speak of only one. A similar doubling we find also in chapter xx, 30. In either instance this apparent discrepancy disappears by supposing that the two other Evangelists mention only him whose case was the worse, or who appeared as the principal person. Luke has given us in the case before us a hint why he mentions only one demoniac. He says (chap. viii, 27) that "a certain man from out of the city" met Jesus, whereby we have to understand a citizen, inasmuch as it is said, that the same man lived out of town, in the tombs, and only he offered to follow Jesus. His case, therefore, attracted most attention. The details of the transaction must be gathered from the parallel passages. The demons, under whose influence these wretched persons were, chased them out into solitary places, where they took up their abodes in the tombs and proved by their dismal appearance the terror of all that passed that way.

VERSE 29. Mark and Luke tell us that the demoniac when he saw Jesus fell at his feet and worshiped him. That in doing so the demoniacs implored the help of the Lord, having at the moment a consciousness of their suffering condition, and that the Lord was on the point of helping them, when they cried out: What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, etc. — Luke indicates by his explanatory remarks, (viii, 29:) "For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man." As soon as that command was given their condition changed. Violent spasms followed, and under the influence of

the demons they uttered words that strangely contrasted with the humble prayer addressed to Jesus a moment before. This sudden change of their frame of mind is an important feature, helping us to understand the nature of demoniacism. These wretched beings had moments of light and rest, where they saw their condition and sighed for deliverance. Nor was their will entirely destroyed, but it was so enslaved that when the demons asserted again their control over them, they make no resistance, but identify themselves with them and speak as their representatives, declaring that Jesus' object was to torment them. — In this, that the unclean spirits did not come out at the first bidding of Jesus, Olshausen sees the Savior's wisdom. The state of the unfortunate men was such that a sudden cure would have destroyed their physical organization; for this reason the Lord gradually prepared the way for their cure.

VERSES 30-32. According to Mark and Luke the words spoken in verse 29 were followed by a conversation of Jesus with the demons, wherein they implore him to grant them permission to enter into a herd of swine. Commentators have assigned various reasons why the demons made such a request. Some are of opinion that they did so on account of the uncleanness of these animals, the impure spirits delighting in every thing unclean. Others think that they acted so from their hatred against the inhabitants of the country, wishing to make their property unavailable, since they could no longer do mischief by those whom they possessed. Others again, that the object of the demons was to set the people against Jesus, in which they succeeded admirably. We must not overlook what seems to be nearest, that they dreaded "being tormented before the time," preferring as an alleviation a temporary residence in living animals. The objection that the design was frustrated by the driving the swine into the sea, is of no weight, since we have reason to assume that the strange influence which the demons exerted on the swine brought about the result against their own expectations. In this mysterious transaction we have to bear in mind that in man the demoniacal influences affected the nervous life, the animal part, and that the nervous life of brutes is as excitable as that of man. — Strauss and others charge Jesus with having unwarrantably meddled with other people's property, by permitting the demons to enter into the swine, to which impudent charge Dr. Lange pertly replies: "Jesus was neither a justice of the peace, nor a police officer, nor swineherd in the country of the Gadarenes. His only business was to heal the demoniacs." We add, that the secular loss that befell the inhabitants needs no more vindication than the permission given

in the order of Divine Providence to a wicked man to destroy the property of another man. Christ's suffering the demons to enter the swine answered, moreover, as Dr. Alexander observes, "the important purpose of proving the reality of diabolical possessions, by exhibiting a case in which the demons, abandoning the human subjects whom they had so long tormented, instantaneously betrayed their presence and their power in a multitude of lower animals, impelling them against their own instinctive dispositions to a sudden simultaneous movement ending in their own destruction."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

Let us consider,

I. THE EMBLEM OF SATAN'S POWER IN THE POSSESSED.

1. They were exceedingly fierce, under the influence of violent and terrific mania — not under the control of reason, but of raging passion — not under the guidance of sound judgment, but under that of the excited impulses of a diseased nature. So is reason dethroned in the sinner, and passion hurries him along on the slippery path of vice. — The other Evangelists add that no man could bind him, (them,) not even with chains, etc. Great efforts have been put forth to keep the corrupt nature of man under control by laws, by instruction, by arts, sciences, and literature; but all these means avail neither to eradicate the deeply-seated evil from the heart, nor to dethrone Satan there.

2. They were dangerous for other people, (v. 28.) — So is the sinner; he jeopardizes the best interests of his friends, relatives, and companions. He sullies and violates human society.

3. They had their abode in the tombs, (v. 28.) Every unconverted man is spiritually dead, though he lives. He walks within the confines of spiritual death and goes down to destruction.

II. THE HOMAGE WHICH THE FALLEN ANGELS RENDER CHRIST.

1. They knew the Savior. Therefore they gave him his true title, (v. 29.) How true is the apostle's saying: "The devils believe and tremble!"

2. They exhibit their rebellious nature. For this reason they exclaim: "What have we to do with thee?" We have renounced thy power. We glory in our rebellion. We delight in injustice. Their words may, moreover, imply that they have no part in his gracious mediation — no interest in his vicarious atonement — no claims on his redemption.

3. They are afraid of him. "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" In this they recognize Christ's authority — his judicial power, etc., that he had the right to punish them, and that they deserve punishment.

III. THE CONDUCT OF THE GADARENES. They preferred their swine not only to the cure of their fellow-men, but also to Christ's gracious presence; and so do men to this day.

IV. THE HEALED DEMONIAC. He sits clothed and in his right mind at the feet of Jesus. He wishes to follow Jesus, but he is sent away by him to tell his friends how great things God had done for him.

CHAPTER IX.

§ 15. JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC.

MATTHEW continues in this chapter to narrate the miracles of Christ in the most simple manner, without any reflection or exclamation of surprise, from which no uninspired writer would have refrained. In connection with the cure of the palsied man the Lord shows his power to forgive sins upon earth, and proves thus his divinity. The Pharisees, although they held the erroneous opinions that man might merit the Divine favor by acts of the law, but could never be certain of the forgiveness of his sins, had, nevertheless, a correct idea of the nature of the forgiveness of sin, when they declared it to be an exercise of an exclusively Divine prerogative, that could not be usurped by any creature without blasphemy. While the Pharisees reason thus, they think really more correctly and logically than our modern rationalists, who make the Son of man the model man indeed, but still a mere man, without paying any attention to his claims upon Divine powers and attributes. The Lord saw that the thoughts of the scribes were the offspring of their wicked hearts. Their wickedness showed itself, 1, in the absence of all sympathy with the suffering man, or of any consoling word for him in his distress; 2, in their determination to see in Jesus

a mere man, a supposition at variance with his holy person and doctrine, as well as with his unique power to perform miracles. That they opposed these holy impressions determinately, while they felt in their hearts how unjustly they applied their reasoning to Jesus Christ, we see plainly from the majestic bearing of Jesus toward them, and their inability boldly to speak out their thoughts before him. Yet the Lord does not give them over to their wicked hearts, but places himself upon their stand-point in order to convince them of their error. — Worthy of note is the humility in which Jesus vails his majesty, if he is compelled to vindicate it. While he claims for himself a prerogative of the Deity, he humbly calls himself the "Son of man." He refrained from directly asserting his Godhead in order not to provoke unnecessarily the blasphemies of those that were determined to reject him.

Verses 1-8. (COMPARE MARK ii, 1-12; LUKE v, 17-26.)

(1) **AND he entered into a ship,** ^[1] **and passed over, and came into his own city.** ^[2] (2) **And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed:** ^[3] and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. (3) And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth. (4) And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil ^[4] in your hearts? (5) For whether is easier, to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? (6) But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. (7) And he arose, and departed to his house. (8) But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

[1] Properly, *the* ship or boat — meaning the one in which he came, and which was no doubt waiting for him.]

[2] Capernaum, as appears from chap. iv, 13, Mark ii, 1.]

[3] A mattress on a light frame, on which the sick were borne.]

[4] Literally, evil things. For what cause do you entertain such evil thoughts?]

VERSE 1. The first verse of the ninth chapter belongs properly to the preceding narrative. The following account of the cure of the paralytic took place a considerable time before our Lord's excursion to the east side of the lake, during which he stilled the storm and dispossessed the demoniacs of Gadara, as described in verses 18-34 of the preceding chapter. We must bear in mind that the copulative *and*, according to the Hebrew idiom, which Matthew is accustomed to follow, does not indicate an immediate succession of events, but is equivalent to our *now*, by which often a new context is opened. That Matthew does not design to relate the events recorded in this chapter, in strictly-chronological order, we have shown before. (See Synoptical Table, No. 52.)

VERSE 2. THEY BROUGHT TO HIM. Mark says he was brought by four men. According to Luke, our Lord "was teaching, surrounded by Pharisees and doctors of the law, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem." Matthew's account is more concise than that of Mark and Luke. — AND JESUS SEEING THEIR FAITH — that is, the faith of the sufferer and that of his bearers. The other Evangelists tell us how their strong confidence in Christ's ability and willingness to work the cure manifested itself. From the cheering words of the Savior, addressed to the sufferer, it appears that he was in a penitent state of mind, and, probably, more concerned for the forgiveness of his sins, which may have brought upon him his disease, than for his bodily cure. The Lord mercifully attends first to his spiritual need. The shallow assertion of the rationalists, that Jesus' cheering words were merely an accommodation to the notion of the Jews, that every disease was a punishment of sin, needs no refutation. Dr. Alexander, however, remarks very correctly from another stand-point: "Bodily and spiritual healing was more frequently coincident than we are apt to think, the one being really a pledge and symbol of the other. Saving faith and healing faith, to use an analogous expression, were alike the gift of God, and often, if not commonly, bestowed together, as in this case, where the singularity is not the coincidence of healing and forgiveness, but the prominence given to the latter by the Savior, who instead of saying, 'be thou whole,' or, 'thy disease is healed,' surprised all who heard him by the declaration that his sins were pardoned. This paradoxical expression was no doubt designed to turn attention from the lower to the higher cure or miracle, and also to assert his own prerogative of pardon in the very

face of those whom he knew to be his enemies." Equally pertinent is the remark of Dr. Whedon: "Our Lord here has a double purpose. In the man he sees repentance and faith, and his first purpose is to show him mercy. In the scribes' hearts he knows there is impenitence and cavil, and he means to refute, and even, if it were possible, furnish argument to convince them."

VERSE 3. THIS *one*. This expression in the original denotes contempt, as much as to say: this fellow. — BLASPHEMES. To blaspheme (**βλασφημεῖν**) means to speak evil of a person, or to injure one's reputation; when used with reference to God, it means, 1, to ascribe things to God that are unworthy of him; 2, to deny his attributes; 3, to ascribe to creatures what exclusively belongs to God.

VERSE 4. As the Lord had seen through the thoughts of the sick man and his bearers, so he beholds also those of the Pharisees, and lays open the wickedness of their hearts by a question directed to their conscience. This, his knowledge of other men's thoughts, was a new proof that he was more than a mere man, and ought to have convinced the scribes and Pharisees that he was the promised Messiah, especially as, according to the teachings of the Talmud, such a knowledge characterizes and marks the Messiah.

VERSE 5. FOR assigns the reason of his calling their thoughts evil. In themselves considered the two acts, namely, that of forgiving sins and that of a miraculous cure, can be performed only in Divine power. But our Lord's question is about the SAYING: "Thy sins be forgiven thee, or, arise and walk." To the natural man the first seems easier, because the result to be accomplished by the words can not be discerned by human eyes, whereas, in the latter case, the effect is visible, and thus furnishes a safe criterion for the truth, or the hollowness of the claims advanced. But spiritually considered, the order is reversed. Miraculous cures have been performed by many, prophets and apostles; but forgiving sins is the exclusive prerogative of God.

VERSE 6. BUT THAT YOU MAY KNOW by what authority I tell this man that his sins have been forgiven, I will show you what authority I have over his disease. — THEN SAITH HE TO THE SICK OF THE PALSY. We would expect as sequel to the preceding clause: "I now say to the man." But the Evangelist abbreviates the sentence by throwing the last clause of the sentence into a narrative form. — ON EARTH is significantly added, as distinguished from his power in *heaven*. Christ's work is to declare to man on earth what is

transpiring in heaven. Sins are being committed on earth, and there they must be forgiven. These words administer also a rebuke to the doctrine that man never can know, to a certainty, whether his sins are forgiven in heaven. This also claims our attention, that Christ forgave sins before he had accomplished the work of redemption by his self-sacrifice on the cross — he did so as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

VERSE 7. AND HE AROSE. "Familiar as we are with this astounding scene, it is not easy to imagine the solicitous suspense with which both the enemies and friends of Jesus must have awaited the result. Had the paralytic failed to obey the summons the pretensions of the new religious teacher were refuted by the test of his own choosing." (Alexander.)

VERSE 8. The people, more susceptible of Divine impressions than their leaders, glorified God as the author of all that is good, for the manifestation of his glory in Jesus, of whose divinity they could not have a clear perception. — **UNTO MAN** — that is, man in general. Seeing this power in one man they looked upon it as a new gift of God unto mankind. They felt instinctively, without any clear conception of the connection between the "Son of man" and other men, that the power which manifested itself in the one man, Jesus Christ, was given unto him to benefit all men. This truth is self-evident, for as certainly as Jesus Christ is God manifested in the flesh, so certainly he was also truly man, and the Divine fullness revealed in him has through him become the heritage of the regenerated race. They hailed with joy not only the miraculous cure of the paralytic, but also his power to forgive sin. The Shekinah, thus far confined to the holy of holies, stood now visible before their eyes in the God-man.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. Jesus exercises his prerogative to forgive sins on condition of the exercise of faith by the sinner. The faith of the paralytic and that of his friends were different in kind, but both deserve to be pondered and imitated by us. The latter sought simply his bodily cure, but their confidence in Jesus' ability and willingness to heal their suffering friend was so great that no obstacle could keep them away from him. As they, through their faith, were instrumental in securing to the paralytic not only the recovery of his bodily health, but also the

forgiveness of his sins, so can and shall every one of us become instrumental in the salvation of our fellow-men by bringing them to Jesus in the arms of that faith that worketh by love. But no one can obtain the forgiveness of his sins without a deep conviction and painful sense of his sinfulness and guilt, and without an earnest longing after salvation, which is always accompanied by faith in a higher or lower degree. If the Lord had not discovered this frame of mind in the paralytic he would not have said to him: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;" although he might have cured his bodily malady in answer to the faith of his friends.

2. The forgiveness of sins is more necessary for man than any thing else, in order to free him from his sufferings. All suffering is the consequence of sin. The consciousness of guilt is the real sting in all our temporal sufferings, and the forgiveness of our sins the help and comfort which we need first and above all in the ills of life. Where forgiveness of sin is, there is life, and peace, and joy. Though the temporal consequences of sin are not always at once removed by pardon, yet they lose their punitive character and become blessings in disguise, sent to us by our Heavenly Father. Christ's object in coming into this world was to take away, as the Lamb of God, the sin of the world, to destroy the works of Satan and thus to dry up the fountain whence all the streams of human misery flow, and to tear up the pestiferous upas by the roots. All other attempts to remedy the ills of suffering humanity are miserable quackeries. The cause of the disease is neither met nor recognized.

3. The forgiveness of their sins is, for the perseveringly faithful, the earnest of eternal life and of their perfect restoration as to body and soul. In the restored paralytic we see a picture and a pledge of the myriads of the redeemed, who shall rise from their graves with bodies formed for unending life, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

4. Christ's power to forgive sins on earth is attested by the highest proof. There were three kinds of proof displayed in that crowd in the house at Capernaum. (1.) *That of consciousness*. The palsied sinner who was forgiven required no further evidence of Christ's power to pardon. As soon as he was pardoned he *felt* its heavenly influence. This is the highest proof, but the proof accessible only to the pardoned. How immense is the number of witnesses from personal experience! (2.) *That of Christ's testimony*. If the value of testimony depends upon the intellectual and moral competence of the testifier, who in the

history of the race was ever so competent to bear testimony to any thing as Christ was to bear testimony of his power to forgive sins? If Christ's testimony is not to be taken, whom are we to believe? If you doubt his testimony you must repudiate all history. (3.) *That of miracle.* This was a species of evidence which Christ condescended to give to meet the prejudices of these men. When he had proclaimed the pardon of the poor sufferer, these sneering Jewish skeptics said in their hearts: It is very easy for this pretender to pronounce the man forgiven; the poor sufferer wants to be healed; he can not heal him, and to conceal his weakness he pronounces the man forgiven! He finds it easier to pronounce forgiveness than to restore the sufferer. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, as it were: It is a greater work to forgive sins than to perform a miraculous cure of the body; but you are too ignorant to understand this, and in condescension to your ignorance I'll cure the man. The miracle thus came as that kind of evidence which they challenged and would be most likely to feel. But as Christ gave an ocular demonstration of his power to forgive sins by the miraculous cure of the paralytic, so the workings of his grace, in all that believe, are demonstrated by the new temper and disposition, by the new walk and conversation of the pardoned sinner. True Christianity has the seal of its divinity in the power of the new life which it imparts.

§ 16. THE CALL OF MATTHEW AND THE CONVERSATION OF OUR LORD WITH SOME PHARISEES AND DISCIPLES OF JOHN AT MATTHEW'S FEAST.

Verses 9-17. (COMPARE MARK ii, 13-22; LUKE v, 27-39.)

(9) **AND as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.** (10) **And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners** ^[1] **came and sat down with him and his disciples.** (11) **And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?** (12) **But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.** (13) **But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.** (14) **Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why**

do we and the Pharisees fast ^[2] oft, but thy disciples fast not? (15) And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. (16) No man putteth a piece of new cloth ^[3] unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up ^[4] taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. (17) Neither do men put new wine ^[5] into old bottles: ^[6] else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

[1 That is, other people of bad repute, implying that publicans belonged to this class.]

[2 Private fasts are here meant, that were observed in addition to the public fasts prescribed by the law.]

[3 That is, not yet fulled, which contracts whenever it gets wet.]

[4 Literally, the filling up, the supplement, that is, the part of the garment to which the patch is sewed.]

[5 New wine ferments, and requires strong vessels in order not to burst them.]

[6 In the Orient liquids were preserved and transported in leathern bottles or pipes, generally goat-skins, dressed with the fur inside. When they were old and dry, they easily burst.]

VERSES 9, 10. FROM THENCE. Mark tells us that Jesus on his way to the toll-house, which was on the lake shore, was teaching the people. MATTHEW, called Levi by Mark and Luke, had, undoubtedly, heard the preaching and seen the miracles of Jesus in Galilee, before he received his call to the apostleship. Mark and Luke place this event correctly before the journey to Gadara; but Matthew mentions it in this connection, probably because the calling of a publican to the apostleship was an act of that free grace which the Savior had just before exercised toward the paralytic, and for which he was so ruthlessly censured by the scribes; and also, because it was convenient to mention the calling in connection with the feast — as also Mark and Luke do. From the fact that the visit of Jairus took place after our Lord's return from Jordan, and the call of Matthew before that event, it appears that some time

intervened between the call and the feast, (see Synoptical Table,) thus giving Matthew ample time to resign his office, settle his accounts with his employers, and fully get ready to follow Jesus. He seems to have prepared the feast for his former associates in order to introduce them to his new Master and his disciples. Mark and Luke remark expressly that it was given in Matthew's house; Matthew, from modesty, only hints at it. It is characteristic of the Evangelists to say as little as possible of themselves. In no uninspired writer do we find "self" so much suppressed as by the Evangelists.

VERSE 11. AND WHEN THE PHARISEES SAW IT. Luke says: "*Their* scribes and Pharisees," meaning those residing at the place. We are not to suppose that they intruded themselves upon the company as spectators or spies, much less that they were invited guests, but being informed of what was going on, they took the first occasion to speak to the disciples as they were passing in or out. It is worthy of note, that profane as must have appeared to the Pharisees the call of Matthew, the publican, and our Lord's eating with a class of men who were considered defiled by their occupation, they dare not to attack Jesus personally. Their reproach implied that Jesus by eating with publicans and sinners showed an indifference about their sins, and thus supported their character before the people.

VERSES 12, 13. These words we may suppose our Lord to have spoken to the Pharisees when he left the house. By the well-known proverb, "THEY THAT BE WHOLE NEED NOT A PHYSICIAN," etc., he administered unto them a twofold rebuke. In the first place they pretended to be teachers and shepherds in Israel, whose duty it was, according to Ezekiel xxxiv, 4, to strengthen the diseased, to heal the sick, etc. He is a wretched physician who avoids the sick, which alone have need of him, lest he should be infected by the disease. Secondly, a physician must needs go to those who consider themselves sick, and therefore seek his help, but he is of no use to such as fancy themselves whole. But, continues our Lord, you show by your conduct that you do not yet understand the meaning of the words, "I WILL HAVE MERCY, AND NOT SACRIFICE." This passage is quoted from Hos. vi, 6. Most expositors interpret it thus: "I take greater delight in works of mercy than in sacrifices or any other (outward) religious act." Stier, however, paraphrases it thus: "I delight in practicing mercy, granting grace, and not in receiving sacrifices." While the words, thus understood, imply also an exhortation to the recipient of mercy to be merciful to his fellow-men, this interpretation suits the

context best, the following sentence commencing with the causal particle *for*. "Because God has always delighted in showing mercy, I am come," etc. As there is no class of men which the Lord could call righteous, there is none which he has not come to call. His call is addressed to all, but they are called as sinners, not as righteous. If they had no need of such a physician he would not have come at all. This completes the answer to the question asked in verse 11. — The words "TO REPENTANCE" are wanting in a number of manuscripts; they are, however, undisputed in the parallel passage in Luke, and the meaning of the word *to call* can be no other than "to call to repentance." But whom have we to understand by "THE RIGHTEOUS?" We can not understand by them self-righteous moralists, for they need repentance, and receive a call to repentance as much as others. The word "righteous" is, therefore, to be taken in its proper meaning of being *free from sin*, and the Lord means to say, as Alexander paraphrases it: "I came not to call men as unfallen, sinless beings, to repentance, which would be a contradiction, but as sinners, which they all are; and I, therefore, not only may but must associate with sinners as the very objects of my mission."

VERSE 14. John was at this time already imprisoned. Some of his disciples had become followers of Christ; it would seem that others that had adopted the rigid asceticism of John had affiliated with the sect of the Pharisees, which accounts for it, that according to Luke the Pharisees utter what in our text is spoken by the disciples of John. Had these disciples of John not been of a pharisaic mind they would, instead of taking umbrage at the non-fasting of the disciples of the Lord, have seen therein a sign that the Messiah had come, for it was a Jewish saying, based upon Zech. viii, 19: "All fasting will cease in the days of the Messiah, and there will be none but days of joy and mirth." — Those disciples of John, who kept aloof from Christ after the cessation of John's public ministry, reappear in the Acts, and are merged in the course of time in the heretical sects.

VERSE 15. By referring the disciples of John to the words of their Master, (John iii, 29,) the Lord continues, as it were, the discourse of John, only enlarging its range by calling all his disciples the children of the bride-chamber. To fast at the time when He, the long-desired, the long-promised One, had finally come, would have involved in their case a contradiction, since fasting belongs to mourning, not to joy. This implies also, that fasting, in order to be of the right kind, must be both the effect and

expression of real, heart-felt grief. In calling his disciples the children of the bride-chamber, he refers to their apostolic mission, for they were to be the first rays which the rising sun of righteousness sent down on the human family, or, to retain the figure, they were to introduce the bridegroom to his bride. While he, however, approvingly contemplates the joys of his assembled disciples, he espies the days of suffering, when he would be put to death, and when his disciples would have to suffer for his name's sake. But though he refers to the temporary sorrow his disciples would have to encounter, he does not mean to say, the Church should be given to continual sorrow and fasting after his departure from earth, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches with reference to her many fasts. The predominant spirit in the new covenant ought to be that of joy. (Phil. iv, 4.) The general truth contained in our Lord's reply to the disciples of John, is, that our actions ought always to correspond to the circumstances that surround us. Something may be highly improper at one time, that may be proper and right at another.

VERSES 16, 17. Since the question of the disciples of John implied a censure of Jesus for not doing what their Master did, the Lord explains unto them in two similitudes the relation of the new to the old dispensation, as well as the difference between the outward form and the spirit of religion. "The old forms do not suit for the new life that proceeds from me. The attempt to put this into the old forms would be as injurious as to sew a piece of unfulled cloth on an old garment, or to put new wine into old bottles; in both cases harm would be done; in the first, the new cloth would not only not hold, but take away part of the garment and make the rent worse; in the second, the fermenting new wine would burst the bottles, and so bottles and wine would be lost. The new life requires new forms." The fundamental idea is the same in the two similitudes, but it is considered from two different stand-points, which complete each other. Christianity is both the new cloth and the new wine. Considered from the stand-point of the disciples of John, Judaism is still the main thing, and the new doctrine a mere patch to mend the old garment; but viewed from the stand-point of the New Testament, the new wine of Christianity is the main thing, and the old forms of theocracy can not hold it. "How prophetic," says Rev. H. W. Beecher, "were these words of our Lord — picturing beforehand the result which was actually accomplished in the Church, when, after his death and after his apostles had passed away, men undertook to put the new cloth of Christianity upon the old garments of Jewish institutions and modes of

thought; and to hold the new wine of the Gospel, its vigorous and life-inspiring truths, in those old bottles of heathen ceremony, and Jewish ritual, and pharisaic forms and fasts; in other words, to change the spirit and life of Christ's teachings into a Christian pharisaism; how surely was the value and the vital energy of Christianity lost, and itself transformed from a principle of life into a deadly superstition that for ages ruled with the scepter of death over the Church, crushing, brutalizing, destroying the souls of men! And the Reformation of the sixteenth century was but the ceasing from this vain endeavor to keep the new wine in old bottles; casting off the rubbish of formalism, under which Christianity was dead and buried out of sight, and bringing out the Gospel in its spiritual simplicity, leaving it free to develop its own outward manifestations, and to organize its own institutions and practices, by the energy of its own Divine and marvelous life — which work is yet far from being finished. The new developments of truth and life which the Gospel is meant to accomplish can not and should not be bound in the shackles of the past. It was a grand purpose of his that the bondage of formality should be broken; that the chains and incumbrances of old ceremony should be cast off from the minds of men for evermore; that the world should busy itself henceforth, not with the outward shows of religion, but with its substantial facts — character, righteousness, love to God and man; and that his disciples should prove their better and truer understanding of the character of God, and their more real allegiance to him, not by fastings and ascetic practices, but by obedience — no longer seeking to please him by starving their bodies, but by strengthening their souls to do his will — no longer creating artificial righteousness and ceremonial sins, by establishing a multitude of fasts, and calling upon one another to observe them under the penalty of God's displeasure — but laboring to purge away the real sins, and to establish a real righteousness of the heart and of the life."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

VERSE 9. By the selection of an apostle from an order of men, among whom common opinion had pronounced that there was no worth to be found, Christ teaches us the freedom, impartiality, and mercy of the Gospel dispensation. The readiness of Matthew to give up his lucrative business and to overcome all the obstacles that might have prevented him from becoming a follower of Christ, teaches us that whatever Christ commands us he gives us

also the power to do. His "follow me," turned the whole current of the publican's thoughts, emotions, activities, and being, fully and forever, Christward.

VERSE 10. Jesus comes to men of all ranks to save them. He paid no respect to the prejudices of his cotemporaries, and was ashamed of no class of men, accepting an invitation to dine with publicans and sinners as willingly as one from a respectable Pharisee. It is a mark of self-righteousness to shun all outward intercourse with sinners. — The feast in Matthew's house teaches us that Christianity stimulates our social instincts. Never, we may suppose, did Matthew have such feelings as now, at this great feast. Man now appeared to him in the light of those spiritual ideas and joyous feelings, which the words of Jesus had awakened in his mind. His conversation was, no doubt, about the new light that had broke on his soul, and the new delights that had risen in his heart, and the purpose to which he was now going to consecrate his energies and his life. Happiness — like its highest emblem, light — is diffusive. Happy beings ever seek to make others participate in their joy, while misery isolates, seeks solitude, and strives, to shut up all its dark and horrid feelings within the doors of its own victim.

VERSES 11-13. Jesus is the great physician of souls. All men need his healing power and mercy. But before we can be healed by him we must feel and acknowledge our need of him. To look upon himself as spiritually sound is the most dangerous disease of fallen man. The blessed declaration, "*I am come to call sinners,*" is the bright star of hope in the dark firmament of fallen humanity. Let it shine on till every sinner responds to the call.

VERSES 14-17. The answer of our Lord to the question of John's disciples teaches us three lessons. 1. The external services of religion ought always to be the free and honest expression of the feelings of the heart. Christ saw worship not in the external services of the Temple, but in the spirit and truth of the devout soul. He saw benevolence not in the abundance which rich men cast into the treasury, but in the feeling expressed in the widow's mite. The suppressed sigh he regarded as prayer. Whenever any external religious service ceases to be the expression of the heart, it is utterly worthless in the sight of God. Christ constantly reproved the Jews for their formalism. Paul, before his conversion, a zealous formalist, fully imbibed the spirit of Christ, declaring: "He is not a Jew," etc., (Rom. ii, 28, 29,) and warning Timothy especially against

those who have the form of godliness but deny its power. The kingdom of God does not consist in eating and drinking — that is, in any thing outward — but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 2. The predominant feeling, produced by the religion of Christ in the heart of the believer, is the spirit of joy. The relationship between Christ and his true disciples is a very intimate and tender one; and the conscious presence of Christ, on the part of his disciples, is ever connected with the highest joy; their joy was interrupted only for a short time, while he was absent from them. But according to his promise, he visited them, and was with them for forty days after his resurrection from the dead, and then on the day of Pentecost he came to them, spiritually, to be their constant guest. 3. The principles of the Gospel must be kept distinct from all other systems. What our Lord says of patching up an old garment, or putting new wine into old, leaky, leathern pipes, admits of manifold applications. A patching up of the old man, a mere outward reformation, avails nothing. On the other hand, if the old, unconverted man applies to his condition the glorious promises of the Gospel, the precious wine is spilt and his case becomes worse. Thou must become first a new man, born of God, before thou canst receive into thyself Christ's wine of gladness. It is equally impracticable to shut up the spirit of true Christianity into false, antiquated forms. A healthful religious life requires that the form should be the product of the spirit, and the spirit creates from time to time new forms, which progress in perfection with the development of the new life. The Gospel is no skeleton of logically-strung doctrines, but a living seed that creates for itself a proper form and shape. Give to the grain of corn soil, sun, air, and moisture, and it will give itself a body. Confide in the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, and it will create a proper form for itself from time to time. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; but where there is the letter of the law, there is bondage. The true idea of churchly conservatism is to preserve the life; this being accomplished, the proper form will come of itself.

§ 17. JESUS HEALS A WOMAN DISEASED WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD, AND RAISES THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

Verses 18-26. (COMPARE MARK v, 22-43; LUKE viii, 40-56.)

(18) WHILE he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler,^[1] and worshiped him, saying, My daughter is even now

dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. (19) And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. (20) And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood [2] twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem [3] of his garment: (21) for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. (22) But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. (23) And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels [4] and the people making a noise, (24) he said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. (25) But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. (26) And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

[1 According to Mark, the ruler of a synagogue at Capernaum, named Jairus. Alexander paraphrases the Greek ἄρχων εἰς: "Among those who applied to him for aid was one belonging to the class of rulers."]

[2 This disease made legally unclean. (Lev. xv, 19, etc.)]

[3 Literally, edge, margin; here a fringe. The Jews were directed by law (Num. xv, 38, sq.) to wear fringes on the four corners of the outer garment, to remind them of the law. The article — τοῦ κρασπέδου; Heb. *zizith* — designates the most important one of the four fringes.]

[4 A piper, minstrel — the piping lasted seven days. (Gen. xv, 10; Jer. ix, 17.)]

VERSE 18. WHILE HE SPAKE THESE THINGS. Matthew expressly placing the healing of the woman and the raising of the ruler's daughter after the feast, we must consider this record to be chronologically more correct than that of Mark and Luke, who, after the answer given to the Pharisees, record other facts. Yet these two Evangelists state the two miracles more in detail, while Matthew merely records the facts, it being his object to group the discourses, similitudes, and miracles, etc., of Christ under general heads. — The ruler interrupted the discussions of our Lord with the Pharisees and the disciples of John, which took place during the feast in the house of Matthew. This gave the Lord a chance to show to these fault-finders, how ready and willing he was to leave at once an occasion of mirth and hilarity and to enter sympathizingly into

the keenest grief of others, yea, to enter the valley of death itself, in order to raise a dead child. — MY DAUGHTER IS EVEN NOW DEAD. This translation is not accurate — ἡ θυγατὴρ ἀρτι ἐτελεύτησεν means, my daughter may even at this time have died. The father speaks here proleptically; as appears from Mark and Luke, the child was not dead when the father left the house, but her symptoms were such, that, according to appearance, she could not live much longer; the father going by this symptom is apprehensive that she may have died while he was on his way to Jesus; and he was right in his apprehensions, for before he reached his house messengers brought the news that death had actually taken place.

VERSES 20, 22. On this passage we refer the reader to Mark v, 27-30. Here we will only quote the following interesting remarks from Mr. Robertson's sermon on the healing of Jairus's daughter: "On his way to perform one act of love the Savior turned aside to give his attention to another. Humanly speaking, there were many causes which might have led to the rejection of the suffering woman's request. The case was urgent, a matter of life and death; delay might be fatal, a few minutes might make all the difference between living and dying. Yet Jesus not only performed the miracle, but refused to perform it in a hurried way. But the delay was only apparent, and had its wise design. The miracles of Jesus were not merely arbitrary acts, they were subject to the laws of the spiritual world. A certain inward character, a certain relation to the Redeemer was required to make him spiritually susceptible of the mercy to be bestowed upon him. Jairus, beholding the cure of the woman, saw her modest touch approaching the hem of the Savior's garment. He heard the language of Omnipotence: 'Somebody has touched me.' He heard the great principle enunciated that the only touch which reaches God is that of faith. And remembering this, it is a matter not of probability, but of certainty, that the soul of Jairus was made more capable of a blessing than if Jesus had not paused to heal the woman but hurried on. We may draw another lesson from this. In worldly matters the more occupations and duties a man has the more certain is he of doing all imperfectly. In the things of God it is reversed. The more duties you perform the more you are fitted for doing others: what you lose in time you gain in strength. You do not weaken your affection for your family by cultivating attachments beyond its pale, but deepen and intensify it. He who is most liberal in the case of a foreign famine, or a distant mission, will be found to have only learned more liberal love toward the poor and unspiritualized of

his own land." — THY FAITH HAS MADE THEE WHOLE. The woman was cured by touching the garment of Jesus, as Mark and Luke record, but the cure followed this act because it was an act of faith. Lest to the mere outward act the healing power might be ascribed Jesus spoke to her on the subject. Although her views as to the means by which she might obtain relief may have been erroneous, yet they were based on a strong faith in the person of Christ, and this faith Jesus praises. O, how ready is the Lord to give unto all; how delighted with every act of receiving a favor at his hands, no matter by what means it is sought! It is his uniform practice to ascribe to faith what his power has done, because he does not dispense his healing virtues without faith on the part of man.

VERSE 24. THE MAID IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH, literally, "the maid did not die." Our Lord says "she sleepeth" with reference to her speedy awakening, and in this sense her death was only a sleep. Olshausen understands the word "she sleepeth" literally, and says: "Does the act of the Lord lose any of its significance if we conceive the state of the child as a suspension of all the functions of life? Death, whose reality is sometimes beyond human ken, is here taken by the Lord in its true and full sense, and he declares that it had, in the present case, not taken place; but this very knowledge before he had seen the child is the miraculous in the case. What none knew he knew without having been present, and he openly declares what he knew." This interpretation is a forced one. It is apparent, from all attending circumstances, that the child was really dead, and that the Lord used the word "*she sleepeth*" figuratively. He uses the same word with regard to Lazarus, whose actual death is doubted by no one. Luke expressly says: "Her spirit came again." It had, consequently, left the body. The words may, then, be paraphrased: "Do not regard the child as dead, but think of her as merely sleeping, since she is so soon to come to life again." — The New Testament records three instances of raising the dead by our Lord in a significant gradation. The girl in question had just expired; the young man of Nain lies on the bier, and is carried out to be buried; Lazarus had lain four days in the grave. The Bible teaches us to regard the death of the body as a sleep, with regard to the general resurrection.

VERSE 25. See the particulars in Mark v, 36-43.

§ 18. JESUS HEALS TWO BLIND PERSONS AND A DUMB DEMONIAC.

Verses 27-34.

(27) **AND** when Jesus departed thence, two blind men ^[1] followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou son of David, have mercy on us.* (28) And when he was come into the house, ^[2] the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. (29) Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. (30) And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See *that* no man know it. (31) But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country. (32) As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. (33) And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. (34) But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of devils.

[1] Blindness is a widely-spread malady in the Orient, especially in Egypt, Arabia, and Palestine. The individuals in question had, in all probability, merely lost their sight; one that was born blind attracts unusual attention, (John ix.)]

[2] That is, into the house where he dwelt at Capernaum.]

These two miracles are recorded by Matthew alone. The two blind men deserve our attention chiefly, because they called aloud on Jesus as the son of David — that is, the Messiah. The other case is the very reverse of it. The man is dumb, perhaps not organically; the demon has caused his dumbness; whether he effected this by ruining the organ as he did in other cases, where he bent the spine and blinded the eyes, or whether he brought it about by influencing the mind of the individual, that he refused to speak from unconquerable melancholy or cunning stubbornness, does not appear. Such dumbness is a striking picture of the sinner, who is prevented by the devil from confessing his misery and wretchedness. But whatever may have been the immediate cause of the suffering before us, Christ espies its real cause at once, and removes it. The

miracle differs in one respect from others. The total absence of faith in the demoniac furnished no point to Christ's power to work upon. Nothing but the faith of the men who led him was left for him, while the lurking and blaspheming Pharisees increased the power of the demon over the unfortunate man.

VERSE 27. SON OF DAVID. This was the popular designation of the Messiah; but because this title, more than any other, called attention to the Messiah's royal power, and was, therefore, more than any other, liable to abuse by the carnally-minded multitude, Jesus never used it himself, preferring the term "Son of man," which, by its uniqueness and mysteriousness, was a powerful incentive to serious thought and reflection.

VERSES 28, 29. Jesus did not at once take notice of the prayers of the blind men, partly in order to prove their faith, partly, perhaps, also, because he was as yet unwilling publicly to accept the title "Son of David." As their faith in his power to cure them could rest only on the reports of others concerning him, it was the more remarkable. — **ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH, BE IT UNTO YOU.** He had not asked them whether they believed that he was the Son of David, but whether they believed that he was able to do this. He requires faith in his miraculous powers, and a grateful reception of their manifestation. Faith never passes unrewarded; man receives according to the measure of his faith.

VERSES 30, 31. AND JESUS STRAITLY CHARGED THEM — implying a strict injunction. Having called on him before as "the Son of David" in public, it was more than likely that they would now, having received their sight, still more loudly proclaim him as the Messiah, whereby they might easily cause popular risings in Galilee. That the men appeared before the people with their sight restored, and ascribed the cure to Jesus, could not be prevented; but Jesus forbade them to give out under what name he had done it, it being the first miracle which he had performed as the openly-professed Messiah. With all his readiness to help, the Lord was constantly opposed to "all crying in the streets," and cautiously considered all attending circumstances. — It was an act of disobedience, and, as such, by no means praiseworthy, that they paid no attention to the Lord's injunction, although gratitude and zeal for his honor seem to have been their motives. Not our own inclinations, but the command of Christ, ought to be the rule of our conduct.

VERSES 32, 33. This narrative resembles that of chapter xii, 22, etc., in so far as it gave rise to the same blasphemous utterances by the Pharisees, but the individual cured is certainly not one and the same. The people put to shame by their sound judgment not only the Pharisees of those days, but also the skeptics of our days, who disbelieve such miracles.

VERSE 34. The Pharisees themselves had to acknowledge that the Lord had cast out a demon, and they moreover admitted that it required more than human powers to cast out demons; but they refused to acknowledge this power as a Divine power, and, accordingly, ascribed the deed to the influence of Satan, the ruler of the demons. They did this, however, in all probability, only clandestinely, since the Lord took no notice of it. "Envy, here unbelief," says Heubner, "does rather take refuge to the most absurd, malicious suppositions, than acknowledge virtue and its brightest deeds."

§ 19. CHRIST PITIES THE SHEPHERDLESS PEOPLE AND EXHORTS TO PRAYER FOR LABORERS.

Verses 35-38.

(35) AND Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. (36) But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. (37) Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; (38) pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.

THIS section forms the introduction to the sending out of the twelve, recorded in the following chapter, and is, at the same time, the fitting conclusion of chapters viii and ix, in which we have been told how the Lord devoted the fullness of his Divine powers to the best interests of suffering humanity, how he entered in tender compassion into all phases of wretchedness, wiped away every tear, and conquered death itself. (Isa. xxv, 8.) Such a Savior the prophets had promised, and this long-promised Savior we see traverse the

country, preaching the Gospel. Here he beheld the nameless misery of the people in its full extent. He declares the people of Israel a grossly-neglected flock, deserted by their shepherds, the high-priest, rulers and rabbins, and left to destruction. The condition of the heathen world was, if possible, still worse. Moved by the sight of this deplorable woe and destitution, Jesus Christ, the true Shepherd of Israel and the whole world, stretches out his helping arm, and, for the salvation of the world, creates the apostolic office.

VERSE 35. Matthew does not indicate in which direction Jesus went on this occasion; but, from the other Evangelists, it would appear that he went down the lake toward Jerusalem. Dr. Alexander considers the statement of Matthew to be not on account of one particular mission, but, like that in iv, 23, a general description of our Lord's itinerant ministry, with its two great functions, working miracles and teaching, and adds: "The question why this general description should be thus repeated almost in the same words may be readily answered, and the answer furnishes a key to the whole structure of this first great division of the history. The answer is, that Matthew, having executed his design of showing by examples how the Savior taught and wrought in his great mission, now returns to the point from which he started in beginning this exemplification, and resumes the thread there dropped or broken by repeating his summary description of the ministry which he has since been painting in detail. This view of the connection is not only recommended by grammatical considerations, such as the imperfect tense and participles following in either case, but also by the clear light which it throws upon the structure of the book and the progress of the history. Even a mere hypothesis, which thus converts an incoherent series of details into a systematic, well-compacted whole, can scarcely be denied as fanciful. According to this theory, the meaning of the verse before us is, 'And thus, or so it was, as I before said, that Jesus went about.'"

VERSE 36. THEY FAINTED — *ἡσαν ἐκλελυμένοι* — they were exhausted and ready to faint, like a flock that is worn-out by a long run in the wilderness. Another reading is, *ἡσαν ἐκυλμένοι* — they were skinned, rent, that is, by ravenous beasts, or ruined by hunger and cold. — AND WERE SCATTERED; that is, abandoned, unprotected, so that this — their being abandoned by their shepherds — appears as the cause of the former. They had no shepherd to protect them against wolves and other ravenous beasts, no

shepherd to lead them on to good pastures. What a heavy charge against the priests does this life-picture of an abandoned flock present!

VERSE 37. The good Shepherd is moved with compassion on the poor, deluded people, and graciously overlooking, their own share of guilt in bringing about their wretched condition, reprobates the more severely those who, instead of being shepherds, proved to be their deceivers. How ready is He to heal and to help! But this can not be done so easily as to restore health to the diseased and life to the dead. The healing of this evil is a long process, to be carried on *through human instrumentality*, illustrated by the metaphor of sowing and reaping. It is true the harvest alone is spoken of, but the previous labor of preparing the wild, neglected ground, of sowing the good seed, is meant as well as the act of reaping itself. The laborers have, therefore, to perform not only the duties of reapers — that is, bind up the sheaves — but they must do all the preparatory work from the very beginning. — THE HARVEST IS PLENTEROUS. This refers primarily to Israel as likely to give work enough to his disciples for the present; but before his mind stood undoubtedly the whole world, as ripe for a glorious ingathering. — THE LABORERS ARE FEW; that is, the real, true laborers, although nominal laborers have been plenty at all times.

VERSE 38. These words express a great and glorious truth. The sending out of laborers into the harvest field, which is the Lord's prerogative, the salvation of the world, the gradual development of his kingdom, the Lord here declares to depend on the prayers of his followers. Stier remarks on this point: "It is easy to comprehend that the salvation of lost souls, the preparation of the great harvest, is to be accomplished through human instrumentalities; but it is a mystery that the sending out of such laborers is made to depend on the prayers of men; yet this is attested by the Scriptures and by experience; and this being the case, how earnestly should we pray for ourselves and the world around us!"

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

We infer from this passage two lessons:

I. THAT A RIGHT VIEW OF HUMAN SOCIETY IS VERY AFFECTING. "When Christ saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion." What was the view that thus affected him?

1. He regarded them as being in a deplorable spiritual condition. They were (1.) The subjects of spiritual *faintness*. Spiritual *faintness* is the want of power to feel and do the right. Paul declares the world, apart from Christianity, to be "without strength;" that is, without strength to bear trials with magnanimity, and to prosecute duty without fear; "without strength" to battle manfully with the wrong, and to side ever with the right; "without strength" to rectify our moral errors, to roll off the load of guilt that presses upon the conscience, and to appear with acceptance before our Maker. This is the weakness — the faintness — that Jesus saw, and which now moved his compassion. And this is general. It belongs to all ages and lands; it is a calamity common to the race. (2.) They are the subjects of spiritual perversity. Christ saw them not only "faint," but "scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." A sheep is one of those animals that seem to have a propensity to wander from their home, and to go astray; nor does it seem to have any instinct to stimulate and guide it back to its lost pasture and position. Without proper pasture, shelter, and guardianship, they are exposed to ruin. Thus human souls appeared to Christ. Sheep thus "scattered" were to him types of men in their alienation from God and each other. They have left the fold of heaven; the golden tie of love which once bound them to each other is broken, and they are "scattered," one by one, over all the bleak scenes of selfishness, ignorance, and guilt. Though men are bound together by compacts, crowded together in populous cities, organized into companies and empires, their souls, if sinners, are divided from each other, and scattered wide as the poles asunder.

2. He regarded them as inadequately supplied with spiritual helpers. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." There was no proportion between the vastness of the work and the fewness of the laborers. What errors, what prejudices, what habits, what propensities in the case of each of the millions of the Jewish people now required to be worked off, and superseded by the principles of truth and the spirit of holiness, and how few were the men consecrated to the work! Though laborers have greatly multiplied since the days of Christ, and though, perhaps, they are more numerous than ever, the disproportion here lamented by Christ, between the work and the workers, is as great to-day as ever. Who can think upon the multitudes of

skeptics, the millions of worldlings, the crowds of mere nominal Christians, the teeming myriads of heathens, in connection with the few earnest Christian reformers, without exclaiming, "The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few?" Have we now one *true*, faithful, laborious Christian teacher to a hundred? — to a thousand? — to ten thousand? The question, indeed, tends to oppress the energies and darken the hopes of the philanthropic soul. This disproportion between the work and the workers is, I confess, one of the most humbling and discouraging thoughts that steal over this doubting soul of mine.

II. THAT THE PHILANTHROPIST WHO DESIRES TO IMPROVE SOCIETY MUST DEVOUTLY LOOK TO HEAVEN FOR SUITABLE AGENTS. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." But why should they look to him?

1. Because he has the deepest interest in the work. He is "the Lord of the harvest." All souls are his. Souls are "his husbandry." Who feels such an interest in an object as its proprietor? Who can feel such an interest in the human soul as God?

2. Because he alone can supply the men suitable to the work. While all souls come forth from God, those that are fitted for spiritual labor are his children and messengers in an especial sense. He endows them with those particular attributes which qualify them for the work; he molds their characters and inspires their faculties by his gracious influence. When Christ ascended up on high, he gave some to be apostles, etc. Great men — the men to do the spiritual labor of the world — must come from God.

3. Because he gives the men suitable to the work in answer to prayer. "Pray ye," etc. Erect schools, found colleges, establish universities, promote the means of education to the utmost of your ability, if you will, but unless you get men of the right stamp, you have done but little to help the world. You have merely furnished tools, but you have no workmen to use them efficiently. One true man, fitted with the right faculties, and baptized with the true spirit — of the stamp of Elijah, or Paul, or Luther — would do more to help on the world than all your religious libraries, schools, and colleges. God's plan is to improve, elevate, and save man, by man. The want of the world is not so much better books, institutions, and schools, as better men — men of a higher and diviner type.

As God helps the world by men, let the Church select from the humble classes of society those children who are the *choicest specimens of the race*; children with the *largest supply of brain, and heart, and physical vigor* — whose whole conformation is of the *highest type*. Let those, at the earliest possible age, be placed under the tuition and superintendence of teachers of the highest intellectual and moral mold. Boys of such high natural order, thus selected and trained, would, under God, become the kind of laborers the world wants. As God works by means, we believe that, through such an agency as this, in connection with prayer, *he would send forth laborers equal to the work.* (Abridged from "The Homilist.")

CHAPTER X.

§ 20. THE FIRST MISSION OF THE APOSTLES.

NOT the original vocation of the individual apostles, which took place at an earlier period, and is here presupposed, nor even their *first* formal induction into the apostolic office, which Luke (vi, 13) mentions as immediately preceding the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, but the appointment to their first mission, with which Matthew could connect very properly their ordination to the apostolic office, not mentioned by him before, are narrated here. Matthew's purpose is here, as elsewhere, not to record certain incidents or acts in the order of their actual occurrence, but to present another striking feature in the ministry of Christ; namely, his appointing to active service those who had been previously chosen one by one, *or* two by two — the first step toward the reorganization of the Church.

In our chapter the twelve are evidently spoken of as a constituted body. They form already a family, of which Jesus is the head. Henceforth the Lord calls himself the Master, and the twelve the members of his household, (Matt. x, 25,) who eat his bread, (John xiii, 18; Luke xxii, 35,) and for whom he has, as the head of the family, the Passover prepared, (Luke xxii, 7, 8;) yea, he extends his relation to them beyond the narrow limits of the present world, (Luke xxii, 30.) The intimate relation existing between himself and them is described in the words: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; for as the Father sent me, so I send you." These men, whom he here sent out on a short missionary tour, preparatory for their future high embassy, were destined to

represent him as his apostles, not only in Israel, but all over the world. They are called apostles at their first formal mission. The term "*apostles*" comes from the Greek verb ἀποστέλλειν, to send forth with a message, and was used to designate a person that was commissioned by a king to transact any business between him and another king or people. The apostles of Christ were to be the specially-commissioned ambassadors of God and representatives of Christ. Before all others, that were to become afterward organs of the Holy Ghost, they are distinguished by this, that they were to receive the immediate impression of Christ's whole life, of his works and words, of his sufferings, death, and resurrection, that they might be able to testify what they had heard and seen themselves. (John xv, 27.) For this reason the twelve, when they had lost one of their number, deemed it necessary to fill up the original number as established by Christ himself, by the choice of a new member in the place of the one that had fallen out. (Acts i, 8; comp. vs. 21, 22.) That Christ chose *twelve* apostles had undoubtedly reference to the twelve tribes of Israel. (Comp. Matt. xix, 28; Rev. xxi, 12, 14.) The apostles were sent, at first, only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, in order to prepare a spiritual Israel for Christ before the formal calling of the Gentiles. Christ wished, accordingly, to indicate by this choice of the twelve, that their mission embraced all Israelites, and that he desired to labor among the twelve tribes as the Messiah, as the spiritual King of Israel, through his twelve judges and representatives. In the old Israel there lay the germ of the whole new Church of believers, whose rulers the apostles are, both by their preaching of the Word and the founding of the Church. For this reason they were Christ's immediate disciples, always about his person, and, after his resurrection (John xx, 22) and ascension, (Gal. i, 11, 12; Acts x, 9, etc.,) illuminated by him in an especial manner, his immediate instruments for the founding of the Church by the preaching of the Word and the administration of discipline. To their number another was subsequently added — Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, whose especial calling was not to exclude the other apostles from ministering unto the Gentiles, but to establish, in the strongest manner possible, the equality of believing Jews and Gentiles. It is true the term "apostle" was applied sometimes to those also that were sent forth by Christ to preach or announce the kingdom of God, and Paul himself used it in this more general sense; yet (1 Cor. xv, 7) he presupposes the more limited meaning as the original one, and applies the term in the latter sense to himself only, because he had been immediately called by the Lord himself. (1 Cor. ix, 1; xv, 9.)

A few more general remarks on the men whom Christ chose to be apostles may find a place here. Olshausen says: "They were to form by themselves a perfect unit. It was, therefore, necessary that they should mutually complete each other in their dispositions and endowments, and carry in themselves the germ of those leading peculiarities which afterward characterized the different parts of the Church. None but the Searcher of Hearts was able to establish such a circle of kindred spirits as represented the whole body of Christ, the Church of the New Testament. The one light that radiated from Christ passed, like prismatic colors in variously-modified splendor, over into the hearts of the apostles, and in this way the Gospel reaches all men, being adapted to their different dispositions and wants." Neander remarks: "Although we have not a sufficient knowledge of each of these twelve men to enable us to know and point put the reason why Jesus received exactly such into that number, yet the wisdom of Christ displayed in their selection appears sufficiently from the example of the most prominent characters, of a Peter and a John, in whom we see how the principal types of human nature were employed to appropriate and develop Christianity. At the same time it is by no means necessary, for the purpose of justifying the wisdom of Christ, to suppose that all the apostles were men of striking peculiarities and towering talents, and that only such could accomplish great things. It was sufficient for the purpose, which the apostles were to subserve, that their body consisted of such men as attached themselves, with unfeigned love, to the Savior, and by their childlike confidence in him and willingness to be governed in all things by his Spirit, were qualified to transmit his true image in its purity to others. It was sufficient that from out of the apostolic college, which, as a whole, fully answered its purpose, only a few members should shine forth by their strength of mind and importance of character, on whom the others could lean for their support."

Lange thinks that, as the apostolic office required, before every thing else, men in whom the life and spirit of Christ would be reflected, without human coloring — men of whom it might be expected that they would send forth the water of life as pure as they had received it from the fountain — Christ chose *laymen*, who did not entangle his work in priestly ordinances; *unlettered men*, who did not mix his wisdom with the tenets of human philosophy; *plain men*, who did not obscure the Divine truth by a false culture. Only upon the stem of the mind of a true Israelite Jesus could graft the scion of the New Testament

life, and it was this mind which brought the disciples to Jesus; and yet it must not be overlooked that the piety of these Galileans had assumed a more liberal character through their independence of the hierarchical influence of Judea and their intercourse with Gentiles of their native country."

But how can we account for it that Judas was received into the apostolical college? The Evangelist says that "Jesus knew him from the beginning." By these words of the Evangelist we must not understand that Judas had been a reprobate from the beginning, and that Jesus chose him for this very purpose, that he should betray him, as if the awful necessity had rested on this castaway to become the instrument of Christ's death. This view is diametrically opposed to the word of Jesus, that he had come to seek what is lost, and assumes a necessity which by no means existed; namely, that Jesus should be betrayed by a member of his most intimate circle. In such a sense men are never used as instruments in the hand of Providence, and victimized to a higher purpose. But as we can not suppose that Jesus was mistaken as to the character of Judas, on what ground is the choice of Judas to be accounted for? This question is satisfactorily answered by Ullmann, who says: "When Judas was called to be an apostle, there was already in him a strong tendency to ambition and covetousness. He might fall, but he might also, like Peter, rise again. His proximity to Jesus might influence him for good or for evil; and, with the possibility of success before him, Jesus regarded it as worth while to make the attempt to recover him. If Judas were gained to the side of good, he would prove one of the most powerful of the apostles; if he were lost, he might still, yea, must of necessity, serve the plan of Jesus. By an act of wickedness, which is, at the bottom, as incapable of rational explanation as evil is generally, Judas hardened himself, even while in communion with the purest goodness. Thus that Divine love which might have saved him only worked his destruction. And just as all evil must finally serve the good, so Judas, when the process of hardening had once set in, was compelled to further the ends of Jesus, whatever his own intentions might be. In contrast to the purity of Jesus, he exhibited sin in all its abominableness, and by bringing about the catastrophe of the death of Jesus, he helped on the accomplishment of the work of redemption. Through him and his crime it became possible for Jesus to enter into the suffering of death, without seeking it himself. Finally, too, by his own desperate death, he testified to the purity of Him whom he had betrayed. In all this, however, we must not seek the end, the reason, but only *the result* of the choice of Judas by Jesus.

The choice was dictated by the motives indicated above; and these motives can not but be acknowledged to have been pure, seeing that they were based on the possibility of the salvation even of Judas."

Verses 1-4. (MARK iii, 13-19; LUKE vi, 12-19.)

(1) AND when he had called unto him his twelve disciples,^[1] he gave them power *against* unclean spirits,^[2] to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. (2) Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son of Zebedee*, and John his brother; (3) Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son of Alpheus*, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus;^[3] (4) Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

[1] The word for disciple is in Greek μαθητής — a learner; this appellation was given to the twelve, partly on account of their outward relation to Jesus, who, after the fashion of the rabbins of his time, had a number of disciples constantly about his person, partly because their main business during Jesus' public ministry was to learn. After the outpouring of the Holy Ghost the twelve are only called apostles, and the other believers are called disciples, because they were now to hear in the twelve Jesus himself, and to see in them the infallible teachers of the Church. Subsequently the term "disciples" came out of use, even the apostolic epistles do not use it, but in its place the terms, "brethren," "faithful," "saints," "Christians." [

[2] *Unclean spirits* — πνεύματα ἀκάθαρτα — so the demons are called, not only because they are unclean and impure in themselves, but also because they incite men to all kinds of impurities.]

[3] Lachmann reads merely Θαδδαῖος after Cod. B, etc. — Tischendorf — Λεββαῖος after Cod. D, Augustin, Hesychius, etc.]

VERSE 1. He called them to himself, and for their credentials gave them power to perform some of the miracles which he himself was performing. The specific difference between the miraculous power of Jesus and that of his disciples consisted in this, that in Christ it was intrinsic, while in the case of the

latter it was a delegated power, and was exercised by them only in the name of Jesus, never in their own name.

VERSES 2-4. The names of the apostles are now given, arranged two by two, perhaps because they were sent out so. We have four catalogues of the apostles in the New Testament: the one in our text, one in Mark iii, 16, one in Luke vi, 14, and one in Acts i, 13. In every one there are three classes given, each class containing the same names, but in a different order. Only Peter, Philip, James, the son of Alpheus, and Judas Iscariot occupy in all the same place. Two reasons may be assigned for this variance of their order: 1. Matthew and Luke put the brothers together, while Mark follows the orders in which they were sent out two by two; 2. It is quite likely that the greater or less importance of the one and the other had something to do with the order in which they are enumerated. Those that are comparatively little known are mentioned last, while the best known stand first. From the fact that Peter is named first in the four lists, that James, John, and Andrew follow in each immediately after Peter, and that Judas Iscariot is invariably mentioned last, Lange and Alford, with others, would infer "that *the first* in the list refers not only to the early calling of Peter to the apostleship, (John i, 42,) but indicates also prominence of rank in the apostolic college, without, however, implying that he was to be raised to the primacy in the Church," about which latter point we refer to Matt. xvi, 18. "His true historical position," says Alexander, "is that of a spokesman to the college of apostles, like the foreman of a jury or the chairman of a committee. That it does not imply a permanent superiority of rank or office may be argued from the fact that no such primacy is anywhere ascribed to him." — **SIMON, WHO IS CALLED PETER.** He received his surname at his introduction to Christ. (John i, 43.) Why the Lord gave him this name, see chap. xvi, 18. — **ANDREW** is a Greek, not a Hebrew name. The Jewish practice of adopting Greek names proves the familiar use of the Greek language in Palestine at that time. He was a native of Bethsaida, son of Jonah, and had been a disciple of John the Baptist before he became acquainted with Christ. (John i, 37-40.) After the resurrection he is mentioned only once more. (Acts i, 13.) According to tradition, he preached among the Scythians, for which reason the Russians claim him as their apostle. — **JAMES, THE SON OF ZEBEDEE,** called, in distinction from James, the son of Alpheus, "the greater," was partner in the fishing trade with Peter and Andrew, and an eye-witness of the miraculous draught. He was one of the three that were

admitted to the most familiar intercourse with Jesus, and received, with his brother John, the surname "Boanerges," that is, sons of thunder, (Mark iii, 17,) probably with reference to their personal character, as exemplified by their desire to command fire to fall from heaven, and to consume those Samaritans that would not receive Jesus. (Luke ix, 54.) His mother, Salome, was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus; he was, consequently, first cousin to Jesus, and this accounts for the prayer of the two brothers to have the highest rank assigned to them in the kingdom of Christ. (Matt. xx, 20.) This James was seized and beheaded by Herod at Jerusalem. (Acts xii, 2.) Clement of Alexandria writes that the officer, to whom his execution had been intrusted, seeing the martyr's joy and heavenly serenity, was converted to Christianity, and then shared his martyrdom. — JOHN, the author of the fourth Gospel, of three Epistles, and the Apocalypse. See more about him in the Introduction to his Gospel. — PHILIP was from Bethsaida, in Galilee, and became a disciple the day following the visit of Andrew and Peter. (John i, 43.) He not only readily followed the short but significant invitation extended to him, but presently attempted to communicate his own impression about the person of Jesus to others. (John i, 45.) Alford infers from John xii, 20-22, and from his Greek name, that he was descended from a Greek family. He appears in all the lists as the fifth, and in connection with Bartholomew and Thomas, whose character seems to have resembled his own. (John vi, 5-7; xiv, 8.) The few notices about him are given by John. The other Evangelists merely mention his name. Of his apostolic labor we have only legends. He is said to have preached the Gospel in Scythia and Phrygia, and to have died at Hierapolis at a very advanced age. — BARTHOLOMEW is supposed to be identical with Nathanael of Cana, in Galilee. This supposition rests not only on the fact that Nathaniel is mentioned (John i, 46) in connection with Philip, while in the synoptic Gospels Bartholomew is mentioned in the same connection, but also on this, that we find Nathanael in company with the other apostles. (John xxi, 2.) Moreover, the name "Bartholomew" is, properly speaking, only a surname, and means "son of Thalmai." If Bartholomew is identical with Nathanael, we have a full delineation of his character by the Lord himself. (John i, 47.) The last mention of him is in Acts i, 13. After the testimony of some of the Fathers, Paetaenus found in India a copy of Matthew's Hebrew Gospel, that had been left there by Bartholomew. Tradition adds that he was flayed alive, and then crucified with his head downward. — THOMAS, surnamed Didymus — that is, twin — seems to have been a native of Decapolis. Wherever he saw or

supposed he saw contradictions, (John xiv, 5,) or where he was required to believe facts, especially miraculous facts, on the statement of others, (John xx, 24,) he hesitated; yet as soon as his difficulties were removed, he embraced the subject with the whole strength of his soul. Some see in him the representative of the nobler class of rationalists, whose unbelief does not proceed from an unwillingness to believe, but from the demand of an almost ocular demonstration before they do believe. As Christ condescended in mercy to the frailty of Thomas, so many of the sincere seekers after truth of the latter class may still find the pearl of great price. Of his apostolic labors we have only legends. He is said to have preached in India and Persia. On the coasts of Malabar there are still many Thomas-Christians, who trace their origin from Thomas, but are altogether unlike the apostolic Churches in doctrine and practice. — MATTHEW, the publican, author of this Gospel. See more about him in the Introduction. — JAMES, the son of Alpheus, also called the "less." If this Alpheus was, as is supposed, (see Matt. xiii, 55,) identical with Cleopas and a brother of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, James, the son of Alpheus, is the often-mentioned brother of the Lord and author of the Epistle going by that name. — LEBBEUS, whose surname was Thaddeus. About this name there are difficulties. Mark calls him only Thaddeus; Luke has neither of these names, but in place of it he has Judas, the brother of James; and as both Matthew and Mark omit the name of Judas (not Iscariot, John xiv, 22,) it seems to follow that this Judas, Thaddeus, and Lebbeus were one and the same person, and that this Judas was Jude, the author of the short Epistle. (Compare the remarks on chap. xiii, 55.) — SIMON, THE CANANITE, called by Luke Zelotes. It is likely that he belonged, before his conversion, to the sect of the "zealots;" that is, the most violent party of the Pharisees, which sect, it is true, was not yet fully organized in our Lord's times, but existed, nevertheless, in embryo. We can not say to a certainty what the term "*Cananite*" means. Some consider it equivalent to "zealot, or Zelotes." Meyer derives it from a place named Cana, different, however, from the Cana in Galilee, whose inhabitants were called *Kavāîoi*. The position of his name at the side of James and Jude, (see Luke vi, 15, and Acts i, 13,) and the juxtaposition of these names in chap. xiii, 55, makes it probable that this Simon was also one of our "Lord's brethren." Besides, Eusebius, in his Church History, III, 11, identifies him with Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem, who, according to tradition, succeeded James the less in the episcopal office. — JUDAS ISCARIOT; that is, a man of Cariot — a place belonging to the tribe

of Judah. (Josh. xv, 25.) Judas was, consequently, not of Galilee, but of Judea. Baumgarten, in his "Geschichte Jesu," has on this point the following interesting remarks: "As Jerusalem and Judea were the principal seat of corruption in Israel in those days, and as this corruption has generally its roots in the higher classes of society, both as to faith and morals, Jesus chose his first disciples from the humbler classes of society in Galilee. The only exception to this rule, it seems, was Judas Iscariot, who was not a Galilean, but a Judean, and the Lord must have discovered talents of a high order in him, which we see even in his dreadful fall; for it must have required an uncommon degree of circumspection and self-control to cover up his repeated acts of fraud so artfully in the presence of his Master and his fellow-disciples, that he was safe from direct blame. It was, undoubtedly, his intellectual acumen which, struck with the matchless clearness and grandeur of the sayings and doings of Jesus, induced him to become one of his disciples."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

The men Christ personally and immediately appointed to the work were men of the most suitable description. He had all men at his command. The men on philosophic chairs and on imperial thrones were as much at his command as the clerks of the receipt of custom and the fishermen on the shores of Galilee. We are, therefore, justified in looking at the men he selected as the right class of men for saving souls.

Taking this view of the case, we infer —

I. THAT IT IS NOT NECESSARY THAT THE MEN TO SAVE SOULS SHOULD BE DISTINGUISHED BY ANY PARTICULAR MENTAL PECULIARITY. All such distinctions were foreign to these men. They were all of the humbler class, unknown to fame — toll-gatherers, fishermen, and struggling sons of toil. But although they were not men marked by any particular adventitious distinction, they might still, perhaps, be men distinguished by some one *particular* characteristic of mind. If so, one might conclude that the work of saving souls is limited to one particular order of mind, and that all others are perfectly free from the obligation. But these men did not belong to any *one* specific class of mind. Look at the utterances and acts of these men, so far as they are recorded. Their leading features of mind differ

widely from each other. They seem to belong to every specific class. Some are, like Peter, greatly led by imagination, impressible and impulsive — ready to believe without evidence and to act without thought; others, like Thomas, are reflective and inquiring, withholding faith till the most convincing evidence is brought. Now, if no particular adventitious distinction nor mental characteristic is necessary to save souls, we infer, *that souls under God are to be saved by man as man*; not by man as a scholar or sage; as a thinker, poet, or orator; as a sovereign or a judge; but by man. The *obligation* is therefore on all.

II. IT IS NECESSARY TO BE INDOCTRINATED WITH THE PRINCIPLES, ENDOWED WITH THE POWER, AND GUIDED BY THE RULES OF CHRIST.

1. *It is necessary to be indoctrinated with the principles of Christ.*

These were all "disciples" of Christ before he gave them their commission. "When he had called unto him his twelve disciples," etc. They had been taught by him before he gave them their commission to teach; they were his pupils before he made them apostles; he made them disciples before he commissioned them to be his preachers. We infer, therefore, that Christian discipleship is a necessary qualification for Christian evangelship.

2. *It is necessary to be endowed with the power of Christ.* "He gave

them power against unclean spirits," etc. Some might say that if the apostles are the true specimens of men for saving souls, then their counterparts can not be found, for they were endowed with miraculous power, and such endowments are not to be had now. It is true that the apostles had those supernatural endowments, which were confined to their own class and age; but two thoughts will show that the *moral* power which Christ imparts now is far more than a compensation for the loss of the miraculous. First. *Much of what is true of the miraculous is also true of the moral.* (1.) Was the miraculous something superadded to the natural energies of the soul? So is the moral. Man has not, constitutionally, true moral force of soul, force of profound devotion, race-wide sympathy, and holy resolve. (2.) Was the miraculous specially derived from Christ? So is the moral. There is no true moral force that comes to the soul of man that does not come from him. (3.) Was the miraculous given for the removal of spiritual and material evils — the casting out of "unclean spirits," and healing of "all manner" of bodily diseases? So is the moral. Christ gives moral power for the very same purpose — for the purpose of removing all the evils

that afflict the body, and expelling all the devils that infest the soul. Secondly. *What is not equally true of both shows the superior importance of the moral.* (1.) The possession of the miraculous was no virtue. Wicked men might have been endowed — were, perhaps, endowed — with miraculous power, and did many "mighty works." (2.) The miraculous power can not rectify or reach the moral springs of the soul. No miracle can change the current of feeling, destroy the moral habits, or turn the will. The soul is throned back in a pavilion into which no miraculous power can travel; but moral power — the power of truth and love — finds it out, reaches it by a whisper. Its still, small voice can reverse its mightiest currents, and make its tempests cease. (3.) The necessity of miraculous power might be superseded. Indeed, miracles, to be of any service in the cause of truth, must cease at a point. Their constant occurrence would destroy their effect. But nothing can ever supersede the necessity of moral power; it is necessary to the man himself, necessary to society, necessary to the universe.

3. *It is necessary to be guided by the rules of Christ.* "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them." (Abridged from "The Homilist.")

§ 21. OUR LORD'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE APOSTLES.

THE first mission of the twelve is also recorded by Mark and Luke, but without those minute instructions which Matthew gives in connection with the event. Inasmuch as portions of the lengthy discourse recorded by Matthew are given by Luke, in connection with the sending out of the seventy disciples, (Luke x,) which event is not mentioned by Matthew, as well as on another occasion, (Luke xii,) Olshausen, considering the connection in Luke more natural, is of the opinion that Matthew gives us, in this chapter, not an original address, but a collection of maxims and principles, inculcated on different occasions, which were to guide the apostles in their intercourse with the world. — Stier contradicts this view, and says: "This lengthy discourse recorded by Matthew contains ample internal evidence that it was delivered as a whole on one occasion, and for one specific purpose, and what we have said in connection with the Sermon on the Mount against this strange notion of attributing to Matthew collections of sayings that were uttered on different occasions, is equally applicable here." And, really, there seems to be no reasonable doubt that this address was delivered as a whole at one time and

for one specific purpose; namely, on the occasion of sending out the twelve, although it is not unlikely that portions of it were repeated on different occasions. The address refers primarily to the first mission of the apostles, which Matthew here records; yet the instructions which the Lord gives to his disciples on this occasion are significant and prophetic words, that reach into the far-distant future. In this first mission of the apostles the Lord sees their future missions and those of their successors. What was said to the apostles on the occasion in question applied, if literally understood, only to their then circumstances, but if spiritually understood, it was fully applicable to their whole future calling. The discourse forms three great divisions, following in natural order; each treats the same subject from a new point of view, and thus forms a whole by itself. In the first division (vs. 5-15) the Lord speaks, according to the letter of his words, mainly of the first mission of the apostles and the contents of their preaching, which raised them as yet but little above the stand-point of John the Baptist; with this difference, however, that John wrought no miracles, did not itinerate, and could not offer to the poor the peace of the opened kingdom of heaven. The instructions given to the apostles, in their literal import, refer to their mission to the cities and towns of Israel. This division comes to a grave close in verse 15, where the fully-developed unbelief that rejects the offers of mercy is threatened with dreadful punishment. The second division (vs. 16-23) has reference to the general mission of the apostles, the nature it would assume after their Master's departure, (vs. 17, 18,) and the persecutions to which it would expose them, (vs. 21, 22.) The "Behold, I send you," points out, as it were, something new; that is, "I shall send you afterward again, and that under much more difficult circumstances, into the very midst of opposition and persecution." Their proper mission was not to commence before that time; the present mission was only preparatory for and typical of it. This division embraces, consequently, the apostolic period. The hearers of the preaching are no longer Jews exclusively, but men in general, and the rejection of Israel and the calling of the Gentiles are clearly indicated. The description of the duties of evangelical teachers and of their treatment by the world to the end of time, is followed by the announcement of a new catastrophe, by which, in this connection, the destruction of Jerusalem is primarily meant; but the final judgment is also included, since the judicial "coming of the Son of man" for the destruction of Jerusalem is invariably a type of his coming for the final judgment. Thus, as the instructions given in verses 5-15 apply, in their prophetic sense, to the whole future missionary career of the apostles, so the apostolic instructions

(vs. 16-23) are applicable to all their successors, to all to whom it is said, "I send you," constituting the grand, authoritative platform of principles for missionary operations for all time to come, and to be understood more and more in the course of centuries and by experience. — The third division (vs. 24-42) is addressed to *all disciples of the Lord*. The persecutions foretold, with primary reference to the apostolic period, are here designated as the common lot of all believers of all times till they receive the great reward promised unto them. The position of the world toward the cause of Christ, the successive triumphs of the latter over all opposition and persecution are here foretold. Christ's kingdom is designated as a kingdom of suffering for all its members up to the moment when a more than abundantly-compensating glory will be the enviable lot of all the finally faithful.

A. INSTRUCTIONS OF THE LORD WITH REGARD TO THE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES CONFINED TO ISRAEL.

Verses 5-15.

(5) THESE twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans [1] enter ye not: (6) but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (7) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. (8) Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, [2] cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. (9) Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass [3] in your purses; [4] (10) nor scrip [5] for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. (11) And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. (12) And when ye come into a house, salute it. (13) And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. (14) And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. (15) Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

[1 Samaria lay between Galilee and Judea. After the revolt of the ten tribes Samaria became their capital, and from it the population generally received the name Samaritans. After the taking of Samaria and the leading away of the best part of the population into captivity, the King of Assyria sent in their place heathen colonists. (2 Kings xvii, 24.) From those and the remnants of Israelites left there arose a mongrel race, and their religion was a mixture of revealed truth and heathen superstition. (2 Kings xvii, 24-41.) The Jews after their return from the Babylonish captivity not permitting them to help in erecting the second Temple, (Ezra iv, 1-3,) they built themselves a temple on Mount Gerizim under Sanballat, but it was destroyed ten years before Christ by the Jewish high-priest and prince, John Hyrcanus; they, however, continued to resort thither for prayer. Subsequently they became strict monotheists, shared the Messianic expectations, but recognized only the Pentateuch. The Jews held no intercourse with them. (John iv, 9.) It would seem that they were more ready to receive the Messiah than the Jews. (John iv, 39-42; Luke ix, 51.)]

[2 The words "raise the dead" are wanting in Cod. E, F, K, L, M, etc., in many Minuscules, several versions and Fathers; Tischendorf omits it.]

[3 These three coins represent every kind of money. By the English term "brass" is to be understood an alloy of tin and copper.]

[4 Literally, girdles. The folds of the girdle, worn by both sexes, to keep the flowing dress together, served poorer people also to keep money, while the richer classes had pockets for this purpose on the right side of the dress.]

[5 An obsolete word for sack or bag, in which travelers carried their provisions.]

VERSES 5, 6. As appears from chap. ix, 36, it was the Lord's compassion on the Jewish people in their wretched and neglected condition that prompted this mission of his apostles unto them. That he sent them, however, to the Jews alone, and forbade them to go to Samaritans or Gentiles, was not done to approve or confirm Jewish prejudices about their nation being the favorite nation of the Most High. Christ was to be, during his sojourn on earth, primarily the minister of the circumcision, (Rom. xv, 8,) and his public ministry was, accordingly, almost exclusively confined to the Jews; so also that of his apostles while he was with them. There were cogent reasons for this course. In the first place, it was the lighter task to preach the Gospel to the Jews, who by their sacred books ought to have been fully prepared for its reception. The Jews were the only nation that had received such a training. For this reason it was necessary to convince them of the truth of Christ's doctrine and claims before the Gospel could be preached to any other nation with hope of success.

Secondly, the Gospel plan of salvation could, even to the Jews, not fully be preached, so long as the grand facts of Christianity, the vicarious death, resurrection, and ascension of its Founder were not accomplished, much less to the heathen nations, who were ignorant of the typical and preparatory character of the old dispensation. Thirdly, so long as the Lord tabernacled on earth there existed still a possibility of Israel accepting their Messiah, and, consequently, the relation of the Jewish nation to the Gentiles had to be respected; that is, the blessings of the covenant could not be offered unto the latter outside of the theocracy before the final rejection of the Jews. An opposite course of conduct — that is, a formal mission of the apostles to the Samaritans and Gentiles — would have destroyed their access to the Jews altogether. If Israel had accepted their offers, the prophecy of Micah (iv, 1) would, at once, have been fulfilled; but as they were rejected, what Paul says (Rom. xi, 11) came to pass. The apostles were, consequently, instructed for the present not to go into the WAY OF THE GENTILES; that is, not beyond the confines of Palestine, not on the roads that led into the countries of the Gentiles, nor INTO ANY CITY OF THE SAMARITANS; that is, not settle there for the purpose of evangelizing them. *The way of the Samaritans* they could not avoid, since they had to travel through Samaria when going from Galilee to Judea. It may appear strange that Jesus should give such a command with regard to the Samaritans after he had, with his disciples, dwelt two days with them, had convinced many of them that he was the Messiah, and declared them to be a field white already to harvest. (John iv.) That, however, Jesus did not intend by that visit to lay a permanent foundation among the Samaritans, is plainly seen from the fact that he did not repeat his visit nor receive any Samaritan into the number of his apostles or disciples. He intended by that visit of his simply to prepare the Samaritans for the Gospel that would, at a later period, be preached unto them. In this respect his intercourse with Samaritans was to be an example for the apostles in their subsequent apostolic career. He did not forbid his disciples all intercourse with the Samaritans. If they met them on the road, or any where without their cities, they were at liberty to converse with them, as he himself had done. (John iv.) Moreover, the injunction of the Lord was only temporary, as is implied, in the original, in the use of the second aorist tense, while the commands that have a permanent validity are all expressed by moods of the present tense. Shortly after the ascension it was formally removed: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts i, 8.)

VERSE 7. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. In the full sense of the word, the kingdom of God, the new dispensation, did not commence till the old was abrogated. Before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the apostles could not declare the new dispensation as having commenced; they could only announce, as the Lord himself did, that the kingdom of God is at hand. The subject-matter of what the apostles preached at their first tour in Israel, was, on the whole, identical with that of John's preaching (iii, 2) and the Lord's, (iv, 17,) but widely different from their subsequent message. (Matt. xxviii, 29; Mark xvi, 15.)

VERSE 8. The miraculous powers delegated to the apostles for a specific purpose, and, as it would seem, for the time being, foreshadowed the salvation from the thralldom and misery of sin, which the Messiah was to bring, and served as the credentials of their divine mission. They needed these miraculous powers at the outset of their public career more than at any subsequent time; for who would have listened to these fishermen and publicans without such credentials? — **THE SICK.** The article is wanting in Greek, and must be left out in English too. The apostles were not charged to heal *all* the sick, etc., but only those that were willing to be healed by exercising faith in what the apostles announced. — **RAISE THE DEAD.** See foot-note 2.

VERSES 9, 10. 'What is forbidden here had reference only to the occasion in question. **Μή κτήσησθε** is the subjunctive aorist, and implies, as stated before, something transient, something that is not to be a rule for life. (Comp. 2 Tim. iv, 13.) This appears also from a comparison with Luke xxii, 35-37. The circumstances referred to in the latter passage had greatly changed for the worse, and, therefore, the instructions are also changed. The idea conveyed here is simply that such were their circumstances at present that they could well trust Providence for their support. They were forbidden to take with them, 1. Money; 2. Provisions; 3. More than one suit of clothing, or more than one pair of shoes, or more than one staff. The reasons why the Lord prescribed such a course at the time were probably, 1. That they might, during his lifetime, become accustomed to bear the hardships to which, in their subsequent missionary career, they would be exposed; 2. That their faith in Providence might be strengthened. As the apostles had subsequently to set out on their missionary tour with empty hands, the promises given them for their first preparatory tour were calculated to inspire them with confidence. — **FOR THE WORKMAN IS WORTHY OF HIS MEAT.** This is explanatory of

what goes before, stating the ground on which the foregoing instructions rest. While the apostles were to rely implicitly on Providence, and not to indulge in any anxious cares, this declaration, which is but a common truth of life, reminds the people of all times of their duty to supply the temporal wants of the messengers and servants of God. This declaration of the Lord accords with Numbers xviii, 31, where it is said to the Levites: "And ye shall eat it in every place, [that is, the increase of the thrashing-floor and the increase of the wine-press;] for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation." While the Lord promises to the workmen the material support which they need in devoting their whole strength and time to his service, he fulfills this promise through human instrumentalities. It devolves upon those to whom they preach to furnish them the necessaries of life. The preachers of the Gospel have a clear right to expect that much as their due. It is a reward for their services, not a gift of charity, as, alas! too many persons are apt to view what they give for the support of the Gospel. By the spirit of these commands of the Lord, though not by their literal application, pastors of Churches, as well as missionaries among the heathen, are still bound.

VERSE 11. INQUIRE WHO IS WORTHY. The duty of evangelizing the world does not require the Evangelists to expose themselves rashly and needlessly to abuse and privation. The disciples are here expressly commanded to inquire whether there are persons that are worthy. This inquiry, however, must be considerate. Not the least spark of life kindled by God's grace must be passed by unnoticed. — **AND THERE ABIDE TILL YE GO THENCE.** Having selected a lodging, they must not arbitrarily change it, be it either from convenience or from apprehension to be burdensome. This order was very appropriate and timely; for by a rash, improper change of their lodgings the apostles would, 1. Have placed themselves on an equal footing with the vagrant Jewish proselytes of those days; 2. They might have left those whom they had favorably impressed too soon, or justified the suspicion that they were not satisfied with their accommodations; 3. Frequent changes might have given occasion to evil surmises, and thus curtailed their usefulness.

VERSE 12. From Luke x, 5, we learn what the salutation was. It was, "Peace be to this house." This was the common form of salutation among the Jews, and includes every possible good wish. The rabbins say: "Great is peace, for it includes all other blessings." This beautiful, significant word is to become a reality in the mouths of the heralds of the kingdom. Not only their first

salutation, but their whole conduct and being must breathe peace, "that their feet may be beautiful wherever they go." (Isa. lii, 7.)

VERSE 13. AND IF THE HOUSE BE WORTHY. If the house pointed out to you is as described, if its occupants are willing to receive the peace which you proffer unto them, then let YOUR PEACE COME UPON THEM, or, more literally, then your peace come upon the house. Your salutation will not be an empty formality; it will confer a blessing on those to whom it is directed. — **BUT IF IT BE NOT WORTHY.** If the house thus saluted is unwilling to receive the peace which you offer, if they refuse to hear and receive you, THEN LET YOUR PEACE RETURN TO YOU; literally, your peace return to you. It will be as if you had never pronounced peace upon this house. There will be no communion in spirit between this house and you. (Isa. lv, 11.) It is your duty to continue your journey undismayed and without any feelings of resentment, retaining the peace refused by them. Let this be your consolation, if your labors of love meet with determined resistance. The expression, "Let your peace return to you," implies, also, a caution to the apostles that they should not forfeit this peace by offending in any way, even against these unworthy persons.

VERSE 14. The meaning of this verse is not that they should turn away from the house or city after the first failure, but that they should make diligent and persevering inquiry as to whether there was any congenial person about, and only after they had become satisfied that this was not the case, they should leave the house first and then the city. Some of the apostles carried out this command to its very letter. (Acts xiii, 51; xviii, 6.) — **SHAKE OFF THE DUST OF YOUR FEET.** This was a symbolical act of a very grave character. When the Jews returned home from a journey through a heathen country, they shook off the dust of their feet as soon as they reached the line, expressive of their contempt for the heathen. In the case of the apostles it meant: "Those that reject your message about the kingdom of God belong no longer to the house of Israel, but are in reality heathens." At the same time they thereby testified, 1. We take nothing of yours with us; we simply break off our connection and communion with you; 2. We have desired nothing of yours; we have sought you, not your property; 3. We free ourselves from all participation in your condemnation; we offered you peace; you rejected it, and thus you will bring on your rejection.

VERSE 15. It must be noticed that this denunciatory part, as also the command to shake off the dust, applies *only* to the people of Israel, who had long been prepared for the message of the Gospel by the law and the prophets, and, recently, more particularly by John the Baptist. At the same time the Lord does not here pass final judgment on all those who rejected the first message of the apostles. His words are rather a prophetic warning against unbelief from its first incipiency to its final consummation. That some of the number denounced might subsequently become subjects of converting grace is not denied. In this sense these words are equally applicable to all despisers of the Gospel in Christian countries. But as they were then inapplicable to the heathen, so they are now inapplicable to those who do not know God. — SODOM AND GOMORRAH; that is, the inhabitants of these cities are cited here as symbols of all ungodliness and wickedness visited by God's vindictive justice. The degree of guilt is proportional to the strength and clearness of the Divine impressions against which the individual struggles and becomes finally hardened. The clearer the light, the stronger the conviction, the greater the guilt. The Sodomites had heard but the feeble testimony of Lot; but in the case before us there was more than Lot. In the final rejection of the Gospel sin or guilt reaches its culmination. (Matt. xi, 20; Luke xii, 47.) Two more points deserve to be noticed: 1. The severest temporal judgments do not satisfy the demands of God's insulted justice; for Sodom and Gomorrah are still waiting for their final judgment and punishment; 2. Terrible as their punishment was, and their final judgment will be, yet it will be more tolerable than the fate of those that finally reject the offers of the Gospel.

B. CHRIST'S INSTRUCTIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE PERSECUTIONS AWAITING THE APOSTLES.

Verses 16-23.

(16) BEHOLD, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be [1] ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless [2] as doves. (17) But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, [3] and they will scourge [4] you in their synagogues; (18) and ye shall be brought before governors and kings [5] for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. (19) But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour

what ye shall speak. (20) For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (21) And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death. (22) And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end^[6] shall be saved. (23) But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

[1 Greek, become — γίνεσθε.]

[2 Without guile.]

[3 See footnote on chap. v, 22.]

[4 A tribunal of three members of the inferior councils had the power to sentence to scourging in the synagogue. On the mode of executing this punishment see Deut. xxv, 2, 3; thirteen stripes with a leather scourge, consisting of three thongs, were reckoned for thirty-nine.]

[5 The governors and kings are here distinguished as civil rulers from the ecclesiastical councils.]

[6 That is, to the end of the evil hour or sore persecution, as is manifest from the context.]

VERSE 16. In the solemn and emphatic words, "Behold, *I* send you," our Lord repeats the announcement of their mission, but he does not confine it to Judea. The circumstances attending their first mission are greatly changed. Instead of hospitable roofs, an unqualified rejection of their message and cruel persecutions are predicted unto them. The emphatic *I*([{'Εγώ}]) which opens the new section must not be overlooked. The Lord says, It is *I* that send you on so perilous a mission, creating in this way the conviction in their hearts that, amid all dangers and enemies, he would protect and defend them. The manner in which Christ introduces the subject of persecution, commencing with the lighter kinds, and passing on to persecution even unto death, is also worthy of notice. Even the greatest circumspection and wisdom can not avoid martyrdom. — Dr. Alexander's comments on this verse are more to the point than those of the German commentators: "The contrast in the first clause is identical with that in vii, 15, SHEEP and WOLVES being specified as natural enemies, but here

with special stress upon the circumstance that one is helpless and the other cruel. At the same time the use of the term *sheep*, as usual, suggests the idea of comparative worth or value, and of intimate relation to the shepherd or proprietor. . . . The last clause states the duty thence arising, and the means of security amid such perils. — THEREFORE — because you are so precious, yet so helpless, and because your enemies are so superior in strength and malice. — BE YE is in Greek much more expressive, meaning properly, *become ye*, implying the necessity of a change to make them what they were not by nature or by habit. — WISE AS SERPENTS. The allusion is to a well-known fact, that this part of the animal creation is peculiarly cautious in avoiding danger. It is this self-defensive and preservative faculty, and not the malignant cunning of the serpent, which is here presented as an emblem and a model. — HARMLESS AS DOVES. Doves have in all ages been proverbial emblems of gentleness and innocence; but here a more specific sense attaches to the emblem, as suggested by the very derivation of the epithet employed, which primarily means *unmixed*, and, in a moral application, free from all duplicity, corresponding with the 'single eye' of vi, 22."

VERSE 17. BUT BEWARE OF MEN. You will naturally expect support and help from your countrymen; but beware of them, and of men in general, for they will prove wolves.

VERSE 18. AND YE SHALL BE BROUGHT, etc. This prediction conclusively proves the prescience of Jesus Christ. The gradual development of his kingdom, its constant spread amid all opposition and persecution, even unto the death of his apostles, which the Jews could, in those times, effect only by delivering them up to the Gentile magistrates, lay open and plain before his eyes. — FOR A TESTIMONY AGAINST THEM AND THE GENTILES. More correctly translated *to them* — that is, to the rulers — and to the nations, namely, those nations ruled by them. If we take "nations" in the sense of Gentiles, we have to understand by "them" the Jews. — From these words the apostles learned that it was their solemn duty to testify of Christ at all times and under all circumstances. Their examinations before governors and kings furnished them with some of the finest opportunities to preach the Gospel of Christ. Thus the spirit of persecution, whereby Christianity was to be rooted out, proved a powerful means of its more rapid spread and growth, and "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church."

VERSE 19. TAKE NO THOUGHT HOW OR WHAT YE SHALL SPEAK. It was but natural that the humble and unlettered apostles should be overcome by fear and confusion in the presence of the great ones of the earth, and, therefore, the Lord instructs them how they should conduct and defend themselves before these high tribunals. — **TAKE NO THOUGHT**, (μή μεριμνήσητε.) Take no anxious, distracting thought — a spiritual prohibition, answering to the literal one in verses 9, 10. (Compare, also, chap. vi, 25.) In these words the Lord forbids his disciples to rely unduly on their own strength, to put forth efforts exclusively their own toward a successful management of their defense. In lieu thereof they are to rely on him, to look up to him for strength and wisdom as to *what* and *how* they are to speak. — **FOR IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU.** A similar promise had long before been given to Moses. (Exod. iv, 12.) It shall be given to you from God, who gives every thing else.

VERSE 20. IT IS THE SPIRIT OF YOUR FATHER WHICH SPEAKETH IN YOU. The Spirit of the Father is here opposed to the disciples' own spirit, and there is in this promise of the Spirit something, which points also to their future, more properly apostolic, mission. (John xv, 26, 27.) It is worthy of note, 1. That the Lord, in speaking to his disciples, never says *our* Father, but either *my* Father or *your* Father, or both at the same time. He no where leaves any room for the opinion that God is in the same sense *his* Father in which he is *ours*. 2. That, in the great work of God in the world, not human individuality, but God alone, his Christ, his Spirit, are the great moving power to which every thing must be ascribed.

VERSE 21. These words point to a wider field than could open to the apostles at their first mission. The Gospel is represented here as taking precedence of all natural relations and conditions of life. The new element of life which it introduces into the world is checked by no kin or family ties. Wheresoever there are susceptible souls, it seeks them out, and takes hold of them. But it is this very feature of the Gospel which also calls forth the opposition of those that do not yield to its influence, and so the Gospel of peace brings the sword even into the family circle. What the Lord predicts here refers therefore, not to the apostles alone, but, as appears plainly from verse 24, to all that after them shall believe the Gospel. Hatred growing out of opposing views on religion severs all the bonds of affection, kin, and friendship. We have here a rising climax; a brother delivers up his brother, then a father his

own children, and, what is most unnatural of all, children rise up against their own parents. The history of the spread of Christianity shows the literal truth of these prophetic words of the Savior.

VERSE 22. HE THAT ENDURETH TO THE END SHALL BE SAVED. In order to understand these words, it is necessary to enter into the character of our Lord's prophecies respecting *his coming*, on which see the notes on Matt. xxiv.

VERSE 23. BUT WHEN THEY PERSECUTE YOU IN THIS CITY, FLEE YE INTO ANOTHER. Looking to the persecutions in store for his disciples, the Lord lays down a general rule of conduct for them. They must not seek martyrdom; they must not peril their lives unnecessarily. On the contrary, where there was no principle at stake, where no great object could be realized by submitting to persecution, they were to flee to other cities, where there was comparative safety. It is, therefore, the part of humility and prudence, except where love and justice dictate a different course, to avoid persecution, and all would-be martyrs are, in the words of our text, sternly rebuked. The particle of asseveration, *verily*, is three times used in this discourse, at the close of every section — verses 15, 23, and 42. — TILL THE SON OF MAN BE COME. By this coming of the Son of man we may understand either the ushering in of the new dispensation by the resurrection and ascension of Christ, or the overthrow of Judaism by the destruction of Jerusalem. Dr. Alexander considers it "an indefinite expression, meaning sometimes more and sometimes less, but here equivalent to saying, till the object of your mission is accomplished."

C. CHRIST'S INSTRUCTIONS AS TO THE COURSE TO BE PURSUED BY HIS DISCIPLES CONTINUED — REASONS WHY THEY SHOULD BE PERSEVERINGLY FAITHFUL AMID TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS.

Verses 24-42.

(24) **THE disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.** (25) **It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master,^[1] and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,^[2] how much more shall they call them of his household?**

(26) Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. (27) What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the house-tops.^[3] (28) And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (29) Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? ^[4] and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. (30) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (31) Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. (32) Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. (33) But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. (34) Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. (35) For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (36) And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (37) He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. (39) He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. (40) He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. (41) He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. (42) And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water^[5] only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

[1 The servant must not look for better treatment than that of his master.]

[2 "This word is the Greek form of the name of Baal-zebub, (the Philistine god worshiped at Ekron,) signifying *the lord of flies*. (2 Kings i, 2.) But the reading of the word in this verse, best supported by the manuscripts, is, by a slight alteration, *Beelzeboul*. This is undoubtedly here the true form. The Jews were accustomed to express their contempt of a thing by some slight change of its name, which gave it a disgusting or even indecent meaning. *Beelzeboul* signifies lord of dung. And the word dung was also their

contemptuous epithet for idolatry, since they intended to give the filthiest possible name to what they considered the vilest possible sin. *Beelzebub*, therefore, they changed to Beelzeboul, lord of dung, or, perhaps, idolatry. It was perhaps from the title *lord of idolatry*, thus acquired, that Beelzebub was reputed prince of devils. And in the extremity of their hatred, their attributing to Jesus the name of this supreme demon, indicated their consciousness of the mighty power manifested." (Whedon.)]

[3 House-tops in Oriental countries were flat and surrounded with railings, so that one could conveniently address the people from them. From the top of public houses official proclamations were read.]

[4 The assarian (farthing) was a Roman coin of copper, equal to one-tenth part of the denarius, or one cent and a half.]

[5 In the hot countries of the Orient the offer of a cup of cold water is an act of kindness much appreciated.]

VERSE 25. The third division of this discourse reaches to the end of time, and promises to every one who shall receive his disciples a gracious reward in the day of judgment. — There is a gradation in the different designations of the relation between Christ and his disciples; namely, 1. That of teacher (**διδάσκαλος**) and disciple, (**μαθητής**) (Comp. Matt. v, 1; xxiii, 7, 8; Luke vi, 20.) 2. That of Lord (**κύριος**) and servant, (**δοῦλος**) (See John xiii, 13; Luke xii, 35-48.) And, 3. That of master of the house (**οἰκοδεσπότης**) and members of the household, (**οἰκίακοι**.) (Matt. xxvi, 26-29; xxiv, 35; Luke xxiv, 30.) Those that have found in Christ the Teacher and Lord become his children, the members of his household. As the Lord was, during his sojourn on earth, the head of his family, he is so still, only in a higher sense, as the head of his Church. — IF THEY HAVE CALLED THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE BEELZEBUB. (See foot-note on preceding page.) The Pharisees charged Jesus with casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and transferred the name itself to Christ. This involved the highest degree of blasphemy, and was, though not the unpardonable sin itself, at least a fair approach toward it. To ascribe Divine influences, as such, to the powers of darkness is the very climax of the enmity of the carnal mind against God. — How MUCH MORE SHALL THEY CALL THEM OF HIS HOUSEHOLD? The disciples and members of the household, who are inferior to their Master in dignity and power, who can not plead perfect sinlessness as

he could, who have their weaknesses, which the world knows how to magnify, must be prepared for a still worse treatment than their Master.

VERSE 26. FEAR THEM NOT, THEREFORE. The Lord now addresses words of encouragement to his disciples. Their near relation to him, which would bring opposition and cruel persecution upon them, offersthem the first encouragement — their Master will finally triumph over all opposition and all his enemies. The second encouragement lies in this, that the opposition which they would encounter could not be avoided without abandoning the very end for which Christ came himself and sent forth his apostles. — FOR THERE IS NOTHING COVERED [κεκαλυμμένον, that has been covered] THAT SHALL NOT BE REVEALED; AND HID, [κρυπτόν, secret.] THAT SHALL NOT BE KNOWN. This solemn saying, which our Lord uttered on different occasions, (Luke viii, 17; xii, 2,) implies the following truths: 1. It is God's purpose that the Gospel shall be fully published, and this purpose ye serve. Although it may be retarded by the opposition and attacks of its adversaries, yet it will in the end illuminate the whole world. 2. Beware, then, of hypocrisy, (Luke xii, 2,) through fear of men. Let the hatred of your persecutors not prevent you from preaching the truth; for all that act the part of hypocrites will be detected and exposed hereafter. 3. Fear them not, for under whatsoever aspersions ye may labor from them, the day is coming which shall clear you and condemn them, if you are fearlessly doing the work of Him that sent you. (Col. iii, 3, 4; 1 John iii, 2.) Then the Lord will bring every thing to light, and clear it up, and the innocence and truth of the Master, the disciples, and the Gospel, that are slandered here, shall then be fully vindicated.

VERSE 27. "IN DARKNESS" and "IN THE EAR" refer to the obscurity and limited extent of the public ministry of our Lord, compared with the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles, after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. In a similar sense our Lord said to his disciples: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and *greater works* than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." (John xiv, 12.)

VERSE 28. FEAR NOT THEM WHICH KILL THE BODY, BUT ARE NOT ABLE TO KILL THE SOUL. The immortality or indestructibility of the soul is here presupposed as something that is self-evident, or, rather, Jesus, who does not arrive at his knowledge by induction or deduction, but has it by intuition, speaks of the condition of the soul after the death of the body by

merely stating what is the case. This his statement plainly implies the self-conscious existence of the soul in its disembodied state; for, 1. We are told that what men can do to the body they can not do to the soul — they can kill the body, but can not kill the soul; 2. If the state which the soul enters after its separation from the body, or after the death of the body, were that of entire unconsciousness; if the soul in its disembodied state were incapable of thinking, feeling, and enjoying, those that kill the body would really murder the soul also — at least to the day of resurrection — but this is denied in the text. The murderers of the body can not affect the soul. — The disciples are warned against all anxious cares about their lives, since their bodies alone are exposed to the malice of their enemies, they being unable to touch the real life of Christians. The soul, the better part of man, is out of human reach, but is under the power of another, whom the Savior admonishes his disciples to fear. — **BUT RATHER FEAR HIM WHICH IS ABLE TO DESTROY BOTH BODY AND SOUL IN HELL.** On this clause expositors are greatly divided. Stier, whose opinions are always entitled to respect, even when we can not entertain them, maintains positively that Satan alone can possibly be the object of dread, spoken of in the text. His reasons are, 1. The leading object of the whole division is to incite his disciples to exercise a childlike, unshaken confidence in God, whose nature it is to save, not to destroy; 2. The parallelism, "Fear not them which kill," etc., and, "Rather fear him which is able," forbids us to understand by the fear of the second clause something radically different from that of the first; 3. The New Testament never speaks of God as destroying the soul; but this is exactly the province of Satan, whose realm hell is, and of whom it is expressly said, (Heb. ii, 14,) that he has the power of death; 4. By making the great object of fear *Satan*, and not *God*, the unity of the whole discourse is preserved. The Savior, as it were, says: "Ye have but one grand enemy, who is bent on your destruction, and sin has given him the right to bring it about, (Eph. vi, 12; Heb. ii, 14,) and him, therefore, fear. Keep, by all possible means, especially in the hour of the sorest trial, out of *his* reach, and all your other enemies will be harmless;" 5. The parallel passage (Luke xii, 3-7) makes the reference to Satan still more imperative. The disciples are represented as the intimate friends of Jesus and of God. To *fear* him would be entirely out of place in this connection; but Satan, who "was a murderer from the beginning," to whom every murder is, strictly speaking, chargeable, is and remains an object of fear, not as having any absolute power over the believer, but because the believer can any moment, through lack of

faith, expose himself to Satan's power. Alford, after thoroughly weighing Stier's arguments, finds himself constrained to reject his view for the following reasons: "It seems at variance with the conclusion of the discourse and with the universal tone of Scripture regarding Satan. If such a phrase as φοβεῖσθαι τὸ διάβολον — to fear the devil — could be instanced as having the meaning of φυλάξασθαι — to beware of, or if it could be shown that anywhere power is attributed to Satan analogous to that indicated by 'Who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell,' I should then be open to the doubt whether he might not here be intended; but seeing that φοβεῖθαι ἀπό — have no fear of — indicating terror, is changed into φοβεῖσθαι — fear him — so usually followed by τὸν θεὸς — God — in a higher and holier sense, and that God alone is throughout the Scripture the Almighty Dispenser of *life and death, both temporal and eternal*, seeing, also, that Satan is ever represented as the condemned of God, not as the one that is able, etc., I must hold by the general interpretation, and believe that both here and in Luke xii, 3-7, our Heavenly Father is intended as the object of our fear. As to this being inconsistent with the character in which he is brought before us in the next verse, the very change of construction in φοβεῖσθαι would lead the mind on, out of the terror before spoken of, into that better kind of fear always indicated by that expression when applied to God, and so prepare the way for the next verse. Besides, this sense is excellently in keeping with verse 29 in another way: 'Fear Him who is the only Dispenser of death and life — of death as here, of life as in the case of the sparrows, for whom he cares.' 'Fear Him above men; trust Him in spite of men.' The passage in James iv, 12 — 'There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy' — would be decisive even in the absence of other considerations. Full as this epistle is of our Lord's words from this Gospel, it is hardly to be doubted that he had this very verse before him. This Stier endeavors to escape by saying that 'to destroy,' as the opposite to 'save,' has a different sense from 'destroying the soul.' But as connected with 'lawgiver,' what meaning can 'destroy' bear, except that of eternal destruction? . . . The depth of this part of the discourse I take to be the setting before Christ's messengers their Heavenly Father as the object of childlike trust and childlike fear — the former from his love, the latter from his power to destroy body and soul in hell. Here is the true depth of the discourse; but if in the midst of this great subject our Lord is to be conceived as turning aside, upholding as an object of fear the chief enemy, whose ministers and subordinates he is at the very moment commanding not to fear, and speaking of him as 'being able to

destroy soul and body in hell,' the true and deep connection, to my mind, is broken." — According to this text, the punishment of the damned after death is not annihilation. (Comp. Matt. xv, 23.) The γέεννα (hell) here spoken of must be in the spirit-world, since in the γέεννα near Jerusalem, or Valley of Hinnom, the body alone would be thrown. Thus we learn from this verse that the souls of the damned are thrown into γέεννα, or hell proper, and that after the resurrection of the body, soul and body reunited will be in hell.

VERSES 29-31. These verses contain further encouragements for the disciples, setting forth forcibly and touchingly Divine Providence as the basis of an unshaken confidence, even in the midst of the most trying and perilous circumstances. — ARE NOT TWO SPARROWS SOLD FOR A FARTHING? Sparrows are the representatives of God's most insignificant creatures — two of them sell for the smallest piece of money, a farthing — yet they are an object of God's special care. For whatsoever has received life from him does not die without his permission. — AND ONE OF THEM SHALL NOT FALL ON THE GROUND WITHOUT YOUR FATHER. The argument arises, then, from the less to the greater: "Ye are of more value than many sparrows. Now, if no sparrow loses its life without your Father, how much less will ye? Therefore, be not afraid: Ye, my messengers and disciples, are infinitely better than the brute creation, better than many sparrows." Nor is the Divine care confined to your persons or lives; no, it extends to every thing, even the least that is yours. "*The very hairs of your head are all numbered.*" Nothing about you, however small and insignificant, is beyond the notice and care of God. (See also 1 Sam. xiv, 43; Luke xxi, 18; Acts xxvii, 34.) The true disciple of Christ can, therefore, implicitly rely on God's protecting care. His cause is God's, who makes his joy and grief, and whatever befalls him, subservient to his best interests.

VERSE 32. This verse contains a new and more comprehensive ground of encouragement. The ground of encouragement contained in the preceding verse was taken from God's providence, was negative in its character, that is, merely a protection against their enemies; the one brought forward now is positive. The disciples that confess their Master before the world shall be confessed before God, the Heavenly Father. — WHOSOEVER, THEREFORE, SHALL CONFESS ME. Greek, ὁμολογήσει ἐν ἑμοὶ — shall confess in me — either a Syriac mode of expression — that is, shall make me the object of his acknowledgment among and before men — or we may

supply the participle "being" before "in me," by which the idea would be expressed that true confession rests upon a life union existing between Christ and the believer. The context shows that it is a practical, consistent confession which is meant, not a mere confession with the lips. — HIM WILL I ALSO CONFESS, etc. Both in the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. vii, 21-23,) and here, *after mentioning the Father*, our Lord describes himself as the Judge and Arbiter of eternal life and death.

VERSE 33. BUT WHOSOEVER SHALL DENY ME BEFORE MEN.

The reverse of the preceding verse. Not a transient denial through weakness is meant here, since such a denial can be forgiven through repentance and a renewal of life, as was the case with Peter, but a practical and enduring denial, a full and open renunciation of the Lord — a denial of his love, of divine life, of the kingdom of God. Of such a nature is the denial of Christ before a tribunal, when persevered in, in order to save one's life. — HIM WILL I DENY ALSO BEFORE MY FATHER, WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. They shall be publicly exposed before the tribunal of God, and excluded from all participation in the kingdom of glory. To appear before this tribunal without Christ as an intercessor, or rather with Christ as a Judge and witness against us, who can think of it — without a shudder! In these two verses we are taught, as a general thing, that a consistent and frank profession of our faith in Christ is a duty which is binding upon all, and has the promise of special blessings, while the reverse of it, the denial of Christ by word and deed, is sinful, and brings on, if persevered in, our total rejection on the part of God and exclusion from the kingdom of his Son. Yet we are not warranted to draw from this passage the unqualified conclusion that none can be saved without being a member of one or the other branch of the visible Church. The confession and denial of Christ, here spoken of, refer rather to our readiness to evince our love to him on every occasion, or to manifest the very opposite mind and disposition.

VERSE 34. THINK NOT THAT I AM COME TO SEND PEACE ON EARTH.

By peace the Jews understood, in general, all temporal and spiritual blessings. They expected from the Messiah especially perfect temporal happiness for themselves, and the words contain, therefore, a positive declaration against the erroneous notions of the Jews drawn from the prophecies concerning the reign of the Prince of Peace. The prophets had, indeed, foretold peace; but the disciples were not to understand this prophecy as if such peace was to be ushered into the world at once by the coming of the

Messiah. The "glory to God in the highest" necessarily precedes the declaration, "and on earth peace." He that really desires this peace must also desire the way to obtain it, the struggle for God's honor and glory. As Christ, therefore, has come to bring the true peace, he has necessarily come to destroy the false peace, which can not be done without causing that dissension which is salutary and indispensably necessary. — **I AM NOT COME TO SEND PEACE, BUT A SWORD.** The sword, the general symbol of war, may have special reference to the Roman sword, which, forty years after Christ's death, was sent to destroy Jerusalem, and to the bloody persecutions which were in store for the Christians. In their deeper, spiritual sense, however, these words point to the separation of what is unlike each other, of truth and falsehood, of righteousness and sin, and the adherents of both, of those that receive and those that reject his peace. The Gospel in its very nature must bring contention. This is the necessary consequence of Christ's coming into the world or into a human heart. The kingdom of Christ is, in itself, a kingdom of peace, but outwardly it excites the hatred of the world, which is the more intense the more gloriously Christ's kingdom develops itself, and this struggle lasts till all enemies of Christ are laid at his feet.

VERSES 35, 36. Verse 35 is quoted nearly literally from Micah vii, 6. The best, most precious peace on earth is harmony in the family circle, but as long as it rests upon an inwardly-false basis, it will be broken by the peace of Christ. In the passage quoted from Micah the Messiah is promised as the Prince of Peace; his reign is described (chap. iv, 1-8) as the reign of peace; but this peaceful reign must be preceded by war, the pangs of the Daughter of Zion, (vs. 9-14;) the sins of degenerate Israel are in its way, (chaps. vi and vii,) and some of these sins, (vii, 6,) are quoted by the Savior. He designates his mission as the immediate cause of discord. — **I AM COME TO SET AT VARIANCE** — that is, to call forth lasting enmity between the most intimate friends and near relations by my Word, the effects of which will be a new life and a new disposition in those that gladly receive it; but hatred against the Word itself and all those that receive it, in those that disbelieve and reject it. By nature men are alike. The persecutor and the martyr do not naturally differ; but their self-determination with regard to the Gospel makes them radically different, and produces an enmity, even between kin and friends, which lasts as long as this relation to the Gospel is persevered in. — **AND A MAN'S FOES SHALL BE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.** Out of hatred

against the Gospel all ties are severed and all considerations are trampled under foot.

VERSE 37. This often-repeated saying (Luke xiv, 26; xviii, 29) is based upon words of the Old Testament. What Jehovah claimed for himself, (Deut. xxxiii, 9, 10; Exod. xxxii, 26-29,) Christ here claims for himself. If Christ were not the truth and life itself, (John xiv, 16,) he would have violated the most sacred duties by the demand to consider, for his sake, the strongest family ties as of little or no account. God alone must be obeyed more than father and mother, and Christ, because we see the Father in him. (John xiv, 9.) Christ's object is not to destroy the family relations, but to ennable and to sanctify them, which is done by bringing them under his influence, under implicit obedience to his Word and Spirit. The love of Christ must exceed the love of father and mother, and must prove the stronger, especially where there arises a conflict between them; that is, where parents, appealing to the obedience due by children, demand an apostasy from Christ or disobedience to his commands. The sense of the words, therefore, is: "He that does not receive my Gospel in order to avoid the enmity of his unbelieving relations and friends, he who thus loves them more than me, is not worthy of me; he makes himself unworthy of me and all the blessedness that I impart.

VERSE 38. How must this declaration of the Lord have astonished his apostles! He had not yet spoken to them of his own cross, his suffering and death, nor was the word *cross* used by him in a figurative sense, as is the case now. It had then no moral signification, but conveyed only the idea of the ignominious and painful Roman punishment. The taking up the cross refers to the custom of making condemned criminals carry their cross themselves to the place of execution. The disciples were thus told that, unless they were willing to submit to the greatest ignominy and to the most painful death, for Christ's sake, they were not worthy of him. This is the primary meaning of the Lord's declaration; but it includes, in a secondary sense, also the crucifying of the flesh and the death of the old man — a figurative use of the word, which we frequently meet with in Paul's Epistles, and which has, since that time, come into general use among Christians. It is a perversion of the meaning of this term to call, as is too often done, praying in public or confessing the Lord a taking up of the cross.

VERSE 39. HE THAT FINDETH HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT, AND HE THAT LOSETH HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE, SHALL FIND IT. The words *life* and *it* in this verse refer to the same thing, in a higher and lower sense. "He that saves his natural life by faithlessness, by a denial of the truth, will lose his real life, his soul, eternal life. He that loses the first by a bold and steadfast confession of the truth, will find the latter." But besides the primary meaning of this saying, as regards the laying down of life literally for Christ's sake, we can not fail to recognize in it a far deeper sense, in which he who loses his life shall find it. In Luke ix, 23, the taking up of the cross is to be practiced daily. In Mark viii, 34, and Matt. xvi, 24, there is connected with it, "Let him deny himself." Thus we have the crucifying of the life of this world, the death of sin spoken of in Rom. vi, 4-11, and the life *in* and *for* God. This latter is the real, true life which the self-denier shall find, and preserve unto life eternal. (John xii, 25.) Another remark seems to be in its place here. The losing of one's natural life for Christ's sake is not an indispensable condition of salvation. Even some of the apostles died a natural death, without sustaining thereby spiritual detriment; nor does, on the other hand, this losing of one's life invariably secure eternal life. We know too well, from Church history, that, after the apostolic age, many sought and found martyrdom through fanaticism, carnal ambition, and, to say the least, a morbid piety. These did not die for Christ's sake. It is only the death of the old man, the crucifying of the flesh, that is inseparably connected with salvation. There is, therefore, the wider meaning in the words: "He that has preserved and saved the life of his corrupt nature, the life of selfishness, shall not partake of the higher and eternal life of the soul, and *vice versa.*"

VERSE 40. The Lord concludes his discourse with words of the highest encouragement and consolation. As Christ was the Father's representative on earth, so the apostles represented Christ officially, though imperfectly, after his ascension. In the treatment extended to them, he is honored or dishonored. He that receives you with the full knowledge of what you are, for the sake of your character and office, receives me.

VERSE 41. The receiving here spoken of refers primarily to times of persecution, where the act of receiving involved a profession of the doctrine preached by the messenger, and exposed the friendly host to the same danger with the persecuted disciple of Christ. — **HE THAT RECEIVETH A PROPHET.** This term applies here to all divinely-appointed teachers of the

new dispensation. Sometimes the term *prophet* applies to a particular class of teachers, who had the gift of prophecy, and ranked next to the apostles. (See 1 Cor. xiii, 28; Eph. iv, 11.) — IN THE NAME OF A PROPHET; that is, in his character as a prophet, and because he is a prophet. It must not be overlooked how carefully the Lord here calls the attention away from the mere outward act, the *opus operatum*, and directs it to the motives of the act. — HE THAT RECEIVETH A RIGHTEOUS MAN. By "a righteous man" it would seem that not a teacher, but a layman, must be understood, and he is received for the sake of his righteousness. — SHALL RECEIVE THE REWARD OF A PROPHET AND OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN. We have, in these words, the general truth taught that whoever heartily receives a prophet or a righteous man, a teacher of religion or a layman, from love to Christ, secures unto himself thereby a share of their reward, because he manifests, by holding communion with them in the hour of their peril, an agreement in sentiment with them.

VERSE 34. ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES. By these we must not understand little children, as some expositors do, but disciples of Christ, who as yet had made but little progress in the knowledge of spiritual things. This appears plainly from the addition, "In the name of a disciple." — HE SHALL IN NO WISE LOSE HIS REWARD. Whoever gives to a disciple, "as a disciple," a cup of cold water, honoreth Christ in the disciple, and will be rewarded for it.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

In order to impress the importance of this chapter still more upon our readers, we subjoin from the Homilist, in an abridged form, an excellent analysis of our Lord's missionary instructions to his apostles, which gives to every branch, of the Christian Church useful hints in their efforts to evangelize the world:

THE LAWS, ISSUES, AND ENCOURAGEMENTS OF EVANGELICAL MISSIONS.

Believing that whatever Christ "spoke from time to time, he spoke for futurity, even to its final end; yea, even to eternity itself;" that "the present and the immediate are the type of the more remote;" and that, in sending forth these "twelve," he contemplates all later missions of these apostles and their successors, we are warranted in looking at these verses as giving the *laws*, *issues*, and *encouragements* of an evangelical mission in every age.

I. THE LAWS OF AN EVANGELICAL MISSION. We infer, from this commission of Christ to his apostles, the following laws:

1. That the chief sphere of its labors should be the nearest its home.

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The fact that Jesus himself confined his labors to Judea, and that, in the commission he gave to his disciples before his ascension to heaven, he distinctly commanded them to "begin at Jerusalem," and thence go on, acting ever on the most proximate, fully authorizes us in regarding this injunction to the twelve as an expression of a *general law* that should regulate all evangelizing efforts. This law is not an arbitrary impost; it is founded in the truest *love* and *wisdom*. Genuine love says: If you have a favor to bestow, offer it first to those of your own kin and neighborhood. *Home first* is the dictate of a true philanthropy. That feeling which induces man to cross seas and traverse islands and continents, to offer blessings which he has never presented to his own neighbors, who stand in equal need, is the simpering sentiment of a morbid and diseased mind, not the manly love of a true heart. The law is the dictate of WISDOM as well as love. (1.) We have greater facilities for giving the Gospel to our neighbors than to foreigners. They are within our reach, they understand our language, they can appreciate our mode of reasoning, they can test the sincerity of our motives. (2.) Our neighbors, when evangelized, would become more effective allies than foreigners. The stronger the forces in the center, the more powerfully the influence will be felt at the extremities.

2. That the material wants of mankind are to be attended to, as well as the spiritual. "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick," etc. The command to preach "the kingdom of heaven" implies, (1.) That the great *spiritual* want of mankind is the *reign of God* over

all the powers of the soul — the making of the human will in every thing cheerfully obedient to the Divine. (2.) The Gospel is the system by which this reign is established; hence, it is called "the kingdom of heaven." It is not a system merely to excite the sensibilities or to enlighten and discipline the intellect; it is the *reign* of God in the soul (3.) The work of the Church is to bring the Gospel to man for this purpose. This is the work, so far as the spiritual necessity of mankind is concerned. But while attending to this work, do not be regardless of the *material* exigencies of humanity. "Heal the sick," etc. The fact that the apostles were endowed with power to remove the physical evils of mankind in their evangelical mission, and commanded to employ them, does certainly give the idea that the Church, in her endeavors to propagate the Gospel, must be mindful, at the same time, of the corporeal and temporal requirements of men. This principle was acted upon in the ministry of Christ, and is every-where implied, and often explicitly enjoined, in the writings of the apostles. Paul tells us to "bear each other's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." James tells us that "pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," and John says, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" This is a principle, obedience to which seems almost indispensable to success in the promotion of Christianity. (1.) Corporeal evils are obstructions to the reception of the truth. Men suffering under disease, poverty, slavery, oppression, are certainly not in the best position to receive the Gospel. The natural tendency of corporeal evils is to strengthen depravity, close the heart against God and man, and nurse misanthropy and impiety into a reckless rage. (2.) Earnest efforts to remove the corporeal evils of a people are among the most likely means to dispose them to listen to our doctrines. These evils are *felt*; and he who generously removes them is hailed as a benefactor, and the heart opens to his words. Job says that when the ear heard him, it "blessed" him. Why? Because he "delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him." Had the Church always acted upon this principle; had it endeavored to give bread to the hungry, as well as Bibles to the ignorant; had it sought to deliver man from the social and political despotism of his fellow, as well as from the despotism of Satan; had it struggled to redeem the body as well as the soul; had it appeared to men more as a secular benefactor, and less as a theological belligerent, an ascetic devotee, or a sectarian partisan; had the world seen it more in the acts of a genial messenger

of deep and genuine philanthropy, penetrating the darkest scenes of trial with a word to cheer and a hand to bless, and less in pompous ceremonies, conflicting creeds, and affected pietisms; I say, had this been the past history of the Church, it would have been now the sovereign of the world.

3. *That the same disinterested benevolence which made us the recipients of the blessing, should animate us in its communication.* "Freely ye have received, freely give." Christianity can only be effectually propagated by *disinterested* efforts. It must be given "freely" — not for the sake of office, sect, or gain, but for the sake of souls. "Freely give" — a comprehensive and most pregnant position, which can not be too much laid to heart by God's ambassadors even to the present day; condemning all improper, methodical, and commercial stipulations in preaching God's grace, all payment that surpasses the limits of their need, (v. 10,) and all those unbecoming perquisites which are ungracefully attached to the direct ministration of the Word and sacraments.

4. *That there must be an entire freedom of mind from all secular anxieties in the work.* "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat." Probably it would be a "narrow perversion — a fanaticism of the letter" — to regard this prohibition as *literally* binding upon all who are engaged in evangelizing labors; but the spirit and meaning of the command — namely, *entire freedom of mind from all secular anxieties* — are undoubtedly binding on all evangelists. Solicitude about gold or silver, purse or scrip, should have no place in the minds of those who endeavor to convert mankind to the religion of Christ. There are two things which should always exclude this anxiety: (1.) Faith in the munificent providence of our Master. He is ever with his true servants, and always able to guard them in every peril, and to supply their every want. (2.) Faith in the power of the Gospel to dispose those among whom we labor to render the necessary temporal provisions. Men who are rightly influenced by the ministry of a man will feel that "the workman is worthy of his meat." Indeed, it is evident that Jesus here throws the support of his apostles upon the people they would preach to — as if he had said, Don't be anxious about temporal provisions. By a law of the human mind, *a feeling of moral obligation* to support you will be awakened in those whom you bless by your message. The Gospel "workman is worthy of his meat." Worthy indeed! What temporal return bears any

proportion to the good which a man conveys to another who is instrumental in breaking the moral slumbers of the mind, unsealing the fountains of spiritual feeling, rolling off the sepulchral stone that entombs the soul, and raising it into fellowship with God?

5. That our conduct toward men should be ever regulated by their moral condition. "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you," etc. Let our conduct toward men be regulated by their moral character, not by their secular circumstances. Whoever the man is, if he is "worthy," visit him; bless him; dwell with him, if convenient. If not "worthy," however rich or influential, have nothing to do with him: shake off the dust from your shoes. *Know no man after the flesh.* As evangelists we have to do with souls, and the only distinction we have to recognize is the distinction of soul.

6. That the highest intelligence should be blended with the purest character. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." The general truth is, that *intellect in the world must be met by intellect in the Church, and depravity in the world must be met by purity in the Church.* An intellectual age will never bow to a weak-minded ministry; a depraved age will never be reformed by a corrupt Church.

7. That confidence in the paternal providence of God should be strong enough to raise us above the fear of man. — Such, then, are the laws of evangelization which Jesus inculcated in this commission, and which we regard as binding upon the Church in all ages. If these have been neglected or transgressed, it is certainly no wonder that the evangelizing work has made but little progress. The case stands thus: Christ committed the work of evangelizing the world to the Church, and gave distinct and enlightened directions how it was to be carried out. The Church has been aiming and struggling for the end, but it has been comparatively, regardless of the method. Which of the seven laws specified above has the Church not transgressed? Let the Church, instead of being regulated by the policy of little human organizations, go back in spirit to Capernaum; stand, with "the twelve," before Christ, listen to his commission, and pledge itself to carry that commission out according to his directions; let

this be done, and the dawn of the brightest era will commence — the key-note of the highest harmony will be struck.

II. THE ISSUES OF AN EVANGELICAL MISSION. What are the results on human souls which the proper working out of an evangelical mission will produce? In other words, what moral effects on the souls of men will arise from the promotion of Christianity in the world? The chapter under review enables us to answer that the effects are threefold — *spiritual peace to the receiver, augmented guilt to the rejecter, and great trials to the promoter.*

1. *Spiritual peace to the receiver.* "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it." (11-13.) The apostles, in their salutation, expressed the grand object of Christianity, which is to give "peace." Its language to every family and soul it addresses is, "Peace be unto you." Its author is "the Prince of Peace." The celestial song that announced his nativity proclaimed, "Peace on earth;" the last legacy he left the world was peace. His word is the "gospel of peace;" his empire is "peace in the Holy Ghost." To all who yield to his benign teachings and gracious influences, he imparts a "peace that passeth all understanding." What is this peace? Though it can only be fully appreciated by experience, it may be — it often is — misunderstood. What is it? It stands opposed, (1.) *To the torpid state of the thoughtless.* True peace is the peace of a quickened, active conscience, that has done battle with lusts and evil habits, won the victory, and obtained the throne of the soul, ruling all by the harmonious will of God. True peace stands opposed, (2.) *To all anxieties of soul.* It expels all anxious thoughts. The intellect trusts to the wisdom and goodness of God for a solution of all perplexing problems; the heart confides in the paternal providence of God for all necessary temporal good; the spirit is divinely guided to form those friendships which, when dissolved on earth, will be renewed in heaven, and the soul trusts implicitly to the merits and mercy of Christ for complete salvation. He that believeth entereth into a rest from all these harassing anxieties. True peace stands opposed, (3.) *To all religious inactivity.* Peace of soul, like the peace of planets, consists in harmonious action. The "God of peace" is ever at work. "He fainteth not, neither is weary." The moral rest of God is right action. The "Prince of Peace" went about doing good. True peace of soul is not the peace of a stagnant lake, but the peace of a flowing river, too deep to be rippled, too strong to be resisted.

2. *Augmented guilt to the rejecter.* "Let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (13-15.) These words suggest two ideas concerning the augmented guilt of the rejecter: (1.) *That his guilt is no injury to the minister who has offered him the blessing.* His peace shall "return" to him. The stream of pacific sentiment and desire, which he sent forth from the depths of his heart, when it finds no resting-place, shall flow back, in all its plenitude, into his own soul. The attempt to do good is good to him who makes the effort, even though the object be injured by it. Notwithstanding this, ministers are not to waste their time and energy upon the incorrigible. "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet." (2.) *That his guilt will be fully manifest at the judgment day.* "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable," etc. This verse contains four solemn truths. First: *That there is a period of retribution to dawn on our race.* It is here called "the day of judgment." The state of the world requires such a day; oppressed virtue cries out for such a day; the Bible distinctly declares that there will come such a day. Every day of our life has some gleams of retribution that prophesy and mirror something of such a day. Secondly. *That men of the remotest ages will be concerned in the transactions of that day.* The men of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as the men of our Savior's age, will be there. Two thousand years had passed away since Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed; but Jeans teaches here that they are not gone out of existence: they shall appear again on the day of judgment. All will appear then. Thirdly. *That among the myriads who will appear on this day, there will be an immense variety in the degree of guilt.* "More tolerable," etc. Every land, and age, and individual will have their peculiarities of guilt. Some of the sinners will appear almost innocent in comparison with others. Fourthly. *That diversity of guilt will, in a great degree, arise from the amount of religious opportunity abused.* Sodom and Gomorrah will appear guilty. But their guilt will appear as nothing to the guilt of those who had the teachings of Christ and his apostles. The Gospel, then, augments the guilt of the rejecter, as well as imparts true peace to its receivers. It is the "savor of death unto death," as well as of life unto life. But it produces life by design and adaptation, death only by contingency. It is the moral *cause* of life — it is only the *occasion* of death.

3. Great trials to the promoter. These trials would arise, (1.) *From the spirit of the world in relation to the Gospel system.* The spirit of the Jews, in reference to Christ, was like that of a *wolf*, (v. 16,) selfish and savage. As this ravenous beast prowls about in search of its prey, the Jewish people pursued the Lamb of God. From this spirit, Christ tells his disciples, great trials would come to them. They would be delivered up to "the council;" they would be "scourged in their synagogues;" they would be "brought before governors;" they would be "hated of all men" for his "name's sake." This savage spirit would thus express itself. Mankind, in their depraved state, have always more or less of this spirit in relation to the Gospel; and from it has always arisen to the disciples of Christ persecution in some form or other. The other cause, which is here suggested as producing trials to the evangelist, is, (2.) *The influence of His system in producing social divisions.* "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents," etc. "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword." "I am come to set a man at variance with his father," etc. The cause of this is not in Christianity, but in the depravity of the rejecter. Christianity is simply the occasion of its development. Nutritious food may be hurtful to a diseased stomach, light may be most injurious to a diseased eye, music most distressing to a diseased brain; and so Christianity, which is designed and fitted to produce peace, will always produce the opposite in the heart of the rejecter. As if the Divine Reformer had said, Do not expect that, because my doctrines are essentially pacific, and because my grand aim is peace, and your mission is peace, that you will meet with no opposition. Awful and bloody wars will frequently, though always *incidentally*, come out of your pacific mission. The moral atmosphere of the world is so charged with impurities that bitter storms must come before men can have the salubrious and sunny influences of celestial peace.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS OF AN EVANGELICAL MISSION.

Christ here supplies them with an unsparing hand. Let us briefly elicit them.

1. The cause for which the true evangelist suffers is most honorable. Jesus says they are "for my name's sake," (v. 22.) We might ask, What was there in the *name* of Christ to excite malignant feelings against his friends? Christ's name stands for all that is amiable in spirit, immaculate in character, sublime in purpose, godlike in beneficence and majesty. To suffer for the sake of mere worldly heroes might be a disgrace; but to suffer for Christ's sake is the

greatest honor for man this side of heaven. The apostles, and confessors, and martyrs felt this amid their severest tortures. They thanked God that they were "counted worthy." To suffer for Christ is to suffer for the promotion of truth, rectitude, benevolence, and happiness among men.

2. The example which the true evangelist has in His suffering is most glorious. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Vs. 24, 25.) But how does the fact that Christ suffered in his public ministry give an encouragement to all evangelists under their sufferings? (1.) Because if the Master suffered in his work, these sufferings are no proofs, in themselves, that they are disqualified for their mission. (2.) Because if their Master suffered in his work, these sufferings were not necessarily connected with any disgrace. There are ignominious sufferings. (3.) Because if their Master suffered in his work, their sufferings were no necessary indications of Divine displeasure. (4.) Because if their Master suffered in his work, there would be hope that their sufferings would issue in the same glorious results. They would hope to overcome as he overcame.

3. The success of the cause for which the true evangelist suffers is most certain. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops." (Vs. 26, 27.) The idea here is, that the doctrines which were comparatively concealed, shut up in the breasts of some twelve men, should one day become fully and universally known. He assures them, (1.) That they *would* spread. "What I tell you in darkness" *shall* be known, etc. We are engaged in no doubtful enterprise. The little "cloud" shall cover the heavens, the little "stone" shall grow into a mountain, the "mustard-seed" shall become a majestic tree. Those doctrines which Jesus quietly whispered in the ear of twelve poor men shall one day roll in streams of rapturous music through the world. He assures them, (2.) That they *ought* to spread. He not only predicts that they shall, but commands his disciples to set in earnest to the work. "Preach ye upon the house-tops." Jesus had not one doctrine for the initiated and another for the commonalty. His truths were for the race, and race-wide should be the proclamation. Here, then, is encouragement. "Therefore, be ye steadfast, unmovable," etc.

4. The providential care of God over the true evangelist in suffering is positively guaranteed. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Vs. 29-31.) The argument in these verses may be thrown into three propositions, which they either imply or express: (1.) That in the estimation of the great God, some of his creatures are more valuable than others. Men are more valuable than birds. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." (2.) That over those of his creatures which are the lowest in the scale of value he exercises a benevolent providence. Not one of the sparrows "falls on the ground without your Father." Over all life, even plantal life, he exercises care. "The lilies of the field," etc. (3.) The fact that he exercises a benevolent providence over the *least* valuable, is an assurance that he does so over the *most* valuable. If he takes care of the lesser, he will surely take care of the greater. Hence "the very hairs" of his children's heads "are all numbered." Here, then, is encouragement to the true evangelist under suffering. He may say with Job, "He knoweth the way I take," etc.

5. The reward of the true evangelist for all sufferings will be most glorious at last. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Vs. 32, 33.) These words contain three ideas: (1.) The function of true discipleship. To "confess" Christ — to confess him as the Messiah — the redeeming God. To confess not merely with the lip, but practically with the life; not in solitude, but "before men" on the open theater of life; not merely in the Temple, but in the market, the senate, at the bar — every-where. (2.) The temptation of true discipleship. There is a temptation to be "ashamed" of him, and to "deny" him. This arises from two causes, the natural tendency of the individual to bow to the opinions of the multitude, and the fact that the opinions of the multitude are generally against Christ. Herein is the temptation. In heaven, where all love Christ, there is no such temptation. The influence flows in the other direction. (3.) The reward of true discipleship. "Him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." I will acknowledge him before the Eternal and his assembled universe, as my devoted disciple, my faithful servant, my beloved friend. What a reward is this!

6. That if actuated by the right spirit, the true evangelist will find the greatest trials the greatest blessings. "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Three ideas are contained in these remarkable words: (1.) That self-denial is a necessary condition of Christian discipleship. The "cross" is the most powerfully-expressive symbol of self-denial; and this cross, says Christ, must be borne, painful though it is, ignominious though it may seem. (2.) That this self-denial may involve the sacrifice of our present animal well-being. "He that loseth his life" — that is, not *existence*, but animal happiness or well-being. By following Christ a man may lose — men often have lost — all their physical pleasures and comforts — their support, liberty, energy, health, and even animal life itself. This Christ's own self-denial led to; and this self denial has led to in the case of martyrs. (3.) That the self-denial which leads even to the sacrifice of animal well-being is the greatest blessing, if inspired by due respect for Christ. "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

7. That the interests of the true evangelist are thoroughly identified with the interests of Christ; (Vs. 40-42.) He assures them of three things: (1.) That he would receive those who would receive them, as if they received himself. "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me." I shall regard the treatment that you meet with, kind or otherwise, as if it were offered to me. I go with you—blend my sensibilities and interests with yours. Those that persecute you persecute me. (2.) He assures them that those that would receive them as *his true* servants, should meet with their reward. "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet," etc. He who receives them merely as men, or in some other capacity, will not have the reward. He who receives under his roof a truly-good man, gets a blessing in many ways. His ideas, his spirit, his example, his prayers are all blessings. He assures them, (3.) That even those who render the humblest service to the humblest of their number shall be rewarded. A "cup of cold water" to one of the "little ones" will secure a blessing.

CHAPTER XI.

§ 22. THE MESSAGE OF JOHN AND THE DISCOURSE OF JESUS ON THE OCCASION.

WHAT is recorded in this chapter—with the exception of verse 1, on which see the comment — preceded in point of time the mission of the twelve. (See Synoptic Table.) For we learn from chap. xiv, 13, and Mark vi, 30, that Herod had beheaded John while the twelve were on their missionary tour. It is probable that Jesus was at or near Capernaum when the messengers of John came to him with their master's question. The remarks made by the Lord on the occasion, form one well-connected and gradually-rising discourse, whose conclusion (vs. 27-30) completes the answer to the question propounded. (See vs. 20-25.) This view is not disproved by recognizing the fact that parts of this discourse were spoken by the Savior at another time, (Luke vii, 10; xvi, 16,) and in another connection. We consider, therefore, the whole as one discourse of our Savior pronounced on the occasion in question, and divide it into four parts.

With regard to the object of the question (v. 3) expositors differ widely. The older view, which is still held by Watson and Alexander, and eloquently defended by Stier, is, that John propounded this question to Jesus merely for his disciples' sake; but most of the modern commentators reject this view as unnatural, and doing violence to the letter of the text. Stier himself admits that it is not the first impression which the ungarnished statement of the whole transaction by two Evangelists would make upon the unbiased reader, but he feels himself compelled to leave the natural meaning of the words, and to put an artificial one in its place, because a doubt in the Messiahship of Jesus, openly expressed, appears to him absolutely irreconcilable with the earlier declarations of John concerning the person and dignity of Christ, and with the latter's explicit testimony concerning John on this very occasion. If we had, indeed, no other choice than either to ascribe the question to a doubt of John respecting the Messiahship of Jesus, or to adopt the view that the message was intended to remove the doubts of his disciples, we would not hesitate to give the preference to the latter view. But as the passage admits of another explanation, we reject both. If some of John's disciples, notwithstanding his repeated testimony concerning Jesus, and though well informed of the works of Christ, were nevertheless unwilling to recognize the Messiah in him, what

reason had John to expect that a mere declaration of Jesus would remove their prejudices? And how could John pass a doubt of his disciples as his own? How could they reconcile the message which their master sent by them with his character, if, as is claimed, all was right in John's mind about Jesus? But still more inadmissible, on the other hand, is the view of those who ascribe the question to an actual doubt in John's mind concerning the Messiahship of Jesus. It is, indeed, true that even special ambassadors of God may have the light of their faith temporarily obscured; but to go so far as to doubt not only Jesus' Messianic character, but even to express this doubt openly, would, in John's case, not have been a merely-temporary wavering of faith, but a formal, public taking back of the solemn testimony which he had given in his official character, (John i, 7,) an act that is altogether irreconcilable not only with John's official character and the Divine revelations that had been granted to him, (chap. iii, 16, 17; John i, 26-37,) but also with the praise which Jesus bestowed upon John on this very occasion, (v. 7.)

There is a third view of John's question which neither does violence to the text nor is irreconcilable with John's character and position. Let us take into consideration the immediate cause which induced John to send his disciples to Jesus — the hearing of the marvelous works of Jesus, giving the blind their sight, making the lame walk and the deaf hear, cleansing the lepers, and even raising the dead, (comp. chap. ix, 18-31, and Luke vii, 11-17,) all of which must have quickened the expectations of those who were waiting for the consolation of Israel, that Jesus, in whom all the Messianic prophecies were fulfilled, would now establish his kingdom, and proclaim himself openly and fully as the Messiah; let us further consider the situation of the Baptist, that he, who was to usher in the Messiah, and who had proclaimed his kingdom to be at hand, by his imprisonment, which had now lasted for several dreary months, had been suddenly prevented from bearing any further witness of Christ, and that in his earnest longing to see the full manifestation of the Messiah, as Moses desired to see the promised land, he might have considered it his privilege and duty, as the forerunner of Christ, before leaving the stage of action, to induce Jesus, by his message, to declare himself fully and openly to be the Messiah, of whom he had borne witness, and that, if he meant to prompt Christ to make an official proclamation of his Messianic reign, he could not do it in a more becoming manner than by closing his request in the words: "Art thou he that should come, or shall we look for another?" Let us, lastly, consider the

imperfect knowledge that the Baptist evidently had of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of the Messiah and of the manner and time of its establishment. In verses 9 and 11 we are told by our Savior himself that John, though more than a prophet, is less than the least in the kingdom of heaven. John's privileges were greater than those of all his predecessors. To him the kingdom of God was no longer an object of prophecy; he could declare that it had come near; he had seen the Messiah face to face; but in the brightest moments of his Divine illumination he had not that insight into the nature of his kingdom, the manner of its development and spread, into the person of the God-man, which the least true Christian has; for the dispensation of the Spirit had not yet come. (John vii, 39.) Though John the Baptist, Zacharias, and those other Israelites who waited for the consolation of Israel, expected the Messiah to establish a spiritual kingdom, a reign of righteousness, they connected, nevertheless, with it the idea of a visible, terrestrial kingdom, that he would literally sit on David's throne, and extend his reign from the river to the ends of the earth. The stronger John was convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus by Divine revelation, the more incomprehensible he found it, that the separation of the people, commenced by his baptism, was not continued by Jesus, and that the judgments which he had announced the Messiah would execute on the apostate portion of Israel, had not followed. It would be unaccountable if John, who was less than the least in the kingdom of heaven, should have purer and more enlarged views of that kingdom than the apostles had. Not only before the resurrection of our Lord, (chap. xx, 21; xxiv, 3; Luke xxiv, 21,) but shortly before his ascension, (Acts i, 3-6,) and even after the descent of the Holy Ghost, their ideas of the kingdom of God were very partial, Peter needing a special revelation to convince him of the truth that the Gentiles are accepted without circumcision. (Acts x.) If, accordingly, John, with all those Israelites who waited for the consolation of Israel, expected the Messiah to establish a visible kingdom on earth, how ardent must have been his longing for the decisive moment when that which he had announced for two years as at hand should be fulfilled; yea, how sorely must his patience have been tried and his Elias-like indignation roused at the corruption of the court and the people in general, at the apparent triumph of vice and wickedness over virtue and faith, when he heard, from his disappointed disciples, that Jesus did nothing to deliver either him or the nation from the oppressor's hand! Yet he evidently did not lose his faith in Jesus; otherwise he would not have applied to him; and by applying to him, he avoids the danger to which he was exposed of being offended in Jesus. As the

servants of God, in their sorest trials, do not turn to the world, but to God, as they pour out their distressed hearts before him, and find in this very cry, mixed as it may be with impure elements, comfort, rest, and safety, so also John. All that can be objected to this view is expressed by Stier, when he says: "How is it possible that the man, who recognized in the humble Jesus, when he applied to him for baptism, at once the Holy One of God, and pointed to him as the Lamb of God, who, at the very outset, understood his subordinate position so fully, should venture to feel or express, even in the remotest degree, any dissatisfaction with his course?" We do not consider this objection weighty. The inconsistency between Peter's glorious confession and subsequent attempt to interfere with the Lord's design to go to Jerusalem, seems to be far greater. Peter had a genuine, Divinely-wrought faith that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God; but he could not reconcile with his faith the fact that this Son of God should suffer and die. So John, though not wavering in his faith that Jesus was the Messiah, could not separate from this truth the idea that he would reign on earth. It is true John calls Christ the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; but he might have conceived of his taking away the sin of the world without having a clear idea of his vicarious suffering and death. If the apostle so highly honored by the Lord was tempted to lay aside, for a moment, the reverence he owed his Master, so the Baptist may have been tempted. The view we have presented is in perfect consonance with the closing words of Christ's answer to John's disciples, "And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me," as well as by the subsequent tribute of praise which he pays to John's character before the assembled people, in which he defends John against the possible charge of fickleness, (vs. 7, 8,) as if he now doubted, like a reed shaken with the wind, what he had formerly testified, but accounts, at the same time, for his question by the inferior light he possessed, (v. 10.)

A. THE MISSION OF JOHN'S DISCIPLES TO JESUS.

Verses 1-6. (COMPARE LUKE vii, 18-23.)

(1) AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. (2) Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, (3) and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? (4) Jesus

answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: (5) The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. (6) And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

VERSE 1. Dr. Alexander, in commenting upon this verse, very justly complains of the misleading divisions of the sacred text into arbitrary chapters, and remarks: "This verse is a winding up of the preceding chapter by the statement that our Lord, after organizing and commissioning the twelve, did not allow that act to interrupt his own itinerant labors. The next verse opens an entirely new subject, without any mark of time whatever, and therefore without any contradiction of Luke's more chronological arrangement,"

VERSE 3. ART THOU HE THAT SHOULD COME? The participle ἔρχόμενος, though present in form, has generally a future meaning—he that shall come or is to come. It was the designation of the Messiah, because he was the desire of nations. (Comp. Ps. xl, 7; cxviii, 26; Mal. iii.)—**OR DO WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER?** More correctly, shall we look, have we to look (*προσδοκῶμεν*) for another, whose forerunner only thou art?

VERSE 4. GO AND SHOW JOHN AGAIN THOSE THINGS WHICH YE DO HEAR AND SEE. From Luke vii, 18, we learn that John's disciples had informed their imprisoned master of the mighty works done by Jesus; Jesus spares indeed the two messengers before the people, yet administers a rebuke to them in his answer by referring them to what they had known before. Inform him once more of my works, which prove me to be the Messiah. Their question was: "Shall we look for another?" the answer is, "No, he is come; you need but to see and to hear." Instead of proclaiming himself directly as the Messiah he did it indirectly, leaving no ground for doubt. The *prophecy* has passed into *history*. The *hearing* refers to the rumor concerning him that had gone throughout all Judea; the *seeing* to the mighty deeds which the Lord was performing while the two messengers were present. (See Luke vii, 21.)

VERSE 5. Jesus refers here to the prophecies of Isaiah, characterizing his Messianic ministry, especially to chapters xxxv, 5, 6, (comp. xxix, 18,) and lxi,

1, (comp. xxix, 19.) That these miraculous cures were only emblems of spiritual blessings, the new life of the soul, appears, apart from other considerations, from their being connected with the preaching of the glad tidings to the poor and wretched. But what had been foretold by the prophets mainly in a spiritual sense, as emblematical of the soul's salvation, was fulfilled by the Savior also, in a literal sense, in his curing their bodily infirmities for a testimony of his Messiahship. The ministry of the Messiah appears thus as a new creation, as a removal of the ills incident to human life from the smallest to the greatest. Stier observes: "When the Lord uttered these words, more than one dead had already been raised. In Matt. ix we read of the first case. Luke records the raising of the youth at Nain, adding that this, along with other miracles, was reported by his disciples to John. And this seems to have been the real stumbling-block for John's disciples. The miraculous works of Jesus had reached their acme; even two dead persons had been raised, and there were as yet no steps taken to establish the Messianic kingdom. Not even their master had been set free." — TO THE POOR. On these words Owen has the following excellent note: "By *poor* are meant here the humble classes of society. In preaching to them Christ showed him-self unlike the teachers of Judaism or the heathen philosophers, who courted the rich and despised the poor. This feature in his ministry, so strange that it is here joined with the most stupendous miracles, has been the peculiar feature of Christianity ever since the time of its founder. The poor have been the principal recipients of its blessings. To them it offers consolation in trial, heavenly riches in place of poverty, rest from the toil and hardships of life. It adapts itself to their lowly condition, and transforms many a hut and cottage into a temple of praise more truly glorious than the most gorgeous and magnificent cathedral ever constructed."

VERSE 6. AND BLESSED IS HE WHOSOEVER SHALL NOT BE OFFENDED IN ME. This warning, expressed in the mildest possible form, and having a general, indefinite bearing, applies as well to John as his disciples. We must, however, bear in mind that the offense which John was tempted to take in Jesus was radically different from the offense of the carnally-minded Jews. Lange remarks: "Jesus saw John actually exposed to a perilous temptation, but saw, at the same time, his ultimate safety. The Lord pronounces no woe against him that should be offended at him, but pronounces *him* blessed that should escape this danger. Jesus knew John, and knew well what effect this his response would have upon him."

B. CHRIST'S TESTIMONY OF JOHN.

Verses 7-9. (COMPARE LUKE vii. 24-35.)

(7) AND as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? (8) But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. (9) But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. (10) For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. (11) Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (12) And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. (13) For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. (14) And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come. (15) He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (16) But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, (17) and saying, We have piped ^[1] unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned ^[2] unto you, and ye have not lamented. (18) For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. (19) The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

[1 Piping and dancing were accompaniments of the festivals of the Jews. (Luke xv, 25.) The signal was given with a pipe or similar instrument, and the dance commenced.]

[2 Lamentations took place at funeral occasions. (Matt. ix, 23.) Some one commenced and the others fell in.]

VERSES 7-9. The disciples of John take their leave; but before they have proceeded far Jesus commences addressing the people with regard to John,

setting forth forcibly and clearly the holiness of his character and the greatness of his mission, and thus he either prevents or corrects all wrong views about him. Identifying the John in the wilderness with the John in prison, he assures the people that John had not changed his views about him as the Messiah, although this might seem to be the case. The message from the imprisoned John forcibly reminded the people of the stirring times of his first appearance. That crowding of the people about the man in the wilderness, although its lasting results were comparatively but small, had, notwithstanding, been a significant admission on their part. They had not unwillingly listened to the exhortation, "Repent," had, for the most part, received his baptism, and thereby virtually admitted *that they were sinners, and could enter the kingdom of God only through repentance*. The questions addressed by the Lord to his hearers called forcibly to their minds these times, asking, as it were: "How was it, then, when you went out into the wilderness? What did you go out to see? You certainly did not find in John a reed shaken to and fro by the wind of the popular mind? You may rest assured that he does not now retract the testimony he had borne of me. Neither suppose, from his message, that he is one of those effeminate souls that can not endure trials for truth's sake. He is not one of those that desire to be clothed in soft raiment. Only call to mind his raiment of camel's hair! What did you see when you went out into the wilderness?" The answer to this question is, for emphasis' sake, put again in the form of an interrogation, as if saying: Certainly a prophet, as you acknowledged him to be, (chap. xxi, 26,) and, I assure you, he is more than a prophet.

VERSE 10. FOR THIS IS HE OF WHOM IT IS WRITTEN. This prophecy stands in Malachi iii, 1. The Lord changes the Hebrew text "before my face" into "*before thy face*." This application of what Jehovah says of himself to the Messiah, is a clear indication of his Divinity proper. It is, moreover, worthy of note that the three Evangelists have the quotation in this changed form. (Mark i, 2; Luke vii, 27.) Thus the Lord, instead of answering to the question of John's disciples directly, "I am he that is to come," declares in majestic humility: "What makes John more than a prophet is, that he is my forerunner."

VERSE 11. The term HAS RISEN (*ἐγένεται*) properly means *has been raised up*, and is used of prophets, etc., with respect to their divine mission. — NOTWITHSTANDING HE THAT IS LEAST [literally, the lesser] IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS GREATER THAN HE. In

point of a spiritual apprehension of the promised Messiah John was greater than all his predecessors, and yet a member of the kingdom of God — that is, of the Christian Church — though less than John in office and personal qualifications, is John's superior in this respect. This is said prophetically of the Gospel dispensation after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

VERSE 12. From a description of the character of John the Baptist, the Lord proceeds to describe the peculiar character of the times. — FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, UNTIL NOW. These words indicate that some time had elapsed since the imprisonment of John and the close of his public ministry. By the term *until now* we have not to understand that the period spoken of came now to a close. On the contrary, the time of John's public ministry is represented as the beginning of the glorious times of the kingdom of God, in so far as the necessary preparations for it were then made. John had exhorted his cotemporaries to repent, because the kingdom was near at hand, and Jesus himself opened his public career, as well as his disciples, with a solemn call to repentance, because the kingdom of God was at hand. These solemn calls had their effect. — THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERETH VIOLENCE, (*ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται.*) The Greek verb in the active voice means to do violence to a person or thing, to overcome resistance, to master it by dint of great efforts. Most expositors consider it here to be in the passive voice, some in a bad sense, as if the meaning were: "The kingdom of God is violently resisted and persecuted, and by violence snatched away from men." But this interpretation is forbidden by the connection. Taken passively, in a good sense, the meaning would be: The kingdom of heaven is taken hold of or rushed into with great violence. But to this view Stier objects on the following grounds; namely: 1. That in this case the additional clause, "And the violent take it by force," would be a tautology. 2. That it is not in harmony with the context. The Lord speaks of the absolutely-certain and momentous fact that the kingdom of heaven has come, proclaims its presence, and sends forth its invitations in tones not to be misunderstood, (v. 15,) and this forms the contrast between *now* and the times of the prophets. We must, therefore, take *βιάζεται*, in the *middle* voice, *it forces itself*. The sense, then, would be, "the kingdom of God *forcibly introduces itself*," "*breaks in with violence*," and the object *on men* can very well be supplied. In thus violently breaking forth the kingdom of God does violence to all. The poor are compelled to come in, (Luke xiv, 23,) skeptics are

forced to search and to ask for information. Whoever now refuses to enter must oppose force to the force that attacks him, but whoever is willing to enter must force himself through the obstacles thrown in his way by the determined opposers. Thus the kingdom of God both does and suffers violence. This interpretation of Stier very well agrees both with the Savior's subsequent lament of the absence of faith in the people, and with the fact that he drew out the masses by the friendly invitation in verse 28 and with the parallel passage in Luke xvi, 16, "every man presseth into it," every one presses eagerly forward in order to hear the good news, from the forerunner John, by way of preparation, and now in its full extent from Jesus himself. We shall appreciate the meaning and force of the expression still more, if we bear in mind that the Jewish rabbins confined their instructions to small select parties of disciples, neglecting the masses altogether. John's preaching had been very popular, and large crowds had gathered around him; so was the preaching of Christ; the masses, neglected and despised by the scribes and Pharisees, eagerly flocked to them and pressed into the kingdom as far as it was revealed. Yet this eagerness to be admitted to an enjoyment of the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God had but commenced, and the words of the Savior points to the preaching of the Gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit, in every age, till the earth shall be full of the glory of the Lord.

VERSES 13, 14 state the reasons why, since John entered upon his public ministry, the kingdom of God had become the object of general and deep solicitude. The law and the prophets had only predicted it, spoken of it as something future. This prophetic period lasted till the Baptist opened his ministry as the immediate forerunner of the Messiah, as the Elias who was to come. Before John, therefore, this Messianic excitement could not take place, but was the natural and legitimate phenomenon, since the prophetic period had come to a close. — IF YE WILL RECEIVE IT; that is, if you are willing or able to receive it with your carnal Messianic ideas and expectations. Taking Mal. iv, 5 literally, the Jews expected that Elias would come in person before the appearance of the Messiah; this carnal view John contradicts. (John i, 21.)

VERSE 15. These words are generally used by the Lord in order to call attention to important declarations. So here, if John was Elias, as foretold by the law and the prophet, the forerunner of the Messiah, it was self-evident that Jesus was the Messiah, and was as such to be recognized and believed. Therefore, "he that has ears" — he that has the faculty of hearing — let him

hear, consider and understand, let him become convinced that I am the Messiah.

VERSES 16, 17. After bearing this explicit and grand testimony to the character of the Baptist, the Lord proceeds — the particle "BUT" introduces a contrast — to characterize his contemporaries, whom neither he himself nor John the Baptist could please. — WHEREUNTO SHALL I LIKEN THIS GENERATION? The similitude our Savior employs shows that nothing connected with humanity, in its humblest stages of development, was uninteresting to him. He observed the play of children, imitating marriages and funerals. As now and every-where, so did the children in the days of Christ, and in Judea, derive their sports and amusements from the habits and customs of adults. At first sight it might appear as if the capricious, ill-natured Jews were meant by the children who refused to accept the invitation of their fellows to dance and to lament, and that our Lord intended to compare himself and the Baptist to those children that gave the invitation by piping and mourning. This is the interpretation of Stier and of most expositors. But to this view there are weighty objections: 1. The text says expressly: *This generation* — a term which is uniformly used in contrast with Christ and his followers — is like those children that say, "we have piped and we have mourned" complaining of the non-playing children, from which we infer that the non-playing children, the party complained of, are to represent Christ and the Baptist. 2. This is confirmed by verses 18 and 19, where "*they who say*," the complainants, are evidently the fault-finding Jews. 3. If the Baptist and Christ were intended to represent the children, who piped and mourned, and whose invitation was not accepted by sulky playmates, meaning the Jews, the order would be reversed. The mourning, corresponding to John's ministry, would precede the piping, corresponding to the more joyous character of Christ's ministry. For these reasons it seems more probable that if one of the two sets of children is meant to represent Christ and the Baptist, it is the party of children capriciously complained of. Alexander contends that it is not necessary nor proper to make any part of the similitude representative of Jesus and John, the conduct of quarrelsome children being, as a whole, compared with the wayward spirit of the Jews, while the objects of their dissatisfaction are named in the application which our Lord makes in verses 18 and 19. We can, however, not see the point in Dr. Alexander's objections.

VERSES 18, 19. JOHN CAME NEITHER EATING NOR DRINKING. Luke (vii, 33) adds the objects: "bread" and "wine." John was a Nazarite of the strictest order. (See chap. iii, 4.) Lange aptly remarks: "John by his rigid asceticism represented human life in its sternest aspects. The people were, indeed, powerfully impressed by the overwhelming three of his mind, but by and by they said, he is too rigid, too morose for us. The similitude of the piping generation that could not be pleased by John, is the more striking if we associate with it an allusion to the dancing party at the court of Herod, which shortly afterward proved the occasion of John's death. That the pleasure-loving Jews wished to use John for their religious amusement, appears from John v, 35; at length, however, most of them turned away from him, saying that he was possessed of a demon of melancholy." — **THE SON OF MAN CAME EATING AND DRINKING**; that is, living like other people, practicing no asceticism like John. The meaning is plain from the preceding verse. The words may be an allusion to the Lord's occasional presence at festive occasions, as e.g., the wedding at Cana, the feast in Levi's house, etc. On account of this he was assailed by the pharisaic party as a despiser of the law. Those very forms of life, for the non-observance of which they found fault with John, they declared to be criminal in Jesus. For John they desired to play a merry wedding-tune while he called upon them to mourn; and Jesus they wanted to sing a funeral dirge while he invited the people to the marriage-feast of the New Testament liberty. In this delineation of his times Jesus has drawn in an inimitable manner the experience which the preaching of the Gospel makes anew at all times and in all places. The preaching of the law people find too rigorous, inhuman, banishing all joys of life, while they see in the preaching of God's free grace an encouragement to trifle with sin. And it is still the lot of God's messengers to be rejected by a fault-finding world. — **BUT WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED BY HER CHILDREN**. These words form no part of the similitude and its application, but embody the judgment of Jesus on the perverse treatment, which both he himself and John experienced at the hands of the Jews. Wisdom — that is, the wisdom of God, which has made these arrangements, is justified — acquitted of blame "of her children" — that is, by and through those that being born, as it were, of wisdom, partake of its nature, refute by their repentance and conversion those slanders, (vs. 18, 19,) and thus prove conclusively that both John and Jesus acted in perfect conformity to the positions assigned them in the development of the kingdom of God. The children of wisdom, the very reverse of the wayward children of verses 16 and

17, recognize in this very working of widely-different individualities for one and the same end, the infinite wisdom of God. The older view, which sees in the words of the text the censure of the Jews continued — that is, the declaration on the part of the Savior that Divine wisdom was subjected to censure and criticism by the Jews, who ought to be the children of wisdom — is altogether untenable.

C. WOES PRONOUNCED BY THE LORD ON THE CITIES OF GALILEE.

Verses 20-24. (COMPARE LUKE x, 13-15.)

(20) THEN began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: (21) Woe unto thee, Chorazin! ^[1] woe unto thee, Bethsaida! ^[2] for if the mighty works, which were done in you, ^[3] had been done in Tyre ^[4] and Sidon, ^[5] they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (22) But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. (23) And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: ^[6] for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. (24) But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

[1] According to Jerome a city two miles from Capernaum. Neither the Old nor the New Testament, with the exception of this and the parallel passage in Luke, make any mention of it.]

[2] Bethsaida was, according to John i, 45, the birthplace of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, and is called there a city. See more in ch. xiv, 22.]

[3] Here is a reference to miracles not recorded in our Gospels, but alluded to in Luke iv, 23, and John xxi, 25.]

[4] This celebrated city, the commercial metropolis of Phenicia, lay on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about half-way between Egypt and Asia Minor. It was founded about two hundred years before Solomon, and was never subject to Israel, although situate within the borders of the tribe of Asher. There was always a good understanding between Israel and Tyre, which rose to such importance that it was called (Isa. xxiii, 8; Ez. chaps. xxvi

and xxvii) "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth." It was besieged several times, once for five years by Salmanasser, then for thirteen years by Nebuchadnezzar, who in all probability took it, since it came under the power of the Chaldeans, and, subsequently, under that of the Persians. The most famous siege, however, it sustained under Alexander the Great. During this siege the old city was destroyed and the materials of it were used by the Greeks for the construction of a dam of one mile in length, and half a mile distant from the city, against that portion of it that was built upon a small, rocky island. This dam has become through alluvious matter an isthmus, connecting the island with the main land. The greater portion of the island is, at present, naked and desolate, a place "where the fisherman spreads his net." No other prophecy of Scripture has been so literally fulfilled as that concerning the downfall and ruin of this once so mighty, large, and rich city. (Ez. xxvi, 21.) The pride, luxury, and vice of this city were great, and although it was so near Israel, which had the knowledge and worship of Jehovah, yet idolatry was never banished from it.]

[5 Sidon was also a celebrated city of Phenicia, much older than Tyre, and about twenty miles north of Tyre. It was probably founded by Sidon, the great grandchild of Noah, (Gen. x, 15, 19,) and was the oldest of all the Phenician cities. It is now called Suida, has a principally Mahomedan population of about five or six thousand inhabitants, and is in the possession of the Ottoman Turks.]

[6 *Hades*, Hebrew *sheol*, means the invisible world, the world of disembodied spirits. The particulars about hades, the condition and place of the dead from death to the day of resurrection, see Luke xvi, 23, *and passim.*]

VERSE 20. With regard to the time when our Lord pronounced these woes on the cities of Galilee see note to No. 63 in the Synoptical Table. — THEN BEGAN HE. These words make the narrative very graphic, and show that the record is from an ear-witness. They indicate that what follows was spoken after a pause and with greater emphasis. The preceding part of the Savior's discourse contained much censure, but now the severity of the rebuke rises with the greatness of the favors abused. These cities had enjoyed the presence of the God-man. They had felt his influence; had listened, time and again, to his instructions; had witnessed many of his mighty deeds; and yet they did not heartily repent. Gentle and meek as the friend of publicans and sinners was, he did not spare the perseveringly impenitent. — MOST OF HIS MIGHTY WORKS. The Lord here assigns to miracles seen with one's own eyes the first place among the outward means of grace. Upon eye and ear-witnesses of miracles, who persevere in hardness of heart and impenitence,

there rests a greater guilt and a more fearful responsibility than on others who do not enjoy these privileges, and die in their sins. — BECAUSE THEY REPENTED NOT. Some individuals, indeed, believed in Jesus; but as a body the people remained impenitent. The cities mentioned here did not display that degree of hostility against Jesus that Nazareth and Jerusalem manifested; but it would seem that the mass of the people remained indifferent, and this indifference was even worse than positive opposition, because less susceptible of being affected. (See Rev. iii, 15.)

VERSE 21. WOE UNTO THEE. An expression of deep grief and indignation — here at the same time prophetic. — THEY WOULD HAVE REPENTED, the Savior says, if such means of grace had been given unto them as were enjoyed by the cities upbraided. The question arises here naturally, Why did God not give them the means of grace that would have saved them from destruction? It may suffice to say in reply: God is under no obligation to give to all men the same measure of grace. It does not become man to say any thing as to the amount of what God should do for every individual. This is left with God's free grace. The measure of grace allotted to each is determined by the counsel of the will of Him who is holy, just, and true, and willeth not the death of the sinner, but whose ways are past finding out. It is sufficient for us to know that all are without excuse, because God gives to every one a testimony of himself in his own conscience, (Rom. ii, 15,) and that every one shall be judged according to the amount of grace given unto him. But Stier and other German expositors maintain that in this way the real difficulty — namely, that some lacked the grace which would have effected their conversion and eternal salvation — is by no means solved, and they accordingly suppose that this declaration of the Savior contains a hint that, to those who die in an impenitent state for the want of sufficient means of grace, an opportunity may be given in hades to repent and be saved, while for those who have heard the whole counsel of God for their salvation in this world, but have rejected it, nothing but everlasting damnation is in store after death. The same idea they find indicated in verse 22 likewise. Guenther, accordingly, paraphrases verses 22-24 as follows: "If such mighty deeds had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented, like Nineveh, in sackcloth and ashes, and would, accordingly, not have been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander, as the prophets had foretold. Their repentance would thus have prevented this type of the final judgment of the world. But because their persevering

impenitence was the consequence of their imperfect knowledge of God's being and will, because they would have been more willing to turn from their evil ways if they had enjoyed a fuller knowledge, they have not only fared better in the typical judgment — they have been rebuilt — but it shall also be more tolerable for them in the final judgment, after a fuller revelation shall have been granted unto them in hades, seeing that a much greater portion of their citizens shall believe in the Gospel preached to them in hades. God knows it, and I, his Son, know it also, that their impenitence was conditioned by their ignorance. This plea will not be left for the cities of Galilee in the great day, for they have seen the Son of man in the fullness of his revelation, and have nevertheless not repented, and they will thus persevere in their hardness of heart in hades also, and, therefore, be damned on the day of judgment.

VERSE 22. IT SHALL BE MORE TOLERABLE FOR TYRE AND SIDON. See note on Matt., x, 15.

VERSE 23. AND THOU, CAPERNAUM, WHICH ART EXALTED UNTO HEAVEN. By the exaltation of Capernaum can not be understood its secular prosperity or lofty situation, but the distinguished honor which was conferred on the place when Jesus chose it for his residence. The plain meaning, accordingly, is: As highly as thou hast been favored by those signal honors which were conferred on no other town nor city, so great shall be thy degradation and debasement for having abused these privileges. The expressions *unto heaven*, (comp. Luke xv, 18,) *down to hell*, are here figurative expressions, meaning the highest and lowest degree. The Greek word for hell here is *hades*, not *gehenna*. Nevertheless, we may infer, from verses 22-24, that not the temporal downfall of these cities is meant here, but the fate of their inhabitants in the other world. Olshausen remarks on the passage: "At the great separation which awaits the universe, each individual life is attracted and ruled by the element into which it has entered. He that opened his heart to the light and spirit of Christ is drawn thereby into the regions of light, but whoso suffered the spirit of darkness to rule in his heart becomes a prey to the powers of darkness, according to the degree of his individual guilt, which God alone can determine, because it depends on the degree of the impression which the light made upon him, and against which he hardened himself."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. *The guilt of the unconverted is measured by the Divine works that have been wrought among them.* Thy punishment in eternity will be awful in the degree in which thou didst possess the means and motives for repentance. O, how terrible is the condition of him that grows up amid the means of grace, and finally becomes a castaway! No city of Palestine, even Capernaum not excepted, enjoyed such a fullness of the means of grace as we do, after the work of redemption is completed and the Holy Ghost has been given to the Church.

2. *God reveals himself more to some than to others.* "Mighty works" were done for the salvation of mankind: (1.) In the patriarchal age; (2.) In the dispensation under the law; (3.) During the ministry of Christ upon earth; (4.) During the whole dispensation of the Gospel. The wonders of Pentecost, the glorious triumphs which attended the preaching of the Gospel in the first three centuries, and all the moral revolutions accomplished by it in different parts of the earth to this hour, are "the mighty works" of God. God has not ceased to perform his mighty works before the children of men. Every false system demolished, every error exploded, every truth enthroned, every soul converted, is the mighty work of God.

3. *The same Divine operations which are sufficient for the conversion of some make no lasting impression upon others.* This fact, for which we have the authority of Christ, is of deep significance, and teaches us, (1.) That there are different degrees of depravity in the human heart; (2.) That the Almighty has left the self-determination of man so completely free, that even his wonder-working power can not accomplish its end without the consent of man. This consideration impresses us with the wonderful energy of man's freedom to act.

D. THE SAVIOR'S INVITATION TO ALL THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN.

Verses 25-30. (COMPARE LUKE x, 21, 22.)

(25) AT that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the

wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (26) Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. (27) All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*. (28) Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) 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. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

VERSE 25. AT THAT TIME JESUS ANSWERED. To "answer," in the New Testament, is often used after the idiom of the Hebrew, where the person or thing to which the answer refers is not mentioned, but is merely present to the mind of the speaker. (Chap. xxii, 1; Luke xiii, 14.) The Lord replies to his own foregoing remarks, and puts an end to all speculation concerning the sad fate of these cities by referring it to the righteous decree of his Father, which is, that salvation can be brought only to the humble and lowly, who are willing to receive it, and must be withdrawn from the haughty opposers. Addressing himself once more to the wretched and the poor, he kindly closes by inviting them unto him. — I THANK THEE, or, *I praise thee*, (**εξομολογοῦμαί σοι**.) The term implies a full and unqualified agreement with the counsel and purpose of God as holy and righteous in granting mercy and deliverance to the "babes," and withholding them from the wise and prudent. — FATHER here refers to the peculiar relation existing between Christ, as the Mediator between God and man, and the first person of the adorable Trinity. Jesus was the *Son of God*, more especially, as he had his human form of existence from his Father; and in this form, in his Messianic character, he was subject to the Father, who had sent him into the world. In his Divine, antemundane form of existence he was equal with the Father in being, power, and glory. — LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; that is, "Supreme Lord and Ruler of the universe." It is worthy of note that Jesus addresses the Father not as "his" Lord, but as the Lord of heaven and earth. (See Eph. i, 10.) — THOU HAST HID THESE THINGS. The best comment on this passage is given by Dr. Whedon: "What was hid? The spiritual kingdom above described. How hid? By the very fact that God has constituted it a *spiritual* kingdom; for eyes that wickedly persist in being gross and carnal can not see spiritual realities. The plainest

Divine truths, though placed before them, are *hid*, as the plainest objects by daylight are hid from the eyes of the owl — only the owl's blindness is natural and innocent, theirs is voluntary and guilty. God does right in establishing spiritual things; that their spirituality renders them *hid* is the sensual man's fault. Those who understand by this text that God has from all eternity made salvation impossible to be attained by a fixed part of mankind, wrong Divine justice and abuse our Lord's words. [The Father is as willing to reveal his salvation unto all as the Son is willing to give rest unto all; but as the offer of rest can properly be given only to the weary and heavy laden, so wisdom and truth can be revealed only to the teachable.] Moreover, it is not at all probable that the thanks of our Lord rested upon the fact that the Gospel was *hid*, but upon the fact that, *though hid*, it was wisely and graciously *revealed* to its spiritual receivers. Parallel to this is the language of Paul: 'God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed.' If, in either passage, we supply *although* after *that*, we shall obtain the actual meaning." — FROM THE WISE AND PRUDENT, all those who, in their self-conceit, oppose the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. i, 19, 21-27.) If there is any difference between the wise and the prudent, the former may mean men of great learning, the latter men of great shrewdness and natural talent. — By BABES we are to understand, in the first place, the unlearned, (John vii, 49,) then all that are teachable and willing to receive instruction; "the simple," so often spoken of in the Old Testament, (Ps. cxvi, 6; cxix, 130;) the "poor in spirit," who, as children in a childlike frame of mind, suffer themselves to be taught and directed. The Lord may have had Psalm viii, 3, before his mind, to which passage he gave subsequently so lofty an interpretation. This declaration of the Savior was to the letter fulfilled in his cotemporaries; but its truth has ever since been confirmed in every age of the Church.

VERSE 26. Once more the Savior gives utterance to his emotions of thankfulness, and expresses, at the same time, that what he thanks the Father for is not the result of arbitrary decrees, but determined upon on the ground of the highest "wisdom" and "goodness." The *wisdom* of these Divine arrangements appears, in the first place, from the character of the then chosen instruments, whose lack of human learning made "Divine wisdom" in them more conspicuous, and thus stamped upon their doctrine the seal of a Divine revelation, enabling them, at the same time, to impart the same unto others in its purity, unadulterated by any human admixture. The results of the labors of

such men could not possibly be ascribed to their learning or eloquence, but solely to the inherent power of the truths preached by them. The *goodness* of God can be seen in this, that in order to learn the mysteries of the kingdom of God, neither great learning nor talents of a superior order — the privilege of but comparatively few — are required, but a teachable mind, which is within the reach of all. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and his Word gives understanding to the simple. (Ps. cxix, 30; xxv, 14.)

VERSE 27. After having spoken of the Lord of heaven, his Father, the Savior proceeds to speak of himself as working in the same manner as his Heavenly Father. The new idea is then advanced? which forms, at the same time, the transition. The organ through and by which the Father reveals himself is the Son. It appears, accordingly, most natural, and is, moreover, grammatically required by the aorist *παρεδόθη* — that is, were delivered — to understand by *all things delivered unto me*, those very things which the Father reveals unto babes, meaning that all revelation of the Father is made through the Son. Lange, however, and Meyer do not restrict the "things delivered" to doctrine, and, accordingly, translate, "Every thing is, or all things are placed at my disposal;" on which Lange makes the following comment: "The declaration of the Savior does not imply that the worship of the Father ceases, but that it brings every thing under the order of the kingdom established by Jesus in the name of the Father. The main stress lies on the idea that not only the redeemed are Christ's, but also the unbelievers — those that reject him and are finally lost. By rejecting Christ they meant to make him appear impotent. But in their very unbelief and rejection of all overtures of mercy, the majesty of his self-consciousness was most gloriously displayed. They also that rejected him are his, that is, subject to his power and authority." Although the ideas advanced by Lange are undoubtedly Biblical, taught in many passages, yet we do not think that they are taught here. Even if we allow that the aorist *παρεδόθη* does not absolutely forbid this construction, yet it is certainly very far-fetched, and but ill suited to what follows. — NO MAN [more correctly, no one] KNOWETH THE SON, BUT THE FATHER. The term *knoweth* (*ἐπιγινώσκει*) implies here a full knowledge of the relation which exists between the Father and the Son. "In one other place only in the first three Gospels — besides the parallel passage in Luke x, 22 — does the expression *ὁ νιός* (the Son) occur; namely, Mark xiii, 32. The spirit of this verse and its forms of expression are quite those of the Gospel of John. We may also

observe another point of union: This very truth (John iii, 35) had been part of the testimony borne to Jesus by the Baptist, and its repetition here, in a discourse of which the character and office of the Baptist is the suggestive groundwork, is a coincidence not surely without meaning." (Alford.) — NEITHER KNOWETH ANY MAN [more correctly, any one] THE FATHER, SAVE THE SON. The Father, revealed in the Old Testament but dimly, was fully manifested in his incarnate Son. — TO WHOMSOEVER THE SON WILL REVEAL HIM. That this *will* of the Son is not an arbitrary will, but a will that rests on mercy and wisdom, appears plainly from the following invitation. The Holy Ghost is not mentioned in this connection, because his dispensation had not yet commenced.

VERSE 28. The following verses, which Matthew alone has, are a commentary on verse 5: "And the poor have the Gospel preached to them." No mere man, no one but he who could say of himself what is said in verse 27, could give such an invitation. It is identical with the call, which Jehovah himself sent forth. (Isa. lxv, 22.) — COME UNTO ME, "There is exquisite beauty," says Alexander, "in this sudden but not harsh transition from the mysteries of the Godhead to the miseries of man. The Son is the revealer of the Father, not to stimulate or gratify a mere scientific curiosity as to the mode of the Divine existence, but to bring the Godhead into saving contact with the sin-sick, ruined soul. Having laid the foundation for what follows in his own eternal son-ship and community of nature with the Father, he now turns the doctrine to a practical account, and calls men to avail themselves of its provisions." — YE THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN. The active and the passive side of human misery are here delineated; all those that toll and are weighed down by heavy burdens — the consequence of man's fallen condition — are invited. Outward afflictions are not excluded; but as the promise given is of a spiritual nature, the invitation too has primary reference to spiritual misery. Lange remarks: "The two verbs, 'to labor and to be heavy laden,' represent the burden of labor, 1. As voluntarily submitted to; 2. As imposed by others. These two kinds were united in the ceremonial worship of the Jews, but were felt by those only who took the law in its inward sense, who are, therefore, nearly allied to the poor in spirit," The legal bondage of the Jews corresponds fully "to man's general condition, as bound and yet unable to fulfill the law, and, therefore, groaning under its intolerable penalty and condemnation as a crushing load." (Compare Acts xv, 10.) — AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. (Compare with

this promise Isa. lvii, 15; Jer. xxxi, 25.) What a contrast do these words form to what our Lord says of the scribes and Pharisees! (Matt. xxiii, 4.)

VERSE 29. "TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU," and "LEARN OF ME," Stier considers as equivalent terms, since the first was the proverbial expression of submitting to one's teaching and discipline among the Jews. For this reason especially the law was called a yoke. To take upon one's self the yoke of Christ means not only to receive his teaching, but also to recognize him as the Messiah and to submit in all things to the authority and guidance of his word and spirit.

— FOR I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART. These words the Lord adds to his kind invitation in order to encourage his bearers thereby to accept it. "I am *meek*," although I have just pronounced so severe judgments. I judge, indeed, those that refuse to come unto me, but cast out no one that comes unto me. "*And lowly*." An example of humility and self-abasement, that can not be equaled by any created intelligence, Christ has given by his incarnation. (Phil. ii, 6-8.) The addition "in heart" predicates the humility of his inmost life as a holy turn of his will, voluntarily assumed. The Son of man alone could with propriety say of himself, that he was lowly or humble. — AND YE SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS is a literal quotation from Jer. vi, 16. The Lord does not promise those that come unto him a deliverance from all burdens and troubles, but he promises them rest unto their *souls*, which makes every yoke easy and every burden light. Every thing opposed to meekness and humility bears man down and creates wretchedness, but he that learns of the "meek and lowly in heart," finds real rest unto his soul. Whoever has not yet found this rest in Jesus must seek the cause of it in himself, not in Jesus.

VERSE 30. The Christian religion is likewise not without its yoke; that is, it demands submission and obedience to the authority and word of Christ, to the chastening of his Spirit. But the yoke of Christ is EASY. The Greek word means properly *salutary*, beneficial. In Eph. iv, 32, it is translated *kind*; in 1 Pet. ii, 3, *gracious*. Christ requires nothing of us but what saves us even in this life from the misery of sin, and it is only the means and instrument to enable one to bear the burdens of life with ease and convenience, as an old Church father (St. Bernard) has beautifully expressed it: "What can be easier than a burden that unburdens, and a yoke that bears its bearer?" And the burden which Christ imposes is LIGHT, because he imposes it only upon him that has learned to love him, and endows him with the strength to bear it. — Let us compare the yoke of Christ with the burdensome and expensive ceremonies of the Jews,

(Acts xv, 10,) or with the bondage of Popery, or with the requirements which sin makes of its devotees — with the laws which the fashionable or pleasure-seeking world, or the so-called code of honor exacts — and we shall see at once that the religion of Christ is liberty. (John viii, 38.) Truly it is easier to be a Christian than a sinner. The soul's rest in Christ imparts a peace that passes all understanding. (2 Cor. iv, 16.) After the love of God has destroyed in the heart of the "yoke-bearer" the love of the world and of sin, the commandments of God are not difficult; yea, the most afflicted followers of Jesus fare infinitely better even in this world than those that prefer to bear Satan's yoke and the burden of sin.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

THE WISE, THE PRUDENT, AND THE BABES; OR, THE HIDDEN AND REVEALED. (Vs. 25-27.)

If we regard, as we are justified in doing, this utterance of Jesus as immediately following the announcement of "woe" over Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, we shall be at no loss to determine what is meant here by "these things," which he gives us to understand are "hid from the wise and the prudent, and revealed unto babes." "These things" were what the "mighty works" expressed and embodied. His works are the revelation of himself. His "mighty works" of redemptive providence are intended and suited to reveal to the soul his moral character, his love for man, and his purpose to save him. And these are "the things" of which our Savior here speaks.

Jesus teaches us to look upon "these things" — that is, the spirit and substance of the Gospel in two aspects — as hidden from some and as revealed to others.

I. AS HIDDEN FROM SOME. They were "hid from the wise and the prudent." What does this concealment arise from? In answer to this question, the circumstances of the people of whom Jesus now speaks as having these spiritual things hid from them, enable us to say:

1. *That they were hidden not for the want of an external manifestation.* Spiritual truth had been presented to them in all the forms in which it could appear — not merely in living words and wonderful works, but

in the example of him who was truth itself. And yet they did not discern the things thus represented. They were like blind men under the bright heavens, and deaf men amid flowing tides of music. That these things are hidden from heathens is no wonder, for they have never had the external revelation of them. They can not see these things because there is no light thrown upon them from the heavens. But that they should be hidden from those who live among the utterances and forms of revelation, is passing strange and solemn. We infer from the circumstances of these people —

2. That they were not hidden for the want of intellectual ability to discern them. It was "from the wise and the prudent," not from idiots or dolts, that they were concealed. Had the men to whom Jesus refers been destitute of *natural capacity*, men of no intellect, we could not have wondered. Though the sun shine in nature, if the man has not the organ of vision, nature will be hid from him. Intellect is the eye of the soul, and though the sun of external revelation throws its radiance about him, if he has not the intellectual eye the whole field of truth will be hid in densest obscurity. But the persons to whom Christ alludes possessed, in an eminent degree, this intellectual vision. They were "the wise and the prudent." They had the power of understanding these things intellectually; and yet spiritually they were "hid from them."

3. That they were not hidden by any influence exerted by God for the purpose. It is true that the words as they stand would give the superficial reader this impression; but the idea that Jesus here teaches, that the great Father exerted any influence to conceal these things from the wise and prudent is not, to the slightest extent, admissible. (1.) *It is true that the Bible recognizes a sense in which God may be regarded as the author of things that are even contrary to his will and influence.* (Ex. vii, 3, 4; 2 Sam. xii, 11, 12, 24; 1 Kings xxii, 22, 23; Isa. vi, 10.) But it is, after all, only in a very accommodative sense that God can be said to be the Author of that which is against his holy nature, against his revealed will, against the whole of his creative and providential system of action. Morally and truly a being is only the author of that which he produces by *purpose and agency*. (2.) *That to conceal spiritual things from the sinner's soul does not require the agency of God.* They are hid. His agency is required not to conceal, but to reveal. Infinite Wisdom works not superfluously. (3.) *That, as a fact, the Divine agency among those to whom Jesus refers was to reveal.* Through the life, doctrines, and miracles of his Son, he brought those spiritual things most

palpably and impressively under the notice of these men of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. We can not, therefore, for a moment entertain the idea that there was either on God's part a positive influence exerted to blind the mind of these Jews, or the withholding of any influence required to enlighten them unto salvation. Such a supposition robs the history of Jesus of its benevolent meaning, and stains with hideous blot the lovely character of God.

Jesus here teaches us to look upon these things —

II. AS REVEALED TO OTHERS. They were "revealed unto babes." The passage gives certain particulars in reference to this spiritual revelation which will, as we examine it, throw much light upon the whole of this important subject.

1. *That the revelation of "these things" is something besides both the external manifestation and the intellectual ability.* We have seen that the men to whom the Savior refers had both. They had the external manifestations. The prophets, John the Baptist, and now Christ had brought "these things" most powerfully under their attention. They had, too, sufficient intellectual power to understand "these things" — they were the wise and the prudent; and yet, with all this outward light, and with all their intellectual power of vision, they saw not "these things."

2. *That the revelation of "these things" depends on the state of the heart.* It is "to babes" that they are revealed. Not babes in years, not babes in mental feebleness, not babes in knowledge, but babes in heart-attributes — guileless, humble, docile, loving, impressible, truthful.

3. *The revelation of these things calls for the profoundest gratitude to God.* (1.) *Because of the immense good involved in the revelation of these things to man.* When "these things" are revealed to a man it is the imparting to him a new existence, a new universe. Vast is the difference between the brute and the man — they live in different worlds; vast is the difference, too, between man in a savage state and man endowed with the genius and blessed with the attainments of a Milton; but far greater is the difference between the most elevated mind, from whom these spiritual things are hid, and the humblest to whom they are revealed. There is a gulf between them: the one is in "the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity," and the other is "sitting down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (2.) *Because of the*

wonderful condescension on God's part in the revelation of these things to men. He who was before all, is in all and over all, condescended to reveal these spiritual things to the hearts of poor, sinful men. This is God's work. Paul felt this. "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me." He must therefore have the praise.

4. *The revelation of these things is made to the soul through Jesus Christ.* "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." There are four thoughts here in relation to Christ as the revealer of these things to the soul. (1.) *That he is a Divinely-authorized revealer.* "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." (2.) *That he is a transcendently-glorious revealer.* "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." He is so mysteriously great in his nature, relations, offices, and aims, that there is but one Being in the universe that *fully* understands him, and that is God. (3.) *That he is an absolutely-perfect revealer.* "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son." *He knows* the Father, and he only. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son of the Father, he only hath declared him." The old fathers and prophets knew a little of God; angels know a little of God. No finite being, after the study of millenniums, will ever know him fully. Christ knows the Father, he knows him perfectly — he alone comprehends the Infinite. (4.) *That he is the indispensable revealer.* "No man *can* know the Father, but he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Christ is the LOGOS. The sinner will be forever ignorant of God unless he reveals him. It is he alone that "opens the book" of the Divine character and history to the universe, and page after page expounds it.

INVITATION TO THE HEAVY LADEN; OR, THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY. (Vs 28-30.)

In the three preceding verses which we have commented upon, Christ appears in his relation to the great God. Here he appears in his relation to humanity. As the Divine Philanthropist, he looks with an eye of unutterable tenderness and love upon an afflicted and sin-burdened world, and earnestly invites every distressed soul to come to him for rest. The depth and glow — the universality and tenderness of the love expressed in this utterance are enough to induce a fear, in a thoughtful expositor, lest he should not do justice to his

love — lest his coldness should conceal its ardor; his selfishness, its freeness; his narrowness, its universality; his hardness, its exquisite pathos. It requires benevolence to preach benevolence, tenderness to preach tenderness, pathos to preach pathos, the spirit of Christ to preach Christ.

The words teach us three truths in relation to Christianity: First, that Christianity implies moral distress; secondly, that it propounds moral relief; and thirdly, that it demands moral effort.

I. CHRISTIANITY IMPLIES MORAL DISTRESS. It addresses itself to those who "labor and are heavy laden." In order to understand clearly the class to whom Christ appeals, we may glance at the various classes of moral intelligences. They are divided into three:

1. *Those who have no burden.* These are angels and sainted men. Christianity is not addressed to these. Angels never required it. The original religion of the universe has ever been theirs, and that religion does not imply moral distress. Sainted men once required it, but it has done its redeeming work with them; they have passed into a higher world, and are placed under another and a sublimer dispensation.

2. *Those who have heavy burdens, but which are not removable.* The Bible gives us to believe that there are spirits in some dark and accursed part of this universe who are sinking everlastinglly beneath a load of guilt, and for whom there is no hope. How appalling the aspect, how crushing the weight, how galling the pressure of that mountain of guilt, which rests upon the spirits of the lost! Wretched spirits! they labor and are heavy laden, and no invitation of mercy is addressed to them — no hope of relief is held out to them.

3. *Those who have heavy burdens, but which can be removed.* These are sinners on earth. There are heavy burdens resting upon men here. None but God can tell the amount of trial that is surging through human souls every moment. Some are suffering under one burden and some under another. There are millions on this lovely earth to whom life itself is a burden — a heavy, crushing burden. There are *physical* burdens — infirmities and diseases of the body; there are *social* burdens — the care of the family, the claims of business, the inconstancy of friends, the hollowness and selfishness of the world; there are *political* burdens — the enactments of injustice and the tyranny of despotism are heavy burdens upon the heart of nations; there are *religious*

burdens — the unmeaning routine, the painful pilgrimages, the costly sacrifice, imposed by a wily and wicked priesthood, are burdens on the spirits of millions. Such burdens as these often make life intolerable, and induce men to exclaim with Job: "I loathe life, I would not live always." But all these burdens may be felt, and often are where there is no *deep sense of sin*. The victims are weary of these burdens, not because of the sin which is the cause of them, but because of the inconvenience and pain which they produce. But that which gives pressure and galling force to all these burdens is a *sense of sin*. There are men under these fair heavens, on this earth, where the Savior of the world lived and labored, suffered and died, and where his blessed Gospel is faithfully preached, who feel that sin is the burden of all their burdens. They are sick of pleasure, they are tired of their life. They are found at the altar of paganism, in the mosque of the Mohammedan, as well as in different parts of Christendom, crying out in different languages, but with the same emphasis of soul: "Wherewithal shall we come before the Lord, and how shall we bow ourselves before the most high God?" This is the class which Christianity addresses — which Christ here invites. Blessed be God for providing a remedy in Christianity for this class! O, ye distressed souls, tried by the world, tempted by Satan, smitten by conscience, ashamed of the past, afraid of the future — whose heavens are cloudy and seem charged with storms, listen to the invitation of Christ and accept it. "Come unto me all ye," etc.

II. CHRISTIANITY PROVIDES MORAL RELIEF. "Ye shall find rest unto your souls" Rest for the soul. It does not promise that those who come to Christ shall be at once released from all *corporeal* burdens incident to our mortal life. The laws of the material universe are regardless of moral distinctions. The good and the evil, the just and the unjust, material nature treats alike. But what is the rest for the soul? Is it a deadening of the sensibilities so as to prevent us from feeling acutely the evils of life? No. Christianity instead of deadening our sensibilities quickens them. Nor is it the rest of inactivity. The rest of the soul is not the rest of inaction; it means neither insensitiveness nor inactivity. What is it then?

1. *It is rest from all self-seeking.* All men are working; labor is a Divine institution; the world is full of action. Man's curse is not that he labors — labor itself is a blessing — but that he labors from the unhappy impulses of selfishness. Every man is seeking his own — each individual makes himself an end. This is the source of distress. Because of this, the individual worker is full

of a thousand anxieties, and because of this, society is ever in commotion. There are as many conflicting interests as there are men. The man who comes to Christ, while he does not cease from work, ceases "from his own work." He works from love to God and his universe. His meat and his drink are to do the will of his Father. *True, benevolent labor is rest to the soul.*

2. *Rest from all secular anxieties.* How much distress is in our world from this source! Jesus will give rest from these anxieties to all who come unto him. He does it by pledging his disciples every needful blessing: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," etc. He does it by assuring them of a parental Providence that adorns the lilies of the valley and feeds the birds of heaven. He does it by giving them the consciousness that this world is, in their case, preparatory to a better, and that "all things work together for their good." "Thus they glory in tribulation." They know that Jesus is their guide; that the Eternal is their Father; that the universe is their home, and that everlasting life is their heritage.

3. *Rest from religious sacrifices.* By religious sacrifices we mean whatever a man does in connection with religion, not cheerfully and happily. How much of this kind of work is done in connection with religion! The Church is "heavy laden" because of these sacrifices; because of this she moves as a wearied traveler, with stiff limb and slow step. In every Church there is the complaint of too many collections. Why is this? Not because the demand is really too great, but because the spirit of religion is gone. You must translate the idea of sacrifice into that of thanksgiving, and religious burdens will be removed. Then the Church will move more cheerfully. She will take the wings of an angel, sweep the hemispheres of the globe, and preach the everlasting Gospel to all nations and kindreds of people.

4. *Rest from all legal obedience.* There are two kinds of obedience to law — the literal and the spiritual. The former depends upon specific directions; it is doing *just as much* as is in the letter, and *because* it is in the letter. This obedience is merely outward and mechanical; it is in the knee, tongue, or head, but not in the heart. It is always a burden. This was the observance of the Jews. The other is spiritual. Supreme love to the Lawgiver is the motive and inspiration. This is happiness. There are two sons, children of the same father, living under the same roof, subject to the same domestic laws. One has lost all filial love; his father has no longer any hold upon his affections. The other is full of the sentiment; the filial instinct in him is almost passion. How different is the

obedience of these two sons! The one does nothing but what is found in the command, and does that merely as a matter of form; he would not do it if he could help it. The other does it not because it is in the command, but because it is the wish of him he loves. He goes beyond the written law — he anticipates his father's will. Obedience is burden in the one case, but delight in the other. Much of the work now being done in the Christian Church is like the obedience of the unloving son. It is done because it is commanded—done grudgingly and unhappily. Christ removes this. He breathes that spirit of love that makes obedience blessedness.

5. Rest from all forebodings of conscience. A guilty conscience is the burden of burdens. It makes the soul gloomy and tempestuous. It makes death terrible, the grave a land of darkness, eternity an intolerable idea. Christianity removes this. "Therefore being justified by faith," etc.

III. CHRISTIANITY REQUIRES MORAL EFFORT. "Come unto me," etc. If the burden is to be removed, *something must be done*. And what? Three things:

1. *A spiritual approximation to Christ.* "Come unto me." It would be trite to say this is not to be regarded in a material but in a spiritual sense.

2. *A spiritual learning of Christ.* Of all things nothing is so important to man as learning. Without some learning he is little better than a brute. Of all learning there is none so important as religious learning. Of religious learning there is none to be compared with that taught by Christ. He is the Logos. "Never man spake, like this man," etc.

3. *Spiritual obedience to Christ.* "Take my yoke," etc. Every man has a moral master. He is under some yoke. The governing passion is your moral master — *sensuality, worldliness, fame, and superstition*. These are yokes—heavy yokes, too. Christ's yoke is easy; it does not exhaust your strength; it gives new energy. It does not gall; it inspires with happiness. Come to Christ. *Mourner, doubter, backslider, penitent* — come to Christ.

CHAPTER XII.

§ 23. THE DISCIPLES PLUCK EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH DAY.

Verses 1-8. (COMPARE MARK ii, 23-28; LUKE vi, 1-5.)

(1) AT that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were a hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, [1] and to eat. (2) But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day. (3) But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was a hungered, and they that were with him; (4) how he entered into the house of God, [2] and did eat the shewbread, [3] which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? (5) Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? (6) But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater [4] than the Temple. (7) But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. (8) For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.

[1] This word does not mean what we call Indian corn, or maize, which was not then known, but grain in general, including wheat, rye, and barley. Dr. Thomson remarks: "I have often seen my muleteers, as we passed along the wheat-fields, pluck off ears, rub them in their hands, and eat the grains unroasted, just as the apostles are said to have done."]

[2] Here the house of the priest Abimelech at Nobe, where the ark of the covenant then was.]

[3] The pieces of shewbread were twelve in number, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. They were laid every Sabbath in the sanctuary by the priest, who performed the service of the week. As soon as the new pieces were brought the old ones were removed and eaten by the priests, who alone had the right to eat them. (Levit. xxiv, 8.)]

[4] The reading μέιζον, something greater, is preferred to μέιζων, a greater one, (mast.) The sense, however, is the same. A superiority is claimed, which no created being could properly have assumed.]

VERSE 1. AT THAT TIME. This phrase can not be taken here as giving the exact time, as it does in chapter xi, 25, where the context decides. Robinson places the event during the journey of our Lord from Jerusalem to Galilee, after the cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. But as, according to three Evangelists, it occurred just before the healing of the man with the withered hand, which healing took place in the synagogue at Capernaum, we have to place it a little later, most probably after our Lord's return from his first circuit in Galilee. (See Synoptic Table, No. 54.) — **ON THE SABBATH.** Luke specifies this Sabbath as the second Sabbath after the first, (*ἐν σαββάτῳ δευτεροπρώτῳ*.) The various interpretations of this singular expression, which occurs no where else, see in Luke. It gives us no chronological aid.

VERSE 2. THEY SAID UNTO HIM. According to Luke the Pharisees address the disciples. But there is no contradiction in this. Our Lord and his disciples may have been addressed by different persons, or the indirect attack upon the disciples may be represented by Luke as a direct one, without effecting at all the truthfulness of his account. — **WHICH IS NOT LAWFUL.** The act of eating was no violation of the Sabbath, nor was the plucking of the ears an infringement of the right of property. (Deut. xxiii, 25.) But the Talmud says that it must not be done on the Sabbath, on the ground of Ex. xvi, 22.

VERSE 3. Our Lord meets these caviling hypocrites, first, by quoting an authoritative example from their own history, as if he had said: "You profess to be governed by the Scriptures, and to have a profound reverence for David. Have you not read what he did? If you condemn my disciples, you must condemn much more David." — On the occasion referred to (1 Sam. xxi, 1-7) David did eat the shew-bread, which the priests alone could lawfully eat, (Deut. xxiv, 6, 9,) and thus violated the letter of the ceremonial law. As hot bread had been put in on the day of David's arrival, and as the shewbread was changed every Sabbath for the benefit of the priests, it is to be presumed that David's act was committed on the Sabbath; thus the reference to him was appropriate in a double respect. Perhaps our Lord referred to David also because he was an acknowledged type of the Messiah.

VERSE 4. Our Lord's argument is from the greater to the less, namely: "David broke a ceremonial law enacted by God himself; my disciples have not done this: now if David could, in a case of necessity, set aside a positive Divine

enactment without sinning, how much more are my disciples justifiable under similar circumstances in departing from an arbitrary human enactment!"

VERSE 5. According to Num. xxviii, 9, the priests were obliged to sacrifice every Sabbath two lambs and to place on the table fresh shewbread baked on the same day, so that they had actually more to do on the Sabbath than on a week-day. But if all work on the Sabbath was forbidden absolutely, then sacrifices offered on that day were unlawful, though required by express Divine authority. But to assert this would be self-contradictory. The legitimate inference is drawn in the next verse.

VERSE 6. In verse 3 the Lord had defended the conduct of his disciples by an argument from the greater to the less; in verse 6 this argument is from the "less" — that is, the Temple, whose service must be performed on the Sabbath, (v. 5,) to the "greater" — that is, himself. If it is lawful for the servants of the Temple to do certain necessary works on the Sabbath, then the servants of him, who is more than the Temple, who is the true temple of God on earth, have a right, while following me, to satisfy their hunger.

VERSE 7. Having thus vindicated the conduct of his disciples, the Lord proceeds to expose the source from which the charges of the Pharisees proceeded. They were strangers to love and mercy, which God requires, Hos. vi, 6,) while they were such sticklers for the sacrificial worship and the ceremonial law. The Lord had called their attention once before to this passage, (Matt. ix, 13,) he now calls their attention to it again in stronger language, sternly rebuking them for their ignorance in spiritual matters and the wrong committed. The fundamental idea is here also: "If ye had learned to understand that the object of the Sabbath and of sacrifices is not to enable man to merit a reward from God by scrupulously complying with all enactments concerning them, but that God has given both — Sabbath and sacrificial worship—to man to show his mercy toward him, and that his benevolent purposes must be subserved by the observance of the Divine commandments; ye would not have brought a charge against my guiltless disciples — on the contrary, you would have felt compassion for them, while they suffered want in their labors for the kingdom of God.

VERSE 8. The intermediate sentence in Mark ii, 27, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," has led some critics to take the term "Son of man" here as identical with "man," and they have, accordingly,

interpreted the passage as teaching that "as the Sabbath was appointed for man's benefit, it is his prerogative to regulate and use it for his own advantage." But this view must at once be rejected, for, 1. It would be absurd to assume that every man has a right to abrogate or suspend a Divine institution at his own discretion. 2. The expression, "Son of man," which occurs eighty-eight times in the New Testament, uniformly means the Messiah, and there is not the slightest reason to understand it here in a different sense. The argument is: Since the Sabbath was an ordinance instituted for the use and benefit of man, the Son of man, who, though the Lord from heaven, (1 Cor. xv, 47,) has taken upon him full and complete manhood, and is, therefore, the great representative and head of humanity, has this institution under his own power. As Christ showed himself the Lord of the Temple by abrogating the Temple and sacrificial service, so he showed himself also the Lord of the Sabbath, by transferring the day of rest from the seventh to the first day of the week, and its proper designation is *the Lord's day.* (Rev. i, 10.) On the subject of the Sabbath we shall have to say more in our comments on Mark ii. 28.

§ 24. JESUS HEALS A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH.

Verses 9-21. (COMPARE MARK iii, 1-12; LUKE vi, 6-11.)

(9) **AND** when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: (10) And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. [1] And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him. (11) And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit [2] on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? (12) How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well [3] on the Sabbath days. (13) Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. (14) Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. (15) But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; [4] (16) and charged them that they should not make him known: (17) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, (18) Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my

spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. (19) He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. (20) A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth^[5] judgment unto victory. (21) And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

[1 Properly, *who had a withered hand*. The Greek word means literally dried up. It was a species of paralysis, wherein the member affected grows stiff and motionless, retaining the same position it was in when paralyzed. In this way Jeroboam was affected. (1 Kings xiii, 4-6.) This disease was considered incurable.]

[2 This refers to cisterns dug in the fields, into which animals sometimes fell.]

[3 That is, to perform an act of mercy.]

[4 All that were afflicted with diseases and desired to be cured.]

[5 Greek, ἐκβάλλειν, to command, to cause to issue in victory.]

VERSE 9. The adverb THENCE shows, as in chapters xi, 1, and xv, 19, that Jesus took another journey. It does not follow from it that the event took place immediately after the one preceding. Luke places it on another, probably the following Sabbath. The locality where it occurred is not mentioned.

VERSE 10. This narrative is found in Mark and Luke, with some variety in details and some additional particulars. According to the accounts of these two Evangelists, the scribes and Pharisees were watching our Lord to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath. Christ, knowing their thoughts, ordered the man to stand forth. It was at this point that the question was asked: "Is it lawful?" etc. Matthew ascribes it to the Pharisees, the other two Evangelists to our Lord himself. Both statements are consistent. The Pharisees may have simply indicated the question by their looks and gestures, or our Lord may have repeated their question emphatically.— HIS HAND WITHERED. According to Luke it was the right hand.— IS IT LAWFUL? The Greek construction, εἰ ἔξιστι — that is, if it, is lawful — is elliptical, and something must be supplied, either "We should like to know if," etc., or, "If it is lawful, heal the man." According to the traditions of the Jews, the sick should receive medical help on the Sabbath only when a delay would endanger his life. The school of

Shammai, however, forbade all help unconditionally. — THAT THEY MIGHT ACCUSE HIM; that is, lodge a complaint against him with the local tribunal, (chap. v, 21,) where they were also the judges.

VERSES 11, 12. These two verses belong together, and form a double question, as in chap. vii, 9, 10. The question of the Lord evidently indicates that the practice in question was, in his days, both lawful and common. Afterward, however, it was forbidden in the Gemara — possibly in consequence of these words of our Savior — and planks were laid by which the animal might get out. In the second part of the double question and the answer given to it, the Lord reduces a legion of casuistic questions, on lawful and unlawful acts on the Sabbath, to a plain, general principle: Thou shalt do no evil, not injure thy neighbor, even not by withholding from him thy helping hand.

VERSE 13. From Mark we learn that, before he gave this command to the afflicted man, he looked around upon them with holy indignation. — STRETCH FORTH THY HAND. Inasmuch as the attempt to stretch forth the hand and the miraculous power to do so were simultaneous, the Lord deprived his enemies of all legal ground of charging him with a violation of the Sabbath. It is, at the same time, the clearest and most forcible illustration of the co-operation of Divine grace with the human will. It is the duty of the penitent sinner to obey at once the injunctions of the Gospel, and not to plead his inability. Where there is willingness to obey, the Lord will grant the required strength. — AND IT WAS RESTORED WHOLE, LIKE AS THE OTHER. The stretching forth of the hand was the evidence that the cure had been effected by Divine power during the act.

VERSE 14. THEN THE PHARISEES WENT OUT. They left the synagogue pretending to be disgusted with the violation of the Sabbath. Thus they hardened their hearts against the influences of Divine truth. Luke aptly adds: "They were filled with madness." An aroused conscience manifests itself either by penitence or by bitter resentment. — This is the first mention of a counsel taken by the Pharisees to put Jesus to death. How intense their enmity to Christ was, appears from their associating with the Herodians, (Mark iii, 6,) their political opponents, who upheld the Roman dominion, and among whom there were, most probably, many Sadducees.

VERSE 15. According to Mark, our Lord went with his disciples to the Sea of Galilee. He did so not from fear, but because the time of his suffering

and death had not yet come. He withdrew, however, only from his enemies, not from doing good to the people, as Mark describes more fully.

VERSE 16. The end which the Lord had in view in this prohibition, undoubtedly, was to avoid notoriety and popular enthusiasm, in order to give no occasion to his enemies to shorten his ministry prematurely.

VERSES 17, 18. The quotation from Isaiah xlii, 1-4, is not literal. When longer quotations from the Old Testament are made, those parts are generally singled out that are to the point. It has great similarity with Isaiah xi, 1, etc. — MY SERVANT — that is, the servant of Jehovah — was a general designation of the Messiah in the Old Testament, and was retained a long time by the Jewish Christians. Its Greek rendering is, *παῖς θεῶν*, which must be translated by *servant*, not *child* of God. The Hebrew term is, *ebhedth Jehovah*. The Logos took upon himself the form of a servant. In his mediatorial character he was subject unto the Father. — WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; that is, for the office and work of the Messiah. — MY BELOVED, IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL PLEASED. Upon whom the whole paternal affection continually rests, not only as the only-begotten Son of the Father, but also on account of his mediatorial office. These are, almost to the very letter, the words that were spoken from heaven at the baptism of Jesus. (Chap. iii, 17.) — I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM. This was fulfilled at the baptism of Jesus, (iii, 16,) and John testified (iii, 24) that he had not received the Spirit by measure. If the Logos, in assuming human nature, had retained the same mode of existence as before his incarnation, he would have stood in no need of the Holy Spirit. But we are taught (Phil. ii, 6, 7) that "He who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, emptied himself, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;" he, therefore, needed, and received, without measure, the Spirit, to qualify him for his mediatorial office. — AND HE SHALL SHOW JUDGMENT UNTO THE GENTILES. By *judgment* we have to understand all that is implied in his Messianic office as the founder of the new covenant. Owen remarks aptly: "We find, in Mark iii, 8, that of the multitude which followed him to the sea, there were some from about Tyre and Sidon. The Gentiles — in this case, probably, proselytes — were thus already beginning to enjoy that Gospel which, in subsequent times, was to be preached to them more fully by Christ's apostles and ministers."

VERSE 19. HE SHALL NOT STRIVE, like a warrior, for supreme power. — **NOR CRY**, like a boisterous demagogue. — **NEITHER SHALL ANY MAN HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS**; that is, he will not frequent public resorts to harangue the people, as the ambitious do. By quietly retreating from before the rage of his enemies the Lord fulfilled this prophecy. The whole prophecy, however, is, as Alexander justly remarks, descriptive not so much of our Savior's mild and modest demeanor as of the nature of his kingdom and the means by which it was to be established. (Comp. Luke xvii, 20; Zech. iv, 6; John xviii, 36, 37.)

VERSE 20. A BRUISED REED SHALL HE NOT BREAK. The bruised reed, in the first place, represents the poor and the oppressed, the Jewish people in general, as weighed down and crushed by the traditions of their rulers. The import of the prophecy is, that the Messiah will not oppress the poor and weak, as victorious warriors do. In the next place, it is also an emblem of the broken and contrite heart. Jesus treats the sinner with wisdom and heart-felt compassion, cautiously and tenderly. — **AND SMOKING FLAX SHALL HE NOT QUENCH.** Another metaphor, which beautifully sets forth the Savior's kindness and condescension toward penitent souls, though the spark of Divine life may have become almost extinct. Christ knows how to strengthen even the weakest desire of salvation, how to rekindle every spark of faith, however weak. He suffers none to perish who wills it not himself. — **TILL HE SEND FORTH JUDGMENT UNTO VICTORY.** Till he cause judgment — that is, his righteous government — to issue in victory, till truth shall reign triumphantly over the whole earth.

VERSE 21. The Hebrew has for **GENTILES**, the *isles*, whereby the Old Testament phraseology understands far-distant nations. For **NAME** the Hebrew has *law* or *doctrine*, which, however, does not alter the sense, since trusting in the name of God is to obey the law, or, as Isaiah says, to wait for the law. The meaning is the same; namely, that the Gospel shall be preached to and be believed by the Gentiles.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

I. Upon the passage in verses 14-21 the Homilist has an excellent expository discourse. The subject, the glory of true gentleness as exhibited in

Christ, is discussed under the following heads: The gentleness of Christ, 1. Existed in the presence of the most malignant enemies; 2. Was sustained amid the activities of immense labor; 3. Appeared in the unostentatious and tender manner in which he prosecuted the sublimest mission; 4. Demonstrates his special connection with God; and, 5. Will one day win the confidence of the world.

II. The rejection of the Gospel in one place is often the occasion of its reception in another, (v. 15.) The rejecter acts with regard to himself like the man that turns a fertilizing stream from his own fields. He does not thereby dry it up; it will fertilize some other fields. If a man hates the light of the sun he may resort to a dungeon; but the sun will shine and bless millions, although he is in darkness.

III. Some, on hearing the Gospel, despair of their salvation. Others are dejected, because their faith, their knowledge, their love appear to them too little. Christ raises and encourages such souls. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench." The very lowest degree of grace is an inexpressible blessing, a gift of God, and precious in his sight. A spark is better than absolute darkness, and a weak faith better than none at all. If there is but a spark of grace in the heart, like smoking flax, let us pour in oil, and pray to God that the breeze of his Spirit may kindle it into a flame of holy love.

§ 25. MIRACULOUS CURE OF A MAN THAT WAS BLIND AND DUMB. JESUS' REPLY TO THE BLASPHEMY OF THE PHARISEES, AND THEIR DEMAND OF A SIGN FROM HEAVEN.

OF the belief in the existence of a power hostile to God and bent on the ruin of man there are traces in all nations, and especially in that nation which was favored with special revelations of God. When the Messiah, who was to bruise the serpent's head, appeared, it was but natural that the powers of darkness should rally all their forces in order to defeat the object of his coming. It is for this reason that we meet in that time with more demoniacs — that is, with persons of whom evil spirits had taken bodily possession—than in any earlier or later period. Now, if Jesus, by a word of command, was able to free these wretched men from their misery, every one that had his eyes open and the full use of his mental faculties, could see at once that he was the Messiah. The

record of such a cure we have in the following section of our chapter. A similar one was related in chapter ix, 32, but in that case the demoniac was dumb; here he is dumb and blind. What Luke records (xi, 14-20) is so similar to the account of Matthew, that most harmonists consider them as referring to the same event. (See the note to No. 66 in the Synoptic Table.) Mark gives us in chapter iii, 23-29, a portion of our Lord's remarks made on this occasion, without recording the miracle itself, or the causes that called forth the remarks. In Matthew alone we have the whole discourse of the Savior. At first, up to verse 30, he repels the infamous charge by showing its absurdity and impossibility. He might have treated such assailants with the contempt of silence, yet he replied from compassion for their immortal souls, and in order to make, at the same time, their unbelief inexcusable. From the argumentative part of the discourse he proceeds to show the criminality of the conduct of his enemies, and to what dangers those are exposed who persevere in acting against their better convictions, and this is the fundamental idea from verse 30-45.

Verses 22-45. (COMPARE MARK iii, 20-30; LUKE xi, 14-26.)

(22) **THEN was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.** (23) **And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?** (24) **But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.** (25) **And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:** (26) **And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?** (27) **And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.** (28) **But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.** (29) **Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.** (30) **He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.** (31) **Wherfore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the**

blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. (32)
And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.
(33) Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. (34) O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. (35) A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. (36) But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. (37) For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (38) Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. (39) But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous ^[1] generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: (40) For as Jonas was three days and three nights ^[2] in the whale's ^[3] belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (41) The men of Nineveh ^[4] shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. (42) The queen of the south ^[5] shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth ^[6] to hear the wisdom ^[7] of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here. (43) When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ^[8] seeking rest, and findeth none. (44) Then he saith, I will return into my house ^[9] from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, ^[10] swept, and garnished. ^[11] (45) Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven ^[12] other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell ^[13] there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

[1] The covenant relation of the Jews to Jehovah is represented throughout the Old Testament under the figure of a conjugal relation, and

consequently every apostasy from God as an adultery. Though the Jews, in the times of Christ, were not guilty of idolatry, they proved their apostasy from God by their rejection of the Messiah.]

[2 According to the Jerusalem Talmud, "one hour more is reckoned as a day, and one day more as a year." Again: "A day and night together make up an okhah, or νυχθήμερον, and any part of such a period is counted as the whole." With the Jews the day closed at six o'clock, P.M.; now Christ was in the grave part of Friday — that is, he was buried before six o'clock, when the Sabbath commenced — the whole of the Sabbath and part of the succeeding day—that is, from six o'clock of Saturday evening to Sunday morning, consequently three νυχθήμερα — three days and three nights. (See Gen. i, 4; 1 Sam. xxx, 12.) — The learned archaeologist, Dr. Seyffarth, contends that Christ died on Thursday, the 19th of March, and rose on Sunday morning, the 22d, and that he, consequently, lay in the grave three days and three nights. On the day of our Lord's death see Gen. Intro., § 35, C.

[3 The word translated "whale," is κῆτος, corresponding to the Hebrew *dagh gadhol*, neither of which means the whale exclusively, but "a sea-monster," here in all probability the shark; and there are instances on record that men were swallowed by sharks and afterward saved.]

[4 This celebrated city, situated on the banks of the Tigris, was the rival of Babylon. The walls are said to have been one hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots might be driven on them abreast. On these walls stood fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet high, rendering the city well-nigh impregnable. Its ruins are seen on the eastern bank of the Tigris, opposite to Mosul, a modern city.]

[5 Called in the Old Testament the Queen of Shebah. (1 Kings x, 1.) Josephus says that she was queen of all Egypt and Ethiopia; that is, of Meroe, whose queens were called Candace, according to Pliny. An Abyssinian tradition agreeing with this adds, that her name was Maqueda, and she became a proselyte at Jerusalem. The Arabians also claim her, and she is called in the Koran Balkis. As Shebah is in Arabia Felix, near the shores of the Red Sea and rich in spice, gold, and precious stones, it is probable that the Arabian tradition is the true one.]

[6 An expression suited to those days; in consequence of the limited geographical knowledge and the poor facilities of traveling, countries were then comparatively unknown to each other, which are in our days close together, and in daily intercourse with each other.]

[7 That is, the extensive knowledge and learning of Solomon. (See 1 Kings iv, 29-34; Acts vii, 22; Matt. xiii, 54.)]

[8 Waterless deserts.]

[9 The body and soul of the demoniac.]

[10 Literally, unemployed, unoccupied, and thus ready for his reception.]

[11 Furnished, fitted up.]

[12 Seven is often put for an indefinite round number.]

[13 A permanent abode is indicated by the Greek word.]

VERSE 22. THEN. This conjunction is often used by Matthew in an indefinite sense. — It is expressly stated that the dumbness and blindness were the consequence of the possession by a demon, and, as a matter of course, he could speak and see as soon as Christ had dislodged the demon by the power of his word. The cause being removed, the consequence also ceased.

VERSE 23. We may suppose that the descent of Jesus from David through Joseph (see the introductory remarks on the genealogy) was known by the people, and his mighty works necessarily led to the belief that he was the predicted Messiah.

VERSE 24. BUT WHEN THE PHARISEES HEARD IT; that is, the inference drawn from the miracle, the reality of which they could not call in question. Their intense hostility led them to make the charge that Jesus acted in concert with Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Mark states that this charge was made by scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, meaning, no doubt, such scribes as belonged to the pharisaic party; Luke xi, 15, restricts the slander to "some of them." It is evident that the general excitement of the public mind, produced by the ministry of Christ, had become highly alarming to the Jewish hierarchy.

VERSE 25. EVERY KINGDOM. "Jesus does not deny," as Trench remarks, "that the kingdom of Satan, in respect to itself, is infinite contradiction and division, but only asserts that in relation to the kingdom of goodness, it is at one: there is one life in it and one soul in relation to that. But just as a nation or kingdom may embrace within itself numberless parties, divisions, discords, jealousies, and heart-burnings, yet if it is to subsist as a nation at all, it must not, *as regards other nations*, have lost its sense of unity; when it does so, of necessity it falls to pieces and perishes." The same is true within the narrower sphere of a family, when it is arrayed against its own interests or existence.

VERSE 26. The inference from the general principle laid down in the preceding verse is stated in the most forcible manner. Satan can not be at war with himself. The demoniac state is traced directly to Satan, as his legitimate work. "It can not possibly be his object to give me the power to destroy his own work, wherever I meet it, as I do." This meets the objection that Satan in his craft might possibly, in an insulated case, put on the garb and acts of an adversary to himself for his own ulterior purposes.

VERSE 27. The argument takes here another turn. "**BY WHOM DO YOUR CHILDREN CAST THEM OUT?**" The "*children*" of the Pharisees are their disciples, a mode of expression common among the Jews. (See 2 Kings ii, 3.) Both before and after the times of Christ, Jewish exorcists traversed the country pretending to cast out demons by the "authority of the most high and terrible Name." The question arises, whether the casting out by the disciples of the Pharisees were real or pretended exorcisms. Most of the expositors deny their reality, and contend that our Lord reasoned simply from the stand-point of the Pharisees, whose disciples claimed also to cast out devils: "On what ground can you venture to accuse me of collusion with the devil, when your own sons claim to exercise the self-same power?" We prefer the views of Alford, who says: "It would leave an unworthy impression on the reader, and one very open to the cavils of unbelief, were we to sanction the idea that our Lord solemnly compared with his own miracles, and should have drawn inferences from, a system of imposture, which *on that supposition* these Pharisees must have known to be such. The difficulty, on the other hand, which many find in admitting the reality of those exorcisms by the Pharisees, has arisen mainly from forgetting that miracles, *as such*, are no *test of truth*, but have been permitted to, and prophesied of, false religions and teachers. (Ex. vii, 22; viii, 7; Matt. xxiv, 24, etc.; Deut. xiii, 1-5.)" Though we may, however, admit the reality of these Jewish exorcisms, it is evident that they were greatly inferior to those effected by Jesus, for we read (ch. ix, 33) that the people beholding the casting out of an evil spirit by Christ, exclaimed in their amazement, "It was never *so* seen in Israel." The reference by our Lord to the power claimed by his enemies to cast out devils, was a solemn and affectionate appeal to their conscience, if it could possibly be roused.

VERSE 28. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME UNTO YOU — more literally, has come upon you suddenly. The whole is a clear deduction from the preceding verse: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, which your

own premises almost oblige you to admit, then you have by these very acts of mine the most conclusive evidence that the kingdom of God, the times of the Messiah; the order of things in which the Divine element is signally defeating the powers of darkness have come upon you."

VERSE 29. OR ELSE is in Greek simply *or*, and introduces a new illustration of the argument of verses 25 and 26, where he had proved to them that he did not act in concert with Satan, because to assume that would involve the absurdity that Satan desired to destroy his own work. Or if you assume that Satan did not submit to this voluntarily, it necessarily follows that I am his conqueror. The whole is an allusion to Isa. xlix, where the deliverance of Israel from its oppressors is made an emblem of its spiritual deliverance from the powers of darkness by Jehovah himself. But the deliverance of demoniacs was only a prophetic emblem and token of what was to come; namely, of the great victory through the death and resurrection of Christ. (See John xiv, 30; xii, 31, 32; Heb. ii, 14, 15; Eph. iv, 8-10.) Since the work of redemption is completed the devil's house — that is, the world — is spoiled, and he is robbed of his goods — that is, of men, whom he uses as his tools and instruments and claims as his property. This process of despoiling Satan is carried on at a constantly-increasing rate by the Lord through *his* instruments, those very men whom he has delivered from the power of Satan. The words of our Lord imply also, by way of application, that no man can, in his own strength, overcome the strong one; it can only be done by Divine strength.

VERSE 30. The Lord applies now the axiom announced in verse 25 to himself and his own kingdom; the import of his words is: "Those that are mine must be in vital union with me. In the struggle between my kingdom and that of Satan, there can be no neutral party." This saying is no way inconsistent with that in Mark ix, 30; Luke ix, 50, (see note on Mark.) — AND HE THAT GATHERETH NOT WITH ME, SCATTERETH ABROAD. That he who is with him also gathereth with him the Lord takes at once for granted. A man that is really in Christ, can not but gather always and every-where for him, even without knowing it himself; his light shines, his unction sends forth its delicious odor; he leads others to the Lord, and encourages them to cleave unto the Lord; he unites what is isolated and divided; he feeds and watereth for the great harvest. But those that are not in and with Christ, that do not gather with him, do scatter; they are against him and his work, and destroy it as far as they can. They themselves depart wider and wider from the kingdom of God, dissever-

others from God and drag them with themselves into ruin, and are thus both actively and passively efficient instruments in the hands of Satan.

VERSES 31, 32. WHEREFORE I SAY UNTO YOU. This being the case, there being no middle ground between my kingdom and the kingdom of Satan, and seeing that you have taken a position antagonistic to me, I now solemnly warn you that your opposition to me, if it is persevered in, will lead to a state that excludes pardon or forgiveness. — ALL MANNER OF SIN. That the forgiveness of all manner of sin is not promised, irrespective of faith and repentance on the part of the sinner, is self-evident. — BLASPHEMY is sin intensified, inasmuch as it is a more direct opposition against God and the Divine as such, and implies malice and the intent to hurt — **βλασφημεῖν**
βλάπτειν τὴν φήμην — that is, to ruin one's reputation; nevertheless, it also is pardonable, provided it does not progress to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. The degree of guilt attaching to blasphemy is not conditioned by the rank of the person against whom it is committed, but by the higher degree of divine light and the corresponding clearer consciousness and willfulness with which the blasphemer acts. — THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST is variously defined. We shall first give those definitions which we see ourselves compelled unqualifiedly to reject. First. One view is that this awful sin is the very thing which the Pharisees did on the occasion in question; namely, to ascribe the miracles wrought by Christ, whose reality they did not dare to question, to the agency and power of Satan. According to this view the sin in question was, as a matter of course, possible only in the days of Christ's sojourn on earth, since only then his miracles could be ascribed by eye-witnesses to satanic agencies. This view, however, we must reject for the following reasons. The blasphemy of which the Pharisees were guilty, was committed against the Son, not against the Holy Ghost, the miracles wrought by Christ bearing witness of the Son, not of the Holy Ghost. It is, in the next place, worthy of note, that before the Pharisees committed the offense, which induced our Savior to make this awful declaration, God had never warned men against a sin unpardonable in its nature. On the supposition that the Pharisees had committed the sin in question, Christ would have acted here against the whole analogy of God's dealing with man. Add to this what Stier says in refutation of this view: "From the warning '*I say unto you*' it is clear that the Pharisees were but on the fair way to commit this heaviest of all offenses, or if this should remain doubtful, this much, at least, is certain, that the unpardonable

sin is much more possible in our days than it was in those of the Pharisees. Or is, in our days, the convincing manifestation of the Spirit in word and power less than it was then in the person of the Lord on earth? Does not the distinction drawn between the 'Son of man' and 'the Holy Ghost' rather clearly point to the days of the Holy Ghost after the days of the Son of man? The more powerfully the Comforter convinces and convicts — ἐλέγχειν (John xvi, 8) has this twofold meaning — the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; the greater the work is, which the apostles wrought, compared with Christ's personal ministry on earth; the more comprehensive the scale is on which Christ carries on his work in the history of the world and the Church through his true members, and the brighter the evidence of its divinity grows from year to year: the greater becomes the possibility of committing the unpardonable sin by rejecting this testimony of the Spirit wantonly and persistently. The blasphemy against the Spirit has been committed now and then since the days of Christ, but it will be *the* sin of the last times, the reign of absolute hatred against Christ and his religion." Secondly. We must by the "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" not understand every willful and personal offense against the third person of the Trinity. Every sinful act every act of blasphemy against the Father and the Son, is also a sin against the Holy Ghost. But all this is pardonable, as well as the sin of grieving the Spirit in his specific office by unbelief and disobedience. Witness the case of Paul before his conversion; of the Jews on the day of Pentecost, many of whom, though they had spoken against the Holy Ghost, were converted; the words spoken by Peter to Simon, the sorcerer, who wanted to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost with money, exhorting him to repent, etc. In the text under consideration, more than elsewhere, the Lord throws the door of the New Covenant wide open in opposition to the Old Covenant, where the blasphemous use of God's name was punished with death, admitting of no expiatory sacrifice. Thirdly. It is not to be supposed that a person commits the unpardonable sin and ruins his soul irretrievably by the mere utterance of certain blasphemous words, if it is objected that it is said in the very next verse, that "whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him," we reply that we must interpret these words by the universal tenor of the Scriptures. If a person that has spoken against the Holy Ghost *afterward repents of it*, it is a clear proof that he had not so spoken against Him as to commit the unpardonable offense; for without the grace of the Holy Ghost repentance is impossible, and the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, because it proceeds from

such a state of enmity against God's Spirit that precludes the possibility of repentance. Well says Olshausen on this point: "Whoever is troubled by the fear that he may have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, proves by his very sorrow and self-reproach that he has not committed the sin; and even where sorrow bids fair to drive the individual to despair, as was the case with Judas Iscariot, the exhortation to faith in God's pardoning love is still in its place, since the sin against the Holy Ghost remains unforgiven, not because God is unwilling to forgive, but because the offender has lost the capacity to believe that God *can* forgive. Where there is faith enough to lay hold on the promise of pardon, there is *prima facie* evidence that the sin against the Holy Ghost was not committed." Nor does, fourthly, every state of impenitence persevered in to the hour of death, involve always the sin against the Holy Ghost. — What, then, must we understand by the sin against the Holy Ghost? We must understand by it such a resistance to the Holy Ghost as incapacitates the sinner ever afterward to become a subject of converting grace. That man may before his death carry his resistance to such a degree, we believe as fully as that the Pharisees were warned against it by our Savior. "The blasphemy of the Holy Ghost," says Dr. Schaff, "is the self-conscious and persistent manifestation of consummate hatred against the Divine in its highest and purest manifestation; it is not only an unqualified contradiction to, but a perfect abhorrence of God's sin-pardoning grace; it is a hatred which manifests itself sometimes more reservedly under apparent composure, sometimes without any disguise, and against better knowledge calls the Divine satanic, and involves the stern determination to destroy its object by all means possible." "If it has come so far with a man he is no longer a dupe of Satan, but he has become voluntarily and self-consciously a devil himself, fully knowing that he acts only from malice. His sin is no longer human sin, properly so called, but satanic, the finished, absolute sin of Satan. The pardon of this sin is impossible, not because God is unwilling or unable to impart it, but because the sinner is unwilling and unable to seek and receive it. — Since the Lord pronounces here the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost the only unpardonable sin, it follows that those passages of Scripture which speak of sins unto death, for which there is neither expiation nor repentance, (1 John v, 16; 2 Tim. iii, 8; Jude 12, 13; Heb. vi, 4-8; x, 26 -31,) refer to the same state of mind in substance, though to different modes of its development and manifestation. These passages teach us also that the regenerate as well as the unregenerate can commit the unpardonable offense!" (Stier.) The passage in Heb. vi, 4, proves incontestably,

that regenerate persons can so completely apostatize from Christ that they are forever beyond the pale of repentance and forgiveness; but we must not infer from this that every case of apostasy or backsliding involves the unpardonable sin. That, on the other hand, unregenerate persons can commit this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, appears from the fact that the Pharisees were warned by the Savior as being on a fair way of committing it. Persistent, wanton, malicious resistance to truth in its clearest manifestations may not only frustrate the sinner's conversion, but terminate even before death in the unpardonable offense. — NEITHER IN THIS WORLD NOR THE WORLD TO COME. The Greek word for *world* is *αἰών*, *age*; it was a proverbial expression among the Jews, meaning neither at present nor in future, that is, *never*, as Mark also expresses it in the parallel passage, "He has never forgiveness." Most of the modern theologians of Germany infer from this passage that since it is said that the sin or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost alone shall not be forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come, there is a possibility of pardon for all other sins even in the world to come; that is, that those who die in a state of impenitence, not involving the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, will either proceed in the spirit-world in their downward course, till their sin is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, or that, if they should repent, they may find pardon. On this view Alford remarks: "In the entire silence of Scripture (except 1 Pet. iii, 16) on any such doctrine, every principle of sound interpretation requires that we should resist the introduction of it on the strength of two difficult passages, in neither of which does the plain construction of the words require it." So much is certain, that it would be reckless folly to put off the one thing needful to an uncertain futurity or the state after death, of which the Bible says so little, where the means of grace are, even if not entirely cut off, not as powerful as here; add to this that the longer conversion is put off the more difficult it becomes.

VERSE 33. The MAKING (*ποιήσατε*—*ponite*) does here not mean planting, but assuming, representing in thought. Assume a good tree, etc. Thus the leading argument is resumed, setting forth the inconsistency of the Pharisees in representing Christ, whose works were uniformly good, as in league with the evil one. "As his works, the results of his ministry, were good, he himself could not be bad, could not be in league with Beelzebub." — In the second clause our Lord shows them, that as the corrupt fruit presupposes a corrupt tree, so their blasphemy of what is good proves them to be bad in heart.

VERSE 34. HOW CAN YE, BEING EVIL, SPEAK GOOD THINGS?

The point of comparison must not be sought in a physical necessity, but in a moral impossibility conditioned by the corruption of the heart. This corruption of the heart does not destroy man's moral agency, and is overcome by his conversion. The Lord represents it as a moral impossibility for the Pharisees to say any thing really good, so long as they remained in their present state of impenitence. Man's words and actions necessarily partake of the element in which his heart, the great moral fountain-head of man, moves. — OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKETH. The moral state of the heart determines the character of both our words and actions. A fountain can not but send forth water partaking of its own nature. (Jam. iii, 11.)

VERSE 35. The same general truth, as in the preceding verse, is here expressed under another metaphor. The human heart is called a storehouse, wherein things are laid up for future use. Man gives and can only give what he finds in his storehouse. The human heart is the whole man in a religious point of view. — A GOOD MAN OUT OF THE GOOD TREASURE [*of his heart, τῆς καρδίας* is wanting in the best codd.] BRINGETH FORTH GOOD THINGS. This good treasure is not what man is by nature, (see chap. vii, 11,) but what he has been made by the grace of God. He is a good man that has been regenerated by the Spirit of God. "Standing between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan," says Stier, "man's moral character is formed according to his own free self-determination; the strong man (Satan) is not so strong that he can compel man to become his slave; whoever serves the devil and becomes morally like him, becomes so by his own criminal self-determination; the stronger one (Christ) does likewise not compel a bad man against his will to become good." — AND AN EVIL MAN, OUT OF THE EVIL TREASURE, BRINGETH FORTH EVIL THINGS. The evil treasure is man's corrupt nature, his evil heart, from which proceed evil words, that stain both himself and others. As a man becomes good only through the operations of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, seconded by his own self-determination, so no man is by nature as bad as he becomes if he remains unconverted; both the devil and the world develop the evil germs in his nature, and fill his heart with all kinds of evil. As a good man is known by his godly conversation and his blameless deportment, so the evil man is also known by his evil conversation and wicked conduct.

VERSE 36. What the tongue speaketh is of great moment. Our words are, for the most part, a more certain index of the heart than actions. A descending scale is here presented to us. At first the Lord mentioned blasphemy, the highest offense that man can commit, proceeding from the worst possible state of the heart; then *evil things* in general, which the mouth speaketh out of the abundance of the heart, and in this verse he comes down to every IDLE word. Whatever is not the fruit of love and truth is, even without being positively hurtful, evil, an evil fruit. There are no so-called indifferent words or actions; whatever they may seem unto men, in the eyes of God they are good or evil, according to the state of the heart, from which they proceed. Every word that passes our lips will be remembered and judged on the day of judgment. How careful ought we, therefore, to be in all our words, since man will have to give an account of every idle word! Moreover, words are not only the index of the heart, but they are also powerful levers of actions, one word often setting a train of actions in motion, that will continue in their effects at an ever-increasing rate, when the tongue that uttered it is silent in death. Not without good reason did even Plato warn against the utterance of an idle word, representing it as more advisable to throw a stone at random than to utter an idle word.

VERSE 37. A man's being judged by or according to his words, does, of course, not imply that he will not be judged according to his works. When our words are the witness of a penitent heart, renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, we shall be justified by them. By his own words a man may be condemned in two ways: 1. In so far as evil words are the offspring of an evil heart; 2. In so far as words of condemnation spoken against others form the standard by which he himself will be judged. (Chap. vii, 2.)

VERSE 38. The adversaries of Jesus felt keenly that in the preceding declarations the Lord had met them with the royal and judicial authority of the Messiah. They felt that the decisive moment for them had come, that they must either openly declare in favor of Jesus or reject him; and as the Jewish tradition distinguished between heavenly and earthly signs, of which they considered the first alone was infallibly Divine, while they believed the second could be brought about also by satanic influences, (by Beelzebub,) some stepped forward out of the crowd and asked, as they did on another occasion, that he might give them a sign from heaven to substantiate his claims. (See more on this subject in the notes on chap. xvi, 1.)

VERSES 39, 40. AND THERE SHALL NO SIGN BE GIVEN TO IT.

As the Pharisees evidently meant by the "sign" (**σημεῖον**) which they desired to see, not those miracles which they had thus far seen from Jesus, but some peculiar manifestation in the heavens, perhaps alluding to the vision of Daniel, (vii, 13,) it is absurd to infer from this passage, as rationalists have done, that our Lord himself made no claim to perform miracles. On the contrary, as the God-ordained signs, the miracles he was performing, failed to convince them, and as they requested a sign similar to that which the tempter had proposed in the wilderness, (Matt. iv, 6,) Jesus simply refers them to his death and resurrection, which he compares with the miraculous deliverance of the prophet Jonas, principally on account of the opposite effects which the two events had on those concerned, (v. 41.) — THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAS; that is, the sign which was performed in the case of Jonas. — IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH. This expression appears too strong to some commentators to be restricted to Christ's lying in the grave, and they understand, therefore, the day of Christ's soul in hades — the spirit-world — by it.

VERSE 41. Luke says in the parallel passage, (xi, 30:) "As Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." The Lord speaks here chiefly of what would come to pass after his resurrection. — The Ninevites, though they had neither Moses nor the prophets, and had seen no miracle performed by or wrought on Jonas, repented on hearing the preaching of Jonas, but this generation rejects not only the most beneficent and undeniable miracles, but will not be brought to repentance even by the resurrection of the Son of man. The consequence was that impenitent Jerusalem met the destruction which Nineveh escaped by repentance. It also deserves notice, that as Jonas foretold the destruction of Nineveh within forty days, so Jerusalem was destroyed exactly forty years after the death of Christ. — Nothing so well calculated to call forth repentance as the Gospel of Jesus Christ had ever been revealed or preached, especially since the preaching of it was attended with the powerful influences of the Holy Ghost.

VERSE 42. The queen of the south hastened of her own accord to Solomon, to learn human wisdom. The Pharisees scornfully reject the Divine Teacher that has come to them.

VERSES 43-45. Having declared that the Ninevites and the queen of the south would rise in judgment and condemn this generation, the Lord proceeds

to show in a similitude the cause of the utter destruction impending over the unbelieving people. He compares this generation with a demoniac, to whom the demon, after he has been dislodged, returns, and finding him well prepared he repossesses him with seven other spirits, worse than himself. Such will be the miserable end of this wicked generation. In the application of this similitude, especially with regard to the interval of dispossession, commentators differ. Owen remarks: "Some refer it to verses 38-40 in this sense; that if a sign were given them so celestial and glorious as to compel their acknowledgment of his Messiahship, yet it would be but momentary, for the demon of unbelief would return and take possession of their heart. Others, with more propriety, refer it to the whole of the preceding context, embracing both his calumniators (v. 24) and the sign-seekers," (v. 38.) We can see no propriety whatever in either of the two references. Equally untenable appears to us the application of Dr. Whedon to "the transient conversion of that generation under the preaching of John." The only correct interpretation is that of Stier: "The demon of idolatry brought on the Jews the Babylonian captivity. After their return they did no more relapse into idolatry, but endured rather persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. The emptying, sweeping, and garnishing, may be fitly compared to the growth of pharisaic hypocrisy, and the rabbinical schools between the return from the captivity and the coming of our Lord, (v. 44.) The repossession by the one, and the accession of seven other spirits more malicious than the first, hardly needs explanation. The seven demons had already come, when the Lord uttered these words; yet he speaks prophetically of the last manifestation of this state. During the time intervening between Christ's ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem, especially before the latter event, the Jewish people acted, indeed, as if they had been possessed of seven thousand demons. The fate that overtook Jerusalem is a type of God's judgments, that shall be passed on the day of judgment on all unconverted and finally impenitent; and in their hardened state the Jews have ever since been a warning example to the world." A striking parallel to this Stier finds in the history of the Church. There can be no doubt about the applicability of this similitude to the religious experience of individuals. By religious education or impressions, the devil is cast out of the heart, but many turn away from a godly life to "sweeping and garnishing" (see Luke xi, 39, 40) in formality and hypocrisy, till utter emptiness of real faith and spirituality has prepared them for the second more dreadful invasion of the "evil one." (See Heb. vi, 4-6; 2 Pet. ii, 20-22.)

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

I. What opposite effects have the glorious works of Christ on susceptible minds, and on such as are filled with prejudices against him! (Vs. 22-24.)

II. Whoever helps in destroying the kingdom of Satan is not the servant of Satan, but the servant of God. He who slanders those that fight against the kingdom of Satan belongs himself to this kingdom. The tree is known by its fruit. When the fruit is good the tree must not be condemned. To make the Divine satanic is the index of a satanic disposition. (Vs. 25-29.)

III. He that does not declare for Christ, he that has not the mind of Christ through the pardon of his sins and the renewal of his heart, is against Christ, even if he should not be aware of it, for every man is by nature at enmity with God. (Rom. viii, 7.) This enmity must be overcome before a man can be with Christ; but the longer a person lives in his natural state the worse the enmity of his heart grows. The strongest proof that we are on Christ's side is that we gather with him. We can not be with Christ without working for his kingdom. As we are either with or against Christ, so we also work either for or against him. A middle ground is not possible. It is impossible at one and the same time to serve two masters that are at enmity with each other. Those that attempt to do this deceive and destroy themselves. (Vs. 30.)

IV. 1. There are those that have not yet learned to know and feel their wretchedness and misery, and who, consequently, do not know what to make of Christ. To this class belong, (1) those that are apparently satisfied with sensual pleasures and enjoyments; (2) the self-righteous, who think that their apparently-blameless lives will justify them before God. All these may become penitent believers whenever they become sensible of their misery and inability to help themselves. Their case is not hopeless, because neither the world with all its riches and enjoyments, nor man's natural righteousness can permanently satisfy his innate longing for true happiness. 2. The sin against the Holy Ghost consists in this, that man — not in the moment of excitement, but persistently and maliciously — slanders undeniably Divine facts, of whose truth he is perfectly convinced by the operations of the Holy Ghost upon his heart. This horrible state of the mind involves a love of sin that precludes sorrow and contrition of heart, and a degree of contempt for Divine grace, which even

Divine love can not overcome, since it does not compel man against his own free will. 3. The time of grace closes upon some before they die. Man can attain to such a height of wickedness as to preclude penitence and pardon; this state, called the sin unto death, is twofold; namely, that of a perfect hardening against God's converting grace, (the unpardonable sin committed by the unregenerate,) and that of complete and final apostasy, (the unpardonable sin committed by the regenerate.) No one, however, is authorized to apply these truths to individual cases; that is, he has no Scriptural authority whatever to tell any human being that he is beyond the pale of mercy. God alone knows this infallibly. Our duty is to warn all men against sin and to direct them to Christ, the Lamb of God. (Vs. 31, 32.)

V. There is scarcely any thing concerning which men are less on their guard than concerning their words. Many seem to think that provided they *do* right, it is of little importance what they *say*. But this is not the teaching of Christ. Words are the index of the state of our minds, as the taste of water shows the nature of its fountain. (Vs. 36, 37.)

VI. 1. God has confirmed his truth with signs sufficient to convince every man. But the impenitent sinner seeks to excuse his unbelief, pretending that he would believe if God would convince him by some miracle, (v. 38.) But such a pretense serves only to expose the insincerity of his heart, (v. 39.) This appears from the conduct of the Pharisees against Christ related in the text. His cotemporaries had an abundance of the most convincing miracles. His glorious life was full of undeniable miracles, and the greatest of all, to which he directs his hearers in the text, and by which every one that is willing to believe can attain to faith, is his resurrection from the dead. Greater evidence can not possibly be given unto man. Nor are any more miracles to be given unto man in confirmation of the truth. A continuation of them would destroy their desired effect. The efficiency of miracles is not increased by numbers, as is that of an army; the force of miracles does not lie in their abundance, but rather in their rarity. 2. Whoever is not satisfied with the amount of the miraculous that is revealed in Christianity, is left without excuse, (vs. 41, 42.) Others were convinced on much less evidence. What a difference is there between Jonas and Solomon on the one hand, and Christ on the other!

VII. A partial outward reformation without a thorough change of the heart avails nothing. One unclean spirit may go out. A man may become moral,

orthodox, etc. The evil may for a time take a direction where its manifestation is apparently harmless. A reformation of the outward life that has not the love of God exclusively for its moving principle, is but an exchange of one sin for another. Thus Satan is enabled not only to return to his old home, but his power is enlarged, and such a man sinks at last into perdition, (vs. 43-45.)

§ 26. JESUS DECLARES WHO ARE HIS TRUE KINDRED ON THE OCCASION OF A VISIT FROM HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS.

LUKE has the same incident, but in another connection. Mark records peculiar circumstances connected with it. While Jesus was administering so severe a rebuke to the Pharisees, his mother and brothers, probably fearing for his life, or, as Mark adds, (iii, 31,) thinking that he was carried too far by his zeal, endeavored to remove him from the scene of excitement and danger, or at least to caution him; but on account of the crowd pressing around him, they could not come near him. Without violating filial duty or brotherly affection, the Lord repeats here in public what he had said once before at Cana. Bengel aptly remarks: "He does not despise his mother; but, giving precedence to his Father, he does, with becoming earnestness, not recognize mother or brothers by not admitting them for the time being." From the whole tenor of his remarks it is probable that he refused them, on the occasion in question, access to his person. His conduct is a rule for all his followers. There is a spiritual relationship which takes precedence of all earthly ties whatsoever, whenever there arises a conflict between the two.

Verses 46-50. (COMPARE MARK iii, 31-35; LUKE viii, 19-21.)

(46) WHILE he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. (47) Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. (48) But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? (49) And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! (50) For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

VERSE 46. On the brothers of the Lord see note on chap. xiii, 55, 56.—
THEY STOOD WITHOUT; that is, either outside the throng of hearers around our Lord or, perhaps, outside the house.

VERSE 47. THEN ONE SAID UNTO HIM. In all probability the same person that his relatives sent (Mark iii, 31) to inform him that they desired to speak to him outside the house. He seems, however, to have refused their request at this time, and to have continued his discourse.

VERSE 48. WHO IS MY MOTHER? AND WHO ARE MY BRETHREN? By this question the Lord invited the attention of his hearers to what he was going to say about the relation of his disciples to himself. All these characteristics of the mother of our Lord are deeply interesting, both in themselves and as building up, when put together, the most decisive testimony against the superstition which has assigned to her the place of a goddess in the Roman mythology. Great and inconceivable as the honor of that meek and holy woman was, we find her more than once reproved by her divine Son. (John ii, 4.)

VERSE 49. AND HE STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND TOWARD HIS DISCIPLES. Literally, having stretched forth, etc. This motion of his hand was, undoubtedly, followed by a pause to prepare his hearers the better for what was to follow. By pointing with his hand to his disciples, saying, "Behold, my mother and my brethren!" the Lord positively declared that spiritual relationship is of more importance than consanguinity or any other tie. His words seem, at the same time, to imply a rebuke for any interference with the work assigned unto him by his Father. It was absolutely necessary that he should repel the malicious charge of the Pharisees; and if he had withdrawn on the occasion in question, leaving the field to his adversaries, he would have made a very unfavorable impression, especially on his disciples.

VERSE 50. FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL DO THE WILL OF MY FATHER. In this declaration Christ extends his spiritual relationship to his whole mystic body, the Church, including every believer, and sets forth, at the same time, the principle on which it is founded. The Father's will is the Word of God as revealed unto us by and in his Son. To do this will implies to believe in Christ as the Ambassador of the Father, (John vi, 29; 1 John iii, 23,) to be

begotten of the Spirit by the Word of truth, (James i, 18,) and to live a life of faith and obedience to the Son of God. In order to be a disciple of Christ one must not only hear but also do the Word of God. A mere profession and observance of the outward duties of religion do not suffice. — **THE SAME IS MY BROTHER, AND SISTER, AND MOTHER.** The true believer enters into a relationship with Christ more tender and strong than any earthly tie. In enumerating his relations the Lord makes no mention of a father, because he had no human father.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. There is a spiritual family on earth which is constantly increasing. Its head is Christ, its members all believers, who sustain to each other the relation of brothers.

2. The basis on which this spiritual relationship rests is not a merely-denominational connection. A man may belong to the same denomination, may be under the same order and discipline, observe the same ritual, and, at the same time, sustain no relationship whatever with Christ's body and those members of it that are in his denomination. He may be a zealot for the best formula of faith, and yet not do the Heavenly Father's will.

3. Natural relationship is subordinate to the spiritual. And why? The latter is, (1.) More intimate than the former. Where there is spiritual relationship there is a union of hearts; there kindred spirits live for the same end, have consecrated themselves to the same cause, and have enlisted under the same banner. (2.) It offers higher enjoyments, uniting us with those whose love is pure and ardent, who are entitled to our full confidence, who unite their hymns of praise and tears of sympathy with ours. (3.) It is more honorable, introducing us into the great family of God, enabling us to call Christ our Brother, God our Father, and heaven our portion. (4.) It is more extensive, uniting us with the pious of all ages; and, (5.) More lasting, since death necessarily severs all earthly bonds; but he that doeth the will of God remaineth forever.

4. How tenderly does Christ love his followers! They may be poor and indigent and be hated by the world for his name's sake; but they need not be dismayed. Their Elder Brother will take care of his brethren and sisters in time and eternity. There is no member in the family of God of whom Christ is not

mindful. Joseph made provision for all his kin; how infinitely more will Jesus Christ do it!

CHAPTER XIII.

§ 27. THE SEVEN PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

AT the outset of his public ministry Jesus had distinctly declared that the kingdom of God was at hand, and in the Sermon on the Mount he had clearly set forth the nature of this kingdom, the disposition which qualifies for membership, and his own relation to it as its King. He had given the most convincing proofs of his Messiahship. But when he had come to about the middle of his ministry, it appeared plainly that the great mass of the Jewish people would reject the salvation offered unto them. The Pharisees had matured and but ill concealed their plan to get rid of him by violence. The Lord, therefore, changed the method of his instruction. This new method consisted in this, that he clothed the mysteries of the kingdom, which he had thus far delivered without figure, in parables taken from the spheres of natural and human life, whose real meaning only the lover of truth apprehends, while the hull protects the kernel against the abuse of the frivolous and carnal. This is the place to explain, 1. What a parable is; 2. To state why our Lord taught so much in parables; and, 3. To set forth the principles that must guide us in their interpretation.

As regards, in the first place, the nature of the parable, it is fully explained by the etymology of the word. It is of Greek origin — *παραβολή*, from *παραβάλλειν* — and means a placing side by side, a juxtaposition; for in the parable we have a spiritual, supernatural truth and a transaction of common life side by side. "The parable," says Neander, "differs from the fable in this, that while in the latter human faculties and human actions are transferred to beings of an inferior order, as animals and even inanimate objects, in the parable the lower sphere of life serves as the similitude of the higher, while, at the same time, the two spheres are kept perfectly distinct from each other. The power and beings used in the parable move in perfect keeping with the laws of their nature, but represent what takes place in a higher sphere of life. The fable narrates what is from the nature of the case impossible — e.g., that animals reason, speak and act as human beings — while the parable describes what

actually occurs in daily life or in nature." This, however, is but one of the differences between the parable and the fable. As they differ in their nature — that is, their component parts — so they differ also in their object or end. "The parable," says Trench, "is constructed to set forth a truth spiritual and heavenly. This the fable, with all its value, is not; it is essentially of the earth, and never lifts itself above the earth. It never has a higher aim than to inculcate maxims of prudential morality, industry, caution, foresight, and these it will sometimes recommend even at the expense of the higher self-forgetting virtues. The fable just reaches that pitch of morality which the world will understand and approve. But it has no place in the Scripture. The two instances given in Judges ix, 8-15, and 2 Kings xiv, 9, do not impeach the universality of this rule, since in neither case God or a prophet of Iris speaks, but men, and that from an earthly stand-point." The parable also differs from the allegory, comparing as it does one thing with another, at the same time preserving them apart as an inner and an outer, not transferring, as does the allegory, the properties, and qualities, and relations of one *to* the other. In John xv, 1-8, and John x, 1-16, we have allegories, carrying their interpretation in themselves. These allegories are called by John *proverbs*. The term *proverb*, however, is used also in the New Testament for parable. The interchange of the two words is to be accounted for, partly from the fact of there being but one word in Hebrew to signify parable, allegory, and proverb, they being alike enigmatical or dark sayings, speaking a part of their meaning and leaving the rest to be inferred, partly from the fact that the proverb generally rests upon some comparison expressed or implied, as, for instance, 2 Peter ii, 22, or is a concentrated parable, (Matt. xv, 14, 15,) which might easily be extended into a parable.

Secondly: as to the question which the disciples themselves put to their Master, (v. 10,) why he made use of this method of imparting instruction, there are, in addition to the reason stated by the Lord himself in his reply, (v. 13, on which see the exegetical notes,) some other reasons implied which deserve our notice, and on which we will dwell in these introductory remarks: 1. The instruction by parables is founded on the harmony which exists between the natural and the spiritual. Both domains have the same author, and are governed by the same laws. There is an intrinsic and real analogy between the phenomena which nature and human life present and man's spiritual relations, and there is a power in that analogy which no abstract description, no general reasoning can equal. But only one teacher. He without whom was not any thing

made that was made, who is the light of men, was able to unfold to us the lessons which nature and human life are designed to teach us. 2. Figurative language is adapted to all minds. It has depths for the philosopher; it is not too deep for the child. It has an admirable power of gradually admitting light to the mental eye. At the same time, by seizing the mind so quickly through the channel of its natural interest in human events and surrounding objects, it awakens the attention of the young, of the ignorant and the careless. Its form is instantly comprehended by all, while it gives the impression that there is a substance lying beneath. This prompts inquiry. And then the advantage is, that the memory can easily retain the story, and with it whatever degree of spiritual light the mind may have received. Who could banish from his mind, when once understood, the image of the house built on the sand, as the symbol of a man, sure to be disappointed in his groundless expectations? To whom does not the parable of the prodigal son bring back the thought of God's merciful kindness toward the sinner? We must, moreover, take into consideration that the nature of the kingdom of heaven was not understood even by the disciples. Some sayings of the Lord concerning it were even to them hard, and the hearing of them caused many to go back, and walk no more with him. (John vi, 66.) If there was any mode of teaching better suited than another to the purpose of preserving truths for the memory that were not yet accepted by the heart — for keeping the seed safe till the time should arrive for the quickening Spirit to come down and give it growth — that mode would be the best suited to the peculiar position of the disciples. Some of the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel could not be understood by them in their full extent and importance before the historical facts upon which they rested, the death and resurrection of Christ, had taken place, and before they had received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly: let us inquire into the principles that ought to guide us in the interpretation of parables. Inasmuch as every parable is a whole, composed of a variety of parts, the question arises whether each part, each trait of the picture, must be interpreted or not. On this point Alexander remarks: "In expounding the parables interpreters have gone to very opposite extremes, but most to that of making every thing significant, or giving a specific sense to every minute point of the analogy presented. This error is happily exposed by Augustine, when he says that the whole plow is needed in the act of plowing, though the plowshare alone makes the furrow, and the whole frame of an

instrument is useful, though the strings alone produce the music. The other extreme, that of overlooking or denying the significance of some things really significant, is much less common than the first, and, for the most part, found in writers of severer taste and judgment." But how shall we avoid the two extremes, and find the true mean? Olshausen says: "The parables of our Lord being founded on the most thorough knowledge of things, it may be set down as a rule that no trait must be dropped, except the force and harmony of the whole should be impaired by pressing it in the interpretation. Yet the application of this general rule will vary, inasmuch as an interpreter's ability to descry and apply more distant relations is conditioned by his more or less developed religious life." Likewise Tholuck: "It must be allowed that a similitude is perfect in proportion as it is on all sides rich in applications; and, hence, in treating the parables of Christ the expositor must proceed on the presumption that there is import in every single point, and only desist from seeking it when either it does not result without forcing or when we can clearly show that this or that circumstance was merely added for the sake of giving intuitiveness to the narrative. We should not assume any thing to be non-essential, except when, by holding it fast as essential, the unity of the whole is marred and troubled." A safe rule in determining what is essential and what not, is, that we first of all ascertain the leading or central idea of the parable. Before this is fully ascertained and clearly defined, no attempt must be made to interpret its different parts, since only from this center every thing appears in its natural and true light. Lisco very aptly compares the entire parable with a circle, of which the middle point is the spiritual truth or doctrine, and of which the radii are the several circumstances of the narration. So long as we have not placed ourselves in the center, neither the circle itself appears in its perfect shape nor will the beautiful unity with which the radii converge to a single point be perceived; but this is all observed so soon as the eye looks forth from the center. Even so in the parable: If we have recognized its central idea, the proportion and right signification of all particular circumstances will be clear unto us, and we shall lay stress on them only so far as the main truth is thereby more vividly set forth. The finding out of this central truth *is*, indeed, often very difficult, since we meet in every parable with so many truths that may, at first sight, appear unto us equally important; yet on a thorough examination, we find one truth to outshine in brightness all the rest, which, in their turn, grow proportionally fainter. Frequently we are assisted in finding this truth by paying proper attention to the saying which introduces or winds up the parable.

For the meaning of the term *kingdom of heaven*, which forms the burden of the seven parables in this chapter, we refer the reader to our notes on chaps. iii, 2, and vi, 10. "In these seven parables," says Ellicott, "we have seven varied aspects of the kingdom of God on earth. In the *first* parable we have placed before us the various classes in the visible Church; in the *second* we contemplate the origin and presence of evil therein, and its final removal and overthrow; in the *third* we see the kingdom of God in its aspects of growth and extension; in the *fourth* in its pervasive and regenerative character; in the *fifth* and *sixth* in reference to its preciousness, whether as discovered accidentally or after deliberate search; in the *seventh* in its present state of inclusiveness, combined with its future state of selection and unsparing separation." Olshausen finds a different meaning in the succession of these parables. According to him, the first represents the relation of the kingdom of God to the world, the second its relation to the kingdom of Satan; the third and fourth describe the power inherent in the Word of the kingdom, that overcomes all obstacles and enemies; the fifth and sixth set forth the value of the kingdom of God and the relation of the individual believer to the kingdom, while the seventh describes the development of the Church on earth till the day of the final judgment. Some commentators see in the seven parables a prophecy of seven successive eras of the Christian Church; but their conflicting applications show us how little ground we have for ascribing to them a prophetic signification. The most ingenious application is that of Lange, who refers the first parable to the original sowing in the apostolic age, the second to the rise of heresies in the ancient Catholic Church; the parable of the mustard-seed to the apparently-insignificant beginning of the Christian religion, which was raised under Constantine to the state religion of the Roman Empire; the parable of leaven to the great transformation, by the Christian Church, of the heathen nations and tribes that overrun Western and Southern Europe during the fourth and fifth centuries; the parable of the hid treasure to the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, when the hidden truth was discovered again; that of the pearl of great price to the time when, the substance of religion being apprehended in its highest purity and fullest extent, its blessings will be sought with the greatest earnestness, accompanied by an unqualified readiness to consecrate all to God, which era will be followed by the final judgment.

The standard work on the interpretation of our Lord's parables is that of the distinguished British theologian, Trench, and it is not surpassed by any

German writer. Where we can not give any thing better we have quoted him either fully or in a condensed form where a condensation appeared more useful. But while we have aimed at drawing from the work every thing of essential value, we have felt ourselves compelled to differ from the author on some points and to enlarge on others.

A. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Verses 1-23. (COMPARE MARK iv, 1-20; LUKE viii, 1-15.)

(1) **THE same day went Jesus out of the house,**^[1] and sat by the **seaside.**^[2] (2) **And great multitudes were gathered together unto him,** so that he went into a ship,^[3] and sat;^[4] and the whole multitude stood on the shore.^[5] (3) **And he spake many things unto them in parables,** saying, Behold, a sower^[6] went forth to sow;^[7] (4) and when he sowed, some **seeds fell by the wayside,**^[8] and the fowls came and devoured them up: (5) some fell upon stony places,^[9] where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:^[10] (6) And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. (7) And some fell among thorns;^[11] and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: (8) But other fell into good ground,^[12] and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.^[13] (9) Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. (10) And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? (11) He answered and said unto them, Because it is given^[14] unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.^[14] (12) For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. (13) Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. (14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: (15) For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (16) But blessed

are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. (17) **For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which you see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.** (18) **Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.** (19) **When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.** This is he which received seed by the wayside. (20) **But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and men with joy receiveth it;** (21) **yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.** (22) **He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.** (23) **But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*;** which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

[1 That is, out of the house in which he had healed the demoniac and refuted the blasphemous charge of the Pharisees. (Chap. xii, 46.)]

[2 On the shore of the Lake of Gennesaret. "The mountains by which the lake is surrounded never come down into the water, but have a beach of greater or less extent along the water's edge." (Stanley.)]

[3 In Greek, *the* ship. The definite article indicates that it was a boat that either belonged to the disciples or was kept ready for their Master's use.]

[4 The Jewish teachers were in the habit of delivering their instructions sitting, while their hearers were standing.]

[5 Within hearing distance. It seems the pressure of the crowd was so great that our Lord found it more convenient to address them from the boat.]

[6 Literally, *the sower*, that is, the one whose business it is to sow.]

[7 On these words Dr. Thomson, in the description of his journey through Palestine, says: "There is a nice and close adherence to actual life in this form of expression. The expression implies that the sower, in the days of our Savior, lived in a hamlet, or village, as all these farmers do now; that he did not sow near his own house or in a garden fenced or walled. Now here we have the whole within a dozen rods of us. Our horses are actually trampling down some seeds which have fallen by the wayside, and larks and sparrows are

busy picking them up. That man with his mattock is digging up places where the rock is too near the surface for the plow, and much that is sown there will wither away, because it has no deepness of earth. And not a few seeds have fallen among this *bellan*, and will be effectually choked by the tangled thorn-bushes. But a large portion, after all, falls into really good ground, and four months hence will exhibit every variety of crop, up to the richest and heaviest that ever rejoices the heart even of an American farmer.]

[8 Where the field and the road meet. "The ordinary roads or paths in the East lead often along the edge of the fields, which are uninclosed. Hence, as the sower scatters his seed, some of it is liable to fall beyond the plowed portion, on the hard, beaten ground which forms the wayside." (Hackett's Illustrations.)]

[9 Rocky strata, covered with thin layers of earth, such as are found on the cultivated surfaces of the mountains which rise in terrace-like form along the Lake of Galilee.]

[10 Having not sufficient depth of earth to strike deep roots, and the shallow earth being heated by the sun of the day before, the seed springs up the more quickly; but when the vertical rays of the sun fall upon it the slender blade withers away.]

[11 By the thorns we have not to understand grown-up thorns, but the seeds of thorns. The lack here is not in the soil, but in careful husbandry. The soil in question was not hard, beaten ground, nor shallow; but though the thorns and briars had been cut down when it was plowed up, their roots were still in the ground, ready to shoot forth as soon as the rays of the sun reached them; and when they grew up with the corn, they choked it by withdrawing light and air and absorbing the moisture. On the abundance of briars in Palestine Professor Hackett remarks: "Every one who has been in Palestine must have been struck with the number of thorny shrubs and plants that abound there. The traveler finds them in his path, go where he may. Many of them are small, but some grow as high as a man's head. There are twenty-two words in Hebrew denoting thorny and prickly plants. If proper care be not taken they soon get the upper hand, and spread in every direction. 'I went by the field of the slothful; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof.' (Prov. xxiv, 30, 31.)"]

[12 The opposite of beaten loath, thin soil, ground not cleansed from thorns.]

[13 The terms *hundred*, *sixty*, *thirtyfold* are used as round numbers to express the varieties of increase from a moderate to a most abundant harvest.]

[14 Literally, has been given.]

VERSE 1. THE SAME DAY JESUS WENT OUT OF THE HOUSE.

The phrase *the same day* is sometimes used indefinitely. (See Acts viii, 1.) It may be so here; yet we can not doubt that the delivery of the parables followed closely upon the transactions recorded in the last chapter. (See Synoptical Table, No. 66-68.)

VERSE 3. "It is evidently the purpose of Matthew to present to his readers the parables recorded here as the first which the Lord spoke. With this of the sower he commenced a manner of teaching which he had not hitherto used. This is sufficiently indicated by the question which the disciples asked, 'Why speakest thou to them in parables?' (v. 10,) and the answer which our Lord gave, (vs. 11-17,) in which he justifies his use of this method of teaching, and declares the purpose which he had in adopting it; and no less so when he seems to consider this parable as the fundamental one, on the right understanding of which would depend their comprehension of all which were to follow: 'Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?' (Mark iv, 13.) And as this was the first occasion on which he brought forth these things new out of his treasure, (see v. 22,) so was it the occasion on which he brought them forth with the largest hand. We have not any where else in the Gospels so rich a group of parables assembled together, so many and so costly pearls strung upon a single thread. The only passage that will bear comparison is chapters xv and xvi, of St. Luke, where there are recorded five parables that were all apparently spoken on the same occasion. The seven that are here recorded divide themselves into two smaller groups — the first four being spoken to the multitude while he taught them out of the ship — the last three, as it would seem, on the same day, in the narrower circle of his disciples at his own home." (Trench.) — This parable is recorded by the three Evangelists, to a great extent, in the same words, yet with variation enough to show that none copied from the other. Mark gives the fullest statement, as far as the parable itself is concerned, while Matthew alone has the words in verse 12, and the formal quotation from Isaiah.

VERSE 10. According to Mark, (iv, 10, comp. v. 36,) "they that were about him with the twelve," put this question to their Master, after he had finished the parables. They had perceived that the Lord observed some reserve before the multitude.

VERSE 11. BECAUSE IT IS GIVEN UNTO YOU, etc. In these words there seems to be the same construction as in Matt. xi, 25, (comp. Rom. vi, 17,) namely: "Because, though it is given unto you to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven when declared in plain language, it is not given to them." Taken in this sense the words contain a direct answer to the question: "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" In the sequel our Lord explains then the nature and design of his parabolic teaching; but with the exception of verse 12, where the *revealing* as well as the *concealing* properties of the parable are referred to, he speaks only of the latter. — **THE MYSTERIES.** "The word *mystery*," says Dr. E. N. Kirk in his *lectures on the parables of our Savior*, "is liable to be misunderstood, because, having several significations, that which is most frequently attached to it in English usage was the least frequently intended by the sacred writers. Its different significations are: a thing that can not be understood; a thing that has not been understood; and a thing that has a deeper meaning than that which is most obvious. Now the first of these significations being prominent in our minds, while it is seldom that intended by the sacred writers, leads to misapprehension. In this passage the Savior evidently does not mean by mysteries things that can not be known, because he says: 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.' And the disciples were to proclaim them to the world, for he thus commanded them: 'What ye hear in the ear that preach ye upon the house-tops, for there is nothing hid that shall not be known.'" The meaning here is, things heretofore not understood. It was given to the disciples to know them, because they were willing to receive the knowledge. The reason why it was not given to others is plainly declared in verses 13-15.

VERSE 12. FOR WHOSOEVER HATH. This deeply-significant declaration our Lord uttered repeatedly and on different occasions. Its full meaning the reader will find in Matt. xxv, where it is illustrated by a parable. Here it has special reference to the possession of spiritual knowledge. He that has spiritual knowledge in consequence of his desire to receive it, **TO HIM SHALL BE GIVEN, AND HE SHALL HAVE MORE ABUNDANCE;** that is, his knowledge shall be increased; he shall penetrate more fully into the mysteries of the kingdom of God. — **BUT WHOSOEVER HAS NOT,** in consequence of his unwillingness to receive, **FROM HIM SHALL BE TAKEN AWAY EVEN THAT HE HAS;** that is, the means and opportunity to obtain knowledge. His scornful refusal of the truth shall be followed by an

"inability" to understand; for whoever has no desire to receive the truth loses also the ability to receive it; the neglected and uncultivated soil of his heart degenerates more and more and becomes entirely sterile; the means and opportunities of being saved, which he has slighted and rejected, are taken away from him altogether. This happened unto the Jews, whose means of grace Christ was even then curtailing by introducing the new method of speaking in parables, and who were soon after deprived of them altogether, as a warning example for all generations to come. Every gift of God imposes the solemn duty to make the very best use of it; if we fail to do so our condemnation will be the greater. We add the following pertinent remarks of Dr. Kirk, (p. 11:) "Man is on probation. Astronomical truth lies hidden in the heavens. He that wants it may get it, but by desire and effort. Gold is in the mountains, but desire and effort alone secure it. Truth is in books and in the mind, but by desire and effort alone we can get it. The parable is a branch of probation. 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.' This does not touch the ground of sovereignty, but of probation: 'for whoever has,' etc. The French have a proverb: 'It is the first step that costs.' If any man loves truth enough to begin to search for it he conquers the great difficulties in the beginning. . . . They who desire truth and will seek for it shall find it. But it will not force itself upon them against their wills. These men, said the Savior, seeing see not; and this is not unusual nor unanticipated, for Isaiah prophesied of it six hundred years ago. Their heart, he says, is waxed gross; that is, they are sensual, worldly, careless, proud, opposed to the truth; they love the darkness more than the light. And, therefore, I put the truth before them in such forms that if they want the light they can get it, but if they choose to stop at the mere form and shell they may." And again this writer says on the concealing property of our Lord's parables: "The truth must be presented to all, but in such a way as to do the least injury and the greatest good. To some the truth must come enveloped in a form that at first almost concealed it from them. Neither their national nor their sectarian feelings could at first tolerate the full statement that the Gentiles should enter the Church on a level with the favored people. Accordingly he vails the important fact under the image of a great supper, to which the king invited guests from the highways and hedges. Again, he aimed at avoiding a premature irritation of his enemies. Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, elders, and priests, proud, earthly, ignorant, bigoted, envious, and murderous, were continually acting as spies around him. It was, therefore, indispensable that he should avoid giving them any ground of

accusation before the Sanhedrim, or the civil tribunal, or the people. While then he gives them tremendous thrusts, his meaning is so couched in imagery that they never got a plausible charge against him. . . . He described to them the wickedness which they were about to perpetrate; but he described it by husbandmen that first killed the messengers of their king, and then the Son. And under that disguise he declared that God would fearfully overthrow their nation for their sin."

VERSE 13. THEREFORE. This particle may refer grammatically either to what follows or what goes before. We prefer the latter, as does also Dr. Whedon, who paraphrases the passage thus: "In order to take front them that which they have — namely, the means of understanding my doctrines, merely to abuse them — I speak to them in parables, which will cover from their knowledge truths that will do them no good, but with which they will do harm." The immediately-following "*because*" sets forth more fully the inability of understanding on the part of those to whom it is not given, as the consequence of their unwillingness. Instead of the causal particle ὅτι (because) Mark and Luke have in the parallel passage the final particle ἵνα, in order that, whereby the sense is only in so far changed that the not seeing with seeing eyes is represented as the punishment for their previous indifference to every thing Divine.

VERSES 14, 15. This prophecy (Isa. vi, 9, 10,) is cited verbatim from the LXX. It is quoted also John xii, 40; Acts xxviii, 26, 27, and Rom. xi, 8. The Evangelist uses for FULFILLED a peculiarly strong term — ἀναπληροῦσθαι — that is, to be completely fulfilled. The crime of the children of Israel in the days of Isaiah, of rejecting the Divine message, whereby they exposed themselves to the righteous judgments of Jehovah, was repeated on a larger scale by the Jews of our Savior's times, because in Jesus there was the highest self-revelation of God, while Isaiah had but a glimpse of it. Thus in the non-recognition of even this splendor of the Divine light, the curse of sin became manifest to its whole extent, and the words of the prophets were fulfilled in their full import. The verbs SEEING and HEARING as opposed to PERCEIVING and UNDERSTANDING, indicate that if a man has no more ability to understand the Divine, it is in consequence of his having forfeited it voluntarily by the moral state of his heart, described in the next verse. — FOR THIS PEOPLE'S HEART IS WAXED GROSS — literally grew fat; that is, the heart was lost in the flesh and lost its higher life — an emblem of moral

bluntness and insensibility, the consequence of sensual indulgence and inactivity.

— AND THEIR EARS ARE DULL OF HEARING — literally, hear heavily, sluggishly, and imperfectly, as if dull and confused sounds were striking them.

— AND THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED. Hebrew, "smeared over," with the intention not to see, whereby the act is represented as willful and premeditated on their part, and they alone as responsible for the consequences.

— LEST AT ANY TIME THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND SHOULD UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND SHOULD BE CONVERTED, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM. "In the Hebrew original there are five imperatives; namely, hear, but understand not; see, but perceive not; make the heart of this people fat; make their ears heavy and shut their eyes, expressed by the fut. ind. in the LXX. The prophet himself, by repeating before them the threatening words, 'hear and understand not,' is to harden their hearts. What the real import of this language is, appears plainly from the whole tenor of Scripture. The imperative is to be considered as a form of the future forcibly expressing a threat. By representing the hardness of their hearts as being brought about by the prophecy, is meant that the prophet has merely to reveal unto them, and they through their own guilt make the word of prophecy the means of hardening their hearts. Jehovah, as it were, said to the prophet, 'Thou wilt preach unto them in vain, therefore prophesy their hardness of heart,' (Jer. i, 10.)" (Stier.) While the prophet represents the obduracy of the people as an act of retributive justice, it is here traced to their evil hearts; they will not, and, therefore, they can not. (John v, 40.) — THAT I SHOULD HEAL THEM. "They are, therefore, themselves the cause of their not realizing that salvation which to bring them I have come into the world. It is uniformly God's purpose to convert men through the preaching of his Word; hence it is the duty of every one that has ears to hear. But if men do not hear with their ears, if they close them against the preached Word, it is, nevertheless, preached unto them, that the apparent impossibility of their conversion may be judged as an unwillingness to be converted. It must not be overlooked that these blind and deaf persons are the same to whom the prophet afterward promises healing and delivery, (Isa. xxix, 9-12, 18, 19; xlii, 7,) to which fact the Lord had reference, (chap. xi, 5,) and he still speaks even here to these deaf people that they may hear." — The relation of the heart to the eyes and ears, as set forth here, is also worthy of notice. As moral corruption extends from the heart to the eyes and the ears, so in a reversed order salvation is to reach the heart through the eyes and ears.

The external means of grace are to pave the way to the heart, work conviction for sin and a longing for salvation, and thus prepare the heart for the reception of the joyful news. But notwithstanding this it is the heart which decides man's conduct toward the Gospel, and even the hearing of the ear is conditioned by the state of the heart." (Condensed from Stier.)

VERSE 16. What is said in this and the following verse occurs again (Luke x, 23, 24) in a different connection and in a somewhat different form. BLESSED — that is, to be pronounced blessed — are YOUR EYES, as opposed to those carnal eyes that do not see. The eyes and ears are instanced as the organs of receptivity for the inner man.

VERSE 17. By RIGHTEOUS MEN we must understand all the children of God of the Old Testament, that were not only blameless as to legal righteousness, but longed for a higher righteousness and desired to see the promised Messiah. To see him was the highest object of desire for the Old Testament saints. Luke uses for "righteous men," "kings," meaning, of course, only pious kings, such as David, Hezekiah, Josiah, etc.

VERSE 18. HEAR YE THEREFORE THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER; that is, the explanation of it which you have desired. "This explanation is," as Dr. Alexander remarks, "not only in itself a model of conciseness, clearness, and superiority to all conceits and forced analogies, but from its source and author an invaluable rule and guide in all cases of the same kind, where we have not the advantage of an infallible interpretation." — But though our Lord confines himself to an interpretation of what he had said of *the varieties of soil* on which the seed is sown, his interpretation enables us to make also the proper application of the *sower* and the *seed*. On this point Trench remarks: "The comparison of the relations of the teacher and the taught to those between the sower and the soil, and of the truth communicated to the seed sown, is one so deeply grounded in the truest analogies between the worlds of nature and of spirit, that we must not wonder to find it of frequent recurrence, not merely in Scripture, (1 Pet. i, 23; 1 John iii, 9,) but in the works of all the wiser heathens, of all who have realized in any measure what teaching means, and what sort of influence the spirit of one man ought to seek to exercise on the spirits of his fellows, communicating to them living and expanding truths. While all teaching that is worthy the name is such, while all words, even of men, that are really words, are as seeds, with a power to take

root in the minds and hearts of those that hear them, contain germs in them that only by degrees develop themselves; in a much higher sense must this be true of the words, or rather of the Word of God, which *he* spoke who was himself the Seminal Word which he communicated. Best right of all to the title of seed has that Word which exercises not merely a partial working on the hearts in which it is received, but wholly transforms and renews them — that Word by which men are born anew into the kingdom of God, and of which the effects endure forever. I can not doubt that the Lord intended to set himself forth as the chief sower of the seed — not, of course, to the exclusion of the apostles and their successors—that here, as well as in the next parable, he that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and this, even though he no where in the three interpretations of the present one announces himself as such. Indeed, it is difficult to see how we can stop short of him, when we are seeking to give the full meaning to the words, '*A sower went forth to sow.*' His entrance into the world was a going forth to sow; the Word of the kingdom, which Word he first proclaimed, was his seed; the hearts of men his soil: others only were able to sow because he had sown first; they did but carry on the work which he had auspicated and begun." To the above we may add: As the sower soweth the seed all over the field, both on fertile amid sterile spots, so the Gospel is to be preached to every creature. But as the earth does not of itself bring forth without seed, and as the seed does not spring up and bring forth fruit without the co-operation of the earth, so the grace of God and the receptivity of it by man must work together to bring forth fruit. Whether the seed sown will bring forth fruit or not, depends on the nature of the ground on which it has fallen. To illustrate the different reception which the Word of the kingdom meets with from men, is the main object of the parable, and the Lord, therefore, confines himself to that in his interpretation. In a few plain words he delineated prophetically the history of the reception the preached Gospel has met from the beginning till now, and will meet to the end of the Gospel dispensation. It is worthy of note that the four kinds of reception described by the Savior, embrace every shade of difference, large as the human family is, and great as the variety of temperaments and characters, and the number of individual peculiarities are.

VERSE 19. WHEN ANY ONE HEARETH THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM AND UNDERSTANDETH IT NOT. "The man understands it not; he does not recognize himself as standing in any relation to the Word which

he hears, or to the kingdom of grace which that Word proclaims. All that speaks of man's connection with a higher invisible world, all that speaks of sin, of redemption, of holiness, is unintelligible to him and wholly without significance." (Trench.) However clearly the doctrines of the Gospel are set forth, however intelligible they are in themselves, the character in question pays no attention to them, he is perfectly unconcerned and indifferent, as if he had no interest whatever in the Gospel or kingdom of God. But why is he in this condition? The plowshare of the law has not yet broken the soil of his heart to prepare it for the reception of the Divine seed, so that there is not a spot beneath the surface of which the scattered seed could penetrate and find lodgment. The Word of God that falls upon such hearts is not only trodden under foot, as Luke adds, disappearing from the mind without leaving the least traces amid the business and pleasures of life, but it is even devoured by the birds. — **THEN COMETH THE WICKED ONE, AND CATCHETH AWAY THAT WHICH WAS SOWN IN HIS HEART.** What renders the case more hopeless, and takes away even a possibility of the Word germinating there, if perchance a fertilizing shower should sink it deeper, is, that besides the evil condition of the soil, there is also one watching to take advantage of that evil condition, to use every weapon that man puts into his hands against man's salvation; and he, lest by possibility such a hearer, as Luke adds, might believe and be saved, sends his ministers in the shape of evil thoughts of unbelief, worldly desires, and carnal lusts, and by their help, as Mark expresses it, *immediately* — quickly, and by force, like a bird of prey — *takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts.* Even of such as do not take the Word to heart, it can be said that it was sown in their hearts, since what has been heard lies, though not understood, still treasured up in the memory, whether man is conscious or unconscious of it. — **THIS IS HE WHICH RECEIVED SEED BY THE WAYSIDE.** It is not without significance that the hearer of the Word — on whom the seed falls — is identified with the seed sown. As the seed sown into the good ground becomes identical with the recipient himself, so the loss of the seed involves the loss of the careless hearer's eternal life.

VERSES 20, 21. The second class of hearers differs widely from the first. They are not indifferent to, much less do they oppose, the Word which they hear; on the contrary, they receive the truth readily and with joy. We have here persons before us who are so awakened, affected, and enlightened by the Word of God, that they become professors of Christianity. The plain and

incontrovertible truth of the Word and the moral loveliness of its doctrines carries conviction to their minds; but it is especially the sweet and comfortable promises of the Gospel, and at times also the temporal advantages accruing therefrom, that prove so attractive for them that THEY RECEIVE IT EVEN WITH JOY, without counting the costs, without taking into consideration the conditions of discipleship. (Luke xiv, 25-33.) Their joy is very different from that of the finder of the treasure who is willing to deny himself all things, and to suffer all things that he might win Christ. Moreover, the joy which the Gospel brings is preceded by the painful sensation of conviction and self-condemnation on account of sin. Man's emotional nature may easily be excited, but without genuine repentance the proud heart remains stony ground, into which the seed can not penetrate deep enough to strike root. The faith of these persons is a mere emotion, or mere logical deduction, or the work of the imagination. "This class of hearers," says Olshausen, "are either emotional Christians, who accept the Gospel as long as they are under its sweet, comforting influences, but reject it as soon as the old man comes into contact with its demands; or fashionable Christians, who remain professors as long as it is respectable to have religion."

— YET HAS HE NO ROOT IN HIMSELF. "The having that inward root here answers to the having a foundation on the rock, (Matt. vii, 25,) to the having oil in the vessels elsewhere. (Matt. xxv, 4.) And the image itself is not an unfrequent one in Scripture. (Ephes. iii, 17; Col. ii, 7; Jer. xvii, 8; Hos. ix, 16.) It has a peculiar fitness and beauty — for as the roots of a tree are out of sight, yet from them it derives its firmness and stability, so upon the hidden life of the Christian, that life which is out of the sight of other men, his firmness and stability depend; and as it is through the hidden roots that the nourishment is drawn up to the stem and branches, and the leaf continues green, and the tree does not cease from bearing fruit, even so in the Christian's hidden life, that life which 'is hid with Christ in God,' lie the sources of his strength and of his spiritual prosperity. Such a root in himself had Peter, who, when many others were offended and drew back, exclaimed, 'To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.' (John vi, 68.) This faith that Christ and no other had the words of eternal life and blessedness, was what constituted his root, causing him to stand firm when so many fell away. So again when the Hebrew Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had 'in heaven a better and an enduring substance,' (Heb. x, 34,) this knowledge, this faith concerning their unseen inheritance, was the root which enabled them joyfully to take that loss, and not to draw back unto perdition, as

so many had done. Compare 2 Cor. iv, 17, 18, where again the faith in the unseen eternal things is the root, which, as St. Paul declares, enables him to count the present affliction light, and to endure to the end. Demas, on the other hand, lacked that root. It might at first seem as if he would be more correctly ranged under the third class of hearers; since he forsook Paul, 'having loved this present world.' But when we examine more closely what was Paul's condition at Rome at the moment when Demas left him, we find it to have been one of great outward trial and danger; so that it would seem more probable that the immediate cause of his so going back was the tribulation which came for the Word's sake." (Trench.) — FOR WHEN TRIBULATION OR PERSECUTION ARISES BECAUSE OF THE WORD. Luke says: *in time of temptation*. "It is not here, as in the last case, that Satan can merely come and take the Word out of the heart without further trouble; that Word has found some place there, and it needs that he bring some hostile influences to bear against it. What he brings in the present case are outward or inward trials, these being compared to the burning heat of the sun. It is true, that generally the light and warmth of the sun are used to set forth the genial and comfortable workings of God's grace, as eminently, (Mal. iv, 2;) but not always, for see, besides the passage before us, Ps. cxxi, 6; Isa. xlix, 10; Rev. vii, 16. As that heat, had the plant been rooted deeply enough, would have furthered its growth, and hastened its ripening, fitting it for the sickle and the barn, so these tribulations would have furthered the growth in grace of the true Christian, and ripened him for heaven. But as the heat scorches the blade which has no deepness of earth, and has sprung up on a shallow ground, so the troubles and afflictions which would have strengthened a true faith cause a faith which was merely temporary to fail." (Trench.) — BY AND BY. According to the Greek, *forthwith, suddenly*. As suddenly and superficially as such persons receive the Gospel, just as suddenly and capriciously they forsake it again. The persecution becomes a stumbling-block for them, and in order to justify their fickleness they pretend to find fault with the Word. This class of Christians is, alas! even in our days, very numerous; we hear but too often of conversions and professions of religion, which are attended with a good deal of noise and boasting, but, being neither deep nor genuine, disappear as rapidly as they were made.

VERSE 22. The third class THAT RECEIVED SEED AMONG THE THORNS, differs widely from the two preceding classes; on the first class the Word made no impression whatever; on the second it produced transient,

superficial effects; but the third class receive the Word understandingly into their hearts, where it finds a deep ground and strikes deep roots, so that neither the birds of the air can devour it nor the heat of the sun scorch it. A genuine conversion has taken place, and yet there is an evident falling away. Though the seed springs up beautifully and grows for a while, this growth after a while ceases, the life and power of godliness gradually disappears, while its outward profession, the name to live, still remains. They are, in the end, like the former classes, inasmuch as they bear no fruit. The cause of this final unfruitfulness is, *because they suffer the thorns to grow up in their hearts simultaneously with the good seed.* The latent roots of these thorns are in every human heart, just as thorns and thistles grow spontaneously in the fields in consequence of the fall; Satan need not sow it; as long as man suffers it to grow in his heart with the good seed, Satan may stand by in idleness and yet be sure of final success.

— AND THE CARE OF THIS WORLD AND THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES CHOKE THE WORD AND HE BECOMES UNFRUITFUL.

Mark adds: *And the lusts of other things entering in.* The *care of this world* represents the burdensome side of human life, calling man's attention away from his God; in the case of the poor man's solicitude and anxiety, how he is to procure a livelihood for himself and his family. *Riches* represent the other, the alluring, side of human life, promising to satisfy the wants of the immortal mind by the pleasures and enjoyments of this world. Riches are *deceitful* in many ways; they promise to their possessor happiness, which they can not impart; in this way they become the object of an intense desire, which, while it assumes the appearance of a sacred duty to work for one's daily bread and to make provision for one's family, engrosses all the faculties of the mind so exclusively that every other interest is banished from the soul, or receives so little attention that it can not live; but even here the delusion does not end; when a man sees that his efforts to acquire riches unqualify him absolutely for attending to his eternal interests, he acquiesces, vainly expecting that riches, when once possessed, will afford him the very best chances and means to secure his soul's salvation, and to do the more good to others. — "Unless the soil of the heart be diligently watched, the thorns and briars will again grow up apace, and choke the good seed. While that which God promises is felt to be good, and that which the world promises is felt to be good also, and a good of the same kind, instead of a good merely and altogether subordinate to the other, there will be an attempt made to combine the service of the two, to serve God and mammon; but the attempt will be in vain — they who make it will bring no fruit

to perfection, will fail to bring forth those perfect fruits of the Spirit, which it was the purpose of the Word of God to produce in them. The Savior warns us against the danger which proves fatal to those in this third condition of heart and mind, when he says, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares,' (Luke xxi, 34;) and Paul, when he writes, 'They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.' (1 Tim. vi, 9; see Matt. vi, 25-34.)" (Trench.) — That these three phases of the seed sown — either not springing up at all, or springing up without growing, or growing without bearing fruit — represent three phases of the inner life, that of *carnal security*, of *transient awakening*, and *unfruitful conversion*, is self-evident. These three classes, however, do not exclude each other. A man may belong alternately to one or the other of them; he may advance from the first to the third, and fall back from the third to the first. If the thorns are suffered to grow, every new word of God which thou hearest will find in thy heart a stony soil, and when it has come to this it will not last long till thy heart has become a hard beaten way. These three states of the heart may also be considered as corresponding to the three faculties of the mind, *intellect*, *emotion*, and *will*, constituting a whole, yet so that in different individuals the one or the other of these faculties acts as the sole organ of receiving the Divine Word; the first class do not understand the Word at all, although they hear it; the second do understand it and give their consent, but they do not experience in their hearts its renewing power; the third both understand it and experience its power, but their will does not remain in subjection to it. From this point of view the three states of heart may be applied to the three principal periods of human life; namely, *careless, inattentive childhood, ardent but inconsistent youth, and worldly-minded, selfish manhood*.

VERSE 23. BUT HE THAT RECEIVED SEED INTO THE GOOD GROUND IS HE THAT HEARETH THE WORD AND UNDERSTANDETH IT, WHICH ALSO BEARETH FRUIT. According to Mark: "Such as hear the Word and receive it, and bring forth fruit;" according to Luke: "Which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience." The right kind of hearing involves, accordingly, understanding or receiving; that is, faith, which brings forth fruit. What the good ground is we can plainly gather from the three kinds of bad soil.

The good ground is, first, loose, to receive the seed; then deep, to protect it against the heat, and lastly, free from the roots of thorns, thistles, etc. The honest and good heart is thus open for reception, capable of retention, and pure; that is, sincerely disposed to hold the seed sown in patience and self-denial. "But how can any heart be called good, before the Word and Spirit have made it so? and yet here the seed *finds* a good soil, does not make it. The same question recurs, when the Lord says, 'He that is of God, heareth God's words,' (John viii, 41;) and again, 'Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.' (John xviii, 37.) But who in this sinful world can be called 'of the truth;' for is it not the universal doctrine of the Bible that men become 'of the truth' through hearing Christ's words, not that they hear his words because they are of the truth — that the heart is good, through receiving the Word, not that it receives the Word because it is good? This is certainly the Scriptural doctrine, but at the same time those passages from John, as well as this present parable, and much more also in the Scripture, bear witness to the fact that there are conditions of heart in which the truth finds readier entrance than in others. 'Being of the truth' — 'doing truth' — having the soil of '*an honest and good heart*' — all signify the same thing. Inasmuch as they are anterior to hearing God's words — coming to the light — bringing forth fruit — they can not signify a state of mind and heart in which the truth is positive and realized, but they indicate one in which there is a receptivity for the truth. No heart can be said to be absolutely a good soil, as none is good save God only. And yet the Scripture speaks often of good men; even so comparatively it may be said of some hearts, that they are a soil fitter for receiving the seed of everlasting life than others. Thus the 'Son of peace' will alone receive the message of peace, (Luke x, 6,) while yet not any thing except the reception of that message will make him truly a son of peace. He was before indeed a latent son of peace, but it is the Gospel which first makes actual that which was hitherto only potential. So that the preaching of the Gospel may be likened to the scattering of sparks — where they find tinder, there they fasten, and kindle into a flame; or to a lodestone thrust in among the world's rubbish, attracting to itself all particles of true metal, which yet but for this would never and could never have extricated themselves from the surrounding heap. Not otherwise among those to whom the Word of Christ, as actually preached by himself, came, there were two divisions of men, and the same will always subsist in the world. There were first the false-hearted, who called evil good and good evil — who loved their darkness and hated the light that would make that darkness manifest, and

refused to walk in that light of the Lord even when it shone round about them, drawing back further into their own darkness — self-excusers and self-justifiers, such as were for the most part the scribes and the Pharisees, with whom Christ came in contact. But there were also others, sinners as well, often, as regards actual transgression of positive law, much greater sinners than those first, but who yet acknowledged their evil — had no wish to alter the everlasting relations between right and wrong — who, when the light appeared, did not refuse to be drawn to it, even though they knew that it would condemn their darkness — that it would require an entire remodeling of their lives and hearts: such were the Matthews and the Zaccheuses, all who confessed their deeds justifying God. Not that I would prefer to instance these as examples of the good and honest heart, except in so far as it is needful to guard against a Pelagian abuse of the phrase, and to show how the Lord's language here does not condemn even great and grievous sinners to an incapacity for receiving the Word of life. Nathanael would be a yet more perfect specimen of the class here alluded to — 'the Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile' — which was saying, in other words, the man with the soil of an honest and good heart, fitted for receiving and nourishing the Word of everlasting life, and bringing forth fruit with patience; one of a simple, truthful, and earnest nature; who had been faithful to the light which he had, diligent in the performance of the duties which he knew; who had not been resisting God's preparation for imparting to him his last and best gift, even the knowledge of his Son. For we must keep ever in mind that the good soil comes as much from God, as the seed which is to find there its home. The law and the preaching of repentance, God's secret and preventing grace, run before the preaching of the Word of the kingdom; and thus when that Word comes, it finds some with greater readiness for receiving it, as a Word of eternal life, than others." Again: "The words which Luke records, (v. 18,) *'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,'* (see also Mark iv, 23,) are very important for the avoiding a misunderstanding of our parable, which else might easily have arisen. The disciples might have been in danger of supposing that these four conditions of heart, in which the Word found its hearers, were permanent, immutable, and definitively fixed; and therefore that in one heart the Word must flourish, in another that it could never germinate at all, in others that it could only prosper for a little while. Now the warning, *'Take heed how ye hear,'* obviates the possibility of such a mistake, for it tells us that, according as the

Word is heard and received, will its success be — that while it is indeed true, that all which has gone before in a man's life will greatly influence the manner of his reception of that Word, for every event will have tended either to the improving or deteriorating the soil of his heart, and will therefore render it more or less probable that the seed of God's Word will prosper there, yet it lies in him now to take heed how he hears, and through this taking heed to insure, with God's blessing, that it shall come to a successful issue. (Comp. Jam. i, 21.) For while this is true, and the thought is a solemn one, that there is such a thing as laying waste the very soil in which the seed of eternal life should have taken root — that every act of sin, of unfaithfulness to the light within us, is, as it were, a treading of the ground into more hardness, so that the seed shall not sink in it, or a wasting of the soil, so that the seed shall find no nutriment there, or a fitting it to nourish thorns and briars more kindly than the good seed; yet on the other hand, even for those who have brought themselves into these evil conditions, a recovery is still, through the grace of God, possible — the hard soil may again become soft — the shallow soil may become rich and deep — and the soil beset with thorns open and clear. For the heavenly seed in this differs from the earthly, that the latter as it finds its soil, so it must use it, for it can not alter its nature. But the heavenly seed, if it be acted upon by the soil where it is cast, also reacts more mightily upon it, softening it where it is hard, (Jer. xxiii, 29,) deepening it where it is shallow, cutting up and extirpating the roots of evil where it is incumbered with these, and wherever it is allowed free course, transforming and ennobling each of these inferior soils, till it has become that which man's heart was at first, good ground, fit to afford nourishment to that Divine Word, that seed of eternal life." (Trench.) — We may add to the above a word from Stier: "The sowing on the part of man must correspond to the sowing on the part of God. (See Gal. vi, 7; Jer. iv, 3; Hos. x, 12.) Whoever does not hinder the Heavenly Sower in his work, becomes good ground, that bringeth forth its fruit." — **SOME AN HUNDREDFOLD, SOME SIXTY, SOME THIRTY.** Mark inverts the order, and Luke has only "an hundredfold," intimating thereby, as Stier thinks, that when ground brings forth as much as in its nature it can, this very measure, whatever it may be, is counted the highest. Here, however, we have evidently not the truth presented, as in the parable of the talents, that God deals out his gifts in various measures to men, but the fact stated, that the quantity of the final harvest depends on man's faithfulness and active zeal. All Christians are not equally fruitful.

B. THE PARABLE OF THE TARES AMONG THE WHEAT.

Verses 24-30 and 37-43.

(24) ANOTHER parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: (25) But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares ^[1] among ^[2] the wheat, and went his way. (26) But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. (27) So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? (28) He said unto them, An enemy ^[3] hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ^[4] (29) But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

(37) He answered and said unto them. He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; (38) the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; (39) the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. (40) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (41) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; (42) and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

[1] The original of *tares* is ζιζάνιον; Latin, *loliū*; German, *lolch*; English, darnel; a weed growing among wheat and other kinds of grain, and at first having a close resemblance to them. When ripe it is easily distinguished from wheat, the grain being blackish and bearded. It is very hurtful both for the brain and the stomach.]

[2 Literally, in the midst of the wheat, meaning *all through*.]

[3 This is an act of malice still practiced in India, against which the Roman law also provided. Alford says: "The practice is not unknown even in England at present. A field belonging to me was maliciously sown with charlock over the wheat."]

[4 To gather up for the purpose of burning. This, of course, implies that it had to be pulled up first.]

VERSE 24. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKENED UNTO. The kingdom of heaven, by which we have here to understand the visible Church, that has for its object the reunion of sinful man with God, offers the same phenomena as a field. Some deny that the *Church* is to be understood by the field, inasmuch as our Lord himself, in his interpretation, says: The field is *the world*. "But it must be evident," says Trench, "to every one who is not warped by a dogmatic interest, that the parable is, as the Lord announces at its first utterance, concerning the kingdom of heaven, or the Church. It required no special teaching to acquaint the disciples that *in the world* there would ever be a mixture of good and bad, though they must have been so little prepared to expect the same in the Church that it was very needful to warn them beforehand, both that they might not be offended and think the promises of God had failed when the evil should appear; and also that they might know how to behave themselves when that mystery of iniquity, now foretold, should begin manifestly to work. Nor need the term *world* here used perplex us in the least. It *was* the world, and therefore was rightly called so, till this seed was sown in it, but thenceforth was the world no longer. No narrower word would have sufficed for him, in whose prophetic eye the Word of the Gospel was contemplated as going forth into all lands, and sown in every part of the great outfield of the nations." — UNTO A MAN. In this parable the sower is exclusively Christ himself, (v. 37,) who is ever present in his field. — GOOD SEED. "At first there might seem a slight disagreement between this parable and the preceding, as though the same symbol were used in the two places to signify very different things; for here it is explained, '*The good seed are the children of the kingdom*,' there, '*The seed is the Word of God*;' yet in reality there is none, but only a progress from that parable to this. In that the Word of God is the instrument by which men are born anew and become children of the kingdom, (James i, 18; 1 Pet. i, 23;) the Word there is considered more

absolutely in and by itself, while here it is considered after it has been received into the heart, incorporated with the man, as that which has brought him into the position of a child of the kingdom, and which is now so vitally united with him that the two can not any more be considered asunder. (Compare Jer. xxxi, 27; Hos. ii, 23; Zech. x, 9.)" (Trench.) By the sowing of this good seed Christ slowly and patiently builds up his kingdom. Wherever the Word has found its receptive soil and brought forth its fruit, the kingdom has its members, exists as a society, exists in the world as a Divine institution, as the visible Church of Christ.

VERSE 25. BUT WHILE MEN SLEPT. "Many have made the sleeping of men significant, and suppose that it indicates the negligence and lack of watchfulness on the part of rulers in the Church, whereby ungodly men should creep in unawares, introducing errors in doctrine and in practice. (Acts xx, 29, 30; Jude, 4; 2 Pet. ii, 1, 2, 19.) But seeing it is thus indefinitely put, and the servants, who should have watched, if any should have done so, are first designated at a later stage of the history, and then without any thing to mark a past omission on their part, it would seem that the men who slept are not such as should have done otherwise, but the phrase is equivalent to 'at night,' and means nothing further. (Job xxiii, 15.) This enemy seized his opportunity, when all eyes were closed in sleep, and wrought the secret mischief upon which he was intent, and, having wrought it undetected, withdrew." (Trench.) — **HIS ENEMY CAME.** This enemy, as our Lord tells us, (v. 39,) is *the devil*. These words have justly been appealed to as incontrovertibly proving that our Lord did not use a figurative speech when he spoke of a personal devil; for the devil is mentioned not in the parable itself, but in the explanation, where the language must be taken in a literal sense. "We behold Satan here, not as he works beyond the limits of the Church, deceiving the world, but in his far deeper skill and malignity, as he at once mimics and counterworks the work of Christ: in the words of Chrysostom, 'After the prophets, the false prophets; after the apostles, the false apostles; after Christ, antichrist.' We may further notice with what distinctness the doctrine concerning Satan and his agency, his active hostility to the blessedness of man, of which there is so little in the Old Testament, comes out in our Lord's teaching in the New. As the lights become brighter the shadows become deeper; but till the mightier power of good was revealed, we were in mercy not suffered to know how mighty was the power of evil; and even here it is in each case only to the innermost circle of the

disciples that the explanation concerning Satan is given. So it was not till the Son of man actually appeared on the stage of the world that Satan came distinctly forward upon it also; but the instant that Christ opens his ministry for the setting up of the kingdom of God, at the same instant Satan starts forward as the hinderer and adversary of it, the tempter of him who is the Head and Prince of this kingdom. And instead of hearing less of Satan, as the mystery of the kingdom of God proceeds to unfold itself, in the last book of Scripture, that which details the fortune of the Church till the end of time, we hear more of him, and he is brought in more evidently and openly working than in any other. It is very observable too, that Satan is spoken of as *his* enemy, the enemy of the Son of man; for here, as in so many other places, the great conflict is spoken of as rather between Satan and the Son of man than between Satan and God. It was part of the great scheme of redemption that the victory over evil should be a moral triumph, not a triumph obtained by a mere putting forth of superior strength. We can see how important for this end it was, that man, who lost the battle, should also win it, (1 Cor. xv, 21,) and therefore as by and through man the kingdom of darkness was to be overthrown, so the enmity of the serpent was specially directed against the seed of the woman, the Son of man. The title given him is '*the wicked one*;' the article is emphatic, and points him out as the absolutely evil, of whom the *ground* of his being is evil. For as God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, (1 John i, 5; Jam. i, 17,) so Satan is darkness, and in him is no light; there is *no* truth in him. Man is in a middle position; he detains the truth in unrighteousness; light and darkness in him are struggling; but, whichever may predominate, the other is there, kept down, indeed, but still with the possibility of manifesting itself. Herein lies the possibility of a redemption for man, that his will is only perverted; but Satan's will is inverted, for he has said what it is never possible for a man to say, or at least *fully* to act upon, 'Evil, be thou my good;' and, therefore, as far as we can see, a redemption and restoration are impossible for him." (Trench.) — AND SOWED TARES AMONG THE WHEAT. This attempt of the enemy to frustrate the success of the kingdom of God is neither an open one nor is violence employed. He lacks the power to pull out the good seed, and for this reason he endeavors to ruin the wheat by sowing over and above it his darnel. (See foot-note 1.) — AND WENT HIS WAY. Clandestinely coming to scatter his seed and clandestinely going away, Satan takes especial delight in having his existence denied. "The words," says Alexander, "would also suggest the idea that the

work was done, the mischief was accomplished, and required no further care or labor, as the wheat did."

VERSE 26. BUT WHEN THE BLADE WAS SPRUNG UP, AND BROUGHT FORTH FRUIT. The good seed had been sown earlier, had struck deep roots, and was so far advanced in growth that the tares could not choke it any more. This is a consoling feature, from which the disciples of all times should learn never to despair of the Church when they see tares growing up with the wheat. — **THEN APPEARED THE TARES ALSO.** How often in the Church have the beginnings of evil been scarcely discernible! How often has that which bore the worst fruit in after times looked at first like a higher form of good! The seed sown by Satan, properly and originally, is error. But as the seed of the Divine Word, the truth is represented as having assimilated those that had received it so completely to its own nature that they themselves are called the good seed, the children of God, so those also who have received the evil seed of Satan are called his children.

VERSE 27. SO THE SERVANTS OF THE HOUSEHOLDER CAME; that is, to the proprietor of the field. The superintending servants are the ministers in the house of God. They find out what had been done without betraying a consciousness of having neglected their duty. (See v. 25; comp. Luke xvii, 1.) — **SIR, DIDST NOT THOU SOW GOOD SEED IN THY FIELD? FROM WHENCE THEN HAS IT TARES?** This conversation between the master and his servants imparts vivacity and increased interest to the whole parable. To the first question they do not expect a reply. Questions like this are the strongest possible affirmation; the second question is that of surprise. They are amazed at the presence of the tares in the field. "A holy Gospel," says Dr. Kirk, in his lecture on this parable, "must produce a holy Church, we should naturally infer. The kingdom of God brought on earth must at least keep its own territory separate from the domain of darkness. But history informs us that it is not so; and prophecy announced that this was not to be the case. This parable is a prophetic declaration that the Church of Christ on earth should be an imperfect body. The visible Church, or the Church as a body organized on earth, has two kinds of imperfection — the personal defects of the regenerated and the membership of unregenerated persons. These imperfections have, in every age, awakened a sincere zeal, and caused also an unenlightened and even an impure zeal to engage in the work of purification.

The design of this parable is to enlighten and modify the former, and to strip the latter of its plausible argument."

VERSE 28. AN ENEMY HAS DONE THIS. This is the uniform answer of the Holy Scriptures. Beyond this the Word of God does not go. The origin of moral evil, of sin, lies, according to the Scriptures, neither with God nor with man, but with the devil. This is a decided, solemn protest, on the part of a holy God, against having any share in the existence of moral evil. Nor lies the origin of moral evil with man. Before he abused his free moral agency, it had been done by another personality. After the *first* origin of sin the servants do not inquire; beyond the satanic causality they do not go; they do not ask: Whence is this enemy himself? hast thou not created him? how has he become the devil? To these and similar questions the Scriptures return no answer. Possibly the angels know more about the subject. However, if the origin of sin could be satisfactorily accounted for, there would be a cause, a reason for it. Sin would not be self-originated unreason and causeless perversity. For us it must be a source of great consolation that sin did not originate with man. — **WILT THOU THEN THAT WE GO AND GATHER THEM UP?** This question of the servants expresses their willingness to serve their Master. As the tares are in the field without his will and consent, they are ready to destroy them at once. It is well, however, that they consult the Master first; for in the kingdom of the Lord nothing must be done without the expressly-declared will of the Head. On the application of the idea contained in the *gathering up*, see below. Here we would say only so much, that the word implies the application of force and violence in order to destroy the tares at once and forever, (see foot-note,) meaning that zeal in religion against which the Lord warns his disciples so emphatically. (Luke ix, 54, 55.)

VERSE 29. NAY, LEST WHILE YE GATHER UP THE TARES, YE ROOT UP ALSO THE WHEAT WITH THEM. Though the Lord, in explaining the parable, does not tell us whom we have to understand by *the servants* and by the *gathering up*, it is obvious that the *gathering up* is one important ingredient in the parable, and it is not difficult to determine what the Lord forbids and what he does not forbid, by prohibiting his servants from gathering up the tares. Most of the Protestant German commentators infer from this prohibition that the Christian Church is not intended — at least not before the beginning of the millennium — to be a community distinguished from the world and keeping out wicked and unbelieving persons; on the contrary, that

it is intended to form, as all State-Churches do, a commonwealth with the world, in order to save the world. In defense of this view they contend, 1. As Augustine did against the Donatists, "That despite all appearances to the contrary, the Church is a holy body, for they only are its members who are in true and living fellowship with Christ, therefore partakers of his sanctifying Spirit. All others, however they may have the outward notes of belonging to it, are in it, but not *of it*: they *press* upon Christ, as that thronging multitude; they do not *touch* him, as that believing woman. And they who are thus in it but not of it, whether hypocrites lying hid, or open offenders, who from their numbers may not without greater evils ensuing be expelled, do not defile the true members, so long as these share not in their spirit, nor communicate with their evil deeds. They are like the unclean animals in the same ark as the clean, goats in the same pastures with the sheep, chaff on the same barn-floor as the grain, tares growing in the same field with the wheat, endured for a while, but in the end to be separated off, the evil from the good." 2. There is danger of rooting up the wheat by gathering up the tares, because what are now tares may hereafter become wheat, the children of the wicked one may become, by repentance and faith, children of the kingdom, or because the servants, with the best intentions, may fail to distinguish between the tares and the wheat, leaving the former and uprooting the latter. It is only the Lord himself, the searcher of hearts, who with absolute certainty knoweth them that are his. 3. The intimate connections of men with each other by the manifold ties of consanguinity, nationality, citizenship, etc., make it impossible to make a separation between the wicked and righteous on earth without great injury. 4. While many that might yet be saved by being permitted to stay in the Church, would inevitably be lost by being expelled from it, they argue that, on the other hand, the constant intercourse of the good with the evil affords to the former the best opportunity to practice a patient love toward offenders, and to prove themselves in this way as the true children of God; the discipline which this intercourse with the world entails upon them, being an excellent means of growth in grace. To look upon one's self, they say, as belonging to a society or communion consisting exclusively of saints, is calculated to beget uncharitableness and haughtiness, while the true Christian by his intercourse with the wicked in the visible Church is constantly admonished to make himself and others better. And 5, they maintain, that even if unbelievers and the notoriously wicked were expelled from the Church, the congregation of the faithful would thereby not be purged from hypocrites, and there would,

therefore, still be a mixture of good and evil in the Church. — This last-named argument contains, indeed, an incontrovertible truth, and the preceding ones have their weight, in so far as they are directed against the palpably-erroneous views of those who wish to make the Church in its visible form and historic manifestation, identical and coextensive with the true Church which the Lord knoweth and not man. But if the exclusion of notoriously-wicked persons from out of the Church were interdicted by the prohibition in the parable, it would be in direct contradiction with the express command of the Lord, (Matt. xviii, 15-18,) as well as with the practice and teaching of the apostles in their epistles. (See 1 Cor. v, 11, 13; Tit. iii, 10; 2 John x.) All these passages teach plainly that those who hold fundamental errors or lead unholy lives, are to be excommunicated till they renounce their errors and give unmistakable signs of genuine repentance and reformation of life. (2 Tim. ii, 25, 26.) This is a solemn duty of every evangelical Church that wishes to stand on the basis of the apostles. This excommunication, for which we contend, does not debar the offender from heaven nor from the use of *all* means of grace on earth. He may, yea, he is desired to come regularly to Church, to listen to the preaching of God's Word, to attend all the means of grace, that he may be re-awakened and return to his Savior—he is merely debarred from the communion table and the exercise of the privileges of a Church member, till he seeks and obtains re-admission into the communion of the faithful. Such exercise of Church discipline can extend only to errors in doctrine and an outwardly-wicked life; the decision whether others that do not fall under either of these categories are true children of God, must be left with the Lord, the Searcher of the heart. (Comp. Matt. xxii, 1-14.) From all this it is evident that our parable justifies by no means the view that the Church of Christ is not intended to be a community separate from the world and carefully keeping out of its pale all wicked and unbelieving persons, and we must, accordingly, seek another solution of the prohibition in question. We have to understand by the "*gathering up*," proposed by the servants, a *rooting up*, a *destruction*, not of the principle of evil, but of persons, a judicial sentence passed upon the offender, involving capital punishment as denounced in the Old Testament against false prophets and blasphemers, or at least a total and final exclusion from the pale of the Church; in short, every sentence of condemnation that encroaches upon the final decision reserved by Christ to himself. Against every such abuse of Church power the Lord warns here, while he beholds with prophetic ken the Church of all centuries up to the end of time. But, alas! the Church has

disregarded the Master's warning, and has "gathered up," though forbidden by the Lord. Even Protestants, even those that are entitled to the appellation of servants of the householder, have advocated the use of civil force in matters of religion, and have claimed for magistrates the right to destroy with fire and sword the offenders against Church doctrine or discipline. But it is above all others the Church of Rome that has daringly set at naught this prohibition of the Lord, yea, in order to fill the cup of her wickedness this apostate Church has even appealed to this very prohibition as a sanction of her bloody persecutions, as if heretics might be punished in any way perfectly consistent with this prohibition, provided only that it is done in such a manner as not to hurt "the faithful;" that is, the members of her own communion. In this sense, says Thomas Aquinas, "This prohibition is only binding when there is danger of pulling up wheat with the tares." And Maldonatus adds, "That in each particular case the Pope, the representative of the householder, is to judge whether there be such danger or not." But what a fearful judgment is in store for those that have defied the Master's command, either shedding innocent blood or shortening the time of probation of actual unbelievers! (Comp. Rev. vi, 9, 10.) In every attempt to gather up the tares, in the sense described, the servants are not commissioned by the Lord, but by Satan, and there is in this case no danger for the tares. "It is," as Bengel remarks, "not wheat making war on tares, but tares seeking to root out wheat." The spirit of persecution is never from the Lord. — Of the principle embodied in this verse Owen makes the following general and practical application: "The tares were injurious to the wheat, but not so much so as the loosening of the roots occasioned by pulling up the tares. Here were two evils, one which was to be endured for a season, lest the other and greater should take place. This was the decision of the householder, who, in this similitude, represents Jesus Christ. This principle, that of two evils the less is to be preferred — not for its own sake, but relatively — is in accordance with the teachings of Christ, as well as with common-sense, and is of frequent application in reforming the abuses of society. The hot-headed and intemperate zeal of some would lead them to the immediate eradication of social evils, without any thought as to the consequences. But a wise reformer will always consider well the effect of every measure upon the prosperity and perpetuity of organizations that are to be left untouched, as essential to the well-being of the community."

VERSE 30. LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST.

"In these words," says Trench, "the true doctrine concerning antichrist, not indeed the personal antichrist, but the antichristian power, is implicitly declared. We learn that evil is not, as so many dream, gradually to wane and to disappear before good, the world before the Church, but is ever to develop itself more fully, even as, on the other side, good is to unfold itself more and more mightily also. Thus it will go on, till at last they stand face to face, each in its highest manifestation, in the persons of Christ and of antichrist; on the one hand, an incarnate God; on the other, the man in whom the fullness of all satanic power will dwell bodily. Both are to grow, evil and good, till they come to a head, till they are ripe, one for destruction, and the other for full salvation." This is the basis on which Premillenarians build their views. They contend that the simultaneous and equal development of evil and good, represented by the growing together of the tares and wheat unto the harvest, can not be assumed to go on during the millennium, and that, therefore, the millennium will be ushered in by the gathering up of the tares, typical of and introductory to the final judgment after the millennium. Against the premillenarian theory Dr. Whedon draws the following inferences from our text: "1. We have here a very clear contradiction of the millenarian theory that there are two resurrections, one of the righteous, another of the wicked, a thousand years apart. 2. We have also a very express condemnation of the doctrine that God will first destroy the wicked, and allow the saints to reign on the earth a thousand years before the final judgment. The wicked and the righteous will both continue undestroyed during the time of probation. This belongs to the very nature of probation. 3. Nor does this parable contradict the doctrine that men will be generally converted for ages before the judgment. It is destruction, not conversion, that the parable intends to deny. Men will be *permitted* to be wicked even in the millennium. They will be of the same depraved nature as now. Only the main mass will be saints by conversion and sanctification." To these inferences the premillenarians would reply that their theory implies only the impotency, not the impossibility of moral evil during the millennium, and that unless Satan be bound, and the growth of the tares in the midst of the wheat be thereby prevented *a considerable length of time* before the final judgment, nothing like the millennium will precede this final catastrophe.

VERSE 39. THE HARVEST IS THE END OF THE WORLD. The word rendered *world* is not κόσμος — the universe or planetary system —

but **αἰών** — a period or age of the world, "a state or order of things." The premillenarians understand here by the term *the world* that period or dispensation which terminates with the visible coming of Christ to establish his millennial reign on earth, with which event they connect the resurrection of the righteous. (Matt. xxiv, 29; Luke xxi, 24.) That the phrase *the end of the world* may mean the end of a certain *limited* period we do not deny. But it can not be denied, on the other hand, that it may as legitimately designate the end of the *whole* period allotted to the world's history up to the final judgment. The question whether the second coming of Christ will take place before the millennium, for the purpose of establishing his reign on earth, or after the millennium, for the purpose of the final judgment, the reader will find discussed in chap. xxiv, and other passages which directly refer to this subject. — AND THE REAPERS ARE [the] ANGELS. The definite article is not in the original. Angels, as spirits of a higher order than man, are not subject to frailties and errors.

VERSE 40. AS THE TARES ARE GATHERED AND BURNED IN THE FIRE, SO SHALL IT BE IN THE END OF THIS WORLD. The gathered tares shall be burned with fire. Yet by this burning — in the original **καίειν**, and the stronger **κατακαίειν**, (vs. 30 and 40) — we have not to understand annihilation, but burning, suffering pain from fire in hell. (John xv, 6; Matt. xxv, 46.) The same is said also of the land that beareth briars and thorns, (see Heb. vi, 8,) and David says, (2 Sam. xxiii, 6, 7:) "The sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, and shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place."

VERSE 41. THE SON OF MAN SHALL SEND FORTH HIS ANGELS. Though then in a state of humiliation, our Lord does not hesitate to call angels his servants. — ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND, AND THEM WHICH DO INIQUITY. (Compare Job xxxviii, 13; Zeph. i, 3.) Those that were above called *the children of the wicked one* and have remained such, are now divided into two classes: 1. **Σκάνδαλα**, rendered "things that offend," may be applied to persons, as in Matt. xvi, 23. By this term the Lord designates all false doctrines and pernicious principles and their abettors and propagators. 2. Workers of iniquity, all that have disgraced the Church by wicked lives.

VERSE 42. AND SHALL CAST THEM INTO A FURNACE OF FIRE; THERE SHALL BE WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH. The term *furnace of fire* must be here understood literally; it means not *hades*, but *gehenna*, the lake of fire, (Matt. xxv, 41; Rev. xix, 20; xx, 15,) the place of punishment for those on whom the second death has power. (Rev. xx, 6; xxi, 8.) The punishment of hell is here represented under the similitude of the most fearful punishment which can possibly be inflicted; it was in use among the Chaldeans. "The furnace of fire," says Lange, "into which the wicked are cast, forms a contrast to that one into which the servants of Jehovah were cast. (Dan. iii.) Out of this fiery furnace resounded the loud song of praise; from out of that one will be heard the wail of anguish and despair, the gnashing of teeth from impotent rage." No words could possibly express the nature of these intense sufferings more forcibly than those used here.

VERSE 43. THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN, IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER. "As fire was the element of the dark and cruel kingdom of hell, so is light of the pure heavenly kingdom. *Then*, when the dark hindering element is removed, shall this element of light which was before struggling with and obstructed by it, come forth in its full brightness. (See Col. iii, 3; Rom. viii, 18; Prov. xxv, 4, 5.) A glory shall be revealed *in* the saints: it shall not merely be brought *to* them, and added from without; but rather a glory which they before had, but which did not before evidently appear, shall burst forth and show itself openly, as did the Lord's hidden glory once in the days of his flesh, at the moment of his transfiguration. That shall be the day of the manifestation of the sons of God; they shall shine forth as the sun when the clouds are rolled away, (Dan. xii, 3;) they shall evidently appear and be acknowledged by all as the children of light, of that God who is 'the Father of Lights.' (Jam. i. 17) And then, but not till then, shall be accomplished those glorious prophecies which are so often repeated in the Old Testament — 'Henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.' (Isa. lii, 1.) 'In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts.' (Zech. xiv, 21.) 'Thy people also shall be all righteous.' (Isa. lx, 21; comp. Isa. xxxv, 8; Joel iii, 17; Ezek. xxxvii, 21-27; Zeph. iii, 13.)" (Trench.) — **WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR LET HIM HEAR.** A most appropriate warning at the close of such an announcement on the future state of the righteous and the wicked.

C. THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD-SEED.

Verses 31, 32. (COMPARE MARK iv, 30-34; LUKE xiii, 18, 19.)

(31) ANOTHER parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: (32) which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

VERSE 31. The close internal connection between this and the preceding parables is evident. In the parable of the sower the disciples had heard that three parts of the seed sown perished, and only a fourth part prospered; in that of the tares, that even the seed fallen on good ground had to encounter new hinderances. Lest they should be tempted quite to lose heart and to despair, the Lord spoke this parable and the one that follows, as if saying to them: My kingdom will survive these losses and surmount these hinderances, till, small as its first beginnings may appear, it will, like a mighty tree, fill the earth with its branches, and, like potent leaven, diffuse its influence through all the world. Thus this parable belongs to those prophecies of Christ that have already found in part a glorious fulfillment, and are in part being daily fulfilled in the progressive evangelization of the heathen world. "The comparison which he uses, likening the growth of his kingdom to that of a tree, was one with which many of his hearers may have been already familiar from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The growth of a worldly kingdom had been set forth under this image, (Dan. iv, 10-12; Ezek. xxxi, 3-9;) that also of the kingdom of God. (Ezek. xvii, 22-24; Ps. lxxx, 8.) But why, it may be asked, is a mustard tree here chosen as that with which the comparison shall be made? Many nobler plants, as the vine, or taller trees, as the cedar, might have been named. But this is chosen, not with reference to its ultimate greatness, but with reference to the proportion between the smallness of the seed and the greatness of the plant which unfolds itself from thence. For this is the point to which the Lord calls especial attention — not its greatness in itself, but its greatness when compared with the seed from whence it springs; since what he desired to set before his disciples was, not merely that his kingdom should be glorious, but that it should be glorious, despite its weak and slight and despised beginnings. Nor can I, with a modern interpreter, find any thing so very ridiculous in the supposition,

that the Savior chose this seed on account of further qualities which it possessed, that gave it a peculiar aptness to illustrate the truth which he had in hand. Its heat, its fiery vigor, the fact that only through being bruised it gives out its best virtues, and all this under so insignificant an appearance, and in so small a compass, may well have moved him to select this image under which to set forth the destinies of the Word of the kingdom — of the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer, which, though to the Greeks foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling-block, should prove to them that believed the power of God unto salvation." (Trench.) — THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE TO A GRAIN OF MUSTARD-SEED. The planting and expansion of the kingdom of heaven offer the same phenomena as the growth of a grain of mustard-seed. "It is not Christ's doctrine merely, nor yet even the Church which he planted upon earth, that is signified by this grain of mustard-seed. He is himself the grain of mustard-seed. For the kingdom of heaven, or the Church, was originally inclosed in him, and from him unfolded itself, having as much oneness of life with him as the tree with the seed in which it was originally shut up, and out of which it grew. He is at once the sower and the seed sown; for by a free act of his own will, he gave himself to that death, whereby he became the author of life unto many; as he himself had said, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' (John xii, 24.)" (Trench.)

VERSE 32. WHICH IS THE LEAST OF ALL SEEDS. "These words have often perplexed interpreters, as there are many seeds, as of poppy or rue, that are smaller; yet difficulties of this kind are not worth making; it is sufficient to know that — Small as a grain of mustard-seed, was a proverbial expression among the Jews for something exceedingly minute. (See Luke xvii, 6.) The Lord, in his popular teaching, adhered to the popular language. — To pass on then to the thing signified; what, to the eye of flesh, could be less magnificent, what could have less of promise than the commencements of the kingdom of God in the person of the Son of man? He grew up in a distant and despised province; till his thirtieth year did not emerge from the bosom of his family — then taught for two or three years in the neighboring towns and villages, and occasionally at Jerusalem; made a few converts, chiefly among the poor and unlearned; and then falling into the hands of his enemies, without an attempt on his own part or his followers to release him, died the shameful death of the cross: such, and so slight, was the commencement of the universal kingdom of

God. For in this the kingdom of God differs from the great schemes of this world; these last have a proud beginning, a shameful and a miserable end — towers of Babel, which at first threaten to be as high as heaven, but end in being a deserted and formless heap of slime and bricks: but the works of God, and most of all his great work, his Church, have a slight and unobserved beginning, with gradual increase and a glorious consummation. So is it with his kingdom in the world; so is it with his kingdom in every single heart. The Word of Christ falls there too, like a slight mustard-seed, promising little, but issuing, if allowed to grow, in great and marvelous results." (Trench.) — BUT WHEN IT IS GROWN, IT IS THE GREATEST AMONG HERBS. "It is well known that in hot countries, as in Judea, the mustard-tree attains a size which it is never known to reach in our colder latitudes, sometimes so great as to allow a man to climb up into its branches, though this, indeed, is mentioned as a remarkable thing; or to ride on horseback under them, as a traveler in Chili mentions that he has done." (Trench.) — AND BECOMETH A TREE, SO THAT THE BIRDS OF THE AIR COME AND LODGE IN THE BRANCHES THEREOF. "Maldonatus remarks, that birds are exceedingly partial to the seed, so that when it is advancing to ripeness, he has often seen them lighting in very great numbers on its boughs, which, however, were strong enough to sustain the weight without being broken. This fact of the fondness of birds for the seeds, and the manner in which, therefore, they congregated in the branches, was probably familiar to our Lord's hearers also. They, too, had beheld them lodging in the branches of the tree, whose seed thus served them for meat, so that there must have been a singular liveliness in the image which the parable presented to their minds. Neither need we suppose this last circumstance introduced merely for the purpose of completing the picture, and presenting it in a more lively manner to the eye; but rather in the birds flocking to the boughs of the mustard-tree when it had grown great, and there finding shelter and food, (Ezek. xvii, 23, 'under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing,') we are to recognize a prophecy of the refuge and defense that should be for all men in the Church: how that multitudes should thither make their resort, finding their protection from worldly oppression, as well as the satisfaction for all the needs and wants of their souls." (Trench.) — The Lord has called forth in the heathen world a longing after salvation, which admonishes all professors of the religion of Jesus to fulfill the last solemn command of Jesus Christ. (Matt. xxviii, 18-20; Luke xxiv, 47.)

D. THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

Verses 33-36. (COMPARE LUKE xiii, 20, 21.)

(33) ANOTHER parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures^[1] of meal, till the whole was leavened. (34) All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them; (35) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,^[2] saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundations of the world. (36) Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

[1] This is the quantity that was generally mixed at once. (Gen. xviii. 6; Judges vi, 19; 1 Sam. i, 24.) The *measure* was the Roman modius, the third part of an epha.]

[2] The Psalms are reckoned with the writings of the prophets, and the Psalm referred to (Ps. lxxviii, 2) is by Asaph, the "seer." (2 Chron. xxix, 30.)]

VERSE 33. "This parable," says Trench, "relates also to the marvelous increase of the kingdom of God; but while the preceding one sets forth its outward, visible manifestation, this declares its hidden, mysterious working, and not merely its development from within itself, but its influence on the world which it touches upon all sides. The mustard-seed does not for some while attract observation, nor, till it has grown to a considerable size, do the birds of the air light upon its branches; but the active working of the leaven has been from the very beginning, from the moment that it was hidden in the lump." While the parable of the mustard-seed describes the small beginnings and the external enlargement of the visible Church by the spread of the Gospel, that of the leaven sets forth the power which the Gospel of the grace of God has to penetrate, to transform or assimilate the heart of man individually, and human society as a whole. We must, however, not overlook that when the renewing power of the Gospel is represented as complete in its effects, this can be understood only relatively with regard to those who do not resist its influence

— a fact of which the parable of the sower treats. On the nature of the regenerating influence, which the Gospel exerts on the heart of man, symbolized by the leavening, Dr. Kirk in his Lectures on the Parables (pp. 64-66) makes the following remarks, which seem to us to point out the way how the Calvinistic and Arminian differences on regeneration may be reconciled: "The human heart needs a change to fit it for the service of God and the blessedness of heaven as really and as completely as the mass of meal requires the change to make it into bread, and the power to produce that great change is foreign to the heart itself. But the change needed, radical as it is, is not a literal creation. The analogy may not be pressed as a theological argument; yet it holds strictly true that it was not the creation of meal that the leaven should accomplish, but simply its transformation. If it were a literal re-creation, then personal identity would be destroyed. But the regenerated man is conscious that he is a new man, not in the sense of being another man, but a radically-altered man. There is not a new faculty, but a radical change in the employment of his faculties. At every step of the process he is conscious that it is he himself that is undergoing a change. He has not a new conscience, but the old one awakened. Dormant sensibilities are aroused. New thoughts, new feelings, new purposes occupy the soul; but they are all in his soul, the very same he always had. A believer is not an animal made into a man, but a man morally changed." — With regard to the application of the parable to the penetrating of the *whole mass of humanity* Alford remarks: "It is witnessed in the earlier ages by the dropping of heathen customs and worship. In modern times it is more gradually and secretly advancing, but still to be plainly seen in the various abandonments of criminal and unholy practices — as, e.g., of slavery and dueling and the increasing abhorrence of war among Christian men — and, without doubt, in the end, to be signally and universally manifested. But this effect is not to be traced in the establishment or history of so-called Churches, but in the hidden advancement, without observation, of that deep leavening power which works irrespective of human forms and systems." — **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO LEAVEN;** that is, its effects are like those produced by leaven. Leaven is frequently used in the New Testament as an emblem of an efficient force in a bad sense. The Lord warns his disciples against the injurious leaven of the Pharisees. In Gal. v, 9, leaven signifies false doctrines; in 1 Cor. v, 6, it is compared with the pernicious influences of bad examples. Some have, therefore, interpreted the parable as a prophecy of the heresies and corruptions which should mingle with and adulterate the pure doctrine of the Gospel. But

this interpretation deserves no serious refutation. We are fully authorized to use the same thing, in one respect, as an emblem of something good, in another as that of something bad. Examples of this kind are frequent in the Scriptures. Thus the lion is (1 Pet. v, 8) an emblem of Satan and (Rev. v, 5) an emblem of Christ. The serpent is likewise an emblem of Satan and an emblem of apostolic wisdom. Birds are the emblem of firm trust in God and emblems of the wicked one, who snatches up the seed sown on the wayside. By the leaven we have to understand the Word of the kingdom, which Word, in its highest sense, Christ himself was. The leading point of comparison is the *assimilating power* of leaven, and that rests on the affinity which leaven has to meal. We are reminded, by this trait, of the incarnation of the Son of God, on which the renewal of the human race fundamentally rests, and of the fact that each portion of the leavened meal becomes leaven in turn, which accounts for the leavening of the whole lump. Christ imparted his own life and spirit to his apostles, and so the power of the Gospel passed over from them to others, producing in individuals and in the race that salutary ferment which results in a new, radically-changed life, every new convert being a leaven for others. On the other hand, though the leaven has an affinity to the meal, it is a foreign agent brought to supply a want, in the material needing to be changed. The woman does not find the leaven in the meal, but takes it from elsewhere to mingle it therein. "Thus the Gospel is not the unfolding of any powers which already existed in the world — a kingdom not rising, as those other kingdoms, *out of the earth*, (Dan. vii, 17,) but a new power brought into the world from above; not a philosophy, but a revelation. The Gospel of Christ was a new and quickening power cast in the midst of an old and dying world, a center of life round which all the energies which survived and all which itself should awaken might form and gather, by the help of which the world might be renewed." (Trench.) — WHICH A WOMAN TOOK. The making up of dough being generally attended to by women, it is very natural that the parable speaks of a woman. Yet without unwarrantably allegorizing, we may see in the woman the emblem of the Church. "The organ of the Spirit's working is the Church, which evidently would be most fitly represented under this image. In and through the Church the Spirit's work proceeds; only as he dwells in the Church is it able to mingle a nobler element in the mass of humanity, to leaven the world." (Trench.) — AND HID. "It is observable that this leaven is said not merely to have been mingled with but *hidden* in the mass, on which its influence was to be exerted. The true renovation, that which God effects, is ever thus from the inward to the

outward; it begins in the invisible spiritual world, though it ends not there; for beginning there, it yet fails not to bring about, in good time, a mighty change also in the outward and visible world. This was wonderfully exemplified in the early history of Christianity. The leaven was effectually hidden. A remarkable evidence of this is the entire ignorance which heathen writers betray of all that was going forward a little below the surface of society — the manner in which they overlooked the mighty change which was preparing, and this not merely at the first, when the mustard-tree might well escape notice, but, with slight exceptions, even up to the very moment when the triumph of Christianity was at hand. The leaven was hidden, yet, by degrees, it made itself felt, till at length the whole Roman world was, more or less, leavened by it." (Trench.) — IN THREE MEASURES OF MEAL. Some expositors refer the number *three* to the spread of the Gospel in the three then known parts of the world, Europe, Asia, and Africa; others to the three ancestors of the whole postdiluvian race, which is to be regenerated by the power of the Gospel. Whatever is human can be reached by the Gospel. Distinctions in the human family, which time, climate, customs, or any other causes have introduced, give way before the Gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation to the white and the black, to the Greek and the barbarian, the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor. Whatever condition or relation of man Christianity lays hold of, it transforms. — In the case of the individual man the number *three* very naturally suggests the three constituent parts of man, soul, spirit, and body, or the three principal faculties of man, the intellect, the will, and the emotions. The Gospel is destined to lay hold of and transform the whole man. — TILL THE WHOLE WAS LEAVENED implies, under the condition of the co-operation on the part of man, a twofold promise — first, that the Gospel will diffuse its purifying power through all nations; secondly, that whoever will welcome the offer of spiritual life admits, by such consent, into his soul an element all divine, of sufficient virtue to make him a partaker of the Divine nature and save him to the uttermost. (1 Thess. v, 23, 24; 2 Thess. iii, 3.)

VERSE 34. AND WITHOUT A PARABLE SPAKE HE NOT UNTO THEM. This seemingly-unqualified phrase of the Evangelist some commentators explain by giving to the imperfect tense the meaning of repeated action, which it has in Greek — translating, "he was accustomed to speak, spoke usually." But it can hardly be said that our Lord's teaching was usually parabolic in the proper sense. Alexander says, the Evangelist meant to say that

our Lord confined himself to parables *on this particular occasion*. It is better to take the term "parable" here in a wider sense, as Trench remarks: "He gave no doctrine in an abstract form, no skeletons of truth, but all clothed, as it were, with flesh and blood. He acted himself as he declared to his apostles they must act, if they would be scribes instructed unto the kingdom, and able to instruct others; he brought forth out of his treasure things new and old: by the help of the old he made intelligible the new; by the aid of the familiar he introduced them to that which was strange; from the known he passed more easily to the unknown. And in his manner of teaching he has given us the secret of all effectual teaching — of all speaking which shall leave behind it, as was said of one man's eloquence, stings in the minds and memories of the hearers. Had our Lord spoken naked spiritual truth, how many of his words, partly from his hearers' lack of interest in them, partly from their lack of insight, would have passed away from their hearts and memories, leaving scarcely a trace behind them!"

VERSE 35. The words which are quoted by the Evangelist from Ps. lxxviii, contain no direct prophecy, but refer to a fact, which was intimately connected with the functions of the prophetic office, and thus indicated that which could not be wanting in the person of Him, in whom all the prophetic gifts were to be revealed most fully. The use, therefore, of such parabolic language indicating the possession of the prophetic gift was a typical prophecy, which Christ fulfilled.

E. THE PARABLE OF THE TREASURE HID IN A FIELD.

Verse 44.

(44) AGAIN, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; ^[1] the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

[1] In the old countries, which were subject to so frequent invasions, revolutions, and calamities of various kinds, treasures were often buried in the earth for safe-keeping. This practice is still common in the East. Treasures are also found under the ruins of cities buried by earthquakes.]

The relation which the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price bear to the preceding parables, is thus described by Trench: "The kingdom of God is not merely a general, it is also an individual thing; it is not merely a tree overshadowing the earth, leaven leavening this world, but each man must have it for himself, and make it his own by a distinct act of his own will. He can not be a Christian without knowing it. He may come under the shadow of this great tree, and partake of many blessings of its shelter. He may dwell in a Christendom which has been leavened, and so in a manner himself share in the universal leavening. But more than this is needed. There must be a personal appropriation of the benefit, and we have the history of this in the two parables." Both were spoken to the disciples alone. These are addressed as the happy persons who found the highest treasure, and are reminded that for its sake every thing else is to be joyfully renounced.

"A man, laboring perchance for another, or by accident in passing, finds a treasure which has been hidden in a field; from joy at having found it he goes, and selling all he has, buys the field, thus, by the Jewish law, becoming the possessor also of the treasure. This sets before us the case of a man who unexpectedly, without earnest seeking, finds, in some part of the outward Church, the treasure of true faith and hope and communion with God; and having found this, for joy of it he becomes possessor, not of the treasure without the field — for that the case supposes impossible — but of the field at all hazards, to secure the treasure which is in it; that is, he possesses himself of the means of grace provided in that branch of the Church, where, to use a common expression, he has 'gotten his goods;' he makes that field his own." (Alford.)

IN A FIELD. The field in this parable does not mean the whole world, but only that portion of it where the Christian religion is established, consequently the visible Church with her outward means of grace. German commentators understand by the field nominal, lifeless Christendom, which hides true, genuine Christianity under the incumbrances of an outward profession, superstition, traditions, and unmeaning ceremonies. But this view is certainly inadmissible, *because the field itself had to be bought.* The treasure is not on the surface, it remains concealed from the carnal eye. The world finds no treasure in either Church or Bible.

THE WHICH WHEN A MAN HAS FOUND. The treasure is found; of a previous seeking nothing is said, as the object of the parable is not to set forth the duty of man in this respect. God in his unmerited mercy and grace often finds us when and where we have not sought him. (Is. lxv, 1.) How frequently is it the case that a man's eyes are opened to seethe preciousness of religion, by an instrumentality entirely unexpected and apparently inadequate!

HE HIDETH. This hiding of the treasure merely indicates an apprehension on the part of the finder to lose it again, and in order not to lose it, he hides or conceals it.

AND FOR JOY THEREOF, etc. The finder of the treasure has every thing, for he has Christ, and in Christ righteousness, life, and supreme happiness. How natural is, therefore, the joy that is necessarily connected with the possession of the kingdom of God in the heart! (Comp. Rom. xiv, 17.) Express mention is made here of "joy," by virtue of which the finder is enabled to go and sell every thing that he has. All that was dear to him before, he now surrenders cheerfully; as, for instance, the avaricious man his avarice, the sluggard his laziness, the voluptuary his pleasures, the philosopher his self-reliance, etc. The same principle is laid down in Matt. x, 37-39; xvi, 24; Mark ix, 43-48; Luke xiv, 33; Phil. iii, 8. The choice is not difficult — the best is retained. In the storm the mariner throws all his goods overboard, in order to save his life. Self-denial, in this case, is neither a heavy yoke nor bitter cup. Where new buds and blossoms issue forth, the faded leaves drop of their own accord.

AND BUYETH THAT FIELD. As this finder of the treasure saw at first in the field only the property of another, something not his own, and took, therefore, no special interest in it, but makes up his mind as soon as he discovers the treasure, to purchase the field for any price; so the man that has found the hidden treasure, the grace of God in Christ, sees at once that he has no claims on the treasure hidden in the Church, without being a member of it and a participant of all its means of grace. The treasure and the field, Christ and the means of grace in his Church, belong together. A man can not have Christ in the heart, and at the same time cast his lot with the world. The public confession of Christ involved in many countries and at various times the loss of property, liberty, and even life itself, especially in the apostolic age.

F. THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

Verses 45, 46.

(45) AGAIN, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: (46) who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

VERSE 45. On the relation which this parable bears to the preceding, Trench remarks: "The two are each the complement of the other; so that under one or the other, as finders either of the pearl or hid treasure, may be ranged all who become partakers of the rich treasures of the Gospel of Christ. There are those who do not discover that there is an aim and a purpose for man's life — that there is a truth for him at all, till the truth as it is in Jesus is revealed to them. Such are likened to the finder of the hid treasure, who stumbled upon it unawares, neither expecting nor looking for it. There are others who feel that there must be some absolute good for man, in the possession of which he shall be blessed, and find the satisfaction of all his longings, and who are, therefore, seeking every-where and inquiring for this good. Such are likened to the merchant that has distinctly set before himself the purpose of seeking goodly pearls. To that he is bending all his energies; his search is, therefore, determinate, discriminative, unremitting." We may also remark that there is a gradation in the image used to set forth the surpassing value of the kingdom of God. Pearls have always been considered as articles of the very highest value; almost incredible sums of money have been given for a single pearl. But it requires great care and skill to distinguish genuine and perfect pearls from defective ones. In both respects there is peculiar fitness in representing the value of religion by a pearl. — SEEKING GOODLY PEARLS. Setting out on his search he does not know that there is one pearl surpassing all others. But he is seeking pearls, not husks. He is not living for sensual objects, carnal pleasure, worldly fame, acquisition of money. He has nobler and worthier aims. He is conscious that he has an immortal soul which needs spiritual food; his understanding longs for truth, his heart for peace, and for power to overcome sin. He may be "a philosopher, a philanthropist, or a worshiper of the beautiful in nature or art, hoping to find his soul's satisfaction in those higher possessions and enjoyments." Knox understands by the seekers of precious pearls such as have been trained in religion from their infancy. — Richter in his "Hausbible"

applies this parable to "times and circumstances, when religion attracts general attention from friends and foes, and appears in various forms, for which reason great care is necessary in order to make the best selection, and a willingness to give up every thing that comes into conflict with seeking or possessing the precious pearl." — Stier says: "The nearer we come to the end of the present dispensation, the more need there is of care and circumspection; not only is true Christianity, as it were, covered by the general apostasy, but it requires also a keen and single eye to discover it amid the many conflicting and contradictory creeds, confessions, and opinions, in that wild confusion and clamor, preceding the second coming of the Lord, boasting that Christ is here or there, in this chamber, or in that desert, amid those many phases of Christianity, each of which extols its books, its efforts and zeal, its confessions and societies." Such applications of the parable may be edifying and interesting, but they were, certainly, not intended by the Lord.

VERSE 46. WHEN HE HAD FOUND ONE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE. By this one pearl we can understand nothing else than our blessed Lord himself and our personal appropriation of him, by his living in us and we in him. (Gal. ii, 20.) "There is but one such pearl — though every one may have that one — since the truth is one, even as God is one, and the truth possessed brings that unity into the heart of man, which sin had destroyed. It is God alone in whom any intelligent creature can find its center and true repose; only when man has found *him*, does the great *Eureka* break forth from his lips; in Augustine's beautiful and often quoted words, 'Lord, thou hast made us *for* thee, and our heart is disquieted till it reacheth *to* thee.' (Trench.)

G. THE PARABLE OF THE DRAW-NET.

Verses 47-52.

(47) AGAIN, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, ^[1] that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: (48) which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (49) So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, (50) and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (51) Jesus saith unto them, Have ye

understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. (52) Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

[1 The word in the original means a draw-net of great length. It is leaded below, that it may sweep the bottom of the sea, and supported with corks above, and having been carried out so as to inclose a large space of sea, the ends are then brought together, and it is drawn up upon the beach with all that it contains.]

VERSE 47. At the first view this parable seems to be identical with that of the "wheat and the tares" — yet on a closer examination we find that this is not the case; for the leading idea of the parable of the tares is the *present* mixture of the good and the bad — in that of the draw-net their *future* separation; according to the former men are forbidden to make this separation, while according to the latter, God himself makes it. One shows the gradual development of the Church, the other its final perfection, the gathering of the Church being represented as coming to a close, and the final decision forming the central idea. We are admonished in this parable, that we must not be satisfied with merely being caught in the net, but that every member of the visible Church ought to strive "to be a vessel unto honor, meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii, 20, 21.) The Lord knows those that are his. There will be a final separation of the righteous and the unrighteous, of the holy and the wicked in the Christian Church. (Comp. Ps. cxix, 119; Mal. iii, 18.) — **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE UNTO A NET.** The nature of the "draw-net," which suffers nothing to escape, is neither accidental nor unimportant, but a prophecy on the wide spread of the Gospel and the power exerted by it. The Church of the New Testament is not confined to a single nation, as was the Old Testament Church, but is intended for all nations of the earth, to gather some out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. — **AND GATHERED OF EVERY KIND.** All men, the wise and the foolish, the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, masters and servants, men and women, all without any distinction or exception, are to be invited to come into the kingdom of God. (Comp. Matt. xxii, 10; Acts x, 38, 39.)

VERSE 48. WHICH WHEN IT WAS FULL; that is, when the work of the Church on earth is completed, when the net has been dragged over the whole sea. (Comp. Matt. xxiv, 14.) The ocean of the history of the world and of the Church has its shores also, and there it will become manifest, what has been caught and what must be cast away. Since not all are transformed by their connection with the visible Church, such a separation is absolutely necessary; it will take place on the day of the final judgment, when the time of probation shall end forever. — **AND GATHERED THE GOOD INTO VESSELS, BUT CAST THE BAD AWAY.** The gathering is done through human instrumentalities. By the fishermen we must understand the apostles and all the preachers of the Gospel, (see Ez. xlvii, 10; Jer. xxvi, 16; Matt. iv, 19; Luke v, 10;) but the separation is effected by angels. The Church, it is true, judges and separates also in the onward course of her development, (see 1 Cor. v, 4, 5; Jude, vs. 22, 23,) but the final and complete separation is not intrusted into her hands. This separation must come from above; it is accomplished and carried out by the angels, (comp. Matt. xiii, 41; xxiv, 31; xxv, 31; Rev. xiv, 18, 19,) so that at last the idea of perfect purity, one of the marks of the Church, is fully realized: "without are the dogs." (Comp. Rev. xxii, 15.) The place of the good is here designated "vessels," identical with the "barn," (v. 30,) with the "many mansions," (John xiv, 2;) the "everlasting habitations," (Luke xvi, 9,) and "the city, which has foundations.'" (Heb. xi, 10.)

VERSE 49. So SHALL IT BE AT THE END OF THE WORLD; that is, at the close of the Gospel dispensation, which is fixed by God, but unknown to created intelligences. — **THE ANGELS SHALL COME FORTH.** When that decisive moment arrives, the angels, hitherto hidden before the eyes of men, shall come forth from the throne and the presence of God, and act as the executors of God's righteous judgments.

VERSES 51, 52. YEA, LORD. Though the disciples did not understand the mysteries of the kingdom at that time, as well as afterward, when they received the Spirit of promise, (John xvi, 13,) our Lord accepts graciously their declaration, because they were on the right way of understanding, and he knew that their knowledge would be progressive. And in view of this he adds, **THEREFORE;** that is, because you will understand these things, you will be well-instructed scribes, being able to bring forth things new and old. — **EVERY SCRIBE.** The Lord contrasts here his apostles with the Jewish scribes. (See foot-note to chap. ii, 4.) — **WHICH IS INSTRUCTED UNTO**

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN — μαθητευθεὶς, enrolled as a disciple and taught as such. This implies that no one can be a scribe that is, an official expounder of the Scriptures in the kingdom of heaven, namely, the Church — without having been disciplined in the school of Christ. Only such a one IS LIKE UNTO A MAN THAT IS A HOUSEHOLDER, or head of the family, who has daily to provide the whole family with food and the other necessaries of life from his storehouse. To the spiritual householder, the New Testament scribe, the Scripture is the storehouse, the treasury from which he has to draw. The preacher unskilled in the Scripture is a shallow babbler; but a mere acquaintance with the letter of the Scripture is likewise insufficient; the preacher must have appropriated to himself the Word of God by a living faith, so that what he preaches he bringeth forth out of the treasure of his own heart. — THINGS NEW AND OLD. The NEW things are significantly placed first. The OLD things must continually become new by new and proper applications, and this is invariably the case where the truth has become the vital principle in the heart. Jesus had just given his disciples an example of teaching by his parables. He had given them new ideas under old, well-known similitudes, purposing, no doubt, to impress them with the importance of adapting themselves in their future career, as instructors, to the capacities and wants of their hearers, and to connect constantly with the old the charm of the new, in order to avoid tedious monotony. Just as the householder supplies the wants of his family with the things laid up in his storehouse, so the minister of the Gospel must turn to account, use for the best interests of others, what knowledge in Divine things he has acquired by study and experience. (See 2 Tim. ii, 15.) By obeying this injunction a preacher of the Gospel will never be in danger of exhausting the stock of his knowledge. Whoever conscientiously uses for himself and others what he has, and diligently gathers in order to give again, progresses continually in knowledge.

§ 28. JESUS IS REJECTED AT NAZARETH THE SECOND TIME.

WE meet in this section the question whether we have to understand by the brothers and sisters of Jesus, younger children of Mary by Joseph, or not. On this question expositors will probably never agree. It is, as Andrews observes, affirmatively answered by the following modern writers: Neander, Greswell, Wieseler, Alford, Stier, Schaff, Meyer, Winer, Ewald, Lechler, Owen;

negatively by Lange, Olshausen, Lichtenstein, Friedlieb, Norton, Sepp, Hug, Thiersch, Alexander, Mill, Ellicott. The expression "the brethren of the Lord," or "his brothers and sisters," occurs in Matt. xii, 46-50; xiii, 55, 56; Mark iii, 31; vi, 3; Luke viii, 19; John ii, 12; vii, 3, 5, 10; and in Acts i, 14. In all these passages, except in John vii, they are in connection with his mother. Paul refers to "the brethren of the Lord," (1 Cor. ix, 5,) and calls James "the Lord's brother," (Gal. i, 19.) The Lord himself uses the words "my brethren" in Matt. xxviii, 10, and in John xx, 17, but evidently in a wider sense, including at least the eleven apostles in the term.

In our comment on Matt. i, 25, we remarked that neither that passage nor the frequent mention of Jesus' brethren necessarily requires us to infer Mary had children by Joseph. There is, indeed, in this inference nothing that would reflect in the least on the character of Mary or the dignity of Jesus; but Lange makes the following ingenious objection: "A personality, such as Jesus was, generally exerts a controlling influence on the younger members of the family. If, therefore, Jesus had younger brothers, we might expect that they would espouse his cause enthusiastically. But the very reverse is the case. The brothers of Jesus appear, at a very early period, to hold an antagonistic Jewish position to whatever was above Judaism in Jesus. In this sense their unbelief, mentioned by John, is to be understood. They were, in all probability, unbelievers in the same sense as those Jews that desired to make him their king. (John vi, 15.) Not entering into the spirit of *his* teaching, they wanted him to realize *their* Messianic ideas. That younger brothers would have dared thus to interfere with him in the discharge of his official duties appears to us highly improbable."

On the supposition, then, that these brothers and sisters of Jesus were not the children of his mother, they must have been the *children of Joseph*, either by a former marriage or by adoption; for if they were merely cousins or kinsmen, we would expect them to have been called ἀνέψιοι or σύγγενεις, not, as they are *always* called, ἄδελφοι or ἄδελφαι. That Joseph was a widower when he was espoused to Mary is asserted in the Apocryphal Gospels, and this tradition was prevalent during the second and third centuries; but it is not probable that the children of Joseph by a former wife would have remained so long with their step-mother; and, what is a more weighty objection, Jesus, being in this case the youngest son of Joseph, could not have been registered in the Jewish genealogies as the legal heir of David's throne.

That they were the adopted children of Joseph, Lange makes very plausible from the following considerations:

1. There were standing under the cross, according to Matt. xxvii, 56, and Mark xv, 40, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children. According to John xix, 25, "There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene." There can be no doubt that John meant, by his mother's sister, Salome. That he does not mention her by name may be easily accounted for by the same modesty with which he designates himself "as the disciple whom Jesus loved." The fact that Salome was the sister of Jesus' mother throws also light upon her prayer to give to her two sons the first places of honor in his kingdom, and upon the dying Savior's commanding his mother to the charge of John. Nor does it scarcely admit of a doubt that "Mary the wife of Cleopas" is the same Mary which Matthew and Mark call "the mother of James the less and of Joses." For James the less is called, in the lists of the apostles, the son of Alpheus, and Cleopas is the Hebrew for Alpheus. Thus we see that two sons of Alpheus bear the same names as two of the brothers of Jesus, and we can trace the two others to the same origin. We find in Luke's list of the apostles a Judas, brother of James, and the author of the short Epistle of Jude calls himself "the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James." Add to this that, according to Hegesippus, as quoted by Eusebius, Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem, who succeeded James the less, the brother of the Lord, was a son of Cleopas, (Alpheus.) It appears, then, that James, Joses, Judas, and Simon, called the brothers of Jesus, bear the same names as the four sons of Cleopas or Alpheus.

2. According to Hegesippus, Joseph had a brother named Cleopas or Alpheus.

3. Upon the preceding data we may base the hypothesis that this Cleopas, the father of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon, died while they were yet young, (the Cleopas mentioned in Luke xxiv, 18, may safely be considered as a different person,) and that his brother Joseph took the widow to his house, and adopted the children, but that he himself died also before Jesus entered upon his public ministry — a very reasonable supposition, inasmuch as he is mentioned no more in the Gospel history after Jesus went up to Jerusalem in his twelfth year. These adopted children, the legal brothers of Jesus, then, formed

one family with Mary and Jesus. These young Jews may have maintained for a time their independence of their younger brother, with whom they were only united by legal ties. As the older members of the family, it is by no means unlikely that they desired to control Jesus, although they rejoiced, with Jewish pride, in his Messianic reputation. They may thus have formed a family opposition to the manner in which Jesus laid claim to the Messiahship. It is no serious objection to this view that two of them — James and Judas — became apostles; for Peter manifested a similar opposition, (Matt. xvi, 22,) and the words of Jesus, "Behold my mother and my brethren," implying a rebuke of their act, as an untimely family interference, may well be compared with that severer one administered to Peter. The leading spirit of this Nazarene family circle seems to have been Judas, the author of the Epistle, surnamed, perhaps for this reason, Lebbeus or Thaddeus, that is, the Bold.

Plausible, however, as this theory of Lange is, some weighty objections can be brought against it.

1. It is remarkable that these brothers of Jesus, if they were the sons of Alpheus, never appear in connection with their own mother, but always with the mother of Jesus.

2. It is difficult to believe that James and Judas, who were at that time apostles, and so the constant attendants of Jesus, could have been meant by his brethren, who came with his mother desiring to speak with him. (Matt. xii, 46; Luke viii, 19.)

3. If Judas and Simon were brothers of James the less, it is strange that their mother is designated only as the mother of James and of the less-known Joses.

4. A line of distinction between the apostles and the Lord's brethren is kept up in the evangelical narratives from the beginning of his ministry till its close, and no where appears more marked than after his ascension. For we read in Acts i, 13, 14: "When they were come in, they went into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, *James, the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.* These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and *Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*" Here the brethren of our Lord are

distinguished from the eleven. Paul also distinguishes James, the Lord's brother, from the twelve in 1 Cor. xv, 5.

5. Singular as the coincidence between the names of the brothers of Jesus and those of the sons of Alpheus is, the inference, drawn from it, that the persons who bore these names were identical, is, by no means, a necessary one, because the children of different families have often the same name. This is even the more probable, if Alpheus was a brother of Joseph.

6. The argument that James, the Lord's brother, is reckoned among the apostles in Gal. i, 19, and must, consequently, be identified with James, the son of Alpheus, is inconclusive, for the term "apostle" is not always used in the restricted sense of the "twelve."

For further reasons in support of the view that the brothers and sisters of Jesus were younger children, of Mary by Joseph, see Rev. Dr. C. W. Fitch's treatise, "James, the Lord's Brother," in which the author gives an elaborate argument that he was not James the apostle, the son of Alpheus, but that, having been long an unbeliever, and being destined to great prominence in the Church, as the first Bishop of Jerusalem, he was favored by a special revelation of the Lord after his resurrection. On this point we refer the reader to the notes on 1 Cor. xv, 5, and Gal. i, 18.

Verses 53-58. (COMPARE MARK vi, 1-6.)

(53) **AND it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. (54) And when he was come into his own country, ^[1] he taught ^[2] them in their synagogue, ^[3] insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works? (55) Is not this the carpenter's ^[4] son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? (56) And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things? (57) And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house. (58) And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.**

[1 Nazareth was called the country of Jesus, (*πατρίς*), because Jesus spent his childhood and youth there.]

[2 It was the Lord's custom to teach in the synagogues. Any Israelite had the privilege to address the people there, if called upon to do so.]

[3 See foot-note on chap. iv, 23.]

[4 The Greek word, rendered *carpenter*, (*τέκτων*), means an artificer, craftsman, and the material in which he worked, wood, stone, metal, is generally added.]

VERSE 53. WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED THESE PARABLES.

"This verse affords a final proof that the preceding parables were actually uttered upon one occasion, by saying that he *finished* them, the Aorist, which is used, referring to some one time; and by adding that he then *departed thence*, implying unity of place also. Here the chapter should have ended, but by some inexplicable error of judgment, the divider of the text destroyed its unity of subject by subjoining an occurrence, which has no direct connection with what goes before." (Alexander.) The departure thence was not to Nazareth, but across the sea to Gergesa. (Mark iv, 35.) (See Synoptical Table, No. 69.)

VERSE 54. The strictly-chronological order would lead the reader back to chapter ix, 34. We must place between verses 53 and 54 the calming of the storm, the healing of the demoniacs, of Jairus' daughter, of the woman with issue of blood, of the two blind men, and of the dumb possessed. (See Synoptical Table from 70-77.) "The *and* at the beginning of verse 54 is the particle used even in the opening of books in the Old Testament, and, therefore, can prove nothing as to the connection here. *And coming*, as in many other cases, means no more than coming once, or at a certain time not specified. There is, therefore, no discrepancy between this narrative and Mark's, (vi, 1-6,) which gives the following occurrence in immediate succession to the raising of the daughter of Jairus, which Matthew has recorded long before. The truth is, that neither of the two Evangelists asserts an immediate consecution of events, but only, at the most, that one happened after the other, without saying that no other event intervened. It is only by neglecting this distinction that most charges of discrepancy between the Gospels can be rendered even plausible." (Alexander.) — Olshausen and other German commentators consider the visit here spoken of as identical with that related by

Luke, (iv, 31,) simply on account of the similarity of the treatment which our Lord met on both occasions. But this supposition has no weight whatever. Matthew positively speaks of two visits; the previous one took place before our Lord settled at Capernaum and entered upon his Galilean ministry, (ch. iv, 12, 13,) and is identical with the one related by Luke, who likewise says, that leaving Nazareth Jesus went to Capernaum. This first visit is not mentioned by Mark, and Matthew notices it only in reference to our Lord's removal to Capernaum. Of the second visit, not mentioned by Luke, Matthew gives here a particular account, and so does Mark. The points of difference between the first and second visit are plainly marked. In the former our Lord is alone; in the latter he is accompanied by his disciples. (Mark vi, 1.) In the former he is violently driven from the town; in the latter he continues for some time to heal a few sick folks. (Mark vi, 5.) Leaving Nazareth he goes after the first visit to Capernaum, after the second "he went round about the villages teaching." (Mark vi, 6.) Moreover, "it would have been strange," as Alexander remarks, "and out of keeping with the whole tenor of the Savior's conduct, if in the course of his perpetual circuits throughout all Galilee, he never had revisited his old home and renewed the invitations which the people there had once rejected." Finally, there was evidently a change in the bearing of his townsmen toward him. Their rage had cooled down since his first visit, and his fame had greatly increased, so that they make no open, violent attack upon him; nevertheless, they had remained in the same state of mind, taking offense at his humble parentage and condition of life. — WHENCE HAS THIS MAN THIS WISDOM AND THESE MIGHTY WORKS? This sneering question shows that they could not deny his supernatural wisdom and works, but that they were determined not to be convinced by any thing he could do. It is probable that they had heard of the blasphemous charge which the Pharisees had preferred against him of being in league with Satan; if so, they meant to say by their question, *his wisdom and mighty works come surely from no good source.*

VERSE 55. IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER'S SON? How is it possible that the man whom we have known from infancy should all at once be in possession of the power and dignity which he claims? Mark (vi, 3) adds: "Is not this the carpenter?" By the Jewish law all parents were obliged to let their children learn a trade. On the Greek word for "carpenter" see foot-note; from this passage we may infer that Jesus followed his foster-father's trade, before he entered upon his public ministry, — IS NOT HIS MOTHER CALLED

MARY? This question implies that his mother also belonged to a family in low and humble circumstances.

VERSE 58. It was not unwillingness on the part of our Lord that prevented him to work many miracles. But it would have answered no purpose. Moreover, their obstinate unbelief prevented most of them from bringing their sick to Jesus, that he might heal them.

CHAPTER XIV.

§ 29. JOHN THE BAPTIST IS BEHEADED.

Verses 1-13. (COMPARE MARK vi, 14-29.)

(1) AT that time Herod the tetrarch ^[1] heard of the fame of Jesus, (2) and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. (3) For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. (4) For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. (5) And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, ^[2] because they counted him as a prophet. (6) But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias ^[3] danced before them, and pleased Herod. (7) Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. (8) And she, being before instructed ^[4] of her mother, said, Give me here John the Baptist's head in a charger. ^[5] (9) And the king was sorry, nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*. (10) And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. (11) And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother. (12) And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus. (13) When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

[1] This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who is mentioned in the second chapter. His father had once, by will, named him as his successor

in Judea; but he afterward changed his mind, and making his son Archelaus King of Judea, appointed Antipas to the inferior dignity of tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. The title of tetrarch was originally given to the ruler of the fourth part of a district or province. In later usage it became, among the Romans, a common title for those who governed any part of a province or kingdom, subject only to the Roman Emperor. His usual place of residence was at Tiberias, a name which, in honor of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, he had given to a town on the south-western border of the Lake of Galilee. In the other extremity of his domain, only a few miles east-wardly from the place where the Jordan empties into the Dead Sea, he had a castle called Machaerus, which had been enlarged and fortified by his father, and in which, as we may infer from the narrative of the feast, he sometimes resided. In this castle, according to Josephus, (Ant. xviii, 5, 2,) John was imprisoned. Herod Antipas had married the daughter of the Arabian King Aretas; but during a visit to his half-brother Philip, (a private citizen, and not to be confounded with Philip, the tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, mentioned in Luke iii, 1,) he became enamored of his wife Herodias, who was a daughter of another brother, Aristobulus, and prevailed on her to leave her husband, and live with him. This step involved him in a war with his father-in-law, which, however, did not break out till a year before the death of Tiberius, and in which he was totally defeated and his army destroyed by Aretas. He and Herodias afterward went to Rome, at the beginning of Caligula's reign, to complain of the assumption of the title of king by Agrippa I, brother of Herodias; but Caligula, having heard the claims of both, banished Antipas and Herodias to Lyons, in Gaul, whence he was afterward removed to Spain, and there he died. Herod Antipas is referred to in Luke xiii, 31, 32, and xxiii, 8. The Herod who appears in the thirteenth chapter of Acts is Herod Agrippa I, the brother of Herodias.]

[2 The Galileans were very restless and apt to rebel against any officer that acted under Roman authority.]

[3 According to Josephus, it was Salome, daughter of Herodias by her former husband. She afterward married her uncle Philip, tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis.]

[4 The Greek word rendered "being before instructed," means *urged on* or *instigated*, which agrees perfectly with Mark's account, that there had been no previous agreement between them.]

[5 An old English word for a large dish. The Greek word, originally, means a board for any purpose.]

VERSE 1. AT THAT TIME; that is, while the twelve apostles were absent on their first missionary tour, (Mark vi, 13, 14; Luke ix, 6, 7,) and Jesus was continuing his own personal labors, accompanied probably by other

disciples, some of those seventy, who were afterward sent out, and perhaps also by the women, who had before been with him. (See Synoptical Table, No. 79.) The imprisonment of the Baptist took place in March, 781. (See introductory remarks to ch. iv, 12.) His death Mr. Andrews places at the latter part of March or the beginning of April, 782, on the following ground: "The chief datum is the statement of John, (vi, 4,) that a Passover took place a little after the feeding of the five thousand. This Passover, the third of our Lord's ministry, was that of 782, and fell on the 17th of April. The death of John was then a few days before this. The exact date we can not tell, as we do not know how long it preceded the feeding of the five thousand, nor how long this feeding preceded the Passover. If John was beheaded at Machaerus, on the southern border of Perea, some days must have elapsed ere his disciples could bury his body, and come to inform Jesus." — **HEROD THE TETRARCH HEARD OF THE FAME OF JESUS.** It appears that the mighty works of Christ, though wrought in the vicinity of Herod, did not attract his attention before he had put the Baptist to death. This may be easily accounted for by his religious indifference. He would not have interfered with John but on personal grounds. Besides, he may have been on a visit to Rome, or engaged in hostilities with Aretas.

VERSE 2. AND SAID UNTO HIS SERVANTS. In Luke ix, 7, we read: "He was perplexed, because it was said of some that John was risen from the dead." This is not in contradiction with what is said here. For the reports circulating among the people about Jesus might well make the conscience-smitten Herod believe that John had risen from the dead. The evidence which Herod received of our Lord's miracles must have been incontestable, or he would not have imagined a greater miracle as the most reasonable way of accounting for them. The reports concerning Jesus may have reached Herod through some of his own household; for Luke (viii, 3) tells us that one of the women that ministered unto Jesus was Joanna, the wife of Chuza, *Herod's steward*; and in Acts xiii, 1, we read that one of the prophets and teachers at Antioch was Manaen, which had been brought up with *Herod the tetrarch*. Though Herod seems to have belonged to the sect of the Sadducees, (Mark viii, 15,) he was by his guilty conscience frightened into a superstitious belief of an instance of resurrection, altogether incredible in itself. Skepticism and superstition are near akin. Many skeptics believe the most incredible things. — **THEREFORE MIGHTY WORKS DO SHEW FORTH**

THEMSELVES IN HIM. Literally, *the powers* (*αἱ δυνάμεις*, miraculous powers) *are active in him*. John had wrought no miracles in his lifetime; but one who had risen from the dead, Herod inferred; would be possessed of supernatural powers.

VERSE 3. This took place shortly before the second Passover our Lord attended after his baptism. The Evangelist, (see ch. iv, 12,) in marking the commencement of our Lord's public ministry, had simply alluded to the imprisonment of John the Baptist without mentioning the cause, or any of its attending circumstances. This he does now, having to speak of his death. — "According to Luke iii, 19," says Lange: "John had reproved Herod not only for his adulterous intercourse with Herodias, but also for all the evils which Herod had done. This additional remark of Luke is very important, because it helps to solve an apparent contradiction between the Evangelists and the historian Josephus. The latter relates that Herod had John imprisoned and executed, because he apprehended that he might excite popular tumult, etc. According to Luke, John fearlessly reproved the tetrarch for his public scandals, etc., wherefore he may have appeared unto the despot as a dangerous demagogue or revolutionist. And as John was subsequently executed in prison, it is quite natural that the political historian should record only the political motive of the murder. But the Evangelists having a more thorough knowledge of the real motive of Herod's deed, and viewing the acts of men from the moral stand-point, correctly represent the reproof administered by John to the despot as the real cause of his imprisonment and death."

VERSE 4. FOR JOHN SAID UNTO HIM. From this we may infer that the Baptist reproved Herod to his face. Of the particular circumstances, under which this took place, we are not informed. It may have been that Herod had sent for the Baptist either to get his sanction, or to call him to an account for having publicly denounced his profligacy. John was not afraid to attack sin in rulers. — IT IS NOT LAWFUL. It was unlawful for the three following reasons: 1. Philip, the lawful husband of Herodias, was still living, as Josephus expressly states. 2. The lawful wife of Herod was still living, and had, according to the same historian, fled to her father Aretas, when she learned the intentions of Herod. 3. Antipas and Herodias were themselves related to one another, within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity.

VERSE 5. We learn from Mark (vi, 20) that it was Herodias who would have killed him immediately, but was prevented for a time by the awe Herod felt for John, as well as by his fear of the multitude. There is not the least inconsistency between the two statements. Mark simply adds some particulars, and what he says seems to refer to the time intervening between the imprisonment and execution of John. When the first rage subsided and Herod became better acquainted with John, the austere and holy man gained some influence over the weak, unprincipled prince; he liked to hear him, esteemed him, and obeyed here and there his words; but any permanent impressions were frustrated by his love of pleasure and worldly-mindedness, and the overpowering influence of a daring, revengeful woman.

VERSE 6. According to Mark (vi, 22) the guests invited on the occasion were the higher officers and dignitaries in the tetrarchy. — This dance of the daughter of Herodias was a gross violation of all rules of decency and modesty; for in every country of the Orient women are confined to separate apartments, called Harem, which they are forbidden to leave, except they are thickly veiled. Unveiled they are absolutely forbidden to appear before strangers. No chaste woman would thus have appeared before the assembled court, and we have thus in this dance an illustration of the demoralizing influence of Herodias. It is, moreover, likely that the dance of the damsel was the well-known, immoral dance of the Ionians. Possibly Herodias calculated on surprising the guests, in order to carry out her bloody design in the favorable moment of universal applause.

VERSE 7. HE PROMISED TO GIVE HER WHATSOEVER SHE WOULD ASK. Mark adds, (vi, 23:) "Unto the half of my kingdom." What a vain, boastful promise of a vassal of the Roman emperor, who was ruler of but two provinces of Judea!

VERSE 9. AND THE KING WAS SORRY. These words are not in contradiction with verse 5; for the fear of the people and the bloody hatred of Herodias had kept the weak man in a state of irresoluteness. (Comp. Mark vi, 19.) — **NEVERTHELESS FOR THE OATH'S SAKE.** Herod's scrupulous respect for his impious oaths — the original has the plural — was not the fear of God, but his "word of honor," which he had pledged. An oath which promises the perpetration of a crime can not be obligatory in the sight of God. It is "the point of honor" which is at the bottom of duels and of all those sins,

where the allurements of sin are not firmly resisted and, under the false plea of manliness and courage, the laws of God and parental exhortations are unhesitatingly trampled under foot.

VERSE 10. On the death of the Baptist and its relations to the ministry of our Lord, Judge Jones, in his *Notes on Scripture*, makes the following interesting remarks, which confirm the view of Mr. Andrews: referred to in our introduction to chapter iv, 12: "The death of John the Baptist was the crisis of the nation's trial. While John lived it was, in one sense, in the power of the nation to receive him. Now it was too late, unless God would raise him from the dead, as Herod imagined he had, and send him to them again. (Acts iii, 20.) Having rejected John they could not *nationally* receive Jesus. The personal ministry of each was inseparably connected with the personal ministry of the other, so far as the nation, as such, was concerned. Hence our Lord had joined his ministry with John's. (Matt. iii. 15; Mark ix, 12, 13.) Each bore the strongest testimony to the other, to prevent, if possible, the rejection of either by the nation. But the time allowed for their change of mind, in respect to John, expired at his death; and from that time onward we observe an important change in our Lord's public and private discourses. With regard to our Lord's instructions to his disciples, it was not till after the death of John that he spoke *plainly* of his sufferings, death, and resurrection. (Matt. xvi, 21.) As examples of his public instruction of the people before the death of John, the reader may be referred to the Sermon on the Mount, to those parables in Matt. xiii which were spoken in public, and to the discourse at Jerusalem in John v. As an example of his public teaching after the death of the Baptist, we may refer to the discourse in John vi, 26-52, in which he does not appear as a preacher of the kingdom, urging it upon the people in their *national* character, but as the Son of man, having power to save and give eternal life to as many as would individually receive him. Taking the miracle he had just performed as his theme, he discourses about himself as the *true bread*. The bread of God is the Son of man, who came down from heaven *to give his life* for the world — a plain allusion to his death, which presupposed his rejection as Messiah by the nation. We notice, also, that the appeal to his hearers is *personal* throughout, to individuals, not to the nation collectively. This change of address was a consequence of the new posture which the nation took at the death of John. Though the kingdom was not actually taken away from the Jews till the close of our Lord's ministry, yet it was no longer preached, as at its beginning, and

urged upon the people for national acceptance. The Savior's public instructions from that time onward were designed to impress upon his hearers that he had power to save, individually, all who would receive him with the obedience of faith. Hence, also, at his final entry upon Jerusalem, and at his final departure from the Temple, he spoke of the nation's visitation and trial as already past, although he was yet in their midst, and the formal act of rejecting him before Pilate was yet to be performed."

VERSE 11. AND HIS HEAD WAS BROUGHT. From the maiden's request, "give me here," in verse 8, and from this verse it is evident that the feast was held either at Machaerus, or at no great distance from it, probably at Julias, or Livias, where Herod had a palace; for the head was brought while the feast was still going on. According to Mark vi, 27, the king sent an executioner immediately and the bloody command was forthwith executed, probably by night.

VERSE 13. WHEN JESUS HEARD OF IT. The message of John's disciples included both the report of their master's death and of Herod having his attention drawn to Jesus. His departure into a desert place was occasioned not only by this report, but had also, as we learn from Mark, (vi, 31,) the object that he might be alone for some time with his disciples, who had just returned from their missionary tour. Our Lord was, then, not at Nazareth, but on the shore of the Galilean lake, most probably at Capernaum. According to John (vi, 1) he crossed over to the other, north-east, side of the lake, to a town called Bethsaida, (Luke ix, 10,) in the immediate vicinity of which the desert place was. This was out of the dominion of Herod Antipas.

§ 30. THE FIRST MIRACULOUS FEEDING.

NOT only Matthew, but also Mark and Luke, connect this event with the report of the Baptist's death. The apparently-unintentional remark of John, (vi, 4,) "that the Passover was nigh," furnishes a safe chronological date, from which we infer that this miraculous feeding took place shortly before the third Passover of Christ's public ministry. The vast multitudes of people which the Evangelists report seem to have been on their way to Jerusalem; but, attracted by the many miracles which the Lord performed on the sick, (John vi, 2,) they discontinued their journey for a while, and followed Jesus. Christ improved

their presence to preach to them. This first miraculous feeding, and the subsequent walking of Jesus upon the sea, are intimately connected with the preaching of our Lord as recorded by John, for which reason we shall consider the importance and object of this manifestation of the power of Jesus over inorganic nature in our introductory remarks to the sixth chapter of John's Gospel. Here we will make but one general remark. To the miraculous feeding applies, in a peculiarly-emphatic sense, what John says of the miracle of turning water into wine: "He manifested forth his glory." Being *creative* acts, they may be called miracles of a higher order than the miraculous cures. Of the power effecting the latter some conception may possibly be formed by the human mind. "But how is it possible," says Trench, "in our thoughts to bridge over the gulf between not being and being, which yet is bridged over in every creative act? Such miracles demand the same faith which believes that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Heb. xi, 3.)" German rationalism has labored hard to do away with this miracle *par excellence* in one way or another. The sober, discriminating Meyer, though not free from rationalistic tendencies, remarks: "The explaining away of the miracle — as is done by Paulus, who says that Jesus, by the example of his hospitality, induced all present to give of their stock of provisions to their hungry neighbors — is inconsistent with the facts recorded by the Evangelists. The denial of the historical character of the whole narrative — by deducing it from an original parable, or converting it into a mythus based on Old Testament precedents, (Exod. xvi, 1; 2 Kings iv, 42, etc.,) and on popular Messianic notions, (John vi, 30,) as is done by Strauss, or by taking it in a symbolical sense, as De Wette and Hase do — is the product of an *a priori* assumption that matter, under any form or shape, can not be operated upon by creative power. Nor does Olshausen's idea of an accelerated natural process throw much light on the nature of this miracle. The historical character of the narrative is so firmly established by the concurrent testimony of the four Evangelists, that we must believe it, although we can not comprehend it." Nevertheless, a new attempt to render the miracle comprehensible is made by Lange, who thinks we need not assume the loaves and fishes to have been increased quantitatively, but only with regard to their nutritious power! In the twelve baskets being filled with the remains he sees a miracle of love; namely, that the men fed gave to the apostles, out of gratitude, their own provisions! This hypothesis is not worthy of the serious refutation with which Ebrard honors it.

Verses 14-21. (COMPARE MARK vi, 30-44; LUKE ix, 10-17; JOHN vi, 1-13.)

(14) AND Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick. (15) And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, ^[1] and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. (16) But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. (17) And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. (18) He said, Bring them hither to me. (19) And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, ^[2] and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. (20) And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets ^[3] full. (21) And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

[1 Dr. Thomson identifies this desert with an uncultivated plain, a short distance south-east of the influx of Jordan into the lake, on which many thousand persons could sit down. Back of this plain there rises a mountain, which, at its south-eastern end, runs far out into the lake. The coast along this desert forms an excellent bay. From the locality, Dr. Thomson says, it is easy to see how the people from the northern cities could by land get ahead of the disciples by water.]

[2 The loaves were shaped like cakes, of a thumb's thickness, and round, measuring in diameter about nine or ten inches. Such bread was broken, not cut, as with us.]

[3 By the word *basket* we have to understand the traveling-bag in which the Jews, when on a journey, carried their provisions, lest they might be contaminated by coming into contact with heathens.]

VERSE 14. AND JESUS WENT FORTH, may simply mean, from out of the ship on which he had crossed the lake. Trench, Alford, and most of the German commentators supply: "From his place of retirement." From Mark (vi, 33) we learn that the people who went afoot around the lake, arrived before

Jesus at the place of landing. "From this we might infer that when Jesus came out from the boat he saw the multitudes and fed them. But considering the circumstances of the case, and the rapid, sketching manner in which the Evangelists group events that were separated in point of time, it is more probable that Jesus had spent some time there, perhaps a day or more, healing and instructing them, but seeking also for himself and his disciples seasons of retirement; and that once, when he came out from his retirement and saw the people who had been there so long, weary, scattered, and hungry — like sheep without a shepherd — his compassion for them was excited and he fed them." (John H. Morrison's Notes on Matthew.)

VERSE 15. AND WHEN IT WAS EVENING. The first evening is meant here, which lasted from the ninth to the twelfth hour of the day, that is, from three to six, P.M.; while "the evening" of verse 23 means the second evening, that is, the time from six o'clock till midnight. — **HIS DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM.** Previously to this the Lord, according to John, had asked Philip, in order to prove him: "*Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?*" Philip, having no thought of any other supplies, except such as natural means could procure, says: "Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient." Having drawn this confession of inability to meet the present need from the lips of Philip, he left it to work, till somewhat later in the day the disciples came to him with the proposal that he should dismiss the crowds. The Lord replies: "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." And when they, according to Mark, ask if they shall spend two hundred pence on the food required, he bids them go and see what supplies they have actually on hand.

VERSE 16. GIVE YE THEM TO EAT. By these words the Lord intended to call forth in his disciples the expectation of a miraculous act on his part. We are reminded by this of a general truth, that while what is required of us appears often as strangely transcending our abilities, the Lord has provided for every emergency beforehand; what he requires man to do, he enables him to do.

VERSE 18. As these provisions were to be augmented in a miraculous manner, it was quite proper that they should first be brought to Jesus, that the exercise of his creative power might become more manifest, and its effect on the multitude more general and lasting.

VERSE 19. AND HE COMMANDED THE MULTITUDE TO SIT DOWN. Mark and Luke add that they sat down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties. In this way all confusion was avoided, as the apostles could easily go through the ranks and wait upon all. — ON THE GRASS. The place was a very proper one, because there was much grass there. (John vi, 10.) The desert place, in which Jesus was, appears to have been rich pasture-ground. — AND TOOK THE FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES, AND LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN. Jesus, in all probability, raised his eyes toward heaven before the multitude, while he implored the Divine blessing upon the elements before him. — HE BLESSED, AND BRAKE. Luke says, (ix, 16,) he blessed them; that is, the loaves and fishes. In pronouncing the prayer the Lord acted as the head, or father of the family; according to the term employed by John, (*εὐχαριστήσας*), it was a thanksgiving, while, according to the term employed by Luke (*εὐλόγησεν*), the idea of a consecrating prayer, similar to the words of the institution of the Supper, is the prominent one. By giving thanks to God a blessing is conveyed on the meal. — AND GAVE THE LOAVES TO HIS DISCIPLES, AND THE DISCIPLES TO THE MULTITUDE. The question has been asked, whether the loaves and fishes increased in the hands of Jesus, or in those of his disciples. Ebrard thinks that Jesus broke off without intermission from the loaves, and what he broke off was replaced at once. Meyer, on the other hand, says: "If every morsel which the people received had come from out of the hands of Jesus, the time spent in giving to each of over five thousand men a piece of bread and a portion of fish, would have been much longer than Jesus actually did spend in the transaction, and the whole miracle would assume a monstrous appearance." Most commentators are of the opinion that the result of the miraculous power exercised by the Lord became visible in the hands of the disciples, and they, accordingly, conceive of the whole transaction thus: the Lord blessed and gave the loaves and fishes to the disciples as they were; and then, during *their distribution of them*, the miraculous increase took place, so that they broke and distributed enough for all. This was, at the same time, for the disciples a prelude to their future ministry, (Acts iv, 35,) and not only they, but all who received at their hands were witnesses of the miraculous increase. No miracle could possibly be wrought under circumstances more favorable to the discovery of every attempt to deceive, if such an attempt had been made.

VERSES 20, 21. AND THEY DID EAT ALL AND WERE FILLED.

The additional remark of John, that each received as much of the loaves and fishes as he desired, forbids the idea that they were filled only apparently. Each ate as much as he desired to eat. A faint type of this miracle is presented to us by that which Elisha wrought, when with twenty loaves of barley he satisfied a hundred men. (2 Kings iv, 42-44.) Some remoter analogies may be found in 1 Kings xvii, 16; 2 Kings iv, 1-7. — **AND THEY TOOK UP THE FRAGMENTS THAT REMAINED**; that is, they gathered them on the ground where the people sat. Mark says that the same was done with the fishes, (vi, 43.) The apostles gathered these fragments at the Lord's bidding, "that nothing be lost." (John vi, 12.) As in nature, so here the greatest abundance and true economy are to go hand in hand. While the fragments left fully demonstrated that all were actually filled, and thus placed the reality of the miracle beyond any reasonable doubt, the Lord ordering his disciples to gather them teaches them not only the duty of practicing economy, but also, as Alexander remarks, "that the miraculous effect was to be instantly succeeded by the usual condition and the operation of all ordinary laws." — **TWELVE BASKETS FULL**. The number of the baskets corresponds to that of the apostles; each filled his traveling basket. The gathered fragments amounted to much more than was there at first; we have in this an admirable symbol of the workings of charity, which by giving does not become poorer, but much richer than it would have been otherwise. (Comp. 2 Kings iv, 1-7; Prov. xi, 24.)

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. Christ makes provision for the bodily, as well as the spiritual, wants of his people. There is no need of going away from him. He can create bread even in a desert place. The Lord can help both with much and with little. (Ps. lxxviii, 19; cvii, 36.) In his kingdom he gives every thing freely without money or price. (1.) He cures the sick; (2.) Teaches the ignorant; (3.) Feeds the hungry.

2. To this multitude Christ's promise (Matt. vi, 33) was literally verified. They had followed him without making provision for even three days ahead, what they were to eat and drink, and Christ bestowed upon them the inferior blessing, the daily bread. If he thus provided for those who had come to him in a momentary excitement, much less will he leave or forsake those who faithfully serve him!

3. As the Lord gave thanks to his Heavenly Father for the loaves and fishes before he had them distributed, so ought all his disciples to do before every meal, calling to mind that it is God who opens his hands, and satisfies the desire of every living thing. Prayer before every meal is a sacred duty of every father, as the priest in the family, which he can not neglect without being guilty in the sight of God.

4. God makes use of human instrumentalities in dispensing his blessings. To be such an instrumentality as were the disciples on the occasion in question, is a great privilege.

5. As the famishing multitude in the wilderness is an emblem of mankind at large, so their miraculous feeding is a symbol of the sufficiency of the Gospel to satisfy all the wants of man. Christ is the bread, which alone can still the hunger of the soul, though he seems to the natural man as insufficient, as the five loaves and two fishes seemed to the disciples for the feeding of so large a multitude.

§ 31. CHRIST WALKS UPON THE LAKE.

THE miraculous walking of Jesus takes place forthwith after the feeding of the multitude. Luke omits it. The incident with Peter is peculiar to Matthew, whose report is, on the whole, the fullest and most graphic. John, in his short report, (vi, 15,) states the reason why JESUS dismissed the multitude, and sent his disciples away. The miraculous feeding had affected the multitude so much that they desired to make him their king; that is, to proclaim him as the Messiah. "That Jesus ordered his disciples away," Lange remarks, "was undoubtedly owing to their sympathy with the enthusiasm of the people. The news of John's violent death had disheartened them the more, the greater their expectations had been at their return from their first missionary tour. (See Mark vi, 30, 31; Luke ix, 10.) Having sent his disciples away first, the Lord endeavors to allay the excitement of the multitude, and then withdraw to a mountain-top by himself in order to close the eventful day in undisturbed intercourse with his Father." How the multitude, notwithstanding his withdrawal from them, followed him to the western shore of the lake, is stated by John, (vi, 22-24.)

The miracle recorded here belongs to the same class as the preceding one. Both show Christ's absolute control over physical nature. This is not

inconsistent with his true humanity; for even to the first Adam the words of the Psalmist are applicable: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." In the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, this was verified to the fullest extent, so that the miraculous power over nature in him was but the natural outflow of his divine humanity. (See § 30 in the General Introduction.) Yet these exhibitions of his divine humanity were exceptions to the habitual restraint or constraint to which he had voluntarily submitted, and which he threw off after his resurrection. In our conceptions of our Lord's walking on the sea, we must, as Trench remarks, avoid two erroneous views, "the one which conceives of his body as permanently exempt from the laws of gravity, the other which makes the seat of the miracle to have been in the waters rendered solid under his feet. The miracle, according to its true idea, is not the violation nor yet the suspension of law, but the incoming of a higher law, as of a spiritual in the midst of natural laws, and the momentary asserting, for that higher law, the predominance which it was intended to have, and but for man's fall it would always have had, over the lower, and with this a prophecy of the prevalence which it shall one day recover. So was there here a sign of the lordship of man's will, when that will is in absolute harmony with God's will, over external nature." Essentially the same views are expressed by Olshausen, who remarks: "The process of the glorification of the Lord's body is generally considered as originating with the resurrection or ascension; but it is better to view the process as one extending over the whole life of the Redeemer, his Spirit gaining by degrees full power over the body, and thereby transforming it into its own nature, yet so that, on a few peculiar occasions, the spiritual predominates over the bodily. Thus, much of the difficulty that grows out of the general view disappears. A body exclusively earthly, chained to the earth with invisible bonds, can not break this connection; but that a body of a higher nature, impregnated with powers of a higher world, should be able to rise above the earth, can not appear strange. This phenomenon of Christ's walking upon the sea, must not, therefore, be conceived as a magical change taking place for the time being with the body of Christ, as if a power from without had seized and borne it along, but as a personal act of Christ, calling forth and applying his inherent miraculous powers. That he used these powers so rarely rests upon ethical grounds. While the Savior never wrought a miracle for a show, but only to benefit men thereby, the transient manifestation of his hidden glory was calculated to advance the faith of his disciples. They saw more clearly from day to day that their Master was the manifestation of the

invisible Father. (Matt. xvi, 16.) Their carnal, Jewish Messianic ideas became more and more spiritualized. They saw in the life of Jesus ocular exhibitions of the Old Testament descriptions of the glory of Jehovah. 'He alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.' (Job ix, 8.)" Coinciding with Olshausen, Lange adds: "That the case in question presents such a momentary breaking forth of a hitherto-concealed spiritual power of Christ's body, appears from the fact that Peter, by faith, becomes also a partaker of this power. It exists in Peter, as in human nature in general, as the resurrection germ; but it is burdened and chained in him through the weight of natural depravity, can be called forth only by Peter's faith in his Master's miraculous word, and is lost as soon as faith gives way to doubt. Thus this miracle of Christ falls in the same category as his miraculous conception, his glorification on the banks of Jordan, his transfiguration on the mount, his resurrection and ascension; and, standing in the midst of these phenomena, it points both back and forward. From this his miraculous personality proceeds his miraculous activity."

Verses 22-30. (COMPARE MARK vi, 45-56; JOHN vi, 14-21.)

(22) **AND straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.** (23) And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. (24) But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. (25) And in the fourth watch ^[1] of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. (26) And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; ^[2] and they cried out for fear. (27) But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. (28) And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. (29) And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. (30) But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. (31) And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? (32) And when they were come

into the ship, the wind ceased. (33) Then they that were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God. (34) And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. ^[3] (35) And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; (36) and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

[1 The Romans divided the night into four equal parts, differing according to the length of the night, and at the close of each part the guards were released. When Judea became a Roman province, the Jews also adopted this division, dropping their own division of the night into three parts of four hours each. The fourth watch, therefore, commenced toward three o'clock, A.M.]

[2 (Greek, φάντασμα, a phantom, apparition, specter, ghost.)

[3 A small district, a little south of Capernaum, extending some four miles along the western shore of the lake, which took from it one of its names, and two and a half miles in breadth. Josephus gives a glowing description of the beauty and fertility of this plain, calling it the garden of the whole land.]

VERSE 22. TO GO BEFORE HIM UNTO THE OTHER SIDE. Mark says: "To go to the other side before *unto Bethsaida*." John: "They went over the sea *toward Capernaum*." Inasmuch as Bethsaida Julias, near which, according to Luke, the miraculous feeding took place, lies not on the opposite, that is, western, but on the north-eastern coast of the lake, sacred geographers, in order to meet the difficulty in this passage, have supposed the Bethsaida which Mark mentions to be a different town from Bethsaida Julias, and have placed it on the western coast, south of Capernaum. But there is no need for this supposition. It is highly improbable that two different towns on the shores of this small lake should have been called by the same name, but very probable that Bethsaida lay on both banks of Jordan, at its influx into the lake. There was, as Dr. Thomson in his "The Land and the Book" suggests, an East and West Bethsaida, the eastern part being raised by the tetrarch Philip to the rank of a city, and called Julias after the name of Augustus's daughter, while the so-called Galilean Bethsaida, the native place of Philip, Peter, and Andrew, lay on the western bank of Jordan, just opposite Bethsaida Julias. The difference

between John and Mark, as to the locality to which the disciples were directed to sail, may then be thus explained. Our Lord instructed his disciples to go over to Capernaum, "while he sent the multitude away." At the same time he may have told them that he would join them during the night at Bethsaida. The disciples, accordingly, left, sailing in the direction of Bethsaida, along the shore, and expecting to take the Lord on board at the latter place. But by the storm they were driven into the midst of the lake, so that they reached neither Bethsaida nor Capernaum, but landed south of the latter place.

VERSE 23. HE WENT UP INTO A MOUNTAIN — literally, into *the* mountain; the mountain chain around the lake. — APART TO PRAY. John connects his going up into the mountain to pray, very properly, with the popular movement to make him a king by force, inasmuch as this very movement may have been the special burden of his prayer. As the Son of man, he sought in this emergency the needed strength of mind by communion with his Heavenly Father. Out of the many imposing scenes which the public ministry of our Lord presents, none is more affectingly sublime than when he is engaged on a solitary mountain-top and in the stillness of the night in prayer — wrestling with his Father for those that believed in him and for the multitudes that attended his ministry.

VERSE 24. According to Mark the disciples were already in the midst of the lake when it grew dark; that is, about one hour after they had set sail. At this time the storm arose, and they made so little progress, that after six or seven hours' sailing they had advanced, according to John, only from twenty-five to thirty stadia; that is, from three to four miles. The reason was: THE WIND WAS CONTRARY. The storm was not only extremely severe, but blew directly from the place whither they were sailing. (Comp. Mark vi, 48; John vi, 19.)

VERSE 25. The words rendered, "WALKING UPON THE SEA" (*περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν*) rationalistic interpreters — Paulus, Gfroerer, and others — have translated, "walking upon the bank of the sea," contending that the Greek preposition *ἐπὶ* has sometimes this meaning. It is scarcely necessary to remark that the preposition *ἐπὶ* has never that meaning when governing an accusative; for, apart from this consideration, the absurdity of such a transaction is self-evident. If Jesus had been walking along the coast, it is not conceivable why the disciples should have taken him for a ghost, nor

could a conversation have been carried on between Jesus on the coast and the disciples who were at least two miles from the coast in the midst of a raging and storm-tossed sea!

VERSE 26. AND WHEN HIS DISCIPLES SAW HIM WALKING ON THE SEA. He was close by them, for, according to Mark, "He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them." "This apparent passing by," remarks Trench, "on the Lord's part, of his disciples, was that by which their prayer was to be called out, that he would *not* pass them by, that he would *not* forsake them. Exactly in the same way, walking with his two disciples to Emmaus, after his resurrection, 'he made as though he would have gone further,' thus drawing out from them the entreaty that he would abide. And at the root of what a multitude of God's other dealings does something of the same kind lie: so that this is not an insulated circumstance, but one which finds its analogies every-where in the Scripture, and in the Christian life. What part does Christ sustain here different from that which in the parable of the unjust judge, (Luke xviii, 2,) or the churlish friend, (Luke xi, 5,) he makes God to sustain? or different from that which he himself sustained when he came not to the help of the sisters of Bethany when their need seemed the highest? And are not all such cries of the faithful in the Psalms as this, 'Lord, why hidest thou thy face?' confessions that he does so deal with his servants, that by delaying and seeming to pass by, he calls out their faith, and their prayers that he would come to them soon and abide with them always?" — THEY WERE TROUBLED, SAYING, IT IS A SPIRIT. Such was the darkness and so strange the whole phenomenon, that the disciples did not recognize Jesus, but fancied they saw some specter. This is an incidental proof, that the Jews in general believed in a world of spirits and the self-conscious existence of the soul in a disembodied state. The fear of the disciples was natural, and under similar circumstances any crew would have manifested the same terror. The ungarnished description of the whole occurrence, the fright and crying out of the disciples, are also strong incidental evidence, that the whole statement is from an eye-witness. — It is worthy of note, that Jesus did not improve the occasion to rebuke the disciples' fear of ghosts; on another occasion he speaks (Luke xxiv, 39) of spirits as realities, not as being the product of an excited imagination. Although superstition has been extremely fertile in inventing ghost and specter stories, yet we are not warranted to affirm the absolute impossibility of such phenomena, since the Bible does not affirm it in places like

ours — where it ought to have been done, if the popular belief was an unqualified illusion — while in others their reality is at once implied, as, e.g., in the history of Samuel, where though the woman intended only a fraud upon Saul and would have had no power to call the spirit of Samuel, yet that spirit did appear contrary to her expectation, and to her own dismay. (1 Sam. xxviii, 15.) The real and only difficulty lies in this: how can a disembodied spirit make himself known to, or hold converse with, a spirit that is still in the body, whose intercourse with the world around is carried on through the senses exclusively? Formerly the answer to this question was, that the disembodied spirit assumes for the time being an ethereal, yet visible body. But modern psychology says that the soul or spirit out of the body is not unqualifiedly bodiless, and can, through sympathetic influences, under certain conditions, commune with the spirit in the body. It must, therefore, not be deemed an impossibility that the spirits of the dead should at times make themselves visible. Against the superstition and imposition connected with necromancy, which is so positively forbidden in the Word of God, but has of late become so popular again, we are not protected by a general skepticism respecting manifestations from the spirit-world, but by faith in the Father of spirits, who allows his established order to be broken but rarely, and only for wise purposes, as in the case of Samuel.

VERSE 27. BUT STRAIGHTWAY JESUS SPAKE UNTO THEM.
The Savior does not leave his disciples long in this state of extreme fear and sore distress. He addresses them forthwith in his well-known voice, with the cheering words: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." John omits the words, "Be of good cheer," as recorded by Matthew and Mark, and gives only the significant words, "IT IS I," literally *I am*. "The coincidence," remarks Alexander, "of this phrase with the Divine name *I am* (Ex. iii, 14) is extremely striking? even if fortuitous." What a fountain of consolation is opened in these words to every believer to the end of time! He is anxious to give us rest and peace amid all storms from without and within, and his very presence secures these blessings as soon as he reveals himself to us. But just as the disciples in the case before us mistook Jesus and were frightened by his sight, so it happens often to us, that we are frightened and distressed by those very things that are intended to save us from impending ruin.

VERSE 28. The incident about Peter is peculiar to Matthew, and sets forth very truthfully the apostle's character, his fiery temperament and

self-reliance. The words, "Lord, if it be thou," must not be understood as implying on the part of Peter a doubt as to the identity of the Savior; the meaning is, on the contrary, "Since it is thou, Lord, bid me," etc., which meaning the conjunction εἰ, (if,) has sometimes. (Ch. vi, 30; John xiii, 17.) He does not venture without his Master's permission, who alone could save him from sinking. This was a noble exhibition of his confidence in Christ; yet there was an impure ingredient in it, as appears from that *Bid ME*. He desired to distinguish himself before his fellow-apostles, as he did on a later occasion, when he said: "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I."

VERSE 29. AND HE SAID, COME. "We should not fail to observe, and with reverence to admire, the wisdom and love of the Lord's answer. Peter had said, 'Bid me,' but he does not reply, 'I bid thee.' Peter had said 'to come to thee,' but he does not reply, 'Come *to me*' — only 'Come;' that is, 'Come, if thou wilt; make the experiment if thou desirest.' In that '*Come*,' an assurance is indeed involved that Peter should not be wholly swallowed up by the waves, but no pledge for the successful issue of the feat, which would have been involved had his words been the entire echo of his disciple's. This successful issue depended upon Peter himself — whether he should keep the beginning of his confidence firm unto the end. And the Lord, who knew what was in him, knew that he would not; that this was not the pure courage of faith; that what of carnal overboldness there was in it would infallibly be exchanged, when the stress of the trial came, for fear and unbelief." (Trench.) — **HE WALKED ON THE WATER TO GO TO JESUS.** These words evidently imply, that Peter walked some distance on the water. Faith was here, as in all other miracles of the Savior, the indispensable condition on the part of the recipient to call forth the exercise of the miraculous powers resting in the Savior. As long as Peter's eye of faith was immovably fixed on the person of the Lord, he was enabled to do what Jesus did. What a rich emblem is this of that faith which laughs at impossibilities! Through Christ strengthening us we can do all things.

VERSE 30. BUT WHEN HE SAW THE WIND BOISTEROUS; when he saw something else besides Jesus. — **HE WAS AFRAID** — literally, frightened. "This alarm is perfectly in keeping with the character of Peter, which was more distinguished by impulsive ardor than by steady courage, whether physical or moral." (Alexander.) — **AND BEGINNING TO SINK;** that is, to be submerged. "In this his peril his swimmer's art (John xxi, 7) profits him nothing; for there is no mingling of nature and grace in this way. He who has

entered the wonder-world of grace must not suppose that he may fall out of it at any moment, and betake himself to his old resources of nature; he has foregone these and must carry out what he has begun, or fail at his peril." (Trench.) — HE CRIED, SAYING, LORD, SAVE ME! In this moment of extreme danger, with no other feeling than that of utter helplessness, he puts his whole trust in Christ. This "Lord, save me!" is the language of genuine prayer, expressive of our own total inability, as well as of the Savior's nearness to help. Let every soul in her sorest distress throw herself unhesitatingly into the hands of Jesus.

VERSE 31. AND IMMEDIATELY JESUS STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND AND CAUGHT HIM. This shows that Peter was close by Jesus, when his faith failed and he began to sink. — O THOU OF LITTLE FAITH, WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT? The Lord does not say, Why didst thou come? He does not find fault with him for having undertaken too much, but for not having persevered in the exercise of his faith. The greater our faith is in setting out, the greater is the folly of the least subsequent doubt. Trench remarks: "Not till by his sustaining hand he has restored confidence to the fearful one, and made him feel that he can indeed tread under foot those waves of the unquiet sea, does the Lord speak even this word of a gentle rebuke. The courage of the disciple has returned, so that the Master speaks of his doubt as of something which is already past: *Wherefore didst thou doubt?* Before the doubt arose in thy heart thou didst walk on these waves, and now that thy faith has returned thou dost walk on them again; thou seest that it is not impossible, that it lies but in thy faithful will; that all things are possible to him that believeth."

VERSE 32. THE WIND CEASED. John adds: "And immediately the ship was at the land, whither they went."

VERSE 33. THEN THEY THAT WERE IN THE SHIP. It is not probable that any other than the disciples are meant, because none but the disciples are spoken of in verse 22. Four of them were accustomed as fishermen to navigate the lake, and the definite article before "ship" in verse 22 indicates also that it was the boat commonly used by the disciples. Besides, the nature of the miracle was such, that it is not likely others than the disciples would be permitted to witness it in this period of our Lord's ministry. — OF A TRUTH, THOU ART THE SON OF GOD. On this passage Judge Jones remarks in his Notes: "The article, though it appears in our translation, is not in

the original. The expression is different in this respect from Peter's in Matt. xvi, 16. On the occasion of Peter's confession the Savior blessed him, adding that he had declared a truth which flesh and blood had not revealed to him, but the Father. He pronounced no such blessing on this occasion. There must be a difference in the two expressions, or in the sense in which they were uttered. Notwithstanding all that Bishop Middleton, or any one else, has written concerning the use or omission of the Greek article in the New Testament, we can not understand the expression of the disciples on this occasion as a confession of the Deity of the Lord Jesus. It appears to be much of the same nature as the centurion's, who watched the crucifixion. They regarded him as a man highly favored of God, endowed with most extraordinary powers, but without any conception of his Divine nature and attributes, as the Son of God and the Creator of all things. This view of the passage detracts nothing from the proofs of the doctrine of our Lord's Divine nature, and his equality in that nature with God the Father. For this great truth is to be proved by his own words and works, not by the confessions of his disciples, made before they were inspired, and when they were imperfectly instructed in the mysteries of redemption." On the foregoing we would remark, that the omission of the article is of no importance in determining the sense of the term "Son of God." Immediately afterward, (John vi, 69,) and prior to his confession in Matt. xvi, 16, Simon Peter says: "We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," or as the best readings have it, "the Holy One of God." Yet — whether the reading "the Son of God" in that passage is genuine or not — it seems from Matt. xvi, 15-17, that, though the disciples had called their Master "Son of God" before, they had not attached that sense to the term which Peter then attached to it by Divine Revelation. This much is certain, that our text speaks of the first time they called their Master "Son of God" *prior* to the solemn confession of Peter in chapter xvi, 16.

VERSES 34, 35. Matthew and Mark relate that immediately after his landing many sick persons thronged to him. Jesus commences the new day again with dispensing blessings to suffering humanity, notwithstanding the labors of the preceding day and the loss of sleep during the whole night. — AND WHEN THE MEN OF THAT PLACE HAD KNOWLEDGE OF HIM. They were in all probability working in the fields, since it had become daylight meanwhile. They knew Jesus, because he stopped often in that neighborhood, and, moreover, because the people had seen many of his miracles. Rejoicing

in his return, they sent out messengers in all directions in order to have the sick brought to him. (See Mark vi, 55.)

VERSE 36. AND THEY SOUGHT HIM, THAT THEY MIGHT ONLY TOUCH THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT. This may indicate both the strong faith of the people, and the haste with which Jesus passed through the country. — At the close of this chapter Dr. Alexander remarks: "We are here brought back to the main theme of the history, to-wit: the itinerant ministry of Christ in Galilee, to which the Evangelist repeatedly reverts, as soon as he has finished any of the special topics comprehended in the plan of his Gospel. We have such a description after the preliminaries in the first four chapters, (iv, 24;) after the Sermon on the Mount and the series of miracles which follows it, (ix, 35;) after the organization and commission of the apostolic body, (xi, 1;) and now again after the formation of a systematic opposition, the exemplification of our Savior's parabolic teaching, the death of John the Baptist, the great creative miracle of feeding the five thousand, and the threefold miracle of walking on the water, saving Peter, and delivering the ship from danger."

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. As that bark was upon those stormy seas, such is oftentimes the Church. It seems as though it had not its Lord with it, such little way does it make; so baffled is it and tormented by the opposing storms of the world. But his eye is on it still; he is in the mountain apart praying; ever living, an ascended Savior, to make intercession for his people. And when at length the time of urgent need has arrived, he is suddenly with it, and that in marvelous ways past finding out — and then all that before was laborious is easy, and the toiling rowers are anon at the haven where they would be.

2. Peter is here the image of all the faithful in the seasons of their weakness and their fear. So long as they are strong in faith, they are able to tread under foot all the most turbulent agitations of an unquiet world; but when they lose heart, and fear; when, instead of "looking unto Jesus," they look at the stormy winds and waters, then these prevail against them, and they begin to sink, and were it not for Christ's sustaining hand, which is stretched out in answer to their cry, they would be wholly overwhelmed and swallowed up.

CHAPTER XV.

§ 32. A DISCUSSION WITH THE PHARISEES CONCERNING THE TRADITIONS OF MEN.

BETWEEN this conversation with the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem, and the events related in the preceding chapter, falls the discourse of our Lord at Capernaum. (John vi, 22-71.) (See Synoptical Table, Nos. 83-86.) The conversation took place, if not before, immediately after the third Passover, (John vi, 47,) which Christ seems not to have attended. (John vii, 1.) Lange remarks: "As the Gospel history progresses, the gulf between the believing and the unbelieving portion of the nation widens. The former desire but to touch the hem of his garment in order to be healed, the latter look upon him as unclean and excommunicated, because his disciples had transgressed one of the traditions of the elders. In the same way the enmity of the Pharisees is on the increase. At first the Pharisees of Judea had declared against him, then those of Galilee; now they are in league with each other. Since the Pharisees charge now Jesus and his disciples before all the people with contempt of the national traditions, Jesus deems this the proper time to set forth before all the people the contrast and absolute contradiction between a self-righteous traditional system and the eternal laws of God, condemning every form of ecclesiasticism that has set aside the fundamental laws of humanity, or of God, and of the moral nature of man."

Verses 1-20. (COMPARE MARK vii, 1-23.)

(1) **THEN came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,** (2) **Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.** (3) **But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?** (4) **For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.** (5) **But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;** (6) **and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free.** Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by

your tradition. (7) Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, (8) This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. (9) But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. (10) And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: (11) Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. (12) Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? (13) But he answered and said, Every plant, which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. (14) Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. (15) Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. (16) And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? (17) Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? (18) But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. (19) For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: (20) These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

VERSE 1. Lange understands by the scribes and Pharisees a deputation from the synagogue, representing all the scribes and Pharisees, on account of the definite article standing in Greek before "scribes" — *the* scribes. But Stier thinks that the Lord's answer to an official deputation would have been more respectful. They were, at all events, "men of influence from the capital, who acted in the present instance as if invested with special authority, and who had probably followed Jesus in order to watch him."

VERSE 2. WHY DO THY DISCIPLES TRANSGRESS THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS? Dr. Clarke says on this passage: "The Jews feign that, when God gave Moses the written law, he gave him also the oral law, which is the interpretation of the former. This law Moses at first delivered to Aaron; then to his sons Eleazer and Ishamar; and after these to the seventy-two elders, who were six of the most eminent men chosen out of each

of the twelve tribes. These seventy-two, with Moses and Aaron, delivered it again to all the heads of the people, and afterward to all the congregation at large. They say also, that before Moses died he delivered this oral law, or system of traditions, to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, which succeeded him — they to the prophets, and the prophets to each other, till it came to Jeremiah, who delivered it to Baruch, his scribe, who repeated it to Ezra, who delivered it to the *men of the great synagogue*, the last of whom was Simon the Just. Thence it was delivered through the Rabbins to Rabbi Judah Hakkodesh, [in the second century of the Christian era,] who compiled and digested it into the book, which is called the Mishna; to explain which the two Talmuds, called the Jerusalem and the Babylonish Talmud, were compiled, which are also called the Gemara, or complement, because by these the oral law, or Mishna, is fully explained. The Jerusalem Talmud was completed about A.D. 300; and the Babylonish Talmud about the beginning of the sixth century. This Talmud was printed at Amsterdam in twelve volumes folio." — The traditions of the elders bear the same relation to Judaism which the traditional system of the Romish Church bears to the religion of Christ. Lightfoot has shown that the Jewish Talmudists attached greater weight to the rabbinical traditions than to the law. "The words of the scribes," say they, "are lovely, above the words of the law; for the words of the law are weighty and light; but the words of the scribes are all weighty." Alford says: "The Jews attached more importance to the traditional exposition than to the Scripture text itself. They compared the written word to water; the traditional exposition to the wine which must be mingled with it." — **FOR THEY WASH NOT THEIR HANDS WHEN THEY EAT BREAD;** that is, before taking their meals. The Old Testament contains no command about washing one's hands before meals, although it prescribes a number of washings for unclean persons. (Lev. xv.) It was, consequently, a traditional law, which the Lord would be likely to observe at the proper time and place as a sanitary regulation, but did not recognize as an inviolable or religious duty. Jewish tradition says that Rabbi Akiba preferred dying of thirst in the prison, where but little water was furnished him, to eating with unwashed hands.

VERSE 3. WHY DO YE ALSO TRANSGRESS THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD? The Lord charges in turn the Pharisees with transgressing the Divine law under sanctimonious pretenses, showing by an example how the hypocrisy of the Pharisees set a Divine commandment aside

by a tradition based exclusively on self-interest. — BY YOUR TRADITION. The Greek preposition **διά** may be translated *for the sake of*, which would give the same sense as the parallel passage in Mark vii, 9: "That ye may keep your own tradition."

VERSE 4. GOD COMMANDED. Mark has: "*Moses said.*" This is, as Alford remarks, a remarkable testimony from our Lord to the Divine origin of the Mosaic law — not merely the Decalogue as such, for the second clause, *He that curseth*, etc., is not in the Decalogue. — Our Lord selected the fourth commandment in the Decalogue, probably, because it is so universally recognized, and comprises the fear of God and the love to our fellow-men, the germs of all piety and morality in Church and State. He that breaks this commandment violates the moral law of God in its very essence. To honor one's parents implies not only an outward respect and reverence, but an attention to all their wants, especially in their declining years, (v. 5.) The Greek word, rendered by *cursing*, includes all kinds of disobedience to parents, to think, speak, and to do evil to them, to curse them and wish them harm.

VERSE 5. BUT YE SAY, by your tradition, which is here in direct opposition to God's law. — IT IS A GIFT, BY WHATSOEVER THOU MIGHTEST BE PROFITED BY ME. These words are quoted as addressed to the parents. The meaning is: "Any thing I have, by which thou mightest be supported, is set aside as a consecrated gift, and therefore not to be applied to your benefit." Mark (vii, 11) uses for *gift* the Hebrew word *corban*, that is, something consecrated to the Temple worship or to the altar. The Jews were in the habit of making such consecrations or dedications. From Matt. xxiii, 18, we see that such a gift consecrated to the altar was an object of religious veneration, and was often sworn by in preference to the altar. The Divine law required that what was so dedicated or vowed to God should also be applied to the purposes specified. "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High." (Ps. l, 14; Deut. xxiii, 21.) This command was perverted by the Rabbins into the monstrous tenet that the mere word *corban* pronounced over whatever one might possess is sufficient to absolve a man from the duty of caring for his parents, even if he did afterward not actually consecrate his property to religious purposes. If, therefore, indigent parents applied to their children for support, and the latter said, "Corban, let it be consecrated to God," this dedication was irrevocable, and the parents were deprived of what they needed.

VERSE 6. AND HONOR NOT; that is, neglects to honor them by giving them their due support. — **HE SHALL BE FREE**, from blame. These words are not in the text. They form the logical conclusion called by grammarians *apodosis*, which is frequently left to be supplied by the reader. — **OF NONE EFFECT**; that is, null and void.

VERSE 7. YE HYPOCRITES. See foot-note on chap. vi, 2. This, most probably, was the first time that our Lord directly addressed the scribes and Pharisees by this term. Hitherto he had rather contented himself with refuting their principles, but now, when they dare to attack his disciples for their non-observance of the traditions of the elders, which they substituted for the most sacred and obvious commandments of God, he charges them directly with the crime of hypocrisy. Every religious pretense, apart from morality and beyond the revealed will of God, has its origin in that hideous crime. — **WELL** [that is, appropriately] **DID ISAIAH PROPHESY OF YOU.** The quotation, from Isaiah xxix, 13, which is nearly according to the LXX, is made from a section (chaps. xxiv-xxxv) which sets forth, in alternate threatenings and promises, the punishment of the mere nominal Israel and the salvation of the true Israel of God. As is so often the case in the prophetic Word, its threats and promises are for all ages of the Church — though our Lord's saying *of you* indicates that the prophecy is especially applicable to the times of the Messiah. It belongs, thus, to those prophecies which have a primary and secondary application. The prophet, in whose times the Pharisaic tradition had as yet no existence, inveighs against the outward observance of the law by his contemporaries, while their hearts were alienated from God — a state of mind that forms the very foundation of Pharisaism.

VERSE 8. THIS PEOPLE DRAWETH NIGH UNTO ME WITH THEIR MOUTH, AND HONORETH ME WITH THEIR LIPS; that is, they make great professions of piety. — **BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME.** The state of their heart is diametrically opposed to their professions.

VERSE 9. This part of the quotation differs materially from the original in words, but expresses the same sense. The literal translation of the Hebrew words is: "Their fearing of me [that is, their worship] is a precept of man, a thing taught," and means: Their religion rests merely on the precepts of human teaching. — **IN VAIN;** that is, for no purpose. — **TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.** The word, rendered

commandments, ἐτάλματα, is found only here, in the parallel passage, (Mark vii, 7,) and in Col. ii, 22, where it also denotes the commandments of men as opposed to those of God. — Just like these Jewish Rabbins, the Church of Rome declares her tradition to be equally binding with the written Word of God, and thereby makes the Word of God of no effect. Burdens are laid upon the consciences of men which the Lord has not commanded, in many instances in diametrical opposition to the spirit and letter of the Word of God.

VERSES 10, 11. "Having exposed the folly of the prevalent ceremonial superstition as to uncommanded religious washings, and its wickedness in setting aside moral obligations, the Savior now pursues the same course, in a still more public manner, with respect to the most prevalent and favorite of all merely-ritual distinctions, that of clean and unclean meats, which had then become, and still continues, the chief bar to social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles. The very object of the law upon this subject — as recorded in Lev. xi and Deut. xiv — was to separate the chosen race from every other by restrictions on their food which should render it impossible for them to live together, or to interchange the ordinary courtesies of life without a constant violation, upon one side, of religious duty. This effect had been abundantly secured for ages in the practice of all conscientious Jews, but with the necessary incidental evil of a constant disposition, even on the part of such, to mistake a positive and temporary regulation for a perpetual, invariable law, and to regard the forbidden meats as having an intrinsic efficacy to defile, not only ceremonially, but morally. Against this groundless and pernicious error Christ propounds the simple truth, but in a form adapted to arrest the popular attention and impress itself upon the memory." (Alexander.) — NOT THAT WHICH GOETH INTO THE MOUTH DEFILETH A MAN. The Lord speaks here not of legal, but of moral defilement, as appears from the succeeding clause. The authority and obligation of the ceremonial law was, therefore, not called in question.

VERSE 12. THEN CAME HIS DISCIPLES. From Mark vii, 17, we learn that this took place after the people had dispersed, and he had entered into the house. That the Lord placed himself here in so direct opposition to the Pharisees, appeared to his disciples strange, because their Master had, thus far, avoided every personal offense.

VERSE 13. At no other time has the Lord more fully sanctioned the unreserved and unqualified exposure of all doctrines that are opposed to the truth. — EVERY PLANT, WHICH MY HEAVENLY FATHER HAS NOT PLANTED; that is, every doctrine which is not of Divine origin, which God has not revealed to man in his Word. All human traditions are plants which our Father has not planted; they owe their origin to worldly motives, and draw their support from worldly interests. Not the Pharisees personally, but their doctrines, are in this verse the subject of our Lord's remarks; in the next verse he speaks of their persons. — SHALL BE ROOTED UP. Some commentators take the future here in the sense of the imperative; that is, let them be rooted up. Jesus declares here, most distinctly and emphatically, against the toleration of false, pernicious, and ungodly doctrines, and shows, by his own example, how they are to be eradicated. This is not against the prohibition of rooting out the tares, (chap. xiii, 30,) by which we have to understand the violent destruction of *persons*.

VERSE 14. LET THEM ALONE. Leave them to themselves; they will, with their dupes, run into ruin.

VERSE 15. According to Mark vii, 17, Peter acts here as the mouthpiece of the apostolic college. The word *parable* is here used in a general sense, meaning a moral maxim couched in figurative language. Though the disciples must have understood the general truth announced by our Lord in the preceding remark, they did not know how to reconcile it with the injunctions of the ceremonial law.

VERSES 17, 18. DO NOT YE YET UNDERSTAND? that is, are ye also yet without understanding, after I have instructed you for so long a time? Food and drink are digested by corporeal organs, and come into no contact with man's spiritual nature. In verse 18 the heart, or soul, is contrasted with the bodily organization, and the inference drawn that moral pollution can only come from within, not from without.

VERSE 19. There never has been drawn a more truthful and humiliating picture of the human heart than is done in this verse. We have here our Lord's own explicit testimony as to human depravity. — From the fact that Jesus describes the heart as the seat and fountain of sin, no inference can be drawn against the doctrine of the satanic origin of moral evil. The Pharisees said: Outward things defile a man; they constitute sin, or moral evil. Jesus says: No,

it is the heart which defiles a man; on the state of the heart depends every thing. Then follows a specification of the things which proceed from out of the heart.

— EVIL THOUGHTS. Evil thoughts, even if they are not spoken or carried out, defile indeed a man, although sin is consummated only by putting the wicked thought into practice. The evil thoughts which are suggested by Satan can not be meant here, for they come from without, not from the heart.

— MURDERS — not only the act of taking a man's life, but also anger, malice, revenge, and every state of the mind that is opposed to the spirit of the sixth commandment. (See chap. v, 21-26.) — ADULTERIES. See chap. v, 27-32.

— FORNICATIONS include all impure desires and unchaste acts. (See chap. v, 28.) — THEFTS. Mark adds *covetousness*, *deceit*, both of which lead to thefts.

— FALSE WITNESS. "This is also put genetically, not only for false testimony in courts of justice, but for every species of fraud, deception, and falsehood. One of the most universal sins of our race is here referred to. It besets childhood, and, unless judiciously and thoroughly eradicated, takes such deep root in the soul as to be the besetting sin of one's whole life. It makes its appearance in various forms. With some persons a malicious pleasure seems to be taken in spreading slanderous and mischievous reports. In others it results from a want of moral courage to tell the truth. It sometimes proceeds from a habit of exaggeration inadvertently formed. A violation of truth may also be found in promises carelessly made, but not fulfilled, conventional forms of polite prevarication, false impressions conveyed in language so adroitly formed as to imply no verbal falsehood, and in signs, gestures, and even silence itself. Against all these forms the commandment of God, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness,' is opposed. When seen by his eye they indicate a corrupt heart, out of which proceeds that which defiles the soul." (Owen.) — BLASPHEMIES. See chaps. ix, 3, and xii, 31. — "The sins here enumerated [with the exception of the last named] are all violations of the Second Table. If to them we add the rebellious and evil thoughts against God, which issue from the heart, how overwhelming must be the conviction of the deep depravity of our nature and the impossibility of being purified, except by the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin." (Owen.) How necessary the prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!" (Ps. li, 10.)

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

We will take these scribes and Pharisees as they appear here, as the types of a large class of men who are found in the Churches of every age — a class which we call *traditional religionists*. The passage leads us to notice three things concerning them:

I. THEIR MISERABLE SPIRIT, AS DISPLAYED BY THEMSELVES.

1. *They display a spirit of hollow punctilio*usness. The only thing they noticed in the conduct of the disciples of Christ, and the only thing about them in which they felt any interest, was their disregard of one little point of ceremony; namely, the "washing of hands." The clean heart was nothing to them — the clean hand was all they thought of. Thus it has ever been with their class: the letter is exalted above the spirit, punctilious above principles. It matters not how good a man is; he may be as earnest as Paul, as meek as John; if he belong not to their sect, subscribe not to their tenets, respect not their canons and rituals, they are nothing — they are worse than nothing — they are heretics, deserving nothing but denunciation and abuse.

2. *They display a spirit of captious officiousness*. Traditional saints, the men who live in dogmas and ceremonies, have always displayed this spirit of caviling interference. Show me the member of a Church who is more taken up with the forms and proprieties of religion than with its spiritual importance and claims, and you will show me a man whose captious spirit is ever disturbing the harmony of the fellowship to which he belongs. It is a historical fact that those sections of the Christian Church which pay most attention to form and ceremony are the most censorious in their spirit, the most bitter in their sectarianism, and the most successful of agents in creating schisms in the ranks of the good.

3. *They display a spirit of impious assumption*. Their very interference implied a feeling, on their part, of authority on such questions. They act as if they were the judges of character, the arbiters of destiny. Who are the men who have ever been the most ready to arrogate to themselves this power — the most ready to arraign and punish their brethren for heterodoxy? Have they been distinguished either by great spirituality of soul, liberality of thought, or a philosophic insight to the laws of the mind, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the principles of God's administration? No; they have been men whose conceptions

have been narrow, superficial, material — men whose Gospel has been a little bundle of crude notions, attractive to the thoughtless, but, verily, repulsive to all other minds. The passage leads us to notice:

II. THEIR ARROGANT ASSUMPTION, AS IGNORED BY THE DISCIPLES. The disciples were *true* men, and they practically set at naught the punctiliousness of these religionists. We will make two remarks on the conduct of the disciples here:

1. *It was justifiable.* The fact that Christ, instead of intimating in the slightest degree that the disciples were wrong in neglecting this rite, criminales and denounces their accusers, clearly shows that they had done no wrong.

2. *It was natural.* The more men's souls advance in a knowledge of spiritual principles and a sympathy with God and the universe, the more indifferent they naturally become to the mere letter and etiquette of religion. Thus the Hebrew Christians left Judaism; thus the Reformers, Popery; thus the Puritans, and, in later times, Wesley and Whitefield, with their followers, left the Anglican Church; and thus now there are rising spirits in every Church that are practically indifferent to its little points of ceremony and minor shades of creed. The passage leads us to notice:

III. THEIR HIDEOUS CHARACTER, AS UNMASKED BY THEIR JUDGE. The appeal of Christ shows four things concerning these scribes and Pharisees:

1. *That however orthodox they appeared before men, they were heretics in the sight of God.* These men prided themselves on the accuracy of their religious opinions; they were regarded as authorities in such matters. Like the technical theologians of every age, they would have it believed that they had fathomed the depths of all truths essential to human belief and practice. But, notwithstanding this, they were heretics that understood not the A B C of true theology. Moral heresy is often associated with intellectual orthodoxy.

2. *That however socially upright they appeared before men, they were dishonest in the sight of God.* Christ gives a case here to show their moral unsoundness, and to prove that by their traditions they did transgress the laws of God. Observe here two things: (1.) *The divine principle of duty.* This principle is, that it is the duty of children to honor their father and mother. This

divine principle of filial obedience is congruous with the dictates of reason and nature. That having derived our being, support, protection, and all the blessings of early life from our parents, we should return such obligations by ministering to their comfort, should they require it, is a duty unmistakably clear and absolutely binding. Observe, (2.) *The violation of this divine principle by these traditionists.* In the name of religion they extorted from children the property that should have gone to the succor and support of indigent parents. Such pious frauds have, alas! been too common in every age. Property that should have gone to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, has, by traditional religionists, been employed to build costly cathedrals, to support ritualistic pageantry, and feed plethoric priests.

3. *That however religious they appeared before men, they were infidels in the sight of God.* There is no atheism so bad as the atheism of the mere lip-worshipers in the Church. The mere theoretical infidel you may vanquish by argument, but all your reasoning goes for nothing with the lip-worshiping infidels. I believe that if there was no moral atheism in the Church, there would be no theoretical atheism in the world. Every worshiper would be such a living witness for God that bold infidelity would every-where turn pale, and die.

4. *That however valuable their religion appeared before men, it was utterly worthless in the sight of God.* There is no heart in their devotions, and therefore no virtue. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Brother, "in vain" is thy theological creed, however Scriptural its basis and philosophical its structure; "in vain" is thy ecclesiastical polity, however it may accord with the principles of the New Testament, and be adapted to Church edification and order; "in vain" are thy forms of devotion — thy hymns may breathe seraphic piety, thy liturgies may be inspired, thy prayers may be fashioned after the great model prayer; "in vain" is the punctuality with which thou attendest to religious services, and the propriety with which thou dost join in the exercises of the great congregation: in vain all, and forever in vain, if thy "heart is far from God." In all thy religious engagements thou art only sowing the wind, and thou wilt reap the whirlwind. (Abbreviated from "The Homilist.")

§ 33. THE CANAANITISH WOMAN.

Verses 21-28. (COMPARE MARK vii, 24-30.)

(21) THEN Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. (22) And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. (23) But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. (24) But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (25) Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me. (26) But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. (27) And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. (28) Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

VERSE 21. "The motive of our Lord in this journey," Mr. Andrews remarks, "obviously was to find seclusion and rest, which he had sought, but in vain, to find on the east side of the lake, and could not find in Capernaum. He hoped, on the remote frontiers of Galilee, to escape for a time popular attention, and to be hid from the crowds that followed him. We see no evidence that any fear of the hostility of Herod or of the Pharisees actuated him. It is for the twelve that he seeks a temporary retirement." Alexander finds in this retirement of our Lord also the purpose to evince, by one act of his public life, that, though his personal ministry was to the Jews, his saving benefits were also for the Gentiles. Whatever may have been our Lord's motives, he withdrew in a north-western direction, through the mountain ridge of Upper Galilee, into the coasts of Phenicia. It is, however, not probable that our Lord actually passed over into a heathen land. Mark tells us that he only "went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon." That Matthew also meant to say that the Lord had only drawn close to the skirts of that profane land, is evident from his speaking of the woman as *coming out of the same coasts*. According to Mark, "he entered into a house, and would have no man know it," desiring to spend some time in strict privacy with his disciples. But the fame of his miraculous cures and

of his Messiahship had preceded him even thither. From Mark iii, 8, and Luke vi, 17, we learn that his fame had spread also in that region.

VERSE 22. A WOMAN OF CANAAN. Mark calls her a "Greek," in the Hellenistic sense of *Gentile*, and "a Syrophenician by nation," that is, by birth. The Phenicians were descendants from the ancient Canaanites. That part of Phenicia which was included in the Roman province of Syria was called Syrophenicia. — **O LORD, THOU SON OF DAVID!** The Messianic expectations of the Jews were not unknown to other nations. The woman must have learned, by some means, that the Son of David — that is, the Messiah — was in the neighborhood. She believed, yet was, according to verse 26, no proselyte of the gate. She had heard but little of Jesus, but the scanty seed that had fallen into her humble, trusting heart brought forth abundant fruit. — **HAVE MERCY ON ME.** She does not say, "Have mercy on my daughter," but makes the sufferings of her daughter her own. The intercession of this noble woman for her child furnishes a beautiful example how parents ought to pray for their children.

VERSE 23. AND HE ANSWERED HER NOT A WORD. She found the Lord very different from that which report had represented him to her, as never refusing aid to the afflicted. Chrysostom says: "The Word has no word; the fountain is sealed; the physician withholds his remedies." At the same time he does not utter a word to drive her away. The disciples do not understand the Master, who in all other instances had readily granted help to all applicants, and, therefore, intercede for her. — **SEND HER AWAY.** The Greek verb **ἀπολύειν** does merely mean to send away, to dismiss, with or without granting the prayer. Whether the Lord would grant or refuse the prayer they left with him, they only desired him to dismiss the woman, lest by her importunity she might frustrate his desire to remain unknown in that part of the country. Yet, from the answer of the Lord, it would seem that the disciples desired him to grant the prayer. — **FOR SHE CRIETH AFTER US,** and, by doing so, she calls general attention to thee, and makes our stay here universally known. (See Mark vii, 24.)

VERSE 24. I AM NOT SENT BUT. For wise purposes in the counsels of God, Christ's personal ministry was to be confined to his own nation. Before the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy he was first to be "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the

fathers." (Rom. xv, 8.) When, therefore, this heathen woman applied to him for help, he refused her request, not merely apparently, but in reality. Help for her was not possible till she had become a true daughter by her persevering, humble faith. "According to the same fundamental law," says Lange, "the blessings and privileges of the Gospel were dispensed also after the day of Pentecost. The common view, that before that day they were confined to the Jews, and afterward were offered to the Gentiles, is a superficial one, and does not reach the cause of the case. Only as members of the spiritual Israel they could share the salvation of Israel, and the believing Jews could not but recognize them as brethren, (Acts x, xi,) having become fully satisfied that they themselves belonged to the true Israel only through faith and the circumcision of the heart. Thus we have in this history a type of the future extension of the economy of salvation for the reception of the Gentiles."

VERSE 25. THEN CAME SHE. The woman hears the repulse which the disciples, who had ventured to plead for her, receive; but she is not disheartened thereby. Hitherto she had been crying after the Lord from a distance, but now she drew nearer to him, and prostrated herself at his feet.—LORD, HELP ME. She addresses him no longer as "the Son of David," in which capacity, she had learned, he belonged to the Jews exclusively, but as "Lord," mighty, powerful Lord, who was able to help all; in which capacity she, as a member of the human family, had also claims upon him. The state of this woman is a beautiful emblem of the state of a sinner that is deeply conscious of his wretchedness. How proper is this prayer for penitent souls! It relies solely on God's mercy. This woman is a pattern of persevering faith and prayer. Every trial of our faith, where God does apparently disregard our prayer, must incite us to pray the more fervently. A really-penitent, humble heart is never impatient under the apparently-harsh dealing of God.

VERSE 26. According to Mark vii, 27, the words of our text were preceded by the words, "Let the children first be filled." These words contain no unqualified refusal, but rather some encouragement, leaving room for the hope that, after the children's wants should have been satisfied, the rest would receive something too. For the time being, however, the refusal is positive. "Thy time has not yet come." As long as the children are not filled, others have no claims upon the food. — IT NOT MEET TO TAKE THE CHILDREN'S BREAD. The children, like the lost sheep, are the house of Israel — their bread, the blessings of the Gospel, of the Messianic kingdom. — AND TO

CAST IT TO DOGS — literally, little dogs. Jesus uses here an expression common with the Jews, who applied to heathens the epithet "dogs," yet changes the term into "little dogs," whereby he designates the domesticated animal that is fed beneath its master's table, in contradistinction to the wild, homeless dog of the Orient, in allusion to which the Scriptures frequently speak of dogs. (Rev. xxii, 15; Matt. vii, 6; Phil. iii, 2; Ps. xxii, 20; lix, 6.) On this distinction the woman lays hold to push her suit still further.

VERSE 27. SHE SAID, TRUTH, LORD. By this word *truth* (*νόητος*) she confirms what the Lord had said, that she was no member of the theocracy, and had, consequently, no legal claims on its blessings and privileges. She accepts the apparently-harsh designation, and, instead of taking offense at it, turns it into a strong argument why her prayer should be granted. — YET THE DOGS. The Greek conjunction *καὶ γάρ* is not correctly translated; it means *for indeed*. Her reply is paraphrased by Trench: "Didst thou say dogs? It is well. I accept the title and the place; for the dogs have a portion of the meal, not the first, not the children's portion, but a portion still — the crumbs which fall from the table. In this very statement of the case thou bringest us heathen, thou bringest *me* within the circle of the blessings which God, the great householder, is ever dispensing to his family. We also belong to his household, though we occupy but the lowest place in it. According to thine own showing, I am not wholly an alien, and therefore I will abide by this name, and will claim from thee all its consequences." The woman shows not only her great humility and persevering faith, but a wonderful discernment in entering at once into the real meaning which the Savior attached to the epithet "dogs," descrying his kindness and mercy notwithstanding his apparent repulsiveness. "Such persistency in asking, and yet such submissiveness; such earnestness, and yet such reverence and delicacy, are rarely combined, and they furnish a beautiful type of Christian character." (John H. Morison.) Trench remarks further: "Upon these words Luther, who has dwelt on all the circumstances of this little history with a peculiar love, and seems never weary of extolling the mighty faith of this woman, exclaims, 'Was not that a master-stroke? She snares Christ in his own words.' And oftentimes he sets this Canaanitish woman before each troubled and fainting heart, that it may learn from her how to wring a yea from God's nay; or, rather, how to hear the deep-hidden yea which many times lies in his seeming nay. 'Like her thou must give God right in all he says against thee, and yet must not stand off from praying till thou overcomest, as she overcame; till

thou hast turned the very charges made against thee into arguments and proof of thy need; till thou, too, hast taken Christ in his own words." Stier says: "In the connecting together of the humble 'Yea, Lord,' and the importunate 'yet,' is involved the whole order of salvation and prayer. Such faith finds the promise in the very refusal, makes the unworthiness, precisely as the neediness, the plea for favor."

VERSE 28. "She who before heard only those words of a seeming contempt, now hears words of a most gracious commendation — words of which the like are recorded as spoken but to one other in all the Gospel history: '*O woman, great is thy faith!*' He who at first seemed as though he would have denied her the smallest boon, now opens to her the full treasure-house of his grace, and bids her to help herself, to carry away what she will: '*Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*' He had shown to her for a while, like Joseph to his brethren, the aspect of severity; but, like Joseph, he could not maintain it long; or, rather, he would not maintain it an instant longer than it was needful, and after that word of hers, that mighty word of an undaunted faith, it was needful no more: in the words of Mark, '*For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.*' Like the centurion at Capernaum, like the nobleman at Cana, she made proof that his word was potent, whether spoken far off or near. Her child, indeed, was at a distance; but she offered in her faith a channel of communication between it and Christ. With one hand of that faith she had held on to that Lord in whom all healing grace was stored, with the other to her suffering child — thus herself a living conductor by which the power of Christ might run like an electric flash from him to her beloved. '*And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed,*' weak and exhausted as it would appear from the paroxysms of the spirits going out; or, the circumstance which last is mentioned may indicate only that she was now taking that quiet rest, which hitherto the evil spirit had not allowed. It will answer so to the 'clothed and in his right mind,' (Luke viii, 30,) of another who had been tormented in the same way. — But the interesting question remains, *Why* this bitterness was not spared her; why the Lord should have presented himself under so different an aspect to her, and to most other suppliants? Sometimes he anticipated their needs, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' (John v, 6,) or if not so, he who was waiting to be gracious required not to be twice asked for his blessings. Why was it that in this case, to use the words of an old divine, Christ 'staid long, wrestling with her faith, and

shaking and trying whether it were fast-rooted' or no? Doubtless because he knew that it was a faith which would stand the proof, and that she would come out victorious from this sore trial; and not only so, but with a stronger, higher, purer faith than if she had borne away her blessing at once. Now she has learned, as then she never could have learned, that men ought always to pray and not to faint; that, with God, to delay a boon is not therefore to deny it. She had learned the lesson which Moses must have learned, when 'the Lord met him, and sought to kill him,' (Exod. vi, 24;) she won the strength which Jacob had won before, from his night-long struggle with the Angel. There is, indeed, a remarkable analogy between this history and that last. (Gen. xxxii, 24-32.) There, as here, there is the same persevering struggle on the one side, and the same persevering refusal on the other; there, as here, the stronger is at last overcome by the weaker. God himself yields to the might of faith and prayer; for a later prophet, interpreting that mysterious struggle, tells us the weapons which the patriarch wielded: 'He wept and made supplication unto him,' connecting with this the fact that 'he had power over the Angel and prevailed.' (Hos. xii, 3, 4.) The two histories, indeed, only stand out in their full resemblance, when we keep in mind that the angel there, the Angel of the covenant, was no other than that Word, who, now incarnate, 'blessed' this woman at last, as he had blessed at length Jacob at Peniel — in each case rewarding thus a faith which had said, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.'" (Trench.)

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

THE DIFFICULTIES AND TRIUMPHS OF AN EARNEST SOUL IN SEARCH OF DIVINE HELP.

I. THE DIFFICULTIES OF AN EARNEST SOUL IN SEARCH OF DIVINE HELP. The help which this noble-hearted woman, this brave heathen mother, sought, was the restoration of her child. In the effort she meets with *three difficulties*, which, it seems to me, are very much like the difficulties which all earnest souls have to encounter in their efforts to obtain that special help from Heaven which they require.

1. *The apparent disregard of the Great One to her efforts.* While she was crying in an agony of entreaty for help, it is said that "He answered her not

a word." This *apparent disregard of God* to the efforts of earnest seekers at the outset of their career has always been a difficulty deeply felt by them. They strive for knowledge, they aspire after virtue, they struggle for the right, they supplicate Heaven, but there is no apparent response. The Great One seems indifferent. Though they search in his Revelations for knowledge as for hid treasure, though they agonize to enter in at the strait gate of truth and virtue, though they resist unto blood, striving against sin, though they are importunate in prayer, they receive, perhaps, no indication that they have made any impression on God. Nature goes on as ever; the heavens seem brass; God is silent, and he answers not a word. What religious inquirer, what earnest seeker, has not felt this at the outset of his career? He expected responses at once; but he had them not.

2. *The apparent restrictedness of Divine grace.* In reply to the request of the disciples Christ said: "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Though the words were not intended to convey a limitation of mediatorial mercy — falling, as they undoubtedly did, on the ear of the woman, and, probably, with the intention of Christ — they must have sunk as lead upon her heart. The inference that she would be likely to draw from these words would be, "Then I am excluded," and, "Can there be any hope for me?" This is another difficulty which she had to encounter. This, too, is a difficulty which the young inquirer meets with. He sometimes receives a deep and distressing impression that Divine grace does not extend to him, that Christ was not sent to save him. He remembers the enormity and multitude of his own sins, and he seems to hear a voice something like that which now fell on the woman's heart — "*I am not sent to thee.*"

3. *A current religious opinion.* After she had again pressed her request, He answered and said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." In this Christ manifestly utters not his own idea, but a popular prejudice among the Jews. They were wont to regard themselves as the children of God, the special favorites of Heaven. They looked on all other peoples with cold contempt. The most opprobrious epithets were used to designate them. All other nations were "dogs;" they only were children. This moral superiority to every other tribe was with them a reigning religious belief. Jesus simply quotes it, not to express his opinion — far from it — but only to try her faith, and obliquely strike at the foolish prejudice which still existed in the minds of his disciples, as Jews. But though, in quoting it, Christ takes away

the edge of the insult, softens the rude harshness of the language by using, in the original, the diminutive, *little dogs*, yet the opinion, even in the mildest form, when addressed to her in answer to her request, must have been felt as a repulse. What young inquirer has not met with difficulties arising from some religious ideas especially current in his own circle of life? Perhaps reprobation is the reigning idea, or apostolic succession, or sacramental efficacy, or some such unreasonable and heart-repelling absurdities. We speak from experience when we say that some of the theological dogmas which meet the young seeker after God are among his greatest hinderances. Like thick mists upon the landscape, they hide the bright lights above and the living beauties below; they darken the path, they distract and confound the traveler. Would that some breeze from the holy heavens would sweep through Christendom, and clear the atmosphere of all the vapors and fogs of traditional theology! — Having noticed the difficulties, let us contemplate —

II. THE TRIUMPHS OF AN EARNEST SOUL IN SEARCH OF DIVINE HELP.

This woman surmounted all these difficulties. She had that faith before which mountains flee away. Her success serves as an illustration of several important truths:

1. *Her triumph serves as an illustration of the character of genuine faith.* The faith of this woman was obviously of the right type, for it both succeeded in its object and gained the approval of Christ. "Great is thy faith." What is true faith? Here is a veritable example; here it is drawn out in the living actions of human life. Her faith was marked by three things: (1.) *An unbounded confidence in Christ.* She addresses him as the true Messiah: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, O Master, thou Son of David!" There was no question in her mind as to who he was. She wanted mercy, and she knew that he was Heaven's chosen messenger of mercy to the earth. This is ever a feature, or rather the *essence*, of true evangelical faith. It is not a belief in something about Christ — in certain views which men have propounded about him in treatises, creeds, and catechisms — but an unbounded trust in him as the Son of David, the Sent of God, the Savior of the world. "He that believeth on me," etc.; this is it. (2.) *Her faith was marked by an invincible perseverance in her course.* This is ever a mark of true faith. Doubting souls spend their time in lisping about difficulties as a reason for their indolence and inaction. Souls of great faith are morally great. They are all-conquering and unconquerable. Difficulties only nurse them into the majesty of a martyr's power. (3.) *Her faith was marked*

by an entire renunciation of all self-conceit. Humility is ever associated with true faith. All vain and proud notions of self-will vanish in the light of that faith which brings the soul into contact with the Infinite, as the drops of dew evaporate in the beams of the Summer sun.

2. Her triumph illustrates the severe aspects which mercy sometimes assumes toward man. The Great One often deals thus with true souls. He seems deaf to their prayers; he appears to them rather as the cold Judge than the warm-hearted Father. "Clouds and darkness are round about him." He is in the whirlwind and the storm of affliction. Still all is mercy. Thus it was with Abraham, thus it was with David, and thus it has been with the good in every age and clime.

3. Her triumph illustrates Christ's regard for true suppliants. (1.) He commends her faith. (2.) He grants her request.

Young seeker after Divine help, be not discouraged, then, by the difficulties that beset thy path. I see not how thy soul could be saved from lethargy, weakness, morbid fear, and base cowardice, without having difficulties to stimulate thy zeal, challenge thy faculties, and bring out the spiritual energies of thy being. "Tribulation" to man has ever been, since the fall, and must ever be, in the path to the empire of spiritual majesty and bliss. Imitate, then, the example of this Syrophenician woman. Center thy faith, thy soul, not on mere theories that men propound about Christ, but on the Son of David. Though he may not for a time answer thee "a word," and the heavens above thee seem brass as thou prayest, persevere; his silence is mercy — still cry on to the Son of David. Though ideas about the restrictedness of Divine grace may ring in thy ears, and thou mayest fancy that thou art not included among "the lost sheep" for whom mercy has been provided, still cry on to the Son of David. Though a spurious theology may trouble thee with suggestions that thou art too worthless a creature for mercy, and that thou art excluded from the covenant of promise, still cry on to the Son of David. Let naught divert thy attention from him. Hold on to him with an unrelaxable tenacity amid all the trials of life's wilderness, in the Jordan of death, and thou shalt feel on the other side that he has made thee "more than a conqueror." (Abridged from "The Homilist.")

§ 34. THE SECOND MIRACULOUS FEEDING.

As a kind of introduction to the statement of the second miraculous feeding, Matthew premises a comprehensive report of a number of miraculous cures, which Jesus performed on many that were afflicted and diseased. Finding it impossible to remain any longer unknown in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon after the event stated in the preceding section, the Lord withdrew to the sea of Gennesaret, traveling through Galilee, but making in all probability no stay there, but going on as far as Decapolis, (Mark vii, 31,) which was not under the jurisdiction of Herod. He had again chosen, as on former occasions, the open country for the theater of his ministry, and the report of his presence attracted all the afflicted and needy from the whole neighborhood. On his way already he had healed a man that was deaf and dumb, (Mark vii, 31-37,) — now he heals all that were brought unto him. From the manner in which the Evangelists speak of the wonder and astonishment expressed by the multitude in beholding the miraculous cures, we might infer that they saw them for the first time. Three days this great concourse of people had continued with the Lord, having taken their repose for two nights in the field, which could be done without inconvenience, as it was in the Summer, and having exhausted their temporary supply of food, when Jesus expressed his unwillingness to send them away hungry. His miraculous feeding on this occasion, related by Matthew and Mark, did not take place on the north-eastern coast, near Bethsaida Julias, (Luke ix, 10,) but near Decapolis in the south-east. Some of the German critics pretend to find in this second report of a miraculous feeding only a traditional repetition of the first. If this were so, the Evangelists would be guilty of having forged the remarks of our Lord in chapter xvi, 9, 10. The assumption, however, is entirely gratuitous. Every circumstance that could vary, does vary in the two accounts. In the one case Jesus crossed from the western to the eastern coast and walked on the sea after the miraculous feeding; in the second, he arrived at the eastern shore from the North. In one case a caravan going to Jerusalem was fed on the evening of the first day, here a vast crowd of the people inhabiting the mountainous vicinity, that had remained for three days with the Savior. Again, in the second case, the number of the persons fed was less, while the stock of provisions on hand was greater than in the first. Had the second feeding been the product of tradition, it would have been, as Olshausen remarks, represented as even greater than the first. "It is, moreover, remarkable that the four Evangelists, in narrating the first miracle, agree in using

the term **κοφίνους** to describe the baskets which were filled with the remaining fragments, while the two that relate the second equally agree in using the term **σπυρίδας**. And that this variation was not accidental, but that there was some difference, is clear from our Lord's after words, when alluding to the two miracles, he preserves the distinction, asking his disciples how many **κοφίνους** on the first occasion they gathered up; how many **σπυρίδας** on the last. (Ch. xvi, 9, 10; Mark viii, 19, 20.)" (Trench.) But against all this evidence of genuineness the question is raised: How is it conceivable that the disciples so soon after witnessing the first miracle should be perplexed at having the multitude supplied with bread? This question is easily answered. They had known their Master but once to use his miraculous power for such a purpose as that, though there had been instances in which they themselves were in need of bread, (ch. xii, 1;) they may have been fully persuaded that he *could* as easily spread a table for the multitude on this occasion, as he did on a former, yet they might very well have doubted whether he would choose a second time to put forth his creative might. We must, however, also take into consideration the disciples' *slowness to believe*, for which their Master had to reprove them so often. The same forgetfulness of the mighty interpositions of God we find in the people of Israel, from their departure out of Egypt till the entrance into Canaan. (Exod. xvi, 13; comp. Num. xi, 21, 22; Exod. xvii, 1-7.) It is only the man of a full-formed faith, a faith such as the apostles themselves at this time had not, who argues from the past to the future, and truly derives confidence from God's former dealings of faithfulness and love. — Why the Lord chose to repeat this most stupendous miracle on this occasion, we do not know. Trench remarks: "It is at least an ingenious allegory which Augustine starts, that these two miracles respectively set forth Christ's communicating of himself to the Jew and to the Gentile; that as the first is a parable of the Jewish people finding in him the satisfaction in their spiritual need, so this second, in which the people came from far, even from the far country of idols, is a parable of the Gentile world. The details of his application may not be of any great value; but the perplexity of the apostles here concerning the supply of the new needs, notwithstanding all that they had already witnessed, will then exactly answer to the slowness with which they themselves, as the ministers of the new kingdom, did recognize that Christ was as freely given to, and was as truly the portion of, the Gentile as the Jew."

Verses 29-39. (COMPARE MARK vii, 31-37; viii, 1-9.)

(29) AND Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. (30) And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others*, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: (31) Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel. (32) Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. (33) And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? (34) And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. (35) And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. (36) And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. (37) And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets ^[1] full. (38) And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. (39) And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala. ^[2]

[1] The basket mentioned chapter xiv, 20, (*κόφινος*) was the common traveling basket of the Jews; the basket mentioned here (*σπυρίς*) seems to have been large enough to contain a man. (Acts ix, 25.) They were used to sleep in. In the same baskets, it seems, they brought the lame and the maimed, and cast them down at Jesus' feet. (Vs. 30.)]

[2] Magdala lay on the western coast, and is, in all probability, the modern El Madschel, a small village, three miles north of Tiberias. Dalmanutha, which Mark mentions, was a village near Magdala.]

VERSE 30. AND GREAT MULTITUDES. "To those who travel in that region now, it is a matter of wonder where such crowds could have come from. But, according to Josephus, (see Milman's Hist. of Christianity, Book I, ch. iv,) "

the whole province of Galilee was at that time crowded with flourishing towns and cities, beyond almost any other region of the world. According to his statements, 'the number of towns, and the population of Galilee, in a district of between fifty and sixty miles in length and between sixty and seventy in breadth, was no less than two hundred and four cities and villages, the least of which contained fifteen hundred souls.' This would make, for the whole province, a population of more than three millions." (John H. Morison's Notes.) — MAIMED, (*κυλλοί*;) that is, bent, crooked. The older commentators, such as Doddridge, Clarke, etc., understood by the invalids in question persons who had lost one or more members, which were supplied to them by the Lord. Against this view Olshausen remarks: "It is nowhere explicitly said that Christ supplied missing members, and such a cure would not be analogous to the general process of healing. It is, therefore, better to take the word *κυλλός* in the sense in which it is used by profane authors; namely, *bent, crooked*. As the Lord did not create bread without a substratum, but multiplied the stock on hand, so we may suppose that he healed only members of the body that were injured, but did not supply entirely new ones." With this view Alford agrees, who thinks that the cure of debilities, such as arise from paralysis or wounds, is meant here. — AND CAST THEM DOWN AT JESUS' FEET. This indicates the haste with which the diseased were brought unto Jesus. Every one did his best to get first to Jesus, in order to have his patient or patients cured before the others.

VERSE 31. AND THEY GLORIFIED THE GOD OF ISRAEL. From this expression many interpreters inferred that a great number of those present were heathens. Alexander thinks it probable that they might have been the inhabitants of the same tract where the demons took possession of the swine, and where our Savior was desired by the people to depart on that occasion. But Owen observes: "Nothing was more common, as every reader of the Old Testament will see, than for the Israelites themselves to speak of Jehovah as being the God of Israel."

VERSE 37. SEVEN BASKETS FULL. The seven baskets correspond to the seven loaves, the twelve baskets to the twelve apostles. Lange makes on these numbers the ingenious comment: "If the twelve baskets were prophetic that the apostles would all have enough to eat if they should give up every thing in the world, the seven baskets pointed to their ample compensation for what they thus surrendered, seven baskets for seven loaves."

CHAPTER XVI.

§ 35. THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES REQUIRE A SIGN FROM HEAVEN; CHRIST WARNETH HIS DISCIPLES AGAINST THEIR LEAVEN.

EITHER immediately after he had landed on the western coasts of the sea between Magdala and Dalmanutha, or after he had returned to Capernaum, from which he was only a few miles distant, our Lord had another encounter with the Pharisees, who were now for the first time united with the Sadducees in an attempt to entrap him in a snare. From the fact that in the original the definite article "of" stands before "Pharisees," and "Sadducees," Lange infers that the individuals in question acted as the representatives of the Sanhedrim of Jerusalem. "The combined parties and authorities of the country call upon him to give them the Messianic sign from heaven, which implied that if he should fail to do so, he should be prosecuted as a false Messiah. This demand had been made on him in the very beginning of his ministry, (John ii, 18,) though not so directly and formally. The demand was repeated when he had warned his adversaries against the sin against the Holy Ghost. It is now made for the third time. Jesus had given them distinctly to understand, although not in so many words, that he was the Messiah. For this reason they require the sign from heaven as the legitimate proof of the Messiahship. When his adversaries pressed this their demand for the third time, he sighed deeply in his spirit, as Mark reports. He saw their hypocritical hardness of heart, pressing their demand again and again, while they were bent on his destruction. He saw, also, that the decisive moment had come. The Pharisees had made common cause with the Sadducees, who were strongly represented in Galilee by the court party, the Herodians, (Mark viii, 15,) and these his united enemies were now determined, by the categorical answer they demanded to their question, to decide his position in the estimation of the people. In Galilee he was no longer safe; still less so in Judea. Perea, the region on the east of Jordan, was the only place where he could find a safe retreat, till the appointed time for his suffering and death should come. He, therefore, departed thence to the other side of the lake, to Bethsaida, as we learn from Mark, (viii, 13, 22,) who records the cure of a blind man in its immediate vicinity. The disciples' discovery that they had forgotten to provide themselves with bread for their further journey, gave

occasion for Christ's remarks on the way, warning them against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Verses 1-12. (COMPARE MARK viii, 10-21.)

(1) THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. (2) He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the sky is red. (3) And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times? (4) A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed. (5) And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. (6) Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (7) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread. (8) Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? (9) Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? (10) Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? (11) How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it not to you* concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? (12) Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

VERSE 1. TEMPTING. The snare was cunningly devised. If he had complied with their demand, he would have been a Messiah such as they desired. They did, of course, not expect that he would do so. But his refusal they intended to use as an argument before the people, that he was unable to substantiate his claims on the Messiahship.—A SIGN FROM HEAVEN. The Jewish tradition — misinterpreting Dan. vii, 10, and confounding the first and the second coming of Christ — taught that the Messiah would, at his

appearance, give a sign of his coming in the clouds of heaven, or somewhere in the air. Most commentators, however, with reference to a Jewish opinion, "that demons and false gods could give signs on *earth*, but only the true God signs *from heaven*," understand, by the latter term, such signs as the bread from heaven given by Moses to the children of Israel, or the staying of the sun by Joshua, or the rains brought on by Samuel and Elijah. (1 Sam. xii, 17; Jer. xiv, 22; Jam. v, 17, 18.)

VERSES 2, 3. The words of these two verses were repeated by our Lord on another occasion. (See Luke xii, 54-57.) As the Jews were much given to prognosticating the rains, etc., the Lord reminds his adversaries of two well-known phenomena, from which they draw their conclusions with great certainty. When the sky is red in the evening, the cold of the night generally rarefies the vapors so that no rain can follow. But when the sky is red and lowering in the morning, the condensed vapors fall down in rain by the heat of the sun. — O, YE HYPOCRITES! In Greek, simply *hypocrites*; but this word is wanting in some of the best manuscripts, for which reason Lachmann and Tischendorf have omitted it. It is said that our Lord no where applied this term to the Sadducees. Yet they deserved it on this occasion as much as the Pharisees, since men who knew how to deduct proper conclusions from natural phenomena, could also understand the moral phenomena of their times if they chose to do so. Their pretense, therefore, that they needed a sign from heaven in order to be enabled to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, was nothing but hypocrisy. "Messianic signs he had given them enough, and still they stoutly denied that he was the Messiah. If, instead of his miraculous cures, he had given them the wonderful signs from heaven they demanded, they would have said in the same spirit of defiant unbelief: 'Of what account are these strange phenomena, the work of the spirits of the air, that are in league with him? They merely blind the eyes of the common people, and lead them astray. Let him heal our sick, lame, and blind, as the prophets have foretold of the Messiah.'" (Stier.) How applicable is this to unbelievers of all times! — BUT CAN YOU NOT DISCERN THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES? By the "signs of the times" we have to understand the phenomena pointing out the great developments in the kingdom of God as near at hand. Each epoch of the kingdom of God has its own signs. The signs of those days left such as did not understand them without excuse. They were not only the miracles of Christ, but his whole personal appearance, the preaching of John the Baptist, the fulfillment of the

Old Testament prophecies, the departure of the scepter from Judah, the end of the prophetic weeks of Daniel, the sanguine expectations of a Messiah, which were by no means confined to the Jews, but spread over the whole Orient. Moreover, there had been given signs from heaven — the star that had appeared unto the Magi; the heavenly hosts that appeared to the shepherds at the birth of Christ; the voice heard from heaven and the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus at his baptism!

VERSE 4. AN EVIL AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION. The fact that they asked for more signs showed their ingratitude for those they had received, and their perverseness; for their unbelief arose from the want not of more evidence, but of a right disposition of heart to appreciate evidence. There are many, now, who say they would believe if they had more evidence. Have they properly weighed what they have? If not, more evidence would be of no service to them. "If they believe not Moses and the prophets," etc. — **THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAS.** This time the Lord adds no explanation, probably because the individuals that demanded the sign were well acquainted with the same demand recorded in chap. xii, and, therefore, also with the answer given by our Lord on that occasion. The Lord, by merely referring to the case of Jonas, without any further comment, tells them, as it were, that he had to add nothing to what he had told them before. — **AND HE LEFT THEM.** This leaving them has a judicial character. Jesus was filled with holy indignation at their hypocrisy and hardness of heart.

VERSE 5. Matthew mentions only the disciples as having come to the other side, because they were the subject of the "had forgotten;" but, from verse 6, it appears plainly that Jesus had come with them.

VERSE 6. LEAVEN. See note on chap. xiii, 33. The assimilating power of leaven, whether for good or bad, is the point of comparison. In Luke xii, 1, where the same warning is given on a different occasion, hypocrisy is said to be the leaven. It is true, there the Pharisees alone are called hypocrites, while here the term is applied also to the Sadducees. In Mark viii, 15, it is said, "And of the leaven of Herod," which, however, is synonymous with "the leaven of the Sadducees," since Herod and his courtiers were, for the most part, Sadducees. Stier comments on this passage as follows: "By calling Pharisaism and Sadduceeism by one name, leaven, the Lord declares that to be intrinsically one what, according to its outward appearance, was then, as it is at other times:

widely different. All Israel was then divided into these two parties, so that every one had to side with the one or the other, either denying, with the Pharisees, that it was lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, for God's sake, or joining the other party, the court religion of the royal family, that ruled by the favor of the Romans. But Jesus warns his disciples against being influenced by either, both being radically wrong and radically one. The Sadducee is hid in the Pharisee in spite of the latter's rigid orthodoxy and legalism, and with pharisaic zeal the freethinker passes his errors for the truth *against his better convictions*. Both are infidels at heart, and as infidels they are called hypocrites. Notwithstanding the different outward appearance, it is the same leaven. The unbelieving hypocrisy of the Pharisee and the hypocritical unbelief of the Sadducee betray their innermost unity, by their hostile league against the truth of God in Jesus Christ."

VERSE 7. Through these warning words of the Savior the disciples had their attention called to their lack of bread, and they accordingly interpreted them as a warning not to buy any bread from Sadducees and Pharisees. Whether they saw in these words a prohibition of all intercourse with them, transferring the Jewish notions of contracting uncleanness by contact with heathens to the enemies of Jesus, or whether they took the words as a warning against being poisoned by them, can not be determined. Only this much is certain, that they understood the words literally, thinking of real leaven. — AND THEY REASONED AMONG THEMSELVES; that is, they reasoned within themselves and with each other, without saying, however, any thing to Jesus about it. That they interchanged their thoughts appears from the following. — SAYING, IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE TAKEN NO BREAD; that is, he cautions us thus because we have no bread.

VERSE 8. The Lord rebukes, in the first place, the unfounded apprehension of the disciples that they could suffer want while they were with him, and that even he himself was uneasy concerning it. In Mark viii, 17, 18, their want of faith and understanding is rebuked in still stronger terms, and traced to an unfeeling, hardened heart, whence Stier remarks: "The Lord discovers, in their lack of faith, which he reproves, a leaven of unbelief. In the same proportion as we are lacking faith we are incapable of comprehending the truth."

VERSES 9-11. DO YE NOT YET UNDERSTAND? that is, have ye, after ye have witnessed the two miraculous feedings, not yet sufficient discernment to know that by leaven I do not mean natural bread, whose want I could easily replace, but something spiritual? — That, in the face of such a declaration as we have in verses 9 and 10, not only rationalistic interpreters, but even Neander could maintain that only one miraculous feeding had taken place, is really surprising.

VERSE 12. THE DOCTRINE OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES. Although their doctrine is here declared to be their leaven, yet this their doctrine must not be viewed as something distinct from their whole character. By their doctrine we have to understand, accordingly, not so much the subject-matter, to which the Lord enjoins obedience, (Matt. xxiii, 3,) as the tenor and spirit of their teaching.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

1. Men generally judge much more correctly on natural and temporal than spiritual and eternal things. How often, e.g., do men disbelieve the testimony concerning religious facts given by men, whom they would not dare to mistrust in any thing else. Attacks on the cause of religion are eagerly read in papers, books, and pamphlets, which would be laid aside with contempt on every other subject.

2. The signs of the times ought to be studied attentively. The kingdom of God has its signs in our day also. Much is done. The Bible is freely circulated; missionaries of the Cross go to the remotest islands and countries; Sabbath schools are established; every thing points out the importance of the age, and augurs the speedy dawn of better days for the world. Thanking the Lord profoundly for these tokens of his favor, we ought to pray the more fervently, and do all we can to promote the spread of the Lord's kingdom.

3. We are warned in this section against three spiritual evils: (1.) Against the influence of evil, which progresses slowly, but surely, (v. 6;) (2.) Against lack of faith, (v. 8;) (3.) Against spiritual dullness or hardness of heart, (v. 7.)

§ 36. THE CONFESSION OF PETER AND CHRIST'S DECLARATION CONCERNING HIS CHURCH.

THE Evangelist introduces us in this section into the second epoch of Christ's public ministry, preparatory to his suffering and death. A great crisis in his ministry had evidently been reached. Popular opinion was now apparently less favorable to Jesus than it had been at the outset of his ministry. The reply given by the disciples to our Lord's question (v. 14) shows that the hostile attitude of the hierarchy, of the scribes and Pharisees, against the Savior had produced its effects; the common people, although they had not given up all faith in Him, had, nevertheless, evidently lowered their views as to what he might be, they were unsettled, wavering; at all events, they no longer dared to speak of him in public as the Messiah. Add to this that the Pharisees and Sadducees had *united* in their persecution, and that he was also threatened by the Tetrarch Herod. Knowing that the time of his suffering and death was drawing nigh, he deemed it necessary to lay the foundation for the organization of his Church in opposition to the Jewish Church, which was about to reject and deliver unto death its Prince and Savior. The disciples had, indeed, acknowledged him as the Messiah, as soon as they were called by him, (John i, 42, 43;) moreover, Peter had already, on a former occasion, solemnly declared: "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," (John vi, 69;) but the confession which the Lord now draws forth from them had a higher significance and a peculiar purpose. It was to be tested now whether the disciples were determined to hold fast their apprehension of the true character of their Master, though the whole Jewish Church should reject him. At this decisive moment, at the peril of being excommunicated from the theocracy, Peter makes in his own name and that of his fellow-disciples the solemn declaration: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

As his disciples were to be his confessors and witnesses among men, the Lord prepares their minds for a more thorough apprehension of this grand truth, and of the need of their testimony, by the preliminary question: "Who do *men* say that I, the Son of man, am?" The answer to this question shows the *false* conceptions and beliefs of men, to which *they* were to oppose the *true* testimony which *God* had taught them. "The conversation of our Lord with his disciples on this occasion," says Lange, "teaches us, 1. The confident persuasion of a soul under divine influence in contrast with the wavering opinions of men in their carnal, unenlightened state; 2. The indissoluble

connection of a true confession of Christ with the existence of his Church; 3. The perpetuity of the true believers and confessors of Christ."

"The scene of the pregnant conversation recorded in the text," says a British writer, Rev. Wm. Wilson, author of a *Practical Exposition of Matthew XVI-XVIII*, from which we shall quote more in our comments on these chapters, "lies beyond the waters of Merom, and near the sources of the Jordan. It is within sight of the snow-capped mountains of Hermon and Anti-Libanus, and in the angle formed by their divergence. There, amid the magnificence of the mountain-land, Jesus unfolds to his disciples the nature of the work which he had come into the world to do. It was a scene amid which the lessons he now teaches might be most fitly learned. From these snow-clad mountains, the abode of perennial barrenness, descended the refreshing, inexhaustible streams which fertilized the land, and that Jordan which was a beauty and glory to it. So He, the despised and rejected One, springing like a root out of a dry ground, and having no form nor comeliness that men should desire Him, was yet the source of all fruitfulness and vitality in the earth, a spring of living water which was destined to spread itself over the moral waste, and to make glad the wilderness and solitary place, and to cause the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Before them, and on either hand, as they journeyed northward to Cesarea Philippi, were the lofty everlasting hills, which shadowed forth, in significant emblem, the power and stability of that kingdom against which the gates of hell can not prevail. Doubtless Jesus has led his disciples thither in deep sorrow of heart. Woe has been accumulating upon his head from day to day. Encountering every-where a hardened, impenetrable unbelief, which was only quickened by his discourses and miracles into stupid wonder, he has provoked that malignity which nothing will satisfy but his crucifixion. Yet his is far from being the woe of despair. When the cross is in view, the joy also is set before him. He takes these disciples into the region of Cesarea that they might realize them both — to lay the foundation of his imperishable kingdom, and to prepare them for the dark future which was awaiting them. It is an eventful period in the Gospel history — signalized then by peculiar indications of its importance — and in the future history of the Church, by the vital controversies which have gathered round it. The text has formed the battle-ground of Protestantism and Popery. It is here that the Papists have sought to lay the foundations of their system, and, from the

vantage-ground they think it affords, to make conquest of the world. It is a text, therefore, which demands a full and attentive consideration."

Verses 13-20. (COMPARE MARK viii, 27-30; LUKE. ix, 18-21.)

(13) WHEN Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, ^[1] he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? (14) And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. (15) He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? (16) And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (18) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon thin rock I will build my Church; ^[2] and the gates of hell ^[3] shall not prevail against it. (19) And I will give unto thee the keys ^[4] of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (20) Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

[1] Cesarea Philippi is mentioned only here and in the parallel passage of Mark. It has no Old Testament history, though it may have been *Baal-Gad*. It was situated at the base of Mt. Hermon, near the northeastern source of Jordan, the *Panium* of Josephus, and inscriptions show, that the God *Pan* once had a sanctuary at this spot. Here Herod the Great erected a temple to Augustus, the town being then called Paneas, from the grotto where Pan had been honored. Panium became part of the territory of Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis, who enlarged and embellished the town, and called it Cesarea Philippi, partly after his own name, and partly after that of the Emperor. It must not be confounded with the Cesarea of the Acts, (x, 1,) which was Cesarea Stratonis on the Mediterranean.]

[2] The term "**ἐκκλησία**" — Church," occurs only once more in the Gospels, namely, in Matthew xviii, 17, in the meaning which it bears in our text; that is, "the congregation of the faithful," with this difference only, that in the passage under consideration the whole, in the other, a part only is meant. The word itself comes from the Greek verb, **ἐκκαλεῖν** — to call out — and means originally an assembly of the people. Whether the meeting takes

place for good or bad purposes must be determined by the context. In Acts xix, 32, 39, it means a mob. — Before there existed any churches, that is, buildings designed exclusively for public worship, the Christians met in private houses; hence we read of churches in private houses. (Rom. xvi, 3, 5; 1 Cor. xvi, 19; Col. iv, 25.)]

[3 The Greek here for *hell*, is ἀδης, the Hebrew Sheol, the abode of the dead. The term *gates* stands for power, being an Oriental form of speech still used when we speak of the Turkish power as "The Ottoman Porte." Inasmuch as in ancient times public business was transacted in the courts adjoining the fortified gates, these gates are figuratively used for the government which transacted its business there. Thus, *the gates of hell* mean strictly the dominion of death, and by implication, the infernal powers, held in the abode of death and darkness.]

[4 The function which is to be exercised with these keys is that of binding and loosing. There is an apparent incongruity in the figure that is here employed, which has its origin in the fact that in ancient times doors were usually fastened by tying. To fasten the tie or to unloose it was the same thing as to open and shut.]

VERSE 13. WHEN JESUS CAME INTO THE COASTS [that is, territory or confines] OF CESAREA PHILIPPI. He came from Bethsaida, passing up along the left bank of Jordan toward its sources in the north-eastern borders of Galilee. He avoided, as it appears from Mark viii, 27, the city of Cesarea, entering the surrounding towns and villages. — HE ASKED HIS DISCIPLES. This question was asked, according to Mark, "by the way." Luke, in his report of the event, does not name any locality, but adds that the Lord had been alone and praying when he asked this question. (Luke ix, 18.) The same is said of him before he gave his disciples his first solemn charge, — WHOM DO MEN SAY THAT I, THE SON OF MAN, AM? According to the reading adopted by Tischendorf and Alford, based on Codex B, and several versions: "who do men say that the Son of man is?" The meaning of the question is: Who do men — that is, the great mass of the people — think that I, known as "the Son of man," am? What is the public opinion about me? As appears from the answer of the disciples, he did not inquire after the opinion of his avowed enemies. "This question," says Stier, "is and forever remains the decisive question, which is still addressed in increased emphasis to the world and the Church. Obedience to his moral precepts, of which shallow rationalism speaks exclusively, must be preceded by a Scriptural apprehension of his person."

VERSES 14, 15. From the disciples' reply it appears that the popular opinion about Jesus was very unsettled, and undergoing a change for the worse since the Baptist had given his official testimony concerning him. On many previous occasions the people had unhesitatingly called him the "Son of David." (Chap. ix, 27; xii, 23; xiv, 33; xv, 22; John vi, 15.) It is true these declarations had either come from one or two individuals, who, by this time, were or were about to become his disciples, or they had been made by the assembled multitudes on witnessing some of the most astounding miracles; but there was now evidently a change, the result partly of the machinations of the hierarchy, partly of the popular discontent on account of Jesus not realizing their carnal expectations. — SOME SAY THAT THOU ART JOHN THE BAPTIST. This seems to refer to the Herodians. (See chap. xiv, 2.) — ELIAS. See note on chap. xi, 14. — JEREMIAS. The Jews assigned to Jeremias in their canon the first rank among the prophets. Yet Lange says: "However high Jeremias may have stood in popular estimation, those that saw in Jesus Jeremias, had a lower faith than those who said that he was Elias. (Mark xv, 35; John i, 21.) The latter saw in Jesus more the mighty reformer, the former the meek sufferer that had pronounced woes on the demoralized people. Others, whose faith was still lower, saw in him only one of the ancient prophets in general." Mr. Wilson makes on this passage the following pertinent application: "Within the wide-spread domain of Christendom, what true, single-hearted faith is there in Christ, the Son of the living God? What a variety of speculations, traditions, and conjectures regarding him! What fatal errors respecting his person and work are prevailing as the avowed creed of many so-called Churches! And within the pale of those Churches which have a sounder confession, to how few has the arm of the Lord been really revealed! To a vast multitude he is merely the son of Mary, and an object of dread rather than of love and worship, while the mother is the mediator who is trusted and adored. To how many is he nothing more than the model representative man — not the Lord from heaven, but the bringer-in of a new and purer earthly philosophy! How few really know and confess him — are able by the Holy Ghost to call him Lord! How great a number are there who have indeed a form of sound words, but who have never attempted to penetrate their meaning — who, as of themselves, can make no true confession of the Christ in his person and offices — who have not laid hold on him as the hope, and refuge, and anchor of their souls!"

VERSE 16. The question was directed to the whole body of the disciples. In the name of all Peter replied, being the mouth-piece of the other apostles, as Chrysostom calls him: "They are dealt with by the Lord henceforth as having all made it, and on the ground of it those blessings are pronounced and those powers are conferred which are the common property of them all. This confession set the apostles apart from all other men, and was the occasion of their organization into a new society. It forms the basis of the constitution of the Christian as distinguished from the Jewish Church." (Wilson.) Peter's confession may, indeed, be called the first and only Gospel creed. It contains the testimony that was spoken from heaven, (chap. iii, 17; xvii, 5,) and on it St. John dwells with peculiar earnestness, both in his Gospel and in his Epistles. (1 John iv, 15; 1 John v, 5; x, 13.) A profession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God was, to the eunuch, the condition of being baptized. — THE SON OF GOD forms here a contrast to *Son of man*. The latter designation had reference to the Messiahship and his human nature assumed for that purpose; the former referred, not to the office, but to the higher nature of Jesus. It appears from Matt. xxvi, 63, that the Jews themselves understood by the "Son of God" the true Godhead. "The participle *living*," says Olshausen, "is here not used for the purpose of contrasting the true God with the false gods of the heathen, for which there was no occasion, but to express the reality of God's self-revelation in Christ. The Father was so signally and forcibly reflected in Jesus, that he was only in him fully revealed. All previous self-manifestations of the living God were, as it were, dead, when compared with the fullness of life that gushed forth from the person of Jesus. (John i, 14.)"

VERSE 17. BLESSED ART THOU, SIMON BAR-JONA; that is, son of Jonas. Jesus calls him, according to the custom of the Jews, by his father's name, indicating his natural state and extraction, in contradistinction to his spiritual state, name, and blessing, which follow. He is addressed in the same manner on a subsequent occasion to remind him of his frailty in having denied the Lord. (John xxi, 15-17.) — BLESSED. From this solemn benediction we have to infer that Peter understood, by the words he uttered on this occasion, more than when he made the same profession before. He had now a higher than the Jewish conception of the Messiah. "In speaking these words Jesus does not confer on Peter a blessing which he did not possess before the benediction was uttered. The blessing was Peter's from the moment he entered into that knowledge which was the source of it. It is a blessing which did not

and could not subsist, apart from the state of mind out of which it sprung. This necessarily is the characteristic and the condition of all spiritual blessings. It was not the peculiar heritage of Peter; it must be the common property of all who have Peter's faith and knowledge. To apprehend Immanuel as he did is to possess this blessing. It consists in such an apprehension of Christ, and can not be separated from it. The knowledge being mine, the blessing also is mine. The revelation by the Father ceasing, the blessedness terminates. It is just at this point, and from utter ignorance of this grand principle, that the whole Popish error, grounded on this passage, takes its origin. According to the Popish belief, blessing and character are not involved in each other." (Wilson.) — **FOR FLESH AND BLOOD HAS NOT REVEALED IT UNTO THEE.** The glory of Jesus was so completely vailed by his outward lowness, that it could not be recognized without a Divine revelation. This knowledge could not be acquired by any mere human power or effort, originating in himself or others. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The same contrast between the human and the divine we find expressed in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. Paul calls himself (v. 1) "an apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father." In verse 2 he says of the Gospel: "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;" and again, in verses 15 and 16: "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." These words of Paul are evidently a reference to our Savior's words in the text, as if the apostle meant to say: "I am also a Peter; my faith and confession are like Peter's, not of flesh and blood, but of Divine revelation."

VERSE 18. AND I SAY ALSO UNTO THEE. Peter had made a declaration concerning Christ, and now Christ is making a declaration concerning Peter — a declaration which we must assume to have a direct bearing upon Peter's declaration. Peter, in confessing Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, declared him to be the only foundation of man's salvation — that foundation of which St. Paul says: "According to the grace of God, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation; for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This foundation was laid

immediately after the fall by the promise of the seed of the woman, who shall bruise the serpent's head. No other Being but he who was the Son of God as well as the Son of man, the God-man, the Word made flesh, was able to save man. Of him Moses and the prophets testified. "Behold, I lay in Sion a chief Corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believes in him shall not be confounded." Of him, after he had died for our sins and was risen for our justification, Peter declared to the Jews: "This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Thus Peter's confession implied that only foundation upon which rests all hope of salvation, and upon which the apostles were to build. In reply to this confession, our Lord, after pronouncing the confessor blessed, because the Father in heaven had revealed to him the great mystery of godliness, tells Peter what relation he should bear to the Church He was about to build, and against which the gates of hell should not prevail. — THAT THOU ART PETER. In Greek, Πέτρος; in Hebrew, *Kephas*; that is, a stone, or rock. This name had been bestowed on Simon prophetically at his first interview with the Lord. (John i, 42.) Why? Certainly not on account of a peculiar firmness of character — for in this he was more deficient than the other disciples — but with reference to his faith in Christ, the Son of God, the living stone, the head corner-stone — a faith which, out of the abundance of the heart, he so boldly professed, and which did not fail him in his deep fall, enabling him penitently to return to his Savior. It is very significant that "whoever has come to that living stone," believing in him with the heart and confessing him with the mouth, is called by Peter, in his Epistle, "a lively stone" — the same appellation with which he himself had been honored for believing in Christ, the living corner-stone. In the same sense the believers in Christ derive their name Christians from Christ. Thus Peter himself explains to us what the Lord meant when, in answer to his confession, he said, "Thou art Peter." It is as much as if he had said: *Thou art a true believer.* "Jesus, having blessed the disciple who had witnessed such a good confession, bestows upon him a new name as a token and seal of the blessing which he had pronounced. On the occasion of Simon's first introduction to the Lord, he had intimated that this name would be conferred upon him. The time has now come for the fulfillment of this prediction. Simon is now in the possession of the character which renders it appropriate. The bestowal of this new name on such an occasion is in entire harmony with the examples and precedents recorded in the Old

Testament Scriptures. Abraham received a new name, when, in virtue of God's gracious covenant with him, he assumed a new position and a publicly-recognized relationship with the Church of the future. Jacob, also, received a new name when he obtained the blessing at the hands of the Angel of the covenant, and was called Israel, because he had power with God and with man, and had prevailed. From these examples sprang, as it seems, the universal practice among the Jews, to give a new name to their offspring on the occasion of their circumcision. In that sacred rite they were publicly owned and recognized as members of the Church and in covenant with God, and they then received the name whereby they were henceforth to be known among men. The same practice is still preserved in the administration of baptism in the Christian Church. As the Lord dealt with Peter, so he does with every true believer and confessor of his name. 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone *a new name* written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.' Peter received his new name as a member and apostle of the visible Church, and the name was therefore published. Believers receive theirs simply as children of God — as belonging to that family which, in heaven and earth, is named of Jesus Christ — as members of the Church invisible. But the relationship in which both he and they stand to God is indicated by the same process, and it proclaims them as standing on the same platform. Peter is here the representative not only of his fellow-apostles, but, in a more general sense, of all true believers. He, as the representative confessor, is laid, as a lively stone, in the foundation of that building which the Lord is about to rear. Every lively stone in the building becomes, in its turn, a foundation for the future superstructure — a rock on which the Lord builds his Church. It is through the life imparted to some that it is conveyed to others, and the Lord builds his Church, not by the written testimony of his own Word only, but by that testimony as inscribed on believing hearts, by living epistles, to be known and read of men." (Condensed from Wilson.) — AND ON THIS ROCK — ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ. By *this rock* the older Protestant commentators — and of the recent interpreters Dr. Alexander — understand Christ himself, pointing to his own person, on the following grounds: "1. The figure of a rock, although susceptible, like others, of indefinitely-various applications, is especially appropriated in the Scriptures to the Divine character and attributes. 'Who is a rock save our God?' 2. It is exceedingly unusual, if not wholly unexampled, to employ the demonstrative *this* in application to the object of address,

whereas our Lord repeatedly applies it to himself. 3. The diversity of form and gender in the Greek words **πέτρος** and **πέτρα** is too abrupt and marked to be unmeaning, or explicable simply on the ground that the masculine form was used in speaking of a man. If they are synonymous, as commonly assumed, why should the feminine be used at all, the rather as it weakens and obscures the reference to Peter, if intended, which would certainly have been more clear and striking if the same Greek word had been repeated, 'Thou art, Peter, [that, is rock,] and on this Peter [that is, rock] will I build my Church.' The assertion that this distinction exists only in the Greek, and that in our Lord's vernacular the same form was repeated, as it is in the Peshito, is without weight. It is altogether arbitrary to assume that the Aramaic dialect of Palestine, at that time, could not furnish two equivalents to these two Greek words. It has been alleged on high authority, (Lightfoot,) that *Cephas* itself bears the same relation to the Syriac word *Cepha* that *Petros* does to *Petra*, and that both may have been used on this occasion. But even granting that the same word was repeated, it might be, as in so many other cases, with a difference of meaning, not entirely clear at first, but having that peculiar enigmatical significance, which formed so prominent a feature in the Savior's method of instruction. This double sense of one word has been sometimes preserved even in Greek, (compare the double sense of *dead* in chap. viii, 22; that of **ψυχή** in chap. x, 39; of **ναός** in John ii, 19, 20,) while in the case before us the usage of that language furnished two forms to express the kindred but distinct ideas. The classical use of **πέτρος** and **πέτρα** is entirely distinct, the latter answering to *rock* and the former to *stone*, (fragment of a rock,) the two being scarcely ever interchanged, even by poetic license. This remarkable fact makes it still more difficult to understand why Matthew should have used both forms if Christ employed but one, or only in one sense, when the masculine form, **πέτρος**, would have answered every purpose." (Alexander.) The above remarks contain the strongest argument in favor of the common Protestant interpretation; but it is by no means convincing, as we shall show, and the objections to it appear to us insuperable. First of all, this interpretation destroys wholly the intimate connection between the new name Peter and the building of the Church. We have seen what a direct bearing the declaration "Thou art Peter" has upon his preceding confession. In that confession Peter had declared Christ to be the only foundation laid on the part of God for the salvation of man. There was evidently no need that our Lord should speak of himself, in this connection, as the Divine foundation of his Church, and thus repeat the fundamental truth

uttered by Peter. On the contrary, it gives him occasion to speak of himself as *purposing to build his Church*, and to declare Peter, as it were, its first foundation-stone. That πέτρος is designedly changed into πέτρα, is not only, as Dr. Alexander shows, very probable, but appears even necessary, and is highly significant. Peter was only a representative foundation-stone. Our Lord did not mean to say that he would build his Church on the personality of Simon, the son of Jonas — for, in his natural personality, he is soon after severely rebuked, (v. 23) — but on Peter as a man taught of God, and as the representative of his fellow-apostles, in whose name he had made the confession, and who were subjects of the same heavenly illumination — and, indeed, in a wider sense, of all true believers and confessors — on which account the power of binding and loosing, here conferred upon Peter, is afterward declared expressly to belong to the whole apostolic college, and, in a certain sense, to the whole Church. In accordance with this, Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Ye are built upon the foundation [not of Peter, but] of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the corner-stone;" and in the Revelation of St. John we read: "The wall of the city of God had twelve foundations, and in them the name of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Our Lord, after having heard Peter's confession, and declaring his purpose to build his Church, naturally speaks of the building materials which he requires for the organization of his Church. Every building must have foundation-stones. What is the foundation of the Christian Church *on the part of man*? Is it not — what Peter exhibited — a faith wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and a confession with the mouth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? But this believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth is something personal; it can not be separated from the living personality that believes and confesses. The Church consists of living men, and its foundation can not be a mere abstract truth or doctrine, apart from the living personality in which it is embodied. This is in accordance with the whole New Testament language, in which not doctrines or confessions, but *men* are uniformly called pillars or foundations of the spiritual building. If by the words "and upon this rock" our Lord had meant simply Peter's confession, as a fundamental truth, as some interpret it, the first clause of the 18th verse, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter," would seem to be irrelevant; the Savior, after pronouncing Peter blessed on account of his confession, would at once have added, "And upon this rock I will build my Church." — Why Simon, the son of Jonas, was distinguished before the other disciples by the name of Peter; why Christ

honored him so highly by making him the representative of his fellow-apostles and of all true believers; why he called him, as it were, the first foundation-stone upon which he would build his Church, and bestowed upon him the honor of opening the New-Testament Church to Jews and Gentiles, we know not. But this is clear, beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt, that the Church of Rome has no ground to infer from this passage — the only passage in the New Testament which Popery can find to appeal to for her assumptions and delusions — Peter's supremacy over his fellow-apostles, and its transfer to the Bishops of Rome over the whole Church of Christ to the end of time. A strong presumption against the Popish interpretation lies in the omission of our Lord's address to Peter by the other two Evangelists, who stop short at the end of Peter's confession. "This," Dr. Alexander remarks, "is something very different from the usual omissions in the parallel accounts. Had Mark and Luke omitted the occurrence altogether, or merely given it more briefly, no conclusion could be drawn from such a difference. But if Peter's exaltation is the main design of this address, what precedes in verses 13-16 is simply introductory. Now, how can we believe that two of the Evangelists would only give the introduction, and then leave out what it introduces?" And that, on a subject of such a paramount importance as the Church of Rome assigns to it! The claim of primacy, set up for Peter on the ground of this passage, is, as we have shown, sufficiently refuted by the context, and, as Dr. Alexander remarks, "by the continual allusions to the twelve as a collective body, even in the types of the Old Testament, especially the twelve tribes of Israel, as the frame-work of the old theocracy, but still more clearly in the promise to the apostolic body, founded on this ancient constitution, (chap. xix, 28,) in the repetition of the same thing in a different form elsewhere, (Eph. ii, 20,) and in the symbolical description of the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem. (Rev. xxi, 14.)" Peter's primacy would be also in contradiction to Christ's express declaration in chapter xxiii, 8-10. Peter himself denies the primacy when he writes: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who also am an elder;" and then warns them not to be lords over God's heritage. (1 Peter v, 3.) This declaration we find illustrated by facts in the Acts of the Apostles. According to Acts xv, 19, it is not Peter's but James's sentence that is sanctioned by the whole assembly through the Holy Ghost. In Galatians ii we read of a stern rebuke administered by Paul to Peter. Among the three principal apostles he is mentioned second, James first. (Gal. ii, 9.) But even if Peter had, for himself, possessed a supremacy over his fellow-apostles, it is clear that this supremacy, in the nature of the case, could

not have been transferred. Least of all could the Bishops of Rome have inherited it from Peter; for Peter never exercised the functions of a bishop at Rome, as appears from Paul's Epistle to the Romans and his different Epistles written from Rome — to say nothing of the apostolical office being inconsistent with that of a bishop. Finally, suppose even that Peter had been a bishop of Rome, and that his successors in that office could have inherited, in some way, the powers supposed to have been bestowed upon Peter in the passage under consideration, the undeniable fact that so many dogmas of Rome are in irreconcilable contradiction to the spirit and letter of the apostolical teaching contained in the canonical books of the New Testament, is conclusive proof that the Bishops of Rome did not inherit Peter's prerogative, or most fatally forfeited the trust supposed to have been committed to them. — **I WILL BUILD.** The Lord speaks here, for the first time, of his Church, soon to be called into existence. — In Christ's building his Church *himself* there are three things implied: 1. That he chooses himself his instruments or workmen; 2. That he accompanies the word his ambassadors preach with the power of the Holy Ghost. Without Christ they can do nothing. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but the increase must come from God. On that account even the inspired apostles found themselves powerless, and said to the Churches: Pray for us. And the Lord has promised: Lo, I am with you to the end of the world; 3. That he builds his Church according to a certain building plan, from which he will never deviate, and which he has laid down in verse 19. — **MY CHURCH.** "The Church, of which Christ is the builder, is, in the strictest sense, the living, spiritual Church, consisting of all whom the Father should teach and bring to the Savior, but not, on that account, the less that Church which should exist among and be seen of men. The Church visible, indeed, does not consist exclusively of those who are true believers. It consists of those who confess Christ, and credibly profess their faith in him. The Church which Christ personally builds consists only of those who in heart and life are his. On the walls of the Divine temple men, in their ignorance and sin, heap many useless and perishable materials — wood, and hay, and stubble. The Church, outwardly and formally, therefore, is not co-extensive with the Church which is the habitation of God through the Spirit. The former is, to a greater or less extent, the building of man — the latter the building of the Lord. But the one is comprehended in the other. The one consists of those who make a true confession, the other of those who credibly profess faith in Christ. The Church formal, therefore, always embraces the Church divine and real, and the life of the Spirit manifests itself within the

pale of the visible Church. When Jesus announces that he is the builder of the Church, he proclaims himself its Creator and Author. To him, and to no other, it owes its existence, its character, its immunities. Above all human instrumentality, and alone giving efficacy to it, the Lord is ever verifying the purpose which he now announces, in the history of the Church. He does not set forth Peter or any human agent as the builder of that glorious temple. Peter had been laid as a stone of the structure in the very foundation of the building. It is Christ himself that is the efficient agent in erecting this house of God. Every lively stone in its walls is there, because he has so placed it. It has been hewn and fashioned by him, and fitted for the place it is to occupy, and the purpose it is designed to serve. Christ claims this Church as his own by a double right. It is his because he is its builder, and because he has bought it with his blood. Hence is derived his sole right to rule over it, and to legislate for it. It is neither the creature of the State, nor subject to its control, nor dependent on its countenance and patronage, nor regulated by it in its constitution and administration. It is not a voluntary association — a combination of men, united for the accomplishment of certain objects, and is, therefore, not the creature of human will and caprice. Its true members have surrendered their own will to that of God. It is independent of men that it may be solely dependent on God. It is elevated into a region above the earth, and lives under the shadow of the Almighty. It moves and acts in a higher region of light and knowledge — in the radiance of which the wisdom of this world is shown to be foolishness. It ceases to be a kingdom of Christ — a temple of the living God — just in so far as it ceases to be animated by the Divine life, and to be governed by the Divine laws." (Wilson.) — AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT. On the term *gates of hell* see foot-note 3. "The kingdom of darkness," says Lange, "will henceforth develop its power in a continual conflict with the Church of Christ. It will, in the first place, attempt to drag it down into *hades*, the realm of death, by those persecutions and executions that commenced with the crucifixion of the Messiah. When this attempt fails, it will try to spread spiritual death over the Church by superstition and infidelity; but all these efforts shall fail. Instead of succumbing to Satan and his power, Christ will overcome and abolish the kingdom of death. (Is. xxv, 8; Hos. xiii, 14; 1 Cor. xv, 55; Eph. i, 19, 20.) The kingdom of Christ, as the realm of life, shall triumph over the realm of death." — The most important, practical question is, *in what sense* the promise, here given by the Savior to *his* Church, has been verified. Some expositors have denied that any visible organization is meant by

"my Church," and they, accordingly, understand by it the so-called invisible Church. But if this view were correct, we must assume either that Christ did not purpose to organize a visible Church or that his purpose was frustrated, neither of which can be admitted for a moment. We hold, 1. That the promise of invincibility and perpetuity was given to the visible Church, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and that this Church, though under a change of names, has maintained its existence and essential character. Christ has had, in all ages, a visible Church, in which there were found, in smaller or greater numbers, living stones of the same substance and material as Peter; true believers, to whom not flesh and blood, but the Father in heaven, had revealed his Son; souls having a vital union with the Head of the Church; members of Christ's mystic body; branches of the true vine; wheat sown by the Son of God, and standing at the side of the tares sown by the enemy; silver, gold, and precious stones, built upon the same foundation upon which many useless and perishable materials, wood, hay, and stubble, were built. And as the Jewish Church, at the very time it ceased to be the Church of the faithful, had hidden in its bosom souls whom the Lord made the foundation-stones of the Church of the New Testament, so there was, in the Roman Catholic Church, in its apostate condition, a regenerative germ, a leaven left by which the true Church of Christ was preserved and propagated. The promise of her perpetuity is, evidently, not to be restricted to a certain locality or to a certain class of men. "Let us observe," says Mr. Wilson, "what it is that Christ is now doing. There is a Church whose seat is in Jerusalem — a Church of high pretensions, of patriarchal descent — to which pertained the giving of the law and the covenants. But he is founding a Church outside the Jewish — formally setting it aside and constructing another. That Church has ceased to be a habitation of God, and has become a synagogue of Satan — has become the Church's enemy and persecutor — the instrument and agent of quite another than God, and personifying the gates of hell. He is raising up a Church and people to bear witness against it — a Church composed of men who were thrust out of its synagogues, and excommunicated from its fellowship. But to the Jewish Church had been given promises as comprehensive and as absolute as were ever given to the Christian Church. There is not an argument which can be employed on behalf of the infallibility and perpetuity of the Christian Church in the sense in which Romanists understand and interpret these terms, which could not be used with still greater force and conclusiveness on behalf of the Church at Jerusalem. In the only true and legitimate sense these promises have been made good in

the experience of both Churches. God has not violated his promises to Abraham and his seed; but the promise from the first was not to the seed according to the flesh, but according to faith. Jerusalem has been destroyed, and her inhabitants scattered abroad, because they forsook the faith of their fathers. But the father of the faithful has a progeny as numerous as the stars of heaven — not of Jewish extraction indeed, but the heirs of Abraham's faith. It was by faith the Jewish Church stood, and by their want of it they fell. So it is still. 'Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.' So wrote the apostle Paul of old to the Church of Rome, revealing wherein their true strength lay, and indicating, at least, the possibility of their fall. It is a lesson which they have sadly forgotten, and have, therefore, fallen so deeply. Like Jerusalem of old, the persecutors of the saints represent themselves as the only true saints and servants of Christ. But while thus, by guile and by force, the gates of hell may seem to prevail, the Church is, notwithstanding, perpetual and infallible, for it stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. The promise of God is not limited to race and locality. Whatever communities and individuals may fall away from the truth, Christ will always have, as in times past he has had, a Church on earth. Satan never will succeed in exterminating the Church. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Nay, we know, on the sure promise of the Word, that it will be universally and gloriously triumphant, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ." 2. Any particular branch of the general Church may claim the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, in the degree and to the extent in which it suffers Christ to build it up through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and through a ministry divinely called, in the same measure in which it holds fast the doctrines and precepts of the apostles, laid down in the canonical books of the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice. But as far as any fundamental feature of the building plan, which the Head of the Church enjoined upon the apostles, is deviated from by any Church in doctrine or in discipline; as far as the voice of praise, prayer, and intercession is hushed in silence within its walls; as far as the membership is no more cemented by brotherly love: so far a congregation or denomination will forfeit the fulfillment of the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

VERSE 19. AND I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE THE KEYS. On the term *keys* see foot-note 4. — OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. By this

term we have evidently to understand the Church which our Lord says *he* will build, and against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Yet the visible Church and the kingdom of heaven are not, in every respect, identical. "When the whole Church becomes in reality," says Lange, "what she is potentially, when she has progressed from her apostolical beginning to apostolical perfection, she becomes so thoroughly identical with the kingdom of heaven, that her acts become those of the Spirit of God. Disobedience to the commands of the Church will then be an offense against the Spirit of Christ, and, *vice versa*, every offense against the Spirit will become manifest and be condemned as an offense against the Church. But this plenitude of power in the Church is a reality only in so far as the Gospel ministry preserves its apostolical character inviolate, so long as its spirit is essentially the Spirit of Christ. For in reality it is always Christ himself, through his Spirit, who receives into the true communion, and who also virtually excommunicates. (Rev. iii, 7; Isa. xxii, 22.)"

— AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT BIND [literally, shalt have bound] ON EARTH, SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT LOOSE [shalt have loosed] ON EARTH, SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN. Our Lord, having declared Peter, *representing the whole apostolic college*, in virtue of his confession, the foundation of the spiritual building, the Church, designates now the functions which he is to discharge; but these functions belong equally to his fellow-apostles, and to the whole membership of the true Church of Christ, in a certain sense, which we shall subsequently explain, as appears from Matt. xviii, 18. Though our Lord may have used the figure of *the keys* in allusion to the honor Peter afterward had in opening the door of the New Testament Church for both Jews and Gentiles, it is clear, from the addition of the next clause concerning the *binding* and *loosing*, that more than the mere opening of the door is meant by the keys. Keys are the emblem of the whole power of a steward, in the same sense in which a mayor or commander is said to have the keys of a city or fortress — of course, subject to the authority of the king. To *bind* and to *loose* is a phrase which the Jews used concerning the teachers of the law, who were supposed capable of explaining its requirements — what it forbade and what it permitted. It implies, 1. To declare what is lawful or unlawful; 2. To determine whether a deed was done according to or against the law; 3. To pronounce on the arraigned party the sentence of excommunication, or to admit one into communion. We may, accordingly, define the power of the keys — conferred here upon Peter, as the representative of the apostles, and afterward expressly

declared to belong to all the apostles — to be a twofold power. 1. It is what has been called *the key of doctrine*; that is, the authority to declare, for all time to come, *the conditions of salvation*. "By the key of doctrine they unlock the treasures of Divine wisdom; unfold and declare the whole counsel of God; proclaim to men the way of pardon and acceptance, and the terrors of that law whose sentence is death; repeat and inculcate that testimony which God has given concerning his Son; give utterance to the blessings and curses which God himself has pronounced. By the word of this Divine testimony they unloose the chains which have bound the captives of sin, and bring welcome deliverance and peace to the troubled soul, seal upon it the pardon which the Savior purchased, and give access into that grace wherein believers stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. By that word they bind over the impenitent and unbelieving to condemnation. It is the savor of death unto death as well as life unto life. They denounce the just judgments of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and seal on their souls the sentence which will be repeated on the great day of judgment. But in the use of this key they are expressly stewards. They can not shut what God has opened, nor open what he has shut. They can not alter or modify what he has determined. They merely proclaim what his determinations are." (Wilson.) For this end the apostles needed and received the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Their writings are, therefore, invested with Divine authority. Whatever they have bound in their writings must be obeyed at the peril of our salvation. But what they have not bound is left free. No human authority can make it binding on our conscience. It is on this ground that the inspired writings of the New Testament constitute the only and sufficient rule of Christian faith and practice. By the authoritative teaching of the apostles the Church is bound. She dares not add nor detract from it. But it is the duty and the right of the Christian ministry to declare the whole counsel of God, as it is laid down in the inspired volume, and, so far as they do this, their teaching is as authoritative as that of the apostles themselves. The power of the keys implies, 2. What has been called *the key of discipline*; that is, the authority to declare *the terms of membership* in the Church on earth, and to lay down such laws for the order and government of the Church as are to be binding to the end of time. By the apostolical legislation the Church is bound in the administration of discipline, in the admission and exclusion of members. She is not permitted to make new terms of membership. She must strictly follow the directions of the divine Word. It is only that Word which really binds or looses. To shut out men from

Church fellowship without its sanction is not to exclude from the kingdom of heaven; to admit them without its warrant does not give entrance into the kingdom. But within these limits, what the Church binds is bound, and what she looses is loosed. — On the Popish pretense that the power, here conferred upon Peter, includes supreme jurisdiction over the Church, and passed from him to his pretended successors, we have said enough above. But it may be well to add a few remarks on the claim which the Romish priesthood bases upon this passage, and upon John xx, 23, authoritatively to pardon sins, and thus to give admission into and exclude men from heaven. If Peter or any other apostle had possessed this power, it is strange that we read of no instance in the New Testament in which they exercised it. We nowhere read of men confessing their sins unto the apostles, and receiving absolution from them. What did Peter say to Simon the sorcerer? "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray to God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." He did not take it upon himself to retain this man's sins, but contented himself with exhorting him to flee from the wrath to come by sincerely repenting of his sins. When the jailer asked Paul what he must do to be saved, Paul neither imposed penance on him, nor did he absolve him, but he said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved." What the Savior meant, when, after his resurrection, he breathed upon the disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained," we can be at no loss to understand. He then ratified what he here promised to Peter. The sense in which Christ's words were understood by his disciples is determined by the way in which they acted upon them. We find them simply preaching the doctrine of repentance for the remission of sins, the doctrine that faith in Christ secured forgiveness at the hands of God, to whom the power and the act of pardon are always and immediately ascribed. On the dogma of the Romish Church, that the power of authoritative, efficacious absolution or forgiveness of sins is a function of the Christian priesthood, Mr. Wilson remarks: "In examining this doctrine, we observe, in the first place, that the power of forgiveness is not a priestly power or function at all. It never was so, and, in the nature of the case, it can not be so. Heb. v, 1, defines a priest to be one 'ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin.' The priesthood involves the functions of mediation and atonement, but not that of forgiveness. The Levitical priesthood, accordingly, did not forgive sin. They simply offered sacrifices as an atonement for it. Even

Christ himself, in his priestly character, did not forgive sin. When he forgives he acts as Lord. Pardon is always an exercise of sovereignty, and is incompatible with the functions of mediation and atonement. But, secondly, the Christian ministry is not a priesthood at all, so that even if priests had the power of forgiveness, it would not follow that this function pertained to the Christian ministry. They are never described in the New Testament as priests — a thing which is inconceivable on the supposition that they really were priests; for the writers of the New Testament books were not ignorant of the nature and functions of a priesthood. On the contrary, they had never known or heard of a religion without it. But they never call any of the office-bearers of the Church priests. Still further, no priestly function is ever ascribed to Christian ministers. The functions of the priest, according to apostolic definition, are mediation and atonement — mediation between parties otherwise mutually inaccessible, and atonement by the presentation of an expiatory sacrifice. But such mediation and atonement the New Testament never ascribes to Christian ministers. Again, the Scriptures represent Christ himself as the only priest of his people, who, by the one offering of himself, has superseded and abolished all other atonement — who has no successor in that office, because he is a priest forever — and who, by his own mediation, has given to each believer boldness to come to a throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy and find grace to help him in the time of need. Christian ministers are not priests *under* Christ as the Levitical priests were. *They* were types indicating him who was to come. But now that he has come, there is nothing to prefigure, or even to recall, for Christ is an everlasting priest, and perpetually present with his people. Christian ministers are not even mediators specially appointed to bring men to Christ, as Christ himself brings men to God. For the Scriptures uniformly teach that we may come to Christ without any mediator at all, and they hold forth the freeness of immediate access to the Savior, without any intervention as one of the gracious peculiarities of the Gospel. 'If *any man* thirst, let him come *to me* and drink.' The Scriptures declare the Christian minister to be something entirely different from a priest. Ministers are spoken of as the messengers and heralds of salvation, teachers, watchmen, rulers, overseers, shepherds. 'Feed my sheep — feed my lambs;' 'Christ sent me to preach the Gospel;' 'Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?' . . . Pardon is an act of sovereignty. None but God, against whom the offense is committed, can forgive sins. Therefore it is Jesus, who is represented, on the one hand, as bearing the keys of hell and death, and, on the other hand, the key of the house of David.

The former keys he possesses in virtue of his atoning death and triumphant resurrection. He successfully assailed the stronghold of Satan, broke the barriers of the grave, and ascended as a conqueror, having spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly. And as he is alive for evermore, in virtue of his atoning death, he has those keys by which he effects for others the same deliverance as he achieved for himself. To him only it pertains to bring forth into glorious liberty the captives of Satan and sin, to spoil the grave of its prey, and to make his people partakers of his own glorious victory. To him pertains forever the use of these keys, not only for the deliverance of his own people, but for the purposes of judgment and final retribution. At his word the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead which are in them, and they shall be judged every man according to his works. To him also belongs the key of David. He openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. He gives access to the domain and heritage of the saints, and he excludes from participation in the promises. He exercises the royal prerogative which David held over Israel, and, as now seated on his throne, admits to and excludes from the kingdom, secures an entrance to those whom he hath redeemed, and shuts out those who have falsely professed his name. It was the apostle John who thus, in vision, saw the risen Savior in the possession and exercise of this power — exercising it while the apostles were still discharging their functions upon the earth. He is not represented as sharing it with them, far less surrendering it unto them. Whatever may be implied, then, in this power of the keys, certainly it does not imply the usurpation of the Savior's own prerogative, the doing of that which he alone does and is competent to do."

VERSE 20. THAT THEY SHOULD TELL NO MAN. The time had not yet come when he was publicly to be declared and recognized as the Messiah. This should not be done till shortly before his death. (Matt. xxvi, 64.) A positive public announcement of his Messiahship might have given rise to a rebellion against the government. Besides, the disciples were as unripe for proclaiming as the Jews were for receiving the truth which they had confessed to their Master till that truth should have been fully manifested to both in the facts of Christ's future history. It is a peculiar characteristic of Bible truth that it every-where makes its appeal to facts. All its doctrines rest on these, and till the fact has been accomplished the doctrine embodied in it is not fully declared. By Divine teaching the disciples had discerned and confessed one fundamental

truth, but they were yet ignorant of another equally-fundamental one. They did not yet understand the necessity of the atoning suffering and death of Christ. Therefore, they are commanded to retain for a season in their hearts the great truth till they learned to understand that which makes the knowledge of the truth they possessed so significant to men. Let us draw from this the important practical lesson, 'that it is better to hold our peace than to speak when our knowledge is not ripe and full, and when to proclaim the truth would evidently be to injure its power and influence. Before the disciples became preachers they became learners, and continued to be such till they apprehended the whole truth which they were commissioned to proclaim. It must be so always. The teacher must himself have learned, and it is true wisdom for him to be silent till he knows what he speaks, and can render a reason for the hope that is in him.' (Wilson.)

§ 37. THE SAVIOR PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION, AND ENJOINS UPON HIS FOLLOWERS TO TAKE UP HIS CROSS.

AFTER having called forth joyous anticipations concerning the kingdom of heaven on earth in the minds of his disciples by his response to their confession, the Lord suddenly turns their joy into sorrow and perplexity by telling them of his impending suffering and death — words which they could not comprehend. In dark, mysterious words, the Lord had, indeed, on former occasions hinted at his violent death and his subsequent resurrection from the dead, (John iii, 14; Matt. x, 38; John ii, 19; x, 17, 18;) but on the present occasion he spoke without figure openly, as Mark expressly remarks, (viii, 32,) and that for the following reasons: 1. The faith of the disciples was now such as qualified them to bear the sad announcement; 2. This very announcement was intended to strike at the root of their carnal Messianic expectations; 3. The Lord acquainted his disciples with what was in store for him and them, because he wished them to act from choice in following him in the path of suffering and death. In the plainest language the Lord henceforth spoke of his suffering, death, and resurrection. How little the disciples apprehended what Christ told them of his suffering and death is apparent from the fact that the distinct announcement of his resurrection failed to make any impression upon their minds. It has been asked, "How can we account for it that, after the Lord had

so clearly and repeatedly predicted both his death and resurrection, his disciples did not confidently expect the latter when the former had taken place?" To this question Lange replies: "In the first place? it must be borne in mind that they neglected at the proper time to receive into their hearts what he told them of his death in connection with his resurrection. As long as they were unwilling to give any credence to his imminent death, all he said about his resurrection was, of course, meaningless for them. In the next place, their uncertainty was also owing to the fact that they were for a long time doubtful whether they were to take his words in their literal meaning, or to understand them figuratively. The distance between the hight of the Master's spiritual life and their low religious stand-point was such that they were often at a loss how they should take his words. They often understood his figurative language literally, (Matt. xvi, 7; John iv, 33; xi, 12,) while at other times they were inclined to take his literal expressions figuratively. (John vi, 70; Matt. xv, 15, 17; John xi, 11.) Their uncertainty as to the real meaning of their Master's words about his resurrection was, thus, the natural consequence of many errors they had made in interpreting his language on various other occasions. On account of this uncertainty they conferred with each other about the meaning of his rising' from the dead, when he spoke of it for the second time. (Mark ix, 10.)" We must, moreover, bear in mind how slowly hope strikes root in the dejected heart, and how many sayings of our Lord were necessarily dark to his apostles, because suffering and triumph seemed to them irreconcilable. The allegation of Strauss, that the Lord's predictions of his death, etc., recorded in the synoptic Gospels, are contradictory to those in John's Gospel, is a mere assertion, devoid of any proof. What Strauss calls contradiction is this, that John records what our Lord said before the assembled multitudes at the beginning of his public ministry in dark figures, (John ii, 19, etc.) the Synoptists record what he said toward the close of his ministry, plainly and without figure. (See also John, chapters xiv, xv.)

Verses 21-28. (COMPARE MARK viii, 31-ix, 1; LUKE ix, 22-27.)

(21) FROM that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief-priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. (22) Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him,

saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. (23) But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. (24) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (26) For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (27) For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (28) Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

VERSE 21. FROM THAT TIME FORTH BEGAN JESUS. From this expression it appears that heretofore the Lord had not spoken so plainly of his death. Mark and Luke connect the prediction of his death immediately with the injunction of secrecy as to his being the Messiah. — **HOW THAT HE MUST.** This significant *must* we find also in chap. xxvi, 54, and in Luke xxiv, 26. What happened to Jesus, happened according to the counsel of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Christ did not suffer or die because it was predicted of him, but it was predicted because his suffering and death were absolutely necessary for the salvation of mankind, according to God's righteous and infallible counsel. "It is not at all a matter of contingency — a thing which might be avoided by some change in the course of events. It is needless to desire or hope for a different issue. This *must* be. Jesus speaks in a way thus determinate of his sufferings, as it were, to anticipate the objections which he knew were in the minds of his disciples, and to reconcile them to his sufferings as an inevitable necessity. He *must* suffer. The Word of God had declared it. The daily and yearly sacrifices uttered the same language to the ear of faith. It was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that he was to suffer. Without this there is no possible salvation. There must be blood-shedding in order to remission — death in order to deliverance from its power. His was not the death of a faithful witness, who might escape the doom of martyrdom by flight or by the mercy of his persecutors. He was the Lamb of God — a destined victim bound to the horns of the altar. This sacrifice must be. The eternal love

of God for fallen men had so determined it. It must be. All nature proclaimed its necessity — this revolted earth throughout all its domain — the creation which till now had been groaning and travailing in pain — man, and the sphere of his habitation, accursed by reason of his sin. Who shall assume that curse, and remove it? It is thus alone that it can be removed. Causeless it did not come; without sufficient cause it can not depart. Who shall take upon him that burden under which creation groans, and accumulate upon his own head that manifold weight of woe and sorrow? Who is able to bear it? Who is able to open the sealed book of promise, and scatter its precious contents over the wide earth, and make them good to men? Who but he, the Christ, the Son of the living God? He alone is worthy — he alone has the power. He must suffer and die, else all men must die for evermore. Yet while Jesus speaks thus certainly of His sufferings, they are as a dark cloud projected from a field of light, which gives sure promise of clear shining after the rain. Without the cloud there can not be the bow. The revelation of judgment is, in his history, also the revelation of covenant mercy. He must be killed, but then he must also rise again — not overcome of death, but overcoming it. He goes to the grave, but it is to rob it of its prey; and thus, indeed, by his resurrection from the dead, to be revealed as the Son of God, with power — the Son of the living God, himself the center and source of all true and enduring life." (Wilson.) — AND SUFFER MANY THINGS OF THE ELDERS AND CHIEF-PRIESTS AND SCRIBES. "He does not speak of the manner of his death, further than to intimate it was to be a violent one, and after great sufferings; but he brings prominently forward the persons who were to deal the blow. These were the elders, the chief-priests, and the scribes, the representatives and heads of the Jewish people. The elders were the rulers and magistrates of the Jewish commonwealth, in so far as the Romans had left to them any right of self-government. They had not indeed the power of life and death, and an appeal lay against their judgment to the authority of Caesar. But still they were judges in the first instance, and conducted the ordinary civil administration of the kingdom. These were to be against him, and agents in inflicting his sufferings. Then, secondly, the priests, who were the heads of the ecclesiastical government — men who stood as mediators between the people and God, who were daily in the Temple, through whom all acceptable sacrifice was presented, and who alone had access to the holy place and to the altar of incense, where prayer was always made, and where the light of the holy oil always burned — these were also to be against him. And, lastly, there were the

scribes — men in whom was centered all the learning of the community; the expounders of the Scriptures, and the oracles of the people, to whom reference was made in all questions of difficulty, the occupiers of the seat of Moses. From these also he was to suffer many things. This must have been to the disciples a terrible announcement. They were, indeed, aware that these classes looked with a scowling eye on Jesus, and present appearances indicated such an issue as he here points at. But they still clung to the belief that such a state of things was temporary. Being sure that he was the Christ, the Son of God, they felt confident that the time of his obscurations must be brief, that his glory would soon be revealed, and that, amid the hosannas and rejoicings of the whole nation, he would restore the kingdom to Israel. But if what Jesus now spoke was true, in what a position did its fulfillment place them! The events which he now foretells involved the hostility of the whole Jewish nation; for these parties — the elders, the priests, and the scribes — authoritatively spoke its mind. They, then, in cleaving to Jesus, must become aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and, as appeared, strangers also to the covenants of promise. The Jews, they knew, indeed, in entering upon such a conflict, must needs be ultimately the weaker party, and must insure their own rejection and destruction; for was not Jesus the Son of God? To raise an arm against him, therefore, was to insure its being paralyzed. But, then, was not Jesus the Messiah, the deliverer of that very people, the hope of Israel, and their Savior in time of trouble? How could both of these things be true? How could Jesus at once destroy and save them? It was a difficulty too great for them. Not till long afterward were they able to understand the profounder meaning of these Scripture predictions and promises, and to lay hold on the truth that the real seed of Abraham were the children of faith. But meanwhile all was dark and perplexing, contrary to all the fond thoughts and hopes which had possessed their minds. The trial was, for the moment, too severe for them. They staggered under the burden which Jesus imposed. There was truly need, at this moment, for all the faith they had in him as the Son of God. To trust in a suffering Savior, it was necessary for them to know him in his glory as the Christ." (Wilson.) "Let us try," says Stier, "to conceive, as well as we can, of the different effects which the Master's words must have produced on the several apostles, according to the personal peculiarities of each — on the still, contemplative John and Nathanael, the desponding Thomas, giving vent to his feelings in the melancholy exclamation, 'Such an end he must, then, after all, come to!' completely forgetting, for the moment, the preceding words as to the Church; the cunning

listening of Judas Iscariot. Then the ingenuous question of Andrew or Philip: 'What can he mean by what he says? We do not understand what he means.' None expresses at once his inmost thoughts. Peter alone is rash enough, without further consideration, to give utterance to his feelings."

VERSE. 22. THEN PETER. "He had witnessed a good confession; he now proves himself to be a presumptuous intermeddler. Once he walked boldly on the sea; the next moment he sank in slavish terror. Once he was ready to die for his Master; on the same evening, like a coward, he denied all knowledge of him. These alternations of character were as sudden as they were striking. He presents to us on the same day, and almost in the same moment, characteristics extremely the opposite of each other. It was the same man acting throughout, and yet not the same. It was not the same nature acting in different circumstances, but a different nature acting in the same circumstances. He triumphed and was defeated in the same hour — braved danger, and was overborne by it — rose now to the hight of divine knowledge, and now again sunk into the depths of presumptuous ignorance. Now he was the humble suppliant, and again immediately he became the proud dictator. There was doubtless a disharmony in this nature of his. In him we do not see a man merely acting under the influence of different emotions or passions, but a man in whom there was a warfare between the flesh and the spirit, who in himself, as Simon, was the most impulsive and inconstant of men — as Peter, the unshrinking, self-sacrificing apostle of the truth. It is a thing worthy of remark in his history, that a new privilege always exposes him to a new fall; on ascending one step he is hurled back always to a greater depth than that out of which he had issued. Throughout his history as a disciple we can trace this remarkable development. On the Sea of Galilee he manifested this alternation of strength and weakness. On the present occasion, again, he has made a prodigious step in advance, and received the blessing of the Lord, and has had a distinguished place assigned him in the very foundation of the Christian Church; but no sooner is he so elevated than at once he is precipitated, and from being a living stone in the sacred building, becomes a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. Again, on a future occasion, he sat at the supper table, and his affections and reverence were so enkindled that he was ready to die a martyr's death; but on the same night he proved himself a cowardly apostate." (Wilson.) — TOOK HIM. The Greek word means to take a person by the hand, to draw him aside. "He withdraws him for the purpose of private and confidential intercourse. He

will not utter what he has to say in the presence of the rest — as if they were worthy to take part in the remonstrance and reproof which is on his lips. Has he not been peculiarly honored? Has he not been set in a place of greater trust and responsibility than they? Is he not entitled, then, to confidences in which they have no right to share? — to speak to Jesus in a way in which no other is entitled to address him, and to receive from him communications as to his *real* purpose, which it would be a kind of sacrilege to impart to others? Therefore, he takes Jesus aside, and whispers in his ear this presumptuous reproof." (Wilson.) — AND BEGAN TO REBUKE HIM. The word *began* is not found in Codex B. Alford omits it, and reads: "And says, rebuking him." — BE IT FAR FROM THEE — literally, Propitious to thee, to which phrase God is supplied as subject. Others translate: "Be thou propitious to thee;" that is, spare thyself. "After all, then, it is not without some reason that Romanists claim this man as the founder and patron of their Church; but then that Church takes its form and character, not from Peter the confessor and apostle, but from old Simon, again reasserting his dominion, and yielding to the dictates of Satan. In the spirit and manner of this rebuke of Simon, we have the germ of Popery — the root out of which that vast system has developed itself.

1. The assumption of the Pope, as if he alone had the ear of the Lord, and was entitled to announce his will. He, like Simon, takes the Lord aside, as it were, for secret conference, and as if he alone had the privilege of access to him, and to proclaim, with a voice of divine authority, what he will have men to do. The assumption of this lordly authority over men does not, indeed, crown his ambition, but is merely the outflowing of that greater presumption in virtue of which he claims to be the master of Christ himself.

2. Like Simon, he also virtually says, Spare thyself. Christianity shall be a religion of worldly influence and authority — of pomp and grandeur — of self-indulgence and pride — a religion which shall gratify human ambition, and set its foot on the necks of kings. His language always is, Spare thyself; spare nothing but thyself; let every thing be subservient to thy ease, and self-indulgence, and grandeur. Here, on the one side, then, in the language of Simon, we have Popery; on the other side, in the language of Jesus, we have Christianity; for the relations between the true religion and the world are unalterable. Simon says, Spare thyself; Jesus says, I go to suffer and die. To follow Simon's advice is to leave the world unsaved.

3. Like Simon, the Pope assumes the attitude and language of a director, and not of a disciple. It is not his to hear submissively what the Lord says, but to dictate to the Lord what he ought to do — not to learn what his will and

purpose are, but to decree what they must be. Popery has been well and truly called the religion of human nature acting under satanic influence. We see in the example of Simon that it is really so. Its condemnation has been long ago pronounced in the ever-emphatic words: 'Get thee behind me, Satan!'" (Wilson.)

VERSE 23. BUT HE TURNED AND SAID UNTO PETER. Mark says: "He turned about, and looked on his disciples, and rebuked Peter, saying." The Lord's words are personally addressed to Peter; but they are also intended for the other disciples, because there was in all of them something of the same mind that had found utterance in the words of Peter. — **GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN.** The word *Satan* is used here in the general sense of tempter. Just as Peter, in the moment of his confession, had become an organ of the eternal rock, Christ, so he represented in this moment of rash presumption, unconsciously, Satan. He repeated the voice of temptation which had addressed the Lord in the wilderness. It was, in fact, a severe temptation for Jesus, this word of the beloved Peter; for our Lord, as man, feels most keenly whatever has reference to the necessity of his suffering, and the possibility of escape from it. This cross, this drinking the cup of wrath, was his sorest temptation — far more searching and painful than his temptation in the wilderness, as we may see from comparing his acting in the garden and in the wilderness respectively. This baptism was what straitened him, what he looked forward to with awe and trembling. Yet it was what he had set himself to endure, what was to constitute the foundation of the redemption of the world. But his spotless spirit rejected at once with horror any proposition that involved a violation of God's holy will. Stier, referring the words '*get thee behind me, Satan*' to Satan himself hiding behind what was carnal in Peter, says: "This accounts for the severity of the rebuke, such as the Lord made use of on no other occasion against any of his disciples. Hence his quick perception and rejection of Satan's cunning attempt to shake his purpose! But scarcely has he uttered this severe rebuke in the first sentence, when he comes back in the second to the person of Peter, and adds in tenderness and love, 'Thou knowest not, Peter, that and how Satan has spoken through thee to me. Thou thinkest and speakest exactly as men do.' May we learn from this how little men understand in their carnal minds God's plan of redemption, how dangerous an enemy to the Father's and Son's holy love the carnal mind is! This temptation of the Lord by Peter is experienced by his followers in a thousand ways. Our

best friends become our most dangerous enemies when their counsel is carnal. In such cases we must faithfully copy our glorious Master and use the weapons which he gives us in verses 24 and 25."

VERSES 24, 25. What the Lord says here he had already declared to his disciples, when he sent them out on their first mission. (See the notes on ch. x, 38, 39.) The repetition of the solemn declaration here has an important and direct bearing upon what precedes. According to Mark, (viii, 34,) the Lord called unto him the people with his disciples also, and Luke (ix, 23) says likewise: "And he said to them all." "Jesus had been speaking of his own sufferings and death, greatly to the surprise and displeasure of his disciples, for in this case, as in other instances, Peter is to be regarded as the mouthpiece and representative of them all. Not that all of them, indeed, would have expressed their objection precisely in the same way as he, but all of them entertained radically the same feeling regarding the incongruity of suffering and death with the glory and dignity of Christ the Son of the living God. They anticipated for him, and that in a visible and temporal sense, the fulfillment of the Baptist's prediction — 'He must increase.' With such conceptions of the earthly history of the Messiah, there were necessarily associated, though perhaps not distinctly acknowledged even to themselves, certain expectations as to their own destiny. For they were peculiarly his followers; they had cast in their lot with him, and must have anticipated for themselves some share in that advancement which they expected for him. When, therefore, they revolted at the idea of his sufferings and death, there might have been lying at the root of the affectionate interest they felt and expressed for his welfare, some grain of selfish ambition. To contemplate for him such misery and degradation, was to cast the shadow of it over their own life also. Let us, in thus judging them, not forget that the same feeling of self-regard is commingled with all the exercises of mere human affection. However tender and true love may be, the interest it feels in its object is never altogether separated from an undercurrent of self-regard. Jesus enters into and exposes this feeling of theirs. After the severe reproof he has uttered, he at once proceeds on the assumption that his lot and theirs were to be, to some extent, identical. He speaks to that state of feeling into which they had passed. They, in looking forward to his rejection and death, have been contemplating also their own. He tells them that they are not deceived; that what awaited him awaited them also. If, therefore, they protested against his sufferings, even while their own were unacknowledged and unseen, he tells

them plainly that his history and theirs were really so far identical; that if they shrank from the fact of his death and ignominy, it was right they should see it in all its grave consequences to themselves. He puts to them now the alternative of following or of rejecting him. He will not hide from them what is to happen. He does not seek self-deceived followers — to make men his dupes — and therefore he indicates that if they are to come after him, it must be as sufferers after a suffering Savior. His cross and theirs are, in one view, contrasted; for his cross is their salvation. He is a vicarious sufferer for them, one assuming their burden and delivering them. His death is their life. In his exhausting the penalty of the law, and yet righteously fulfilling it, lie their eternal peace and safety. And yet for them there was a cross also. The saving of them not only implied his death, but theirs also. They, too, must be crucified. Their old man must suffer death. In order truly to live they must be created anew. To cling, as they had been doing, to the earth and its honors and enjoyments — to save, to preserve the life they now had, to make it more honorable, lovable, and glorious, was to lose all, to lose the true life. To give up all this, to lose their present and past life, was really to save it. In their discipleship and following after Christ, it was needful that they should surrender far more than they had yet done, not merely that they should part with their goods and possessions, but also with themselves. Their life must be the reflection of Christ's life. To go after him they must go to death. Therefore he announces this as the universal law of the Christian life. *'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'* To this law there is no exception. He that is truly a Christian has denied himself, and is crucified. In all this Christ has gone before us, and all this is essential to the Christian life. Christ's personal sacrifice is denuded of its profound meaning unless it be so. There was no need for it, if we can carry what we have and are into the heavenly kingdom. These sufferings and death of Christ always proclaim that it is not so; that to be as we are is to be outcast and condemned; that we must be born again in order to see the kingdom of God; that we must die in order to live; that we must part with every thing in order to gain the pearl of great price." (Condensed from Wilson.)

VERSE 26. "This is a question not of vain curiosity, with the solution of which we may engage a leisure hour, or which we may leave altogether unsolved. It is not a question of mere speculation, but the most practical of all questions. It is a kind of bargain-making from which we can not turn aside. It is an exchange which, in point of fact, every man makes. This is its grand

peculiarity. The merchant makes what bargains he chooses. If the exchange does not seem to him advantageous, he simply declines to make it. It is not absolutely necessary that he should trade in any commodity which he does not like to have. But this exchange can not be let alone. The question of the text demands and practically receives its solution from every man. You can not be without both the world and the soul. This is evident enough. But then the matter does not present itself to men in the light in which the text reveals it. It is only in the Bible that you find these two quantities put on alternative sides. God assures you that you can not have them both; that you must make your choice between the one and the other. It is here always that the mind and wisdom of God are in conflict with those of men. They will not believe that these things are in opposite scales — they believe that they can have both the world and the soul, and that it belongs to them to make the best of them both. The soul they *have* already, and do not mean to part with it. They must have *it*, at least, in order to the real possession of any thing else. To lose the soul, evidently would be to lose every thing. But then this is what peculiarly and inherently belongs to every man, and therefore it can not well be lost. Without it, indeed, the world, the wide universe, could be to them nothing. In the soul lies the essence of all enjoyment. It looks out through the eyes, and it drinks in pleasant sounds, and is the seat of all sensation. It imagines, and loves, and thinks. Without the soul nothing can have any worth. But then, while all this is evidently true, there is at the same time the persuasion that such an alternative as that of the text is not really presented to them. They will have both the soul and the world. They will, in fact, employ the soul in earning the world, and will make sure, in this way, of the best possible bargain. The real difficulty, then, of the question propounded in the text lies here: *Must I put the soul and the world in opposite scales?* Is this exchange to me a matter of absolute necessity? That question being conclusively settled, all the rest becomes quite easy; for no man, deliberately and of set purpose, would give his soul for the world, knowing and believing that the acquisition of the world involved the loss of his soul. Such folly would imply that the soul had been already lost; that the light of reason had been altogether darkened, and the mind denuded of its distinguishing properties. Yet if the Bible be true, there must be some important sense in which it is a fact that the gain of the world involves the loss of the soul. The text asserts this in language the most unmistakable. Let us endeavor to ascertain what it means in making this assertion, and in order to this, 1. Let us bear in mind that the soul is not self-sufficient; that it must go out of itself, and must rest in something, or

exercise itself on something external to itself. What would the soul be by itself, exercised only upon itself, destitute of all means of communication with that which is without and beyond itself? Reason, imagination, affection, hope, benevolence, veneration, conscience, even the action of the will itself, all presuppose and imply a something beyond the soul, on which it is to fasten itself, and by feeding on that, to be nursed to maturity, and to have its sphere both of action and enjoyment. This is the condition of all intelligent creature existence, and still more emphatically if that creature have a moral sense and responsibilities, as man has. It belongs to God only to be self-sufficient and independent. 2. This, then, being the case, what is the relation established between the soul and the things on which it feeds? If they are perishable, what becomes of it? It does not indeed die with them, for its existence is independent of and apart from theirs. Nay, the fact that it feeds upon and uses them is a proof of its superiority. The soul, then, does not die, though the fashion of these perish. And will it not, when they are gone, only be alive to misery? Nothing is more certain than that such a separation must come between the soul and the world. The bond which connects us with this world must sooner or later be severed. We pass onward to the gates of death and disappear, or those who are around us and dearest to us die, and the fashion of the world passeth away, and the time is hastening on when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the present order of things shall be dissolved. In some form or other, the connection we have had with the world shall be broken, and then, if the soul has been resting only on it, expatiating with its far-reaching power of hope and affection only in it, what remains? Disappointments, ungratified longings, blighted affections, thwarted ambition, a mind quickened to action by the world and the things it contains, and sustained by these, and left at last stranded on the eternal shore, without an object to love, without a hope to lighten the darkness of despair. Is not such a soul, in the truest and most profound sense, a lost one, unable now to retreat into stupid dormancy, and yet drifted from all its anchorage of desire and emancipation — a wreck upon a shoreless sea — the old passions of covetousness, and lust, and envy, and pride, and love of glory, wasting their energies on the soul itself, and drowning the clearness and pride of reason in fathomless despair? Then at last, if not before, it will be seen that this is the alternative — the world or the soul; that to have both is impossible; that to gain the one is to lose the other. But if *now*, foreseeing this, I make up my mind to choose, if this bargain becomes to me a necessity, and if, as every thing in my soul dictates, I choose the loss of the world and the gain of the soul,

what then? What of the world? What is my relation to it? Must I fling it utterly away, or go out of it? Must I cut asunder all those bonds which unite me to it, and hasten to some ethereal region where I shall find new objects on which to put forth my energies, and on which my soul may feed and grow? These are questions which press themselves upon the consideration of every man who seriously and fairly considers what is involved in the exchange between the world and the soul. In ordinary bargain-making I can not have both the thing purchased and the price paid for it; and from the statement of the text it would appear that in this bargain I can not do so. If, on the one hand, I am to gain the world, I must lose my soul. If, on the other hand, I gain my soul, what is the real relation in which I stand to the world? It is not necessary to go out of the world, or to quit its business and duties; it may not be even necessary to change our external position at all. But it is, while in this world, to live by the powers of the world to come — to cease to make this our home — the resting-place and object of our highest affections. It is to have eternity nearer the heart than the world — by faith to enter within the region of the invisible — and to cleave with the whole heart to that which is there revealed. It is to be lifted out of the miry clay, and to lay hold on that all-powerful arm stretched forth to deliver us — to enter into new and holy fellowships with that home and rest which is prepared for the people of God — to have our hope entering into that which is within the vail, and thus becoming an anchor to the soul, to have our home and rest in the bosom of the Father. This is to save the soul; for to fasten and feed on these objects can never end in desolation and misery. For these are amaranthine flowers that strew the eternal pathway, and its trees never fade, and its river of life is never dry, and its immortal inhabitants know no parting tears, and there is no curse there, and no night, and no temple, and the Lord God giveth them light, and they reign forever and ever. Thither Christ has gone, and thither, by the cross and self-denial, he invites us to follow him. He himself is the way, the truth, and the life. He hath come down hither and made himself a brother to us, to lead us out of our misery — to break that hard and foolish bargain which we had made with the world, and to lead us forth into light and liberty." (Condensed from Wilson.)

VERSE 27. On the connection of these words with what precedes, and on their meaning, we can not present the reader with any thing so good as Mr. Wilson's exposition. "In immediate connection with the statement regarding this most important and vital of all transactions — namely, the giving up of the

world for the safety of the soul — Jesus, according to Mark and Luke, introduces another idea which unfolds to us more clearly the hostile relation in which the world and the soul stand to each other; namely, 'Whosoever *therefore* shall be ashamed of me and of my words,' etc. On an attentive comparison we shall find that Mark and Luke have omitted what Matthew has recorded, and, on the other hand, that Matthew has omitted what they have recorded. To understand what Jesus spoke on this occasion it is necessary to read verse 38 of Mark and verse 27 of Matthew, as a continuous narrative, thus: 'Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works.' In the text thus read, then, we have a twofold statement brought before us: 1. An argument grounded on the fact that to cleave to the world is to be ashamed of Christ; and, 2. The just retribution of such sin and folly. Let us attend to these two things in their order.

1. To keep the world, or to gain it, is to be ashamed of Christ. Here Jesus translates the question he had put from its abstract form into a shape more likely to tell directly and forcibly upon the hearts of his disciples. But little is practically gained by teaching a man that the interests of the soul are unspeakably higher than those of the world. In spite of this knowledge, and while admitting it to its fullest extent, the world is still loved, and so the soul is lost. It is not easy always to say what is best for the soul. Jesus therefore puts the case differently: You have owned, and truly owned, me to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Under the veil of my lowly humanity you have read this glorious truth. My Father has taught it to you, and you have believed and confessed it. You are disappointed when I tell you what awaits me. Will you shrink from my side in shame when the whole world disowns, abjures, and casts me out as evil? At that crisis, even as now, the alternative must be the world or me. Ashamed of me, you gain the world indeed, but then you lose the soul. When you shall behold me betrayed, spit upon, dealt with as the offscouring of all things — tried, sentenced, dragged to death — then will you not be ashamed, and hide your faces from me? Will you remember that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God? If you can go with me to that cross, and own me there in the full assembly of the scorners, then indeed you have given up the world and saved your soul. But if not, what then? If you falter, if you deny me, what is this but to cleave to the world, and to destroy your soul? Thus

Jesus presents to them, by anticipation, this great truth. He opens their minds to embrace it, and prepares them for making, deliberately and decidedly, the choice between the soul and the world. They might not be able to see, in the very nature of things, that this choice must be made. But in his life and death lay the demonstration of the fact. It was not an abstract doctrine of philosophy, but must be to them a real historical fact, brought out in their choice or rejection of him. If the world was not lost to them, they must be ashamed of Christ and his words. It was impossible for them, at the same time, to love the world and to cleave to Christ. He was already of the lowest of the people, and was to descend yet lower, even to a criminal's doom. To espouse his cause, to be on his side, was to espouse the cause of a condemned malefactor — to be against all the fashion, opinion, power, law, and religion of the age, and to stand forth enduring the frown of all these, and to expose themselves to his very doom. To them there was but this one alternative, to be ashamed of Christ or to renounce the world. But is it so now? Is this the alternative for believers still? Must we also make this momentous choice? Were these words of Jesus of mere temporary significance, and thus unlike all the other words which he uttered? Is there no shame in the Cross now? Has Christ become a prince of this world, so that when I am on his side I am with the world? The tests, indeed, are not now quite the same in their outward form as in those days. But it is still true that the world and Jesus are on opposite sides, and that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Christ is not now, as in the Jewish and Roman community, regarded in the light of a condemned criminal. The Cross has had its outward as well as its internal triumphs. It is no longer the signal of disgrace and the warrant for cruel persecution. Christ has been recognized as a conqueror — not merely as killed, but as risen again, and the Cross has been invested with a glory before which even worldly men consent to do reverence. It is more a matter of shame among us to be an atheist than to be a Christian. No one is now ashamed to be known as a member of the Christian family, and as sitting at the table of the Lord. The shame lies all on the other side. It is rather scandalous than otherwise not to be all this. Christ, therefore, would appear so far to have overcome the world as to have entirely changed his position in it. The glory is now his, and shame is the portion of the world. Thus, indeed, the case stands outwardly, and when we look at the Christian profession in its mere worldly aspects. But let us look a little deeper. It is indeed a compliment to Christian truth that the world affects to believe it, and assumes the religion of Jesus somewhat as the Crusaders did of old. They have marked with his cross

their banners and their garments. But to assume these outward badges is not to espouse Christ's cause, nor to give up the world. This is rather to betray than to promote his cause — to worship the world under the pretext of serving Christ. Is it not demonstrated in the whole life of such Christians that the world and Christ are still upon opposite sides? You have not harmonized them by professing to serve them both. The Christian camp is to you the seat of a hostile army, and you move about in it as a spy and a traitor. You hide yourself from the Captain of the Lord's host, and have no cordial fellowship with the soldiers of the Cross. That cross, indeed, has been blazoned on your outer garment, but you have not taken it up as yours. The world is still your motive and aim, the seat of your hope and affections, the stay and confidence of your soul. It is the world that is ever uppermost in your family, in the market in all your intercourse with men. Christ is buried out of sight as if you had no concern with him."

(Condensed from Wilson.) — **FOR THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER, WITH HIS ANGELS.** True faith, in its conflict with the world, is able to overleap all time preceding the end, to soar upward, and to live in that future glory, in that blessed region of light and love — afar off to behold Christ as seated on his throne, and to say, God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. — **ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS** — literally, according to his working; that is, his whole conduct, including both his faith and its fruits, one of which is the confession of his name.

VERSE 28. The transition of our Lord's announcement of his second visible coming to judge the world to another coming of his which should take place during the lifetime of some of his hearers, has unnecessarily perplexed some interpreters. To say nothing of the fact that the intermediate links of our Lord's discourses are sometimes omitted by the Evangelists, and that the Oriental mode of speaking has not so many intermediate links as our modern addresses — the transition, without supplying any thing, is very natural. The final judgment was in the far-distant future, and to cheer his disciples, who were cast down by the prediction of his suffering and death, and of their own trials and privations, he solemnly assures them that during their lifetime they should see him establish his kingdom. This should be to them the pledge and assurance of his future coming in glory. They should not only await in hope a distant future triumph, but enjoy a present one. — **THERE BE** [correctly translated, *there are*] **SOME STANDING HERE,** By "some" our Lord most probably

understood all his disciples, except Judas Iscariot, in contradistinction to the crowd referred to in Mark viii, 34. — WHICH SHALL NOT TASTE OF DEATH. This is an Oriental mode of expression, representing death by the figure of a bitter, poisoned cup. — TILL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN HIS KINGDOM. Mark says, "Until they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Luke, "Until they see the kingdom of God." Our Lord may have used the words reported by Mark and Luke, in addition to those of Matthew; both expressions, however, as well as what he had said in chapter x, 23, have the same meaning. Some of the older commentators understood by the Son of man's coming in his kingdom the transfiguration, on the ground of 2 Peter i, 16-18; but this view is refuted both by the parallel passages, and by the words, *there be some standing here*, an expression which our Lord would not have used in speaking of an occurrence so near at hand. Some understand by it Christ's resurrection from the dead and the establishment of his Church by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; but against this view it may be objected, that the establishment of the Church by the resurrection and the subsequent Pentecost, was an event which not only a few of those standing by witnessed, and that from the expression, *they shall not taste of death*, a more distant event is to be inferred. It is, therefore, better to apply the passage to Christ's providential coming to overturn the whole Jewish policy in the destruction of Jerusalem, by which catastrophe the Christian Church was finally and fully separated from Judaism. On the whole, Dr. Alexander's view is the most correct. He says: "The solutions of this question which have been proposed are objectionable, chiefly because too exclusive and restrictive of the promise to a single point of time, whereas it really has reference to a gradual or progressive change, the institution of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of men and in society at large, of which protracted process the two salient points are the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the destruction of Jerusalem more than a quarter of a century later, between which points, as those of its inception and its consummation, lies the lingering death of the Mosaic dispensation and the gradual erection of Messiah's kingdom." We close this section with the following appropriate reflections of Mr. Wilson: "The Church has always a present evidence of the ultimate triumph of her Lord. The Church survives all the storms of time, all the opposition of the world. The power which is in it triumphs over all. The existence of the Church is the one enduring fact in the history of the earth's empires and manifold revolutions. The world assails it in vain, for it is built on the Rock of Ages. Even the martyr's

death only verifies and assures his conquest, and his blood becomes the seed of the Church. Christ reigns in it, and not man's feebleness. He came, and is still here in his power, visibly in the midst of his people, covering them with his overshadowing wings, bearing them up in the tempest, or walking with them in the furnace of fire. Still, as of old, the world and Christ are brought into deadly conflict—the world-power, apparently mighty, as when it was impersonated in the ancient strength of Babylon—the Church, apparently feeble, as the three children who were cast into the furnace; but they are inconsumable, for the Son of man is with them there. The history of that moment included and manifested the history of ages. The Son of man comes in his kingdom, and so the gates of hell do not prevail against it. Thus it was in that generation, to whom it was given to see the majestic power of the risen Savior, to feel his presence pervading their cowardly and selfish natures, and making them victorious in life and death. Thus it was on that pentecostal day, when, being baptized with fire, they recognized the fulfillment of Christ's promise, and knew his present exaltation as the head over all things, and the dispenser of all gracious gifts. Thus it was, when the word went forth from them in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, and when the hearts of thousands bowed to the yoke of the Savior, and when the utterance of his name dispelled disease, and they felt that there was with them that Son of the living God by whose mighty works they had formerly recognized his Messiahship. Thus it was, above all, when, to the few survivors, his arm of vengeful power was revealed, and the reversal of the world's false judgments began—when the wicked city whose people had slain him was converted into heaps of rubbish, and its surviving inhabitants made a hissing and reproach among the nations—when the worship of the Temple had ceased forever, and there was no Church of the living God but the Christian. Then, both in the terrors and the deliverances of that fearful time, did they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

CHAPTER XVII.

§ 38. THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS.

AFTER the remarkable conversation between Jesus and the disciples at Cesarea Philippi, an interval of six days occurs before we find any further notice of them. These days were, in all probability, days of gloom and dejection. They began to realize that a sore trial was awaiting their Master and

themselves. For the first time they had come within sight of the cross and were shocked by it. At first it proved to them, as it did to the nation at large, a stumbling-block. Yet they cleave to Jesus. Their spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. "Leaving the populous places about Cesarea Philippi, Jesus probably took them into the mountain solitudes, and during a period of six days was imparting to them further instructions, of which no record has come down to us. Then, as a teacher sometimes does with the most advanced of his class, he chose out of his disciples three, to impress on them a lesson which they alone were at all prepared to receive. He leads them up into a high mountain, and while he is praying his countenance glows with a celestial radiance; spirits of just men made perfect stand by him, and a voice is heard speaking to them from heaven. They did not fully understand it then, but after his death and resurrection from the dead had laid open to them its meaning, they publish their account of it to enrich forever the minds of Christian believers." (John H. Morison's Notes on Matthew.)

Before we examine the importance and the object of this great event for Jesus himself and his disciples, it is proper to make a few preliminary remarks on the historical character and objective reality of the event itself. This, it is true, is in general sufficiently guaranteed, against all attacks, by the historic credibility of the Evangelists. (See General Introduction.) It is also most solemnly confirmed by what one of the eye-witnesses says concerning it, (2 Pet. i, 16-18:) "For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." John also, another eye-witness, although he does not narrate the event, refers evidently to it, when he says, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The particulars of the transaction are recorded by three Evangelists, without any thing to indicate that it is not a narrative of real events, and with such minuteness and precision that, if the writers were honest, it is impossible to doubt the objective reality of what they relate. Nevertheless, it has been argued, "that the occurrence was not a real one at all, but a vision presented to the minds of the three disciples during their sleep—that they only dreamed they were with Jesus on a high mountain, and saw him in radiant glory

in converse with Moses and Elias — and that they only thus heard the words which were spoken." In support of this view it is said, that the Lord himself (v. 9) called the event *a vision*, and that Luke says, *the three disciples were heavy with sleep*. But the two arguments are of no weight whatever. What is termed "the vision" in Matthew, is defined by Mark and Luke as "*the things which they had seen.*" Nor does Luke say that they were heavy with sleep, *while they saw his glory*; but *when they were awake*, after they had been heavy with sleep, they saw his glory. (Luke ix, 32.) Moreover, if it was only a dream, how have we to account for it, on natural principles, that the three disciples should have the same dream? And why should a mere dream occupy the conspicuous and significant place it does in three of the Gospels, and how was it possible that Jesus himself could attach so much importance to it, as he did in charging the disciples to tell no one of it till after he had risen from the dead? — That the seeing of the celestial scene was not an ordinary seeing with the eyes of the body, but a perceiving with a higher sense of the inner man, which is closed for ordinary purposes, (Num. xxiv, 3, 4,) we may readily admit. In order to see the supernatural with their natural eyes, the disciples themselves had to be raised into a higher, heavenly sphere. (Compare the notes on Matthew iii, 16, 17.)

As to the significance of the event, let us first consider it with reference to our Lord himself. "At this as at other eventful periods of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus," says Mr. Wilson, "we find him engaged in prayer. At this time we know that he had much trouble to bring and to unfold before his gracious and ever-loving Father. The prospect of his sufferings was pressing upon his spirit — sufferings the awful extent and severity of which he alone knew, and already it had become apparent that he must bear them alone, without any human sympathy. For his spirit had been vexed with the presumptuous ignorance and shrinking horror of these his chosen disciples. These spiritual evils in them were ever a sore grief to him — their unapprehensiveness, their unbelief, their self-righteousness, their inconstancy, their cowardice, their selfishness, were ever hindering the outflowing of his love, and rendering him more deeply a sufferer. At this time he had a cause to bring before his Father. He needs refreshment and strength, and goes apart to a mountain with the chosen three to seek them. To him it is a very sacred season. Out of the depths he cries to Him from whom, to the distressed, all help and light come. His human soul needs this stay of prayer. Tossed as it is by

fast-coming woe, and by the contradiction of sinners against himself — and these sinners, too, his own disciples, his closest earthly friends — he enters into that undisturbed calm and haven of rest which he finds beside the throne of God. And even while he prays he is lifted up — he enters into the radiant glory which faith contemplates, and anticipates heaven upon earth — and the fashion of his countenance is changed — the vesture of his humility is transformed into one of glory — and he is exhibited as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The joy is not only set before him, but for a brief time it is realized, and the cross becomes therefore durable. He not only predicts the advent of his kingdom, but is invested with its royal insignia, and already he appears in his own glory and in his Father's. He is proclaimed king, and obedience is claimed for him as one who has been already enthroned." During his whole earthly career the Savior appears in a twofold relation; namely, as redeeming mankind, and as perfecting himself. (Heb. ii, 10.) The latter, that is, the development of his Divine-human life, is laid open to our view in his transfiguration. "The moment," says Dr. Ebrard, "had now come when Jesus entered upon his last journey, firmly resolved to die for mankind. As he had once at his baptism practically declared this his purpose and forthwith confirmed it by coming victorious out of the temptation, so he had declared it again at the present time before his disciples, and had likewise sternly rebuked the temptation that this time came from the lips of a disciple, who in the power of the Holy Ghost had just before confessed him. And as his Father had at his baptism solemnly declared him to be his beloved Son before John, who closed the Old Testament dispensation, so it was repeated here before the lawgiver and the distinguished representative of the prophets. The law and the prophecy came, as it were, in person; the old dispensation, the dispensation of promise, welcomed the new as its fulfillment, and God declared for the second time that he was well pleased in Jesus." Thus the transfiguration, as an earnest of that glory which was his destined inheritance, was strengthening him for the last decisive struggle. While it typically foreshadows the earnest of glory, which is promised to the faithful followers of Christ amid their protracted and painful conflicts, and is an emblem of the kingdom of glory in which the risen saints shall dwell with their Savior, we learn, at the same time, from the transfiguration, that Jesus, the second, but sinless Adam, would not have died without God's eternal counsel concerning our redemption, that on account of his perfect sinlessness his body without tasting death could have entered forthwith into the life of glory. The God-man might at once have entered into

heaven if he had been disposed to detach his own destiny from that of the human family. But recognizing with the two glorified prophets his suffering and death as the only means of redeeming his people, it is the firm purpose of his holy love to descend into the dismal valley of death, and, accordingly, his body was obscured again.

Of equally great importance was the transfiguration for the disciples. They had dared to own him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. They now hear him proclaimed as such from the excellent glory. In the conference of their Master with Moses and Elijah they received the fullest assurance of the unity of the Old and the New Testament — that Jesus was the fulfiller of the law and of the prophets. And in seeing him, as it were, removed from the earth in a cloud of light with two inhabitants of the spirit-world, they had the fullest evidence of his power to retain his life, and that it was of his own free accord if he should descend into the valley of death. The disciples had their faith strengthened. They had to be drawn first, as it were, up to the heavenly world by this sublime vision, before they were to be drawn down into the depth of temptation, such as the death of Christ was for them. But why was this revelation of the Lord's glory confined to three out of the number of his disciples, and why were even these forbidden to say any thing of the event prior to his resurrection? The reason, undoubtedly, was, because the disciples in general could not properly understand and appreciate the whole event before the resurrection of the Lord. Three were sufficient to attest the truth of this wonderful scene, and had more been present it might have been somewhat difficult to have kept it secret. The other disciples, however, had also their faith strengthened by seeing those favored ones return into their midst in such a frame of mind as made the impression upon them that a special revelation had been granted unto them, and still more by the Lord coming to their assistance at the foot of the mountain.

Verses 1-13. (COMPARE MARK ix, 2-13; LUKE ix, 28-36.)

(1) **AND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, (2) and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (3) And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. (4) Then answered Peter, and**

said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. (5) While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (6) And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. (7) And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. (8) And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. (9) And 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. (10) And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? (11) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. (12) But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. (13) Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

VERSE 1. AND AFTER SIX DAYS, or, as Luke has it more indefinitely by a Grecism, "About an eight days after;" that is, about one week afterward. The transfiguration took place, probably, by night, for the following reasons: 1. Luke informs us that the Lord had gone up the mount to pray, which he usually did at night. (Luke vi, 12; xxi, 37; xxii, 39; Matt. xiv, 23, 24.) 2. All the circumstances connected with the glorification and accompanying appearances could thus be more distinctly seen. 3. The apostles were, according to Luke, (ix, 32,) "heavy with sleep." 4. They did not descend till the next day, (Luke ix, 37,) which would be almost inexplicable, had the event happened by day, but a matter of course, if by night. — PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN. "These three belonged evidently to a kind of inner circle among the disciples. They stood nearer to Jesus than the rest, and were admitted to peculiar privileges. They were not only the witnesses of his glory on the mount, but of his agony in the garden — of his lowest abasement, and of his highest elevation in the world. Not that in them Jesus revived in any sense the practice of heathen philosophy, and taught them esoteric doctrines, which he hid from the other disciples. Whatever at first he told them in secret, was ultimately proclaimed from the house-top. But while all of them were brethren of the same household, and all

sharers in the same revelation of the gracious will of God, to them it was given to have a closer intimacy with Jesus, and to be personal witnesses of what the rest did not see. And the effect of this specialty of treatment became abundantly manifest in the future history of the Church. These three stand out most prominently in the early proclamation of the Gospel, and in the performance of those miracles by which it was attested, and even to this day we reap the benefit of their higher privilege in those epistles which they, and they only, were inspired to write. In all this we see a manifestation of what was to be the permanent condition of the Church; namely, that while in the true Church there was to be the same spirit, there would be diversities of gifts — that while all were brethren there would yet be differences among them, in virtue of which some would be greatly signalized above others, both in the measure of grace they possessed, and in the extent to which that grace would become available for the establishment and extension of the Church. There would ever be some who, more than others, were admitted to a closer intimacy with the Lord, and endowed with a more penetrating insight, and unto whom the Lord would more fully unveil his glory. Nor should we lose sight of the fact that the higher privileges of the three resulted in the greater immediate and permanent edification of the Church. We are to regard the one as the cause of the other. And this principle of causation has not ceased. It is still he who gets nearest to the Lord, that labors in his service most abundantly and successfully. There is no evidence that Peter, James, and John were possessed of higher natural endowments than the rest of the twelve, but they saw the Lord's glory on the mount, and were with him in his agony, and so they became in the Church as sons of thunder, in the mighty power of Divine love. And so it is always. The secret of strength and influence lies in this intimate Divine fellowship. Those who see most of Christ are able to speak of him most powerfully and winningly." (Wilson.) — AND BRINGETH THEM UP INTO A MOUNTAIN APART. Our Lord's taking them apart from the other disciples indicates that he knew before what was to take place there. — It is worthy of notice that while the Evangelists are precise in denoting the time, they are very indefinite in respect to the locality. The same is the case with regard to all the more remarkable events in the life of Jesus. The reason of this we may find in the manifold abuses to which even a conjectural knowledge of sacred places has given rise. Tradition has pointed out Mount Tabor as the spot, but, as Dr. Robinson has shown, the summit of Mount Tabor was then occupied by a fortified city. Besides, Mount Tabor in Galilee was too far distant from the

region of Cesarea Philippi, where, as appears from Mark ix, 30, our Lord joins the rest of his disciples again. The mountain was most probably the so-called *Great Hermon*, north-east of Gennesaret. Stanley in his Sinai and Palestine says: "It is impossible to look up from the plain to the towering peaks of Hermon, almost the only mountain which deserves the name in Palestine, and not to be struck with its appropriateness to the scene. That magnificent height, mingling with all the views of Northern Palestine, from Shechem upward, though often alluded to as the northern barrier of the Holy Land, is connected with no historical event in the Old or New Testament. Yet this fact of its rising high above all the other hills of Palestine, and of its setting the last limit to the wanderings of Him who was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, concurs with the supposition which the words of the Scripture narrative inevitably force upon us. High up on its southern slopes there must be many a point where the disciples could be taken 'apart by themselves.' Even the transient comparison of the celestial splendor with the snow, where alone it could be seen in Palestine, should not, perhaps, be wholly overlooked." — It is worthy of notice that the most solemn scenes in the life of our Savior took place on mountains, whither he resorted also for the most part in order to pray. In the Old Testament the sacrifices were also offered up on mountains, and the Temple stood on a mountain. The mountains were symbols of heaven. The English "heaven" comes from the Saxon "*heafan*," and means "elevated" or "arched." The German "*Himmel*" has been derived from the Hindoostan "*Himalaya*," the residence assigned to the Hindoo gods.

VERSE 2. AND WAS TRANSFIGURED BEFORE THEM — literally, was transformed. The features of his countenance assumed an unusual heavenly expression. The apostle Paul applies the same term to the inner process of regeneration. (Rom. xii, 2; 2 Cor. iii, 18.) It is well known what changes joy, love, and other emotions, produce in the human countenance; how the inward happiness of a dying man often transforms his countenance. The revelations of the future world made the prophets sometimes pale like the dead, (Dan. x,) sometimes radiant with joy. The countenance of Moses shone when he descended from Mount Sinai, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look upon him. But the transfiguration of Jesus differed from all these phenomena, his glory coming not only from without, as that of Moses did, which the apostle (2 Cor. iii, 7) for this very reason calls transient, but from within; it was the conformity into which the Savior's body was brought with his

indwelling spirit. It is thus a type of the resurrection body of the saints. — According to Luke the transformation took place while the Lord was praying. We might see in this a type of the elevating and transforming power of prayer. "The true disciple of Jesus ascends with him the holy mount of ordinances, a high mountain which brings him near the very gate of heaven, and while he prays he passes out of the thick darkness into light inaccessible — is raised out of the depths of his severe conflict into the serene calm of assured faith; and while no outward visible change takes place on his countenance and raiment, he feels that there is to him a transformation not less real and blessed; that in this sacred converse with the Highest he has passed from the region of doubt and fear into that of holy confidence; and that now, refreshed, and strengthened, and armed with heavenly panoply, and in sight of the glory to be revealed, he also can bear the cross, and in it triumph over his enemies. He has already become a king in the mastery over his troubles which he has achieved, and will wear the conqueror's crown. This for us is the ark of refuge — the place of rest — the secret of our strength. He who prays becomes invincible, and rides in safety amid those surging billows which shall not overwhelm his soul. Most blessed privilege, did we but know how to use it! O for the outpouring of the Spirit of grace and of supplication, and then would the Church assume a new attitude in the presence of her foes — then her bondage would be turned back, and she would appear clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners! We, the very humblest of us, through the gifts which prayer brings, and the transformation it effects, may become stronger than the mightiest, and the glory of the Lord will arise upon us. Alas, how much we need this transformation!" (Wilson.)

VERSE 3. The recognition of Moses and Elias by the disciples is not to be wondered at. It seems to have been intuitive. Besides, there may have been something in their appearance and accompaniments such as to render their personality unmistakable, or the disciples may have gathered the fact from the conversation between them and Jesus. "What Jesus was doing on the earth was not unknown in the heavenly places. The angels desired to look into these things, and if they did so, surely not less the glorified children of men, who had seen the day of Christ afar off and rejoiced in it, and by faith had entered into the promised rest. And among these heavenly inquirers the most deeply interested must have been Moses and Elias. We find that the angels hovered around the path of Jesus, observed his progress, and strengthened his fainting

spirit. And Moses and Elias now also come forth from the inaccessible glory to inquire, to wonder, and to speak of these things — to learn more perfectly this mystery of the incarnation, what is implied in it, and how it is to work out its blessed results. Of one of these men we are told that he was translated to heaven in a chariot of fire; of the other that, though he died, no man knew of his sepulcher, and that the archangel Michael claimed his body. It is not irrational, then, to believe that these men had, body and soul, been taken to the place of blissful rest, and of unclouded glory — not, indeed, as anticipating the resurrection of Jesus, who became the first-fruits of them that sleep, but as undergoing in the moment of death, and ere the separation between soul and body was complete, that glorious transformation which shall be the privilege of the living saints, when the time of the manifestation of the sons of God shall come. There was, when we thus regard their state, a possibility of their appearing as they did, for they had been reinvested with a glorified body, and were not like the rest of the glorified, existing as unclothed and invisible spirits. These two, then, appeared in glory speaking with Jesus on the mount? Why these? Jesus had shortly before announced to his disciples his purpose to found a new Church, with new terms of fellowship, and by that fact had seemed to separate them from the faith and hope of their fathers. They were told that the Church which they had been owning as the true one which the Lord was to visit and bless, would not only reject Christ, but put him to death. In cleaving to Christ they felt that they must be separated from that Jewish Church. But was not it the representative of Abraham, of Moses, and of the prophets? Such a fact was fitted to fill them with wonder and perplexity. Here was now the solution of the mystery. Here on this mount they see Moses himself, not rejecting Jesus, but doing him reverence. These scribes, and priests, and elders, then, must misrepresent Moses, and that Church of theirs must have become a synagogue of Satan. Jesus is here visibly in harmony with Moses; it is these Jews who have broken the harmony. This Church, then, which is to be built on the living confessors of Jesus, shall not be a separate Church, but shall be one with that of the fathers and confessors of old — the Church of Abraham, and of Moses, and of Elias." (Condensed from Wilson.) — TALKING WITH HIM. Luke says: *They spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.* "This was the grand theme which engaged their thoughts as they dwelt in that glory. It was a topic suited to the time. In it, indeed, was to be found an explanation of this wonderful appearance. That decease — that shameful death, of which the disciples had been afraid to think, as involving the

destruction of all their hopes — is a theme for converse within the gates of heaven itself. The cross begins already to radiate its glory. It is spoken of as a decease — a death not endured because the violence and injustice of man so willed it — not forced upon Jesus reluctantly, as a thing from which he could not escape — as if cruelty and unbelief were to obtain a final victory over all that is lovely and pure. They speak of it as a decease to be accomplished — a part of Christ's own work — the crowning and most glorious fact of his history — a thing which he would himself accomplish — that he had set himself to bear — the voluntary giving away of his life as a ransom for many." (Wilson.)

VERSE 4. THEN ANSWERED PETER. The verb *to answer* is a Hebraism, and does not always imply that what is said is in reply to something said before. It often means simply *to begin to speak*. From Luke we learn that Peter spoke at the moment when Moses and Elias were about to depart. The disciples had been overcome with sleep, and were, as it seems, awakened by the glorious appearance of the two heavenly messengers. Peter was evidently desirous to prolong this wonderful vision and its enjoyment; but the bewilderment under which he spoke — expressed by Luke in the words: "He knew not what he said;" Mark: "He wist not what to say: for they were sore afraid" — is evident from the strange proposal to erect tabernacles, that is, temporary booths, such as were used at the Feast of Tabernacles, for such celestial visitants. "Peter is ever the same impulsive man. We might have thought that the rebuke he had so recently received would have constrained him, for a season at least, to hold his peace. But this, to him, seems impossible. Whatever suggests itself to him must find expression. We can not help admiring this perfect openness and simplicity of character. We are sure always to know what is passing in his mind. It is not enough for him to look on, and meditate, and adore. He can not permit himself to stand outside as an on-looker, but must get into the very heart of the business. So was it with him on the stormy Sea of Galilee. He could not be satisfied with seeing Jesus walking there, but he must try it himself. So is it now in widely-different circumstances. He is not content to look on and wonder at the glorious scene presented to his view. He must have a hand in it. He must be employed somehow about it. One can not help admiring and loving such a character, ever so prompt and ready, entering so fully and heartily into every thing he does, and adapting himself so speedily to every change of scene and circumstance. This disposition, if it led him into some errors, earned for him also many distinctions. It characterized his whole

course of action, and marks him out distinctively from all the other disciples. It is a kind of intense human sympathy. He must get into close contact with the men in whose society he happens to be, by word or by deed. He gets into the very position of those around him, enters into their heart, and feelings, and objects, and identifies himself with them. We may find here the secret of the two grand errors of his life — his reproof of Jesus and his denial of him. It seemed to him, from this ardor and intense sympathy of his nature, as if, when Jesus spoke of dying, he also must die with him, as afterward he boldly and honestly declared his resolution to do. He had, at the moment, no idea of a life apart from Jesus, and therefore his alarm and his rash reproof. It was given under the belief that they were to share a common fate. Again, this feeling, which made him so strong at other times, proved his weakness in the high-priest's hall. This ardent, sympathetic man could not well stand alone. He must be thoroughly with those around him; and, accordingly, there, amid profane mockers, he denied Jesus with oaths and curses. At the present time, with his wonted ardor and promptitude, he enters into the scene before him. For a brief period after he had awaked, the awful and majestic scene appears to have subdued him to silence. But when this scene was apparently about to dissolve, in a moment he overcomes his terror and speaks. He has a proposal to make, which it seems to him will suit the occasion. In affairs belonging to this world, even in matters of life and death, he waits no warrant, and errs in his haste. But here he must have a word of Jesus to authorize him. He can not act without permission. He has been carried into an unknown and visibly-glorious land, in which he is yet a stranger, and he will not move a step without a warrant. Even his strong practical turn of mind compels him to wait for this. He does not know whether the expedients which are suited to another and homelier region may serve the purpose here. He wishes, indeed, to try, but he will not attempt it unless he is permitted." (Condensed from Wilson.)

VERSE 5. WHILE HE YET SPAKE, BEHOLD, A BRIGHT CLOUD OVERSHADOWED THEM — that is, the Lord, Moses, and Elias, so that they were concealed from the disciples' view. "While Peter was yet speaking, Jesus and the two glorified ones entered into it. This was their tabernacle, and they needed not that of Peter. The sanctuary within which they were inclosed was a tabernacle woven of the beams of Divine glory. Jesus and they become invisible in that intense light which is equivalent to darkness. The voice which is heard in it proclaims what the cloud is. It is the Shekinah restored — the

symbol of the Divine presence — the cloud into which Moses entered of old on Mount Sinai — the cloud which also rested on the tabernacle and on the Temple, and which was both bright and dark. The mediator of the new and better covenant enters into that bright cloud, and is, for a brief moment, again in the embrace of the Father. Most blessed and happy reunion! Blessed for the oppressed and heavy-laden soul of the man Christ Jesus — a reunion in which he receives new joy, and consequently new strength to finish his course. Most blessed harmony of heaven and earth, when Jehovah is well pleased in the anticipated triumph of Jesus Christ! Blessed, also, to heavy-laden souls, groaning under the burden of sin, and waiting earnestly for deliverance, because it proclaims a God already reconciled, and condescending again to dwell with men on earth. The thunders of an outraged and violated law are no more heard, and it is only the voice of a Father which is heard issuing from that bright cloud, "This is my beloved Son." (Condensed from Wilson.) — HEAR YE HIM. "In the same words the first lawgiver had promised a second and greater one. (Deut. xviii, 18.) It is the voice of the Father, who installs his Son as the spiritual Lawgiver, as the Sovereign of his kingdom, whom he commands us to obey. The Messiah, who thus far had taught and acted in obedience to his Divine commission, is now formally installed as the Lord and Head over all, before the representatives of heaven and earth. What the tempter had promised him (Matt. iv, 8) he receives now at the hands of the Creator of all things." (Lange.)

VERSES 6, 7. The voice that spoke out of the cloud had such an effect upon the disciples that THEY FELL ON THEIR FACE. (Comp. with this Dan. x, 8, 9; Rev. i, 17.) This was partly an act of reverential prostration in the presence of the Deity, partly the effect of fear. (Comp. Gen. xvi, 14; Ex. xx, 19; Judges xiii, 22; Isa. vi, 5.) — AND JESUS CAME AND TOUCHED THEM. (Comp. Isa. vi, 5-7; Dan. x, 9, 10; Rev. i, 17.) By touching the disciples he convinced them that he was still a real man, clothed in flesh and blood. "There is a restorative power in that touch and word. It lifts them up and imparts strength to them. And for us, as for them, there is no rising up from prostrate helplessness and that, except in this way. Struck down under a sense of sin, we do not arise and go to Jesus; he comes and touches us, and establishes his identity with us. We can not go for help — help comes to us — so near is Christ, and so infinitely gracious. When by the Spirit there has been revealed to us the Divine majesty and holiness, and when in the presence of that, we are self-emptied, without strength, prostrated in the dust, Christ comes

forth and touches us. We shall never find him otherwise than thus. How many have sought him long years in vain — groping their way to find salvation, and whose search has been fruitless; till worn out, exhausted, all resources and methods having been tried without avail, they have sat down in conscious helplessness, almost in despair — and then, when prostrate, with their faces on the ground, Jesus has touched them, and dispelled their fear, and made darkness light about them!" (Wilson.)

VERSE 8. "Now that the three disciples are again set on their feet, that glorious majesty which had filled their souls with terror is no longer visible. When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only. Is there not here also a profound spiritual truth? Does it not set forth the experience of the delivered and ransomed soul? At one moment, all is fear and conscious vileness. And now, again, under the gracious power of that touch of Jesus, it is he alone whom we see — our brother, our friend, our Savior. Now all is peace. The terror of the night is passed, the morning light has come, the Sun of Righteousness has arisen on us with healing in his wings. Then it was an angry God with whom we had to do, now it is a loving and gracious Savior. Our eyes see only him, and God's eye sees only him. Now there is no condemnation — we have passed from death to life and have peace with God, who in Jesus has become to us a Father. Most blessed and life-giving sight, to see Jesus alone — to feel his restoring, re-invigorating power — to have our eye fastened upon and filled with the vision of the Lamb of God — to be so near him, and so quickened by him!" (Wilson.)

VERSE 9. TELL THE VISION TO NO MAN. See introductory remarks. This prohibition amounts to this, that the disciples were not to speak of this temporary glorification of the Son of man, so long as he should continue in his state of humiliation. — Mark (ix, 10) says that "the disciples kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another *what the rising from the dead should mean.*" The resurrection of their Master was beyond their comprehension. They believed in the general resurrection; but that the Messiah, whom they had just seen in his heavenly glory, should rise from the dead, was altogether beyond the horizon of their comprehension, since they could not believe that he would or could die.

VERSE 10. The question of the disciples was naturally prompted by the appearance and disappearance of Elias, as well as by the silence imposed upon

them concerning their having seen him. Its meaning is: Since the appearance of Elias was only a transient one, and we are forbidden to say any thing concerning it, are we to infer from this that the scribes are wrong in saying that Elias must first come — that is, before the kingdom of the Messiah is established — or was this appearance of Elias his predicted coming?

VERSES 11, 12. ELIAS TRULY SHALL FIRST COME, AND RESTORE ALL THINGS. Stier and the literalist school of English premillenarians understand the Lord to speak here of a yet future coming of Elias; namely, with reference to the literal "restoration of the kingdom to Israel" at the second coming of Christ. But it is evident that — even if what the prophets declare concerning the future restoration of Israel is to be understood literally — our Lord would not speak of it in this connection. He uses the future tense simply from the stand-point of the prophets who predicted the coming of Elias, and immediately adds that this prophecy has been fulfilled. — **BUT I SAY UNTO YOU THAT ELIAS IS COME ALREADY.** Not, indeed, that Elias had personally come, but in conformity with the word of the angel to Zecharias before his birth, John the Baptist had gone before the Lord 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. He had gone forth preaching the doctrine of repentance, the restoration of that which was fallen and decayed — not to introduce a new economy, but to prepare for it by seeking to repair the desolate condition of Israel. This was his work — a work which, though it was unsuccessful in its results, as the work of Elijah had been when on earth, he executed with the same zeal. He was the Elias who was to come before the Lord, according to Mal. iv, 5, 6. The scribes, then, were right in saying, *Elias must first come*; but they were so blinded and prejudiced, so carnally-minded, that **THEY KNEW NOT HIM**, who came in the spirit and power of Elias. This infallible interpretation of the prophetic record by our Lord should furnish us with a key to the interpretation of all the prophecies of a like kind. It not only permits us to look for, but suggests that what we are to look for in prophetic fulfillment is not the letter but the spirit of prophecy — not the resuscitation of persons, but the revival of the spirit whereby holy men of old were animated, and of the work in which they were engaged. — **LIKEWISE: SHALL ALSO THE SON OF MAN SUFFER OF THEM.** By these words our Lord again foretells his rejection by the nation, linking the issue of his own ministry with that of John's.

§ 39. JESUS HEALS A LUNATIC BOY, MADE DUMB AND DEAF BY A DEMON, WHOM HIS DISCIPLES WERE UNABLE TO CAST OUT.

MARK gives the most circumstantial account of this miracle, which we must take into consideration to make a proper improvement of what Matthew records, who takes notice only of the main point, and relates more fully our Lord's answer to the disciples' question: "Why could we not cast him out?"

During the absence of Jesus, and of Peter, James, and John, a father had brought his only son, who was made deaf and dumb by a demon, to the disciples to be cured. But though they had been invested with miraculous powers, and had before exercised them successfully, they failed this time. "The scribes were pressing the advantage which they had gained by this miscarriage of the disciples to the uttermost. A great multitude, too, were gathered round, spectators of the defeat of the servants of Christ; and the strife was at the highest — the scribes, no doubt, arguing from the impotence of the servants to the impotence of the Master, and they denying the conclusion; when suddenly He, concerning whom the strife was, appeared, returning from the holy mount, his face and person yet glistening, as there is reason to suppose, with reminiscences and traces of the glory which had clothed him there — so that, '*all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed.*' Yet here the impression which that glory made was other than the impression of the countenance of Moses. When the multitude saw *him* as he came down from *his* mountain, the skin of his face shining, '*they were afraid to come nigh him,*' (Ex. xxxiv, 30,) for that glory upon his face was a threatening glory, the awful and intolerable brightness of the law. But the glory of God shining in the face of Christ Jesus, though awful too, was also an attractive glory, full of grace and beauty, drawing men to him, not driving them from him; and thus, indeed, '*all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed,*' such gleams of brightness played around him still; yet did they not therefore flee from him, but rather, as taken with that brightness, they '*running to him, saluted him.*' Yet the sight and sounds which greeted him on his return to our sinful world, how different were they from those which he had just left upon the holy mount! There the highest harmonies of heaven; here some of the wildest and harshest discords of earth. There he had been receiving honor and glory from the

Father; here his disciples, those to whom his work had been intrusted in his absence, had been procuring for him, as far as in them lay, shame and dishonor. But as when some great captain suddenly arriving upon a field of battle, where his subordinate lieutenants have well-nigh lost the day, and brought all into a hopeless confusion, with his eye measures at once the necessities of the moment, and with no more than his presence causes the tide of victory to turn, and every thing to right itself again, so was it now. The Lord arrests the advancing and victorious foe; he addresses himself to the scribes, and saying, '*What question ye with them?*' takes the baffled and hard-pressed disciples under his own protection, as if he had said to them: 'If you have any question, henceforth it must be with me.' But they to whom these words were spoken were slow to accept the challenge; for it was one from among the multitude, the father of the suffering child, which was his only one, who took up the word, and, kneeling down before Jesus, declared all his own misery and his son's." (Trench.)

Verses 14-21. (COMPARE MARK ix, 14-29; LUKE ix, 37-43.)

(14) AND when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, (15) Lord, have mercy on my son; for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. (16) And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. (17) Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. (18) And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. (19) Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? (20) And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you. (21) Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

VERSE 15. FOR HE IS LUNATIC. "All the symptoms, as put into the father's mouth, or described by the sacred historians, exactly agree with those

of epilepsy, which is affected by changes of the moon; not that we have here only an epileptic; but this was the ground on which the deeper spiritual evils of this child were superinduced. The fits were sudden and lasted remarkably long; the evil spirit 'hardly departeth from him;' 'a dumb spirit,' Mark calls it — a statement which does not contradict that of Luke, 'He suddenly crieth out.' This dumbness was only in respect of articulate sounds; he could give no utterance to these. Nor was it a natural defect, as where the string of the tongue has remained unloosed, (Mark viii, 32,) or the needful organs for speech are wanting — not a defect under which he had always labored, but the consequence of this possession. When the spirit took him in its might, then in these paroxysms of his disorder it tare him, till he foamed and gnashed with his teeth; and altogether he pined away like one the very springs of whose life were dried up. And while these accesses of his disorder might come upon him at any moment and in any place, they often exposed the unhappy sufferer to the worst accidents: 'Ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.' In Mark the father attributes these fits to the direct agency of the evil spirit: 'Ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him.'"

VERSE 17. When the father told the Lord of the ineffectual efforts which his disciples had made for his relief, he with a sorrowful indignation exclaimed: O, FAITHLESS AND PERVERSE GENERATION! These words were not directed exclusively to the disciples, but to all who were present at the scene; to the scribes, who rejoiced in the failure of the disciples, and had their share in it by their hardened unbelief; to the father of the child, whose faith was defective, for, in appealing to Jesus for help. He seemed still to doubt whether the Lord was able to cure an evil so deeply seated and of so long standing, (Mark ix, 22;) to the multitude who stood looking on. "Had the faith of the father been in active operation, the work he desired would have been done, for his confidence and hope would have restored the sinking hearts of the disciples, and brought them back to him who had given them power and authority over all devils to cast them out. Had the disciples believed, they would have felt, as of old, that the power and presence of Jesus were with them to heal, and they would have been delivered from their shame and disappointment. Their faith would have dispelled doubt from the heart of the father, even as Jesus now does, before he effects the cure. Had the multitude believed, the power of God would have been revealed in the midst of them. Their faithlessness hindered its exercise, even as we are elsewhere told of Jesus at Capernaum, that he could

do no mighty works there because of their unbelief. What happened here has been taking place front age to age in the history of the Church. The incapacity of the disciples, the stout resistance of the devil, their inability to destroy his works, and to limit his power, is surely no uncommon thing. It is not a matter of history merely, but of every-day experience. Every-where the devil is proving himself stronger than the disciples of Christ. He not only holds his own, but increases his power. The Church stands amazed and trembling in the presence of her spiritual adversaries. Iniquity cometh in like a flood. Heresies, delusions, blasphemies, and crimes manifold, intrench themselves behind impregnable bulwarks, and the Church has no artillery powerful enough to demolish them. The Gospel is preached, never, perhaps, so extensively as now — the words of exorcism, so to speak, are uttered every-where, but the Divine power to heal is fearfully wanting. The arm of the Lord seems to be shortened. The devil keeps possession of the soul, and is not subject to the word of healing, and some cry one thing, and some another — some apparently eager to detect the source of the mischief and to restore its lost power to the Gospel; while others proclaim that it has become effete and worn out, and resolve to try the exorcism of a new philosophy and social ameliorations, forgetting the while that what renders any amelioration necessary — the thing which produces the manifold social miseries, manifesting themselves in forms as disgusting and terrible as in the case of this poor, possessed child, is just that the devil is there asserting his supremacy, and displaying the cruel tyranny of his reign, and that nothing can be done effectively till he be cast out. And our modern scribes, with their proud mockery, speak of the powerlessness of the Gospel, and glory over its prostrate strength. The world is very much in the state now in which that multitude were when Jesus descended among them from the Mount of Transfiguration. The eyes of the blind are not opened, and the deaf are not made to hear, nor the dumb to speak — the dead are not raised, and no mighty works attest the presence and power of him who binds Satan, and wrenches from him his prey; and the enemies of Jesus are glorying in their strength! The cry has been raised, O for an earnest ministry! By all means, nothing is more urgently needed, nothing can be more vitally important. But you can not get an earnest ministry without having something besides. These nine disciples had been earnest and successful ministers. But now they are weak and helpless — their faith is overborne by the unbelief which encompasses them. They speak, but the devil is no longer subject to their word. Let us look to this rebuke of Jesus. 1. It falls upon that unhappy father of a sorely-afflicted child, and so also

upon the parents of this generation. Do you think that life and grace will come to your homes from the pulpit only? It can not do so. The pulpit may sustain, help, stimulate, and direct you, but it can not take the charge and responsibility out of your hands. To you primarily it belongs to train your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to wrestle for them, to travail in soul, till Christ be formed in them — by fasting, by prayer, to cast out the devil — to invoke the presence of God in your homes, and the gracious power of his Spirit — to bear your children under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty. Even when Jesus returned from the mount, there was no deliverance for this child till faith had been awakened in the father's heart. And in your case it will be even so. Only believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. 2. But the parent, in his turn, needs to be sustained and stimulated in this gracious work. In such a matter always there is the same mutual action as in the case of this parent and the disciples. His faith would have awakened theirs — their faith would have excited his. Faith being lively and strong in neither party, the gracious work remained undone. So it is now. Parents, it may be, are struggling against manifold temptations and difficulties, amid efforts which constantly try their patience, and depress their hope, and weaken the energy of their faith. They see how rapidly and strongly evil develops itself in the souls of their children — how powerful the hold of Satan is — what vanity is bound up in their hearts — and thus depressed, discouraged, and faint-hearted, they come to the Church to the ministers of Christ's Word, and bring their children there. Alas! if *there* also faith be feeble — if there be no word of strength and restoration — if in the mouth of Christ's ambassadors that Word has become all empty sound! 3. But this is not all. According to the laws of the kingdom of grace, a faithless Church can not have a faithful ministry. The warmest affections may be chilled and repressed, and the liveliest faith rendered inoperative, in the face of a cold, dead, unbelieving people, who have no interest in God's message, and no desire for his salvation — who sit at their ease in Zion, and say each to himself, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. In such circumstances the arm of the Lord is arrested, and to an unbelieving people the Lord gives a faithless, slumbering ministry. They need, in order to do their work well, to be sustained by the faith and prayers of their people. The apostle Paul, the most successful minister of Christ that ever lived, felt and owned that his power lay here. He says, 'Finally, brethren, pray for us that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.' Evidently he felt that if the prayers of the people were restrained, the Word of God would be bound. That Word

was magnified among the Thessalonians because they prayed. So it is now, and has been in all ages. The Lord performs not his mighty works among a gain-saying and unbelieving people. Let us all, then, hear this word of reproof, 'O, faithless generation!' and let parents, and ministers, and people, by humiliation, confession, contrition, and prayer, seek that Satan may be stripped of his power, and that the Word of God may have free course; and this period of the Church's history shall be a memorable one, not only in our experience, but in the annals of eternity." (Condensed from Wilson.) — How LONG SHALL I BE WITH YOU? HOW LONG SHALL I SUFFER YOU? "Only he can speak thus," says Stier, "who, as the Holy One among sinners, bore the burden of all, and whose whole life was, in the innermost sense, from the very first, a profound suffering, by feeling and bearing the sins of those around him. Thus this his word, spoken immediately after the manifestation of his glory, reveals to us the depth of his human endurance, the pain of Divine love in his human nature. If we had not this word, and that other in Luke xii, 50, we should want the true, entire insight into the self-denying, atoning-nature of his whole earthly course in our flesh and blood. What complainings, known only to the Father, does this single expression, which he neither can nor will restrain, presuppose?"

VERSE 18. The circumstantial account of the cure, see in Mark.

VERSES 19, 20. "The disciples do not care to mention the difficulty which still perplexed them, in the presence of the multitude. They take Jesus, therefore, apart to ask him how it happened that they were unable to cast out this evil spirit. It is evident that they are yet very slow to understand. They have not rightly gathered up the meaning of what Jesus had spoken, both to the father of the victim and to the multitude, else they would have found that their question had been already answered. The truth which he had spoken to these parties was also a truth for them. But their minds had been seeking a solution of the mystery in far other directions. As almost always happens, they did not expect to find the cause of their failure in themselves. There were many other quarters in which it was possible to seek it. This might be a spirit more powerful than any they had hitherto encountered, or the fault might lie in the son, or in the father who sought their help. Jesus at once undeceives them. It was your unbelief that disabled you. The same sin and weakness which I have reproved in others belongs also to you. Had you believed there would have been no failure, for faith is always armed with invincible strength. The smallest amount

of it is able to accomplish the mightiest works, for by faith the power of God is called into exercise." (Wilson.) — YE SHALL SAY UNTO THIS MOUNTAIN, REMOVE HENCE, etc. On this passage Dr. Whedon makes the following pertinent comment: "The faith here spoken of supposes a concurrence between God and man on the part of God a *mission or duty assigned to the man*, for which the power of faith is granted; and without this true faith is impossible. On the part of man there must be *exercised* all the granted faith-power by which he puts forth the act or pursues the course which is opened in the way of duty before him. When these two things combine, it is literally true that *any thing is possible*. If the man's mission be to remove the Andes into the Pacific, it can be done. If there be no duty to it, there can be no true faith for it; and the attempt to do it would not be faith, but rash self-will. God gives no man faith wherewith to play miraculous pranks. On the other hand, if there be the duty and the God-given power of faith, and yet it be not exercised with the full strength of heart and the firm trust in God which knows the impossibility will be done, no miracle shall follow. This the disciples had not." To the same effect is also the remark of Lange: "Faith can only accomplish what it has recognized in Divine certainty as the will of God, but what it has thus recognized it accomplishes with Divine certainty. Faith makes no experiments; what it undertakes is already decided by God. If a man undertakes to remove mountains without faith, he deserves blame, just as the disciples did." — AND NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO YOU. These words show that, although the "removing of mountains" may be a figurative form of expression, yet this figurative language implies, by no means, more than the Lord actually desired to say. The omnipotence of God is placed into the hand of faith. Stier remarks, very properly, that the Lord speaks of miracles of God's power in nature, in order to rebuke the false belief which is so deeply seated in the human heart, that the so-called laws of nature are superior to or independent of the will of God, and in order to strengthen our faith for the greater miracles of Divine grace in the human heart. "It is a more difficult work to root out sin from the heart, to dispossess the spirit of evil from the soul in which it has long reigned, than to remove a mountain. God is making this truth manifest in his own manner of working. The work of creation was effected by a word; that of redemption is being accomplished in a long succession of ages. When, by the work of thousands of years, he has prepared his people, the new heavens and the new earth will be transformed for them in a day. Faith does not literally remove mountains, but it has a higher and nobler work. It works for the

kingdom of God, and that kingdom is not promoted by such marvels. The mountains which it removes are those which sin has raised in the human heart."

VERSE 21. HOWBEIT, THIS KIND GOETH NOT OUT [that is, is not cast out] BUT BY PRAYER AND FASTING. Our Lord does not mean to say that prayer and fasting were, in addition to faith, the efficient means of casting out this particular kind of demons. Demons, of whatsoever kind they are, are cast out by faith; but prayer and fasting belong to every act of faith that removes mountains, and this in proportion to the greatness of the obstacle that is to be removed by faith. The meaning of the Lord's words, therefore, is that they lacked sufficient faith to expel the demon, because they had not properly strengthened their faith by fasting and prayer. Very appropriate is the remark of Lange: "Whoever wishes to remove mountains must enter into God's will by prayer, and, in the same degree, free himself from the world by fasting. Thus being in unison with God and opposed to the world, nothing will be impossible to him. The greater the evil is which he labors to remove, the more he must make use of these two auxiliaries in the life of faith." He that lives a life of prayer lives a life of faith, and the prayer of faith is never unavailing in whatever we undertake. Prayer itself is facilitated by fasting, sobriety, and temperance in all things, while an opposite mode of life strengthens the flesh and weakens the spirit. Proper fasting makes the spirit more independent of the body, and thus man becomes better prepared to exert a saving influence upon others.

§ 40. THE LORD'S SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DEATH
AND RESURRECTION, PAYMENT OF THE TEMPLE TAX.

Verses 22-27.

(22) **AND while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:** (23) **And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.** (24) **And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?** (25) **He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?** (26) **Peter saith unto him, Of strangers.** Jesus

saith unto him, Then are the children free. (27) Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

VERSES 22, 23. AND WHILE THEY ABODE IN GALILEE — literally, while they were going about or passing through Galilee. Mark (ix, 30) says: "And they departed thence, [that is, from the region of Cesarea Philippi,] and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it: for he taught his disciples." Our Lord wishes to be alone with his disciples, to impress upon them still more what he had told them concerning his approaching death and resurrection; and for the purpose of a solemn review of all they had seen and heard of him, he takes them back to those places where they could most vividly recall the principal scenes of his ministry. — **JESUS SAID UNTO THEM.** According to Luke (ix, 44) he prefaced his second announcement of his suffering and death by the words: "Let these sayings sink down into your ears." — **THE SON OF MAN SHALL BE BETRAYED INTO THE HANDS OF MEN.** Luke says: "The Son of man *shall be* delivered into the hands of men." Mark: "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men." While the other Evangelists speak simply of his being delivered up into the hands of his murderers, Matthew gives us, additionally, the first announcement of the treachery by which our Lord was to be delivered up into the hands of the Jewish rulers. The delivering up of the Son of man is represented by Mark as already being done, in the same sense in which Peter declared to the Jews: "*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*" As he, however, was not yet delivered up in fact till men had seized and slain him, Luke speaks of it as yet future. — **AND THEY WERE EXCEEDING SORRY.** Mark (ix, 32) says: "But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." Luke, (ix, 45:) "But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying." Unable to understand how Christ, the Son of the living God, the holy, sinless Son of man, could be subject to death, they thought their Master's words must have some metaphorical meaning, but as he had spoken in so plain terms to them, they were afraid to put any further questions to him.

VERSE 24. AND WHEN THEY WERE COME TO CAPERNAUM.

"Let us remember that Jesus, traveling from Cesarea Philippi, had come southward into Galilee, and, with the disciples, was living retired from intercourse with other men, seeking a season for them and for himself of solemn meditation. In the course of their journeying they came to Capernaum, for that was the city in which Peter had his home, and which Jesus had so often visited, and in which he had dwelt so long, that it had come to be called his own city. Here necessarily they come into contact with men, though it is noticeable that, on this occasion, there is no crowding round the footsteps of Jesus, no urgent solicitations for his aid, no sick waiting to be healed. They come now into this town unnoticed and unsaluted — a very remarkable fact at this era in Christ's history, and importing either a supernatural influence exerted over the minds of the people, in order to leave the disciples still free to meditate even there, or, what is more probable, that these people were shutting themselves up in the darkness of unbelief, because they had not known the time of their merciful visitation. This fact itself also was fitted to deepen and extend the spirit of reflective meditation in the minds of the disciples. The only salutation they meet with is that recorded in the text." — **THEY THAT RECEIVED [the] TRIBUTE-MONEY CAME TO PETER AND SAID, DOTH NOT YOUR MASTER PAY TRIBUTE?** The Greek word, translated *tribute-money*, is **τὰ δίδραχμα**. This didrachm was exactly the sum which we find mentioned in Ex. xxx, 11-16, as the ransom of the soul, to be paid by every Israelite above twenty years old, to the service and current expenses of the tabernacle. From 2 Kings xii, 4, and 2 Chron. xxiv, 6-9, we find that this impost was kept up for the maintenance of the Temple. Originally it seems designed to have been paid only on the comparatively-rare occasions of numbering the people, but it grew, in course of time, into an annual payment. After the Babylonish captivity, at all events, it assumed the character of an annual tax. In Nehemiah x, 32, it is spoken of as an annual payment. The amount, indeed, is specified at only one-third of a shekel, for the service of the house of God; but this restriction on the amount may be regarded as a kind of compromise necessitated by the distresses incident to the recent return from captivity, and the hostilities to which they were exposed from their neighbors. Josephus mentions that it was an annual payment in his time; and Philo, who also tells us how conscientiously and ungrudgingly it was paid by the Jews of the dispersion, as well as by those of Palestine, so that, in almost every city there was a sacred treasury for the collection of these dues, some of which came from cities beyond the limits of

the Roman Empire. It was only after the destruction of Jerusalem that the Roman Emperor Vespasian caused this capitation tax to be henceforward paid into the imperial treasury, instead of the treasury of the Temple, which now no longer existed. Of this Emperor, Josephus says: "He imposed a tribute on the Jews, wheresoever they lived, requiring each to pay yearly two drachms to the Capitol, as before they were wont to pay them to the Temple at Jerusalem." It becomes sufficiently evident from this testimony that at the period of Christ's earthly ministry this tax was paid annually by all the devout Jews for the service of the Temple. The text does not say that it was the publicans who came asking this tribute of Peter. Those men who came do not demand payment as a right which they could enforce. They merely put the question, "Doth not your master pay tribute?" Such a mode of putting it is just what we might expect, when payment was not a thing of legal compulsion, but a voluntary act of legal piety. It is equivalent to saying: Is your master a good and pious son of Abraham? is he willing to give this proof of his friendly regard to the Temple and its services, and the God who is there worshiped? Peter might have answered no, without another result than this, that his master would have been set down as one indifferent, or as an enemy to the Temple service, which was just the thing the Pharisees and scribes were anxious to charge against him. They avoid the Master himself, which a publican would scarcely have done." The question of the tax-gatherer seems to show that he had not previously collected it of the Lord. It is very probable that up to this time no tax had been demanded of Jesus, he being regarded as a prophet, and that the demand was now made, for the first time, at the instigation of his enemies. It is also said that the Rabbins were exempt from it. Others think that it was the long absence of the Lord from Capernaum which caused the question of the receivers.

VERSE 25. HE SAITH, YES. The Lord had either paid this tribute before, or Peter inferred, from the general respect paid by Christ to all religious duties, that he would pay it; and doubtless he would have paid it at once himself, if he had had the means at hand. "Yet there was here, on the part of the apostle," says Trench, "a failing to recognize the higher dignity of his Lord. It was not in this spirit that he had said a little while before: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' He had lost sight of his Lord's true position and dignity, that he was a Son over his own house, not a servant in another's house; that he was the Head of the theocracy, not one of its subordinate members. It was not for him, who was 'greater than the Temple,' and himself the true

Temple, (John ii, 21,) identical with it according to its spiritual significance, and in whom the Shekinah glory dwelt, to pay dues for the support of that other Temple built with hands, which was now fast losing its significance, since the true tabernacle was set up, which the Lord had pitched, and not man. It is, then, for the purpose of bringing back Peter, and with him the other disciples, to the true recognition of himself, that the Lord puts to him the question which follows; and being engaged, through Peter's hasty imprudence, to the rendering of the didrachm, yet by the manner of the payment he re-asserts the true dignity of his person, which it was of all importance for the disciples that they should not lose sight of or forget. The miracle, then, was to supply a real need — slight, indeed, as an outward need, for the money could assuredly have been in some other and more ordinary ways procured; but as an inner need, most real: in this, then, differing in its essence from the apocryphal miracles, which are continually mere sports and freaks of power, having no ethical motive or meaning whatever." — AND WHEN HE WAS COME INTO THE HOUSE, JESUS PREVENTED HIM; that is, anticipated his communication, showing that he was acquainted with it already. — WHAT THINKEST THOU, SIMON? On what principle hast thou been promising this for me? — OF WHOM DO THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TAKE CUSTOM OR TRIBUTE? The Greek word for the tribute is κῆνσος, not τὰ δίδραχμα. Our Lord argues from the less to the greater, from things earthly to things heavenly. The kings of the earth seem to be mentioned in contrast with the King of heaven, as in Ps. ii, 2. — OF THEIR OWN CHILDREN, OR OF STRANGERS? Kings do not tax their own children. The term *strangers* means here simply those that are not their children, that stand not in so near a relation to the king.

VERSE 26. THEN ARE THE CHILDREN [literally, the sons] FREE. God is the King of the Temple; consequently his Son is free from the Temple tax. It is significant, however, that the Lord does not say, "Then I am free, as the Son of God," but that he extends the right of exemption, which properly speaking belonged to him alone as the Son, also to his disciples, as it were, sons with him! They are no longer servants, like the legal Jews, but children of God, members of the kingdom, and as such exempt from all compulsory contributions toward the support of the Temple. (Comp. ch. xii, 8.) They belong to a higher dispensation than those for whom the payment of the Temple tax was enacted.

VERSE 27. NOTWITHSTANDING LEST WE SHOULD OFFEND THEM; that is, lest we should make them believe that we despise the Temple. Although the Savior was fully conscious of being superior to the Old Testament economy, (ch. xii, 8,) yet he submitted to it in every respect, neither setting aside nor exempting himself from any point of the established Temple service, till he had finished his work upon earth. Since he was not recognized as the Son of God beyond the narrow circle of his friends, he graciously takes into consideration the offense which his refusal to pay the tribute would have given, as if he and his disciples despised the Temple. If he insists in some instances upon it, that he has as the Messiah the power to subordinate some regulations of the law to his will, (see ch. xii, 8; comp. John vii, 21, etc.,) it must be borne in mind that he did it in repelling the attacks of his adversaries, for which purpose it was absolutely necessary to maintain his Messianic right to complete or perfect the law, (ch. v, 17.) — THOU SHALT FIND A PIECE OF MONEY, in Greek a *stater*, an Attic coin, equal to four silver drachmae, or sixty cents in our money; the Temple tax being thirty cents per head, it was just enough for Jesus and Peter. All attempts to get rid of a miracle, and to make the Evangelist to be telling an ordinary transaction, as the scheme for instance of Paulus, who will have it that the Lord bade Peter go and catch as many fish as would sell for the required sum, need no refutation. We have also seen that the miracle had a deep moral significance, and was called for by special circumstances. If our Lord had not paid the money, they would have charged him with contempt of the Temple; if he had paid it in an ordinary way, he would have compromised his Messianic dignity, which under the circumstances was called in question. From making use of the fisherman Peter to perform this miracle on a fish, we may also infer that our Lord intended to make an indelible impression upon him. The issue of the bidding is not told us, but we can not doubt that Peter went to the neighboring lake, cast in his hook, and found, according to Christ's word, the money that was needed in the mouth of the first fish that ascended from the deeper waters to his hook. "The miracle does not lie only in a foreknowledge on the Lord's part that so it should be in the first fish which came up; but he himself, by the mysterious potency of his will, which ran through all nature, drew the particular fish to that spot at that moment, and ordained that it should swallow the hook. (Compare Jonah i, 17.) 'The Lord *had prepared* a great fish to swallow up Jonah.' Thus we see the sphere of animal life unconsciously obedient to his will; that also is not *out* of God, but moves *in* him, as does every other creature. (1 Kings xiii, 24; xx, 36; Amos ix,

3.)" (Trench.) — FOR ME AND THEE. The Lord never puts himself on the same footing with his disciples. (Comp. John xx, 17.) The preposition, translated *for*, signifies literally in place of, and is another proof that the tribute money here spoken of was the redemption money, commanded in Ex. xxx, 12. Peter was a resident of Capernaum, as Jesus himself was to a certain extent. The other disciples had nothing to pay at Capernaum, because they did not reside there.

CHAPTER XVIII.

§ 41. CHRIST ENJOINS UPON HIS DISCIPLES THAT WHICH SHOULD EVER CHARACTERIZE THE MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH.

WHAT Matthew records in this chapter of our Lord's instructions falls naturally into three divisions, which are connected with each other by one fundamental idea; they all treat of true brotherly love that proceeds from humility. The question of the disciples, which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of God, induces the Lord to show unto them that his kingdom, his Church, would be the very opposite of the kingdoms of this world. "The foundation of his kingdom," says Lange, "*is* the willingness to serve in love. (Vs. 1-14.) Upon this foundation the Church must exhibit a holy severity by maintaining proper discipline on the one hand, (vs. 15-20,) and on the other a holy leniency by her readiness to forgive penitent offenders. (Vs. 21-35.)"

A. HUMILITY — THE SOURCE OF TRUE BROTHERLY LOVE.

Instead of steadily keeping before their minds the subject of meditation, which Christ gave them, namely, his twice-predicted suffering and death, the disciples seem to have tenaciously clung to the hope that their Master would before long vindicate his Messiahship against his enemies by setting up his kingdom, more or less in accordance with their Jewish notions. This hope had no doubt been greatly confirmed by what our Lord had said in answer to Peter's confession and by the declaration, that some would not taste of death till they should see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. It, therefore, naturally became a question of personal interest to them who should fill the

highest places in that kingdom, the more so, as their Master had made a distinction among them, by permitting only Peter and James and John to accompany him on the mountain, where they had seen and heard things of which they were not permitted yet to speak. There arose, consequently, on the way before they came to Capernaum (Mark ix, 34) a dispute, *which should be the greatest among them*. After his conversation with Peter about the payment of the Temple tax — which was well adapted to prepare the disciples for the instruction Jesus is about to give them on humility, inasmuch as he, rather than to raise a dispute with the people about his immunities and dignities, consented, though the acknowledged Son of God, to be dealt with as a servant in his Father's house by paying the redemption money — our Lord, knowing (according to Luke ix, 47) the feeling by which they were moved, asked them (according to Mark) what they had been disputing about by the way. They, obviously abashed by his question — from which as well as from the subsequent admonitions (compare Mark) we may infer that their dispute had been animated, and that they had probably wounded each other's feelings by angry words — at first make no reply. But afterward, considering that the Lord knew already what they had been disputing about, they took courage to put to Jesus, apart from their personal dispute, the general question, *who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* Though there is an apparent discrepancy in the statements of the three Evangelists, there is evidently nothing contradictory in them. Luke's account is the shortest; Mark gives the warning against offenses with its occasion most fully, but Matthew gives some minor points that are wanting in Mark. As appears from Mark and Luke, the discourse was interrupted by a question of John on another subject. "But," says Stier, "as the Lord was not diverted by this interruption from pursuing the train of his thoughts, till the question of the disciples is fully answered and disposed of, so Matthew is not diverted from laying before us the words of Christ, spoken on this occasion, as a well-connected and significant whole."

Verses 1-14. (COMPARE MARK ix, 33-50; LUKE ix, 46-50.)

(1) AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (2) And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, (3) and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye

shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (4) Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (5) And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. (6) But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (7) Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh! (8) Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. (9) And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. (10) Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. (11) For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. (12) How think ye? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? (13) And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. (14) Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

VERSE 1. What preceded this question has already been stated in the introductory remarks. — Who is THE GREATEST [literally, who, *then*, is *the greater*] IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? "The particle *then*, unfortunately omitted in our common version, shows that the question in Matthew grew out of just such an incident as is fully narrated by Mark." (Owen.) This question indicates that the disciples had not yet a proper conception of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. Our Lord teaches them that while in the kingdoms of the world all strive to attain the highest rank, in his kingdom one shall rise only in the degree in which he humbles himself to raise others. Incidentally we may also infer from the question of the disciples, that they had not understood the words addressed to Peter (ch. xvi, 19) in the sense of the Church of Rome; they were as yet quite uncertain as to who

should be the prince of the apostles, whether it would be one of the Lord's brothers, or the disciple whom Jesus loved, or Peter.

VERSE 2. AND JESUS CALLED A LITTLE CHILD UNTO HIM, (*παιδίον*) here evidently a little boy, small enough to be taken in the arms, as Mark relates, and large enough to understand and follow a call. It seems also, as Stier justly remarks, that it was a very well-bred child, that came at once at the call of the friendly stranger and did not object to being set by him in the midst of twelve other strangers. That, however, not the character of this individual child — tradition says that it was the martyr Ignatius — but that of children in general is spoken of, needs scarcely to be mentioned. "Jesus makes this one child the representative of the childlike character in general as a type and pattern for the members of the kingdom of God. Although the general depravity of human nature shows itself also in the child, yet humility, the absence of all assumption, is characteristic of childhood; the prince is not ashamed of playing with the beggar's child. This trait is here the point of comparison, the more so as a child is not conscious of its humility." (Olshausen.)

VERSE 3. EXCEPT YE BE CONVERTED; that is, literally, except ye turn, namely, from that disposition of mind which makes you seek pre-eminence or power over others. "Conversion in a general sense," remarks Dr. Whedon, "implies our being *turned* by the influence of truth and the Divine Spirit, with the consenting act of our own will from our course as sinners to the ways of religion." — AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN; that is, in self-obliviousness and simplicity. The absence of self-importance and self-seeking in little children is no proof of their not partaking of the general depravity of human nature, inasmuch as it is the *natural* consequence of their helplessness and dependence on others. This sense of helplessness and dependence on others being naturally wanting in adults, the latter come to this childlike disposition only through a moral process, through an act of humble self-renunciation and dependence upon God. — YE SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Instead of occupying a position of eminence in the kingdom of God, ye are altogether unfitted for it, except ye attain to the very reverse of the disposition, which you have just shown by your dispute.

VERSE 4. WHOSOEVER, THEREFORE, SHALL HUMBLE HIMSELF. The future indicates that the disciples needed a change of mind to make them humble. — **AS THIS LITTLE CHILD** — not as this little child humbles itself, but as this little child is naturally humble. — **THE SAME IS THE GREATEST;** that is, greater than others, according as he is more humble than others. There are, indeed, different degrees of honor and bliss in the kingdom of God. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv, 39-41.) But God's rule is the very opposite of that of men. Among men he stands highest in honor and influence, that knows to make the most of himself — that pushes himself forward, and makes people talk of him; but God will look to the humble; he has respect unto the lowly. "An injunction of humility was the first word taught in the Sermon on the Mount, when he opened his mouth and said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' It was the special lesson of his whole life. To him, beyond all question, belonged the highest place in the kingdom. In what way did he reach it? Even by the very path which he now indicates to them and to us — by becoming the least of all and the servant of all. It is this which determines the dignity and glory of the future state. Christ, the Son of the living God, the king of this kingdom, has become the lowest of all — has descended, and will yet descend, into greater depths — has given up all to become possessed of all, and will die in order to live. He has become the servant of all, even of the lowest and most abject and degraded — the servant as well as the friend of publicans and sinners. This universal service is the glory of the crucified One, and for us there is no other pathway to glory." (Wilson.)

VERSE 5. AND WHOSO SHALL RECEIVE ONE SUCH LITTLE CHILD. The question of the disciples is answered. But the Lord proceeds to show his disciples that from true humility proceeds that love which does not despise or neglect one such little child, by which term we have to understand one that appears as insignificant as a little child, or one that has become as humble and unassuming as the child in question. The word "little child" is used in a general sense, and in contrast with the apparently great. To understand what the Savior says, in verses 5-14, of little children in a natural sense, is evidently forbidden by the scope and object of the discourse, which was occasioned by the disciples' question in verse 1. At the same time, verses 5, 10, and 14 may be practically applied also to little children in the natural sense of the word. — **SHALL RECEIVE.** Receiving is the opposite of a cold neglect, or a haughty turning off. — **IN MY NAME;** that is, on my account, for

my sake. (Comp. xxv, 40.) Between this and the following verse falls the question of John, recorded by Mark and Luke, respecting a person who had cast out demons, and had been forbidden to do so by the disciples, because he did not belong to their number. The internal connection of this question with the discourse under consideration will be considered in Mark.

VERSE 6. BUT WHOSO SHALL OFFEND ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES, WHICH BELIEVE IN ME. The idea of "offending the little ones" follows very properly that of receiving them, (v. 5;) it expresses, in fact, only its other side, and the meaning of these words is, accordingly, the little ones are so dear unto the Lord that what is done for them he considers and rewards as done unto himself, and whoever does them harm is severely punished for it by the Lord himself. The giving of offense or causing to sin seems to refer here, as appears from the connection in Mark, especially to a hierarchical spirit, a lording over the little ones. "The avoiding of offenses obviously involves the same principle as brotherly love, and is even more evidently the offspring of humility. For the chief source of division and strife, the cause or occasion of offense among men, has been the assertion of self. He who walks humbly with God — whose interests have all become identified with Jesus Christ, because he has heard the Lord's voice, and is resting trustfully and in conscious helplessness on the bosom of Jesus — such a disciple is not likely to offend his brethren. It is when pride takes the place of humility, when a believer forsakes the Lord, and seeks the promotion of his own ends, and the gratification of his own ambition, that he becomes offensive to other disciples. Christian faith always implies brotherhood — equality, and not lordship — the consecration of all gifts and graces, with a humble heart, to the service of Jesus Christ. It does not imply sameness, nor hinder the utmost diversity of gifts, opportunities, capability and usefulness in the Church, but it implies that the believer lives in and by Christ, and that he and the least endowed are alike servants of a common Lord, to whom they are indebted for every thing, and in whose service they are willing to expend all they have." (Wilson.) — **IT WERE BETTER FOR ME.** The meaning is, a man had better suffer the most dreadful death than to live on, to commit the sin of offending one of Christ's little ones. To be cast into the deep sea, with a large millstone round the neck, so that even the body is irrecoverable, was a proverbial expression for a certain and most terrible death.

VERSE 7. WOE UNTO THE WORLD BECAUSE OF OFFENSES!

The common interpretation of this passage is that a woe is pronounced upon the world on account of the offenses which it gives, that is, the obstructions it lays in the way of the spread of the kingdom of God, either by its persecutions or by its corrupting influences. Lange is the only commentator who interprets the passage differently, taking the word *woe* rather as an exclamation of pity than a denunciation of judgment, and understanding the words thus: "*Alas for the world, on account of the offenses which it receives from false members of the Church!*" — FOR IT MUST NEEDS BE THAT OFFENSES COME. "Luke has: 'It is impossible but that offenses will come;' and Paul says: 'There *must* be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.' There are two facts here which all philosophy is bound to accept as verities, but which no philosophy can logically reconcile. One is *Divine prescience* and the other is *human responsibility*. Here is *Divine prescience*. 'It must needs be that offenses come.' Christ foresaw all the opposition that in all future ages should arise to retard the onward march of his religion in the world. He knew that the eternal antagonism between the '*two seeds*' would produce these 'offenses.' He knew that the more his truth spread the more offenses would come; as the brighter and warmer the sun the more insects crowd the air. But foreknowing does not involve *foreordaining*. He foresees all future evil; but he does not predetermine it. All his predestination in the matter is, that souls shall be *free*; free to obey and disobey; free to do evil and good. Here is *human responsibility*. Though 'offenses' *must* come, 'woe unto that man by whom they come.' The same idea comes out in Christ's statement concerning Judas: 'The Son of man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed.' Sin may appear a *necessity* in our poor logic, but it is not so in our *consciousness*. We feel that the sinful act is ours; that we are its originating cause; that our moral instincts will not allow us to charge it upon any object out of us, upon any decree concerning us, or upon any arrangements antecedent to us. The simple act is ours. We *feel it*. Hence our self-crimination and remorse. No argument can destroy the feeling. Though Heaven foresaw all the demons in our nature that have figured in human history, and all the wicked deeds, even to the utmost *minutiae*, they were not the less demons on that account. Do not ask me to reconcile Divine prescience or Divine pre-ordination with human freedom and human responsibility. I can not — no one has ever done so; no one can; he does not know his mental position in the

universe who dares attempt it." (Homilist.) — BUT WOE TO THAT MAN BY WHOM THE OFFENSE COMETH. "Woe to the man, even were he an apostle," says Stier, "he is an *offense* and a devil among the twelve. Perhaps, as was the case at other times, at the anointing of Christ in Bethany, Judas may have been the originator, or at least the promoter, of the evil thoughts connected with the unhappy dispute among the disciples. This, however, is only conjectural and uncertain. With more certainty we may apply the word of Christ most justly to another. Woe unto him who pretends to be the greatest in the kingdom of God, the pretended successor of Peter, the overbearing 'servant of all servants of God,' who with false key shuts the kingdom of heaven, offends and corrupts the faithful — nay, builds up, instead of the Church of Christ, a world full of offenses, as the Babylon which is afterward to be thrown down, as a millstone is cast into the sea. (Rev. xviii, 21.)"

VERSES 8, 9. If we understand by "the offenses," in verse 7, the offenses which the world gives, the connection would be: "If the Church, in resisting and overcoming her external foes, is strengthened and purified, how much more will it be so in the conflict between the flesh and the spirit within a man's own soul! Do not, therefore, be ever looking outward in order to detect and to complain of the offenses which come upon you. It may be that the offense is within yourself." But if we adopt Lange's view, our Lord proceeds to show his disciples how they may become stumbling-blocks to others, by suffering their hands, feet, or eyes to be a stumbling-block for themselves. With the exception of the offending foot, the same caution had been given before in the Sermon on the Mount. (Chap. v, 29, 30.) But here the offending members have a different meaning. The Sermon on the Mount speaks of offenses — that is, allurements to sin through the outward senses — while the members mentioned seem to represent *here* certain states of the mind or heart. Lange has the following comment: "If, in interpreting these figurative expressions, we take the occasion into account, which is recorded by Mark, it appears probable that John was in danger of committing a sin through an improper use of his hand; that is, by a wrong manifestation of his energetic character. He attempted, in his zeal, to exercise discipline with unwonted severity. Jesus counsels him, therefore, to cut off the offending hand, that is, to restrain his too violent temper. But as for one disciple the hand can easily become a cause of offense, so for another the eye, the organ of light, the organ for receiving and imparting instruction; for false doctrines proceed generally from the unrestrained, dogmatical zeal of such as

have more calling to serve the Church with their hands and feet than with their eyes. (James iii, 1.) Again, a disciple may mistake his particular calling with regard to the cause of evangelical missions, the work of his feet. It may be that, instead of becoming a missionary in the true sense, his zeal degenerates into a proselyting spirit." As to the meaning of cutting off, plucking out, see chap. v, 29, 30, and Mark ix, 43-48.

VERSE 10. Hitherto our text has been parallel with that of Mark ix. The remainder of the discourse is given by Matthew alone. — **THEIR ANGELS IN HEAVEN.** Some interpreters understand by *their angels* the disembodied spirits of little children after death; but the Scripture no where uses the word *angel* in this sense. In support of this view the passage in Acts xii, 15, can not be appealed to; for the notion that it was Peter's angel was founded on the general belief that the guardian angel of a man resembled that man in appearance. Moreover, how could the Lord have said, "They always behold the face of my Father," representing the act as going on *then*, if he had understood by the *angels* the spirits of those children after their death, which had not yet taken place? It is evident, therefore, that our Lord speaks here of guardian angels. That the angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," (Heb. i, 14,) is an explicit doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. But this is the only passage from which we may infer that. each child of God has some angel, specially devoted to his service. "This idea is *reasonable*. If angels minister to men at all, must they not have some method of action — something like a division of labor among them? Great as they may be, they are still finite; and can finite beings attend to all alike? Impossible. They must have their own spheres. Moreover, judging from analogy, may we not suppose that as among men there is a mental sympathy which gives different men a special interest in certain individuals, and thus qualifies them to render special service, so there may be mental sympathy between some angelic spirits and certain men which does not exist between others, and which induces and enables them to render service to them which they render not to others." (Homilist.) "The ministry of the angels is surely a high privilege of God's people. Yet, perhaps more than any other pertaining to them, it is practically lost sight of. The Lord sends these ministering spirits to guard his people and to uphold their footsteps in the rough pilgrimage of life, and they, for the most part, are unconscious of the honor. The Lord warns men to respect and deal tenderly with his little ones because of this ministry, and they, in great measure, do not

believe in its existence. Yet it is a truth, doubtless most useful to be kept in mind, both by the Church and by the world, in order both to assure the hearts of God's people in the hour of tribulation, and to awe the world into deference and respect for the holy seed. Let us briefly notice, therefore, some of the facts and declarations regarding this angelic ministry to the saints which the Scriptures have preserved, that we may understand somewhat of its nature and uses. They are represented as constant attendants on him whose throne is in heaven, and whose kingdom ruleth over all. They are employed by him as agents in the government of the world. From the beginning of the world's history to its consummation angels have had to do with the affairs of men, executing and carrying into effect the will of God regarding them. But their special office and employment is in relation to the heirs of salvation. They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them. This ministry is not a fresh revelation to the New Testament Church. The saints of old rejoiced in the knowledge of it, and gathered fresh confidence from it to sustain the good fight of faith. David again and again breaks out in songs of rejoicing confidence in the grace and efficacy of such a blessed ministry. 'The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him, and delivereth them;' 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' Nor did that gracious ministry cease when Jesus came. It was then, indeed, that this service became more frequent and active. An angel announced the birth of Christ's forerunner, and to Mary he foretold the birth of Jesus, and a choir of them hailed in ever-during song his advent into this world of woe: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men.' Angels attended the footsteps of the Son of man, and witnessed his agony, and strengthened him to bear it. They still watch the heavenly birth of souls, and spread joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth. Christ's little ones have their attendant angels, who wait upon them from their spiritual birth, and at length bear their souls to the place of rest. For we read that when Lazarus died he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The bodies of the saints even are committed to angelic care — Michael, the archangel, contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses — and they await them on the morning of the resurrection; for when the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, he shall send his angels to gather his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other. It is true, indeed, that all this gracious ministry is invisible, but it is not on that account the less real. It is a spiritual ministry, but

an effectual one. The vision of Jacob's ladder warrants the inference that it is by angels that the intercourse between heaven and earth is maintained. Nor does the idea of such a ministry separate between us and the Lord himself. A gift or message is not less truly from the Lord that it is conveyed to me by the hands of an angel. The Lord is not less truly present with me that he makes an angel my ministering spirit. Nay, does not such a ministry help to bridge over in my thoughts the distance between me, a helpless, sinful creature, and the great God who filleth heaven and earth? The Lord standeth above, but the intervening space is occupied by his angels, who are spirits, and his ministers, who are a flame of fire. Does it not enlarge my spiritual apprehension to know that I am thus environed by a spiritual agency, and that in the rough places of the world's pathway they are charged to bear me up in their hands? Does it not deepen my sense of the love of God that he hath appointed to me such a service, and that my angel is now beholding the face of my Father in heaven — that he is there already in the presence of God, and by his ministry has been appointed to prepare me for that lofty station? I am, if a child of God, here called upon to wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places. But as near to me as the wicked one, as watchful and more powerful than he, is the minister sent forth from on high, to whose charge and safe-keeping I am committed, and who brings into the conflict the strength of the Omnipotent. He discerns the approach of the wicked one, and comprehends all his wiles, and meets him on his own battle-ground, and foils him there — more fruitful in good suggestions than the opposing spirit is in those that are evil. Surely it can not seem incredible to us that such spiritual agencies should exist and operate around and within us. Such a truth is not more mysterious than the work of the Spirit of God, whereby he quickens and renews every saved soul. That agency is also unseen, unfelt, and known only by its results. In truth we live in a world in which the visible is neither the most powerful nor the most prominent agent. What are we ourselves but agencies, which, because we are possessed of an invisible spirit, exercise a control over all material things — that which is visible of us being the subjects and servants of that which is unseen? Such, then, is the intelligent, active, and efficient ministry which God hath appointed for us, because he who was made a little lower than the angels hath been crowned with glory and honor. They worship him, and they serve his Church. Nor do they feel degraded by such a service, for lowly and poor though the little ones be, angelic minds are in such harmony

with the mind of God that it is their highest pleasure to minister to those whom Jesus girts himself to serve, and for whom he willingly gave his life." (Wilson.)

— DO ALWAYS BEHOLD THE FACE OF MY FATHER. Most commentators take these words for a designation of the very highest angelic powers, who have always access to the presence of God, in a similar manner as Asiatic monarchs are accessible to only a few of their subjects, and these the most influential and powerful ones. (Esth. i, 14.) But it is more correct to consider the expression simply as referring to holy spirits that are not separated from God, as men are. "The angels," says Stier, "are in heaven, and yet at the same time on earth; for heaven is not locally circumscribed, and where angels are, there is heaven and the face of God, which they always behold. They behold always and every-where God's countenance, while they are, at the same time, like God himself, tenderly concerned for the little ones intrusted to their care. (Ps. cxiii, 5, 6.)"

VERSE 11. The conjunction FOR states the reason why the little ones are the objects of heavenly care, and this is, at the same time, the strongest reason why they must not be despised. The train of reasoning is this: "You, if standing in any friendly relation to God, are yourself a little one — if possessing any interest in the Savior, you were a lost one — if you are now saved, necessarily that was your condition. It behooves you to remember the hole of the pit out of which you have been dug, and not to be high-minded. If the profession you make of discipleship be not altogether a falsehood and hypocrisy, how can there arise such disputes and divisions among you as to pre-eminence and greatness? The Son of man came to save you when lost. And if now you have a sure footing on that rock on which whosoever buildeth shall never be put to shame, to what do you owe that position, and how are you able even for a moment to retain it? It is this salvation by Christ which creates and sustains in me the sentiment of brotherly love. I can not despise any of his little ones, and therefore will shun all causes of offense whereby they might be grieved or injured. They become dear to me because they are proved to be so to Christ. If he has set his seal upon them as his, they become mine also in the ties of a patient and ever-during affection. If to me it should be an argument wherefore I ought not to be careless of the interests of those whom angels have been sent forth to minister unto — if, as children of the supreme King, they are so royally attended and served, it is an argument weightier with me still that the Son of man came to save them — that they have a far more royal servitor, who has

girt himself and has washed their feet. For this Son of man is he whom all the angels worship — the Lord himself — the creator of the angels, and who, in his love, commissions them on their errands of mercy — even he who stood at the top of Jacob's ladder in his radiant glory, gracious even as thus revealed, and sending his winged messengers to fulfill his generous purposes — but more graciously manifested now that he has become man, the Son of man — that he has himself descended that ladder, not merely to convey some needed message to the poor and perishing, but to become himself one of them. This is his coming to the lost. He not merely willed and commanded that they should be saved, but himself came to do it." (Condensed from Wilson.)

VERSES 12, 13. This parable is given (Luke xv, 4, etc.) in another connection and more expanded, (for which reason see the notes there.) Here we would merely say that in Luke the parable is spoken before the Pharisees, who fancied that they were not in need of repentance — here before the New Testament shepherds, whose special duty it is to seek what is lost, after the example of the chief Shepherd. Bengel remarks, very properly, that the words "if so be that he find it" mean that the shepherd seeks, indeed, what is lost, but does not always find it. Grace is inviting, but not irresistible.

VERSE 14. Lange translates, correctly: "Even so there is no decree before your Father that," etc., adding that this passage denies, most positively, the existence of any Divine decrees fixing the reprobation of a single soul. — It is significant that it is said here, "Before *your* Father" — not, as in verse 10, "*My* Father." This phraseology implies the injunction that the disciples, as the children of God, should be like their Heavenly Father in tenderly caring for the little ones. The connection with the preceding is this: Just as it is not the will of the shepherd that a single one of his sheep be lost, so it is not the will of God that a single one of these little ones be offended.

B. OF EVANGELICAL CHURCH DISCIPLINE, AND CHRIST'S PROMISE TO THOSE THAT MEET IN HIS NAME.

In the preceding section the Lord had taught his disciples how they must become like children in humility, and how this humility manifests itself in such love as does not despise or offend the little ones. The idea of offenses forms the transition to this section. While it was said in the preceding section, "Do not

trespass against thy brother," another aspect of this holy brotherly love is now presented; namely, if thy brother trespass against thee, how will this thy love show itself then? Thou art not at liberty to ignore his sin or to approve of it, but in duty bound to set his fault truthfully before him that he may be restored; if, however, all efforts fail to win him back, he is no longer to be regarded as a Christian brother.

Having the Church of the future, the great communion of all that shall believe in him before his eyes, while addressing his disciples, the Lord proceeds to introduce the subject of binding and loosing, and promises his continual presence to his Church. In conformity with the principles laid down in verses 15-17, every Christian society or Church must settle difficulties that may exist or arise between its members, reforming, if possible, the offender, and exercising such discipline as the peace and the purity of the Church require. But as in all other affairs of the kingdom of God the unity of the spirit is indispensably necessary, so also here; by this unity the Church grows strong, for united prayer brings down heavenly blessings, and where such prayer is offered in the name of Christ, there the Lord constantly manifests his gracious presence.

Verses 15-20.

(15) MOREOVER if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (16) But if he will not hear *thee*, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. (17) And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. (18) Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (19) Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. (20) For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

VERSE 15. MOREOVER, IF THY BROTHER SHALL TRESPASS AGAINST THEE, By the trespasses here spoken of are not to be understood public, scandalous offenses. To regulate the treatment of these, we have another Scriptural rule in 1 Tim. v, 20: "Them that sin rebuke before all, [or, as the words may be rendered, *Them that sin before all rebuke*,] that others also may fear." The fact that the Church is dealing with an offense proves that it is already beyond the reach of private dealing, and can not be removed by personal remonstrance. The trespass which is to be made the subject of private dealing and remonstrance is one of such a kind as may be conclusively determined and settled by the offender and the man offended. It does not come necessarily under the jurisdiction of the Church. It is not a scandalous offense, but one which is inconsistent with true Christian life, and one of which I happen to be personally cognizant. I am not to make a scandal of it. It may be a personal offense against me, and not against the brethren at large. — **GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT** — literally, convince him forthwith of his fault. Do not wait till he come to thee, but go at once to him in the zeal of love and meekness of spirit, and try to convince him in this spirit of the wrong he has done. Take pains to gain thy brother, to raise him up again, and what is said in Ps. cxli, 5, and Prov. xxviii, 23, will either be realized at once, or, if not, thou hast at least done thy duty. Brotherly reproof has been laid down in Lev. xix, 17, 18, as a duty of love. — **BETWEEN THEE AND HIM ALONE**; that is, without any other persons, whose very presence might exert an unfavorable influence by wounding his pride. To tell a man his faults by himself requires courage, and makes on the reproved the impression of sympathy and love, whereby his heart may be won. The opposite course of conduct — to speak of a man's faults in his absence — argues want of love, and cowardice. John Wesley says in his sermon on "The Cure of Evil Speaking:" "It should be well observed, not only that this is a step which our Lord absolutely commands us to take, but that he commands us to take this first step before we attempt any other. No alternative is allowed, no choice of any thing else; this is the way: walk thou in it. It is true, he enjoins on us, if need requires, to take two other steps; but they are to be taken successively after this step, and neither of them before it." — **THOU HAST GAINED THY BROTHER**, by this wise and proper procedure, where so much was at stake.

VERSE 16. BUT IF HE WILL NOT HEAR THEE. His unwillingness may arise from two causes. Either he may not be convinced that the offense

with which I charge him is an offense at all, or he may be determined not to give it up because he loves it. Nor does it necessarily follow that every thing which I believe to be an offense is really such. When I go to take the mote out of my brother's eye, it may be that there is a beam in my own eye, which hinders me from seeing clearly. It does not, therefore, follow that when I have gone alone, and charged my brother with an offense, and found him deaf to my remonstrances, that he is absolutely wedded to his sin. It may not be really an offense, or it may be only I that fails to convince him that it is. The text, however, assumes that the trespass is a real one. Yet my brother is not necessarily bound to believe me when I say that it is. If he is not at once convinced, it is my duty to prove to him his offense, and this is the second step in the healing process. — **TAKE WITH THEE ONE OR TWO MORE.** The persons thus to be used as witnesses or counselors ought to be men whom the offending brother esteems and loves. — Here, also, as in the first step, our duty is plainly defined. So much, and neither more nor less — this, and not something else — we are commanded to do. The time when this second step must be taken is likewise clearly defined — neither sooner nor later, after the first step has signally failed. — "It is important to notice what it is that these witnesses are called in to establish. It is not the fact that a certain thing has been done, but the fact that it is an offense or trespass. My brother, for example, may have been angry with me, and spoken unadvisedly with his lips. I go and remonstrate with him for this offense, and he refuses to hear me, and justifies his conduct. My brother does not dispute it, but he refuses to regard it as an offense. It is then and in these circumstances that I am to adduce my witness, not to establish the fact, but to establish my judgment regarding its nature. I am to return to him with these witnesses, in order to establish my verdict. The use of their testimony, added to my own, is to convince him that he has erred — that his plea of justification ought not to be sustained. He might, with some show of reason, resist my unaided testimony; for his witness may be assumed, in the first instance, to be as good as mine, and it may be alleged that neither he nor I, as the offender and the offended, are the best evidence as to the moral character of the action in question. I am then to bring one or two more, who have no further interest in the matter than their common concern for the purity of Christ's house, to pronounce their judgment on the nature of the action, and, if possible, to convince him that he has sinned. It is here worthy of being noticed that I am not directed to do what very often is done in such cases, to the injury of Christian brotherhood — that when I have gone and spoken to my

brother of his offense and he has refused to hear me, I may then go and speak of it to whom I please, with a view at once of exposing his trespass and of vindicating myself. This course of action is not the brotherly treatment which the text commands and inculcates. I am not at liberty to go to one or two and make my statement of the case to them, and engage their sympathies in my behalf, and obtain their favorable opinion, and then glory over my brother's infirmity. I am warranted to do nothing in the matter directly for myself. My business is solely to remove this offense from my brother. My remonstrance and appeal must be repeated in his presence alone, and before these witnesses whom I have brought with me. Hearing the case there and thus, they are to judge of it, and give their verdict whether this be an offense which ought to be removed. Such a course of action, if my brother be really pure-hearted, and wish to free himself from all iniquity — from becoming a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, will, in ordinary cases, be effectual. While my brother might, perhaps reasonably enough, refuse to listen to my testimony, he will scarcely dispute that of Christian brethren, who are competent to judge, and in circumstances to judge impartially. He will rather call in question his own previous judgment than their more deliberate and unimpassioned verdict. He must either be very sure that he is right, or thoroughly wedded to his offense, if the matter do not terminate here. Even yet, however, if he do not after all confess, and repent of his trespass, I am not warranted to give him up. There is another step which it is demanded of me to take. I must in no wise suffer sin to be upon my brother. It is assumed in this whole process that my one object is to remove this."

(Wilson.)

VERSE 17. AND IF HE SHALL NEGLECT TO HEAR THEM, TELL IT UNTO THE CHURCH. The word *Church* is found no where in the Gospels except here and in chap. xvi, 18. "In the passage before us," says Trench, in his "Synonyms of the New Testament," "it is applied to a single body of believers, united in one another and in Christ, and thus forming a community by themselves, with all the privileges, ordinances, and means of grace essential to salvation, so that if every other Church in the world should be cut off, in this one would be left the germ of all that would be needed to evangelize and convert the world. In Matt. xvi, 18, the word *Church* is used to express, in the abstract, that system of powers and agencies, human and Divine, by which the kingdom of heaven, the religion of Jesus, is to sustain, extend, and perpetuate itself in the world, so that the gates of death, the powers of evil, shall not prevail

against it. It is also used, though very rarely, and never by our Savior or in the Gospels, to designate the great body of the faithful throughout the world, [as one whole.] In this sense it is used by St. Paul in Col. i, 18. *And he is the head of the body, the Church.*" It ought to be borne in mind that the term *Church* is never used in the New Testament to designate a *building*, or a *class of religious functionaries*, or a *system of doctrine or of worship distinguishing one portion of Christians from another portion*. It is also true what Archbishop Whateley says, that "the Churches founded by the apostles were all quite independent of each other, or of any one central body." Our Lord gives us here the characteristics of his Church, that is, a society of those that are united in his name. From the fact — for which the Savior provides — that some of its members give now and then offense, we must draw two inferences: 1. That there is sin and offense found even among those that are united in the name of Christ; 2. That the Head of the Church commands a separation of the incorrigible from the body of believers. — The question has been raised here whether this command of Christ to tell it *unto the Church* is properly obeyed, if cases of discipline are disposed of not by the assembly of the whole membership, but by a number of persons selected for administering discipline. This question must, of course, be answered in the affirmative. The membership, as a body, like all other public bodies, has its constituted representatives. It is not necessary to adduce examples of a use of language which is so common. That which the government of a people does is represented as the deed of the people. Not to speak of the inconvenience of calling the whole membership together, there are cases which can not with propriety be laid before the whole membership consisting of males and females, old and young. — BUT IF HE NEGLECT TO HEAR THE CHURCH; that is, if he disregards the admonitions and counsels of the Church also. The term is stronger than "not hearing," implying something of contumacy. — LET HIM BE UNTO THEE AS A HEATHEN MAN AND PUBLICAN. Let him be looked upon as without the pale of the Church. This, however, does not include a breaking off of civil or social intercourse, but only the suspension of Church relationship, the loss of membership and the privileges connected therewith, exclusion from the sacrament, etc. The Church is not only authorized but positively commanded to declare as out of its pale such transgressors as remain impenitent in spite of all efforts to reclaim them. This is required by the honor, peace, and purity of the Church; but her efforts to save the soul of the expelled member should by no means cease. Like the heathen and publican, he becomes

a subject of missionary effort; and when he manifests genuine penitence, he may and ought to be received again into the fellowship of the Church. On the importance of the exercise of Scriptural discipline Mr. Wilson remarks: "There is ever a tendency to fall away from the exercise of strict and holy discipline. Yet from such a course there is certainly enough in the experience of the past to deter the Church. Where discipline ceases to be exercised, the Church declines, and is 'nigh unto cursing.' Nourishing within her bosom that which she knows to be offensive, she is by gradual but sure process transforming herself into a mere worldly society, and she must either deliver over unto Satan those who offend or become herself a synagogue of Satan. When this hedge has been broken down, the Church becomes identified with the world. In estimating the effect of discipline, therefore, we are not to look merely to its influence on those who are directly subjected to it. It may be that it will not save them and deliver them from their offense; but it discovers and casts out the distempered from among the flock, and so far prevents the infection from spreading, and thus bringing disease and death among them all. It is God's great sanitary law for preserving the health of his people." (Compare notes on last clause of verse 18, chap. xvi.)

VERSE 18. In what sense the power bestowed upon Peter, and through him to the whole apostolic college, is here extended to the whole Church unto the end of time, we have shown in our comment on xvi, 19. The legislative part of this power was confined to the apostles; but as the laws enacted by the apostles must be acknowledged and carried out as the only rule of practice by every community of true believers, the Church must necessarily possess the administrative part of the power of binding and loosing. In other words, as far as the Church binds and looses in conformity with the apostolic laws, so far its acts are ratified in heaven. Stier expresses nearly the same in the following words: "It happens with the binding and loosing just as with the hearing of prayer. It is valid in heaven only because it is the witness of what was already valid in heaven, just as prayer is heard because, by the impulse of the Spirit in faith, it has already come forth from the supreme counsel and will. All binding and loosing is accomplished by prayer, for the admonition is given in the love of praying faith, and the excluding rebuke is administered in the same love." Mr. Wilson remarks: "It is well known that Popery has laid hold of and perverted this passage. It lies at the foundation of her tyranny over the souls of men. Pretending an infallibility in her councils, and the Divine sanction to all her

decrees, she has in this, as in most other instances, converted the mystery of godliness into a mystery of iniquity. The foundation of civil liberty lies in a written law, to which both rulers and subjects are bound to conform. So it is in the Church. God has revealed not to ministers only, but to all the subjects of his kingdom, his truth. To this both ministers and people are subject. Nothing is divine which does not emanate from this source, and is not thus attested to be God's. Nothing is bound or loosed in heaven which the Word does not bind or loose. Here is the foundation of Christian liberty; and here is the safety with which we can admit that the Church's judgments are of binding force and efficacy in heaven itself. Let us not deceive ourselves into the belief that the error here lies all one side. It is true that all councils of men have erred, and it is true that there is a danger in Church rulers announcing their own judgments as those of God. But the error, on the other side, we believe, is equally prevalent and equally fatal — the error of looking upon all Church censures as merely human, and to be regarded no otherwise than as they may bear upon our temporal interests. The great majority of our people, and especially such of them as are subjects of ecclesiastical discipline, regard these judgments as the admonitions and warnings of men merely. They do not perceive God speaking to them in such judgments, and do not recognize the majesty, and power, and holiness of Christ in them. This is one chief reason why the discipline of the Church is so seldom efficacious. It were well worth while to endeavor to restore it to the place it once held — not to be overmuch afraid of accusations of Popish tyranny and infallibility, but faithfully to exhibit the standing of this ordinance in the Word of God — to vindicate its authority, and to show the guilt involved in despising it."

VERSE 19. Owen and others restrict the promise, here given, to the administration of discipline, of which the Lord had been speaking. The meaning would then be: Their administrative acts shall be ratified in heaven, because if they invoke the Divine counsel to direct their judgments — which is presupposed — their prayer will be granted. We admit that this verse, as well as the following, may have a primary and special reference to the office-bearers of Christ's Church, when gathered together for the exercise of Church government. The proper administration of discipline being an indispensable condition of the prosperity of the Church, and, at the same time, a very difficult task, there is an especial need of united prayer for the presence and directing wisdom of Him who knows all things, to suggest to his servants the truth, to

direct their minds, and to guide them to such determinations as he will bless and sanction. It is, therefore, very encouraging for the Church to view the promise here given in immediate connection with the preceding verses. Nevertheless, the promise of a gracious answer to united prayer and of Christ's presence in the midst of those that are gathered together in his name, is not to be restricted to the administration of discipline. We prefer to find the connection with the preceding verses in this: The Lord had just spoken of his Church in its apostolic purity and authority. But foreseeing that his *nominal* Church would lose its apostolical character, so that her administrative acts would be by no means ratified in heaven, and that, consequently, its place would be taken by the small number of genuine Christians, he assured his disciples that the efficacy of the acts of his Church is not dependent on the numbers composing it. The Church is here conceived of in its humblest form, consisting of two or three members. One person can not form a Church, but every plurality of persons that partake of the same higher principle of life, form the Christian Church. (1 John i, 3.) Whatever two or three true disciples — two of *you* — agree upon to ask for shall be granted unto them. The "*on earth*" corresponds to the "*my Father which is in heaven,*" the Church on earth being united with the Father in heaven by the Spirit, who prompts the petition. "The harmony of two hearts in prayer indicates that the same Spirit is in both. This union in prayer is the innermost and highest unity of the people of God. It is not an agreement of the lips, but of the heart, and of the Spirit of God in the heart of each. So much does sin divide and separate men, that when it dwells in the heart of any there can not be this oneness and agreement. So sure a token is this highest harmony of the presence and indwelling of the Spirit of God, that when *two* unite together, and can truly pray in unison for any thing, this is from God, and is valid before God. . . . We remark, further, that as the fact of agreement seems essential to the fulfillment of the full measure of the promise, so the fact of being gathered together is made a condition no less essential. Jesus will have it, not only that there shall be unity of aim and desire, but, in order to experience the fullness of the blessing, he will have this unity *visible*. It is doubtless true of the saints scattered over the earth that there is among them not only a general harmony in the petitions which they present at the throne of grace, but that in this duty of prayer, specially and above all other ways in which their religion manifests itself, this unity is to be discovered. Insomuch that it is true of many who differ much from one another in the forms through which they administer the affairs of the Church, and even in the expression they give to the doctrinal

propositions which constitute its theology, that they agree throughout, and are of one accord and one heart when they are put in the position of asking any thing from their Heavenly Father. Yet there is something lacking which all Churches should aim at and labor for, even that they should be gathered together — that they should be *visibly* one, even as in heart and hope they are one. The blessing attendant upon the accordance of two or three gathered together is exemplified in the case of the first disciples of whom we read, that these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Surely it is not irrational still to expect the blessing of an outpoured Spirit, with power and heavenly riches, to quicken, and renew, and fill us with peace and joy, and the spirit of wisdom, and the power of utterance, and to give us manifestations of Divine truth, and near communion with the Lord. If it is not so in our day, it can not result from the faithlessness or slackness of God concerning his promise, but from the want of a perfect accordance regarding those things which we shall ask. But a blessed time is yet in reserve for the Church, more glorious even than that brief season of jubilee, and this time can not now be far distant, when the Lord shall say, Arise, and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, and when the world shall know that God hath sent his Christ. But the manifested unity of believers is necessary to this result. They who now are separated not only by distance of locality, but separated by distances apparently far more insuperable, shall then be gathered together, not indeed in the same place, but their souls shall be gathered into one communion, they shall form one visible body; and thus assembled, Christ is in the midst of them, in the majesty of his power and the fullness of his grace. He shall have on his vesture a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords, and he shall vindicate this designation by causing all kings to fall down before him, and all nations to serve him, and he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." (Wilson.) — ANY THING THAT THEY SHALL ASK. Whatever is in any way connected with the wants of the Church can become an object of the believer's prayer. A possibility of abusing this glorious promise given by the Lord to his Church does not exist, because it is the Spirit of Christ that inspires and calls forth the agreement upon the thing desired and the prayer for it. Where these conditions are not complied with, there the words of the Lord are inapplicable. That the

promise has no reference to any selfish prayer, which two or more may unite in offering, as John and James did, (Mark x, 35,) is self evident.

VERSE 20. FOR WHERE. Christ's presence depends neither on any special locality, as in the Old Testament, nor in the greater or less number of those assembled. See 1 Cor. i, 2: "All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." — TWO OR THREE. According to Jewish notions, there must at least ten persons be assembled in a synagogue, that they may have a well-founded hope that the Shekinah of the Divine presence will be granted, and their prayer he heard and answered. The rabbinical writers say: "A smaller number God despises." The Lord names here the smallest possible assembly, two or three, and grants them, by his presence, the privileges and powers of a Church. — ARE GATHERED TOGETHER. It is true that there is no time and there are no circumstances when Christ is absent from his people. His promise is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." But he has given special promises to the congregation of his disciples, and from what we read of the experience of the saints of old, as well as from what has come within the range of our own observation, we are entitled to conclude that it is within his house, and in the assembly of his saints, that he makes the clearest manifestation of his glory, and pours forth the richest effusions of his grace. Hear, for example, the testimony of David: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee." (Ps. lxxxiv.) "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God! My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holiday." (Ps. xlvi.) It was manifestly as the result of his own personal experience that he declared, "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." — IN MY NAME, implies according to my direction, in my honor, in reliance on my merits and intercession, with the purpose to find me. Well does Olshausen remark: "In verse 19 the Father is spoken of — in verse 20 the Son. As the Father reveals himself only in and through the Son, and as the Son only does what he is taught by the Father, (John viii, 28,) the

works of the Father and of the Son are identical — the works of the true and living God. Meeting and praying in the name of the Father, without the Son, is impossible. Such prayer is a prayer in one's own name, and this is no prayer at all; for he that denies the Son, the same has not the Father." — THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM. "There is a certain sense in which Jesus is present with all men and at all times. Wherever we are, by night or by day — whatever we do, or think, or speak — Jesus is a present observer of all. Nothing escapes his cognizance, and by thus searching all things, he becomes qualified for the discharge of that last grand duty which is devolved upon him as Mediator, to judge the world in righteousness. And it were well that we remembered continually that we are never hid from the presence of him who is now our witness, and will one day be our judge. It is very plain, however, that when in the text Jesus gives the promise of his presence, he gives it not as something which they should dread and tremble at, but as that which was peculiarly fitted to comfort and animate them. It was in this sense that God of old time was present with his people in their journeyings through the wilderness. He was with them as a guide in all the way, as a minister of their daily sustenance, as a shield against their most powerful enemies. It is the same kind of blessings which Jesus here promises to his people, even to be with them in all the way of their pilgrimage, to sustain, and comfort, and defend them, and to manifest himself unto them in another way than he does unto the world — to show unto them his glory and the power of his grace. He gives the soul a nearness of access unto himself — draws forth its desires, and inflames them with admiration and love — exhibits his own infinite graces, and beauty, and fullness — opens the eye of faith to behold his unspeakable preciousness — brings into the mind the sayings of his holy Word, with such sweet consciousness of their truth, that their hearts burn within them as they talk with him — enlarges and purifies their affections, and pours into them the refreshing streams of his own love, and thus establishes and maintains a communion with himself all the more near and intimate that it is directly with the inner man, at once melting the soul with the glow of his love and awing it to humble reverence by the exhibition of his glory. Still further, the promise implies a readiness on the part of Christ to do for his people what they ask. This will be at once apparent, if we examine, for a moment, the connection of the text with the preceding verse. The statement in the text, indeed, is given as a reason why the disciples should rely with confidence on the promise made to them. As if he had said: You may rest perfectly certain that your requests shall be attended to and

fulfilled by my Father, for I am present to hear them offered, and, in the discharge of my mediatorial service, I present them before the throne on high; the Father heareth me always, and the prayers of my people shall not be disappointed. It is plain, then, that the promise of the text is one of assistance, that it includes the idea of Christ's presence as Mediator and prevailing Intercessor, making known the wants of his people, pouring them into the ear of the Father, and obtaining, on the ground of his own merit, a favorable answer to all their requests. But, again, the whole richness of the promise has not yet been unfolded. There is something like an emphasis in the way in which it is written. I am 'in the midst' of them. Jesus is not merely beside his people, observing their condition, and ready to tender his aid in their difficulties; he is not only manifested as near to them all, to inspire them with confidence and hope; he is in the very midst of them, mingled with the assembly, and equally near to every person who composes it. And this naturally suggests the thought, and confirms the doctrine, that Jesus is not only with his people for the purpose of examining into their wants and conferring upon them those blessings of his salvation which are common to all believers, but, moreover, that with tender consideration he regards the utterances of every individual heart. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. It is his delightful office to 'lift up the hands that hang down, and to confirm the feeble knees.' It is the part of him who is meek and lowly in heart to 'appoint unto them that mourn, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' It is his to say to the timid soul, 'Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God;' to those who are tempted, to whisper the glad assurance, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is perfect in weakness.' It is his to show to the ignorant the treasures of his wisdom, and to say of the backsliding penitent, 'Bring forth for him the fairest robe, and let the fatted calf be killed, for this my son was dead and is alive, he was lost and is found.' For every diversity of condition in which his people are placed, Jesus has something appropriate to bestow, and he is in the midst of them for the very purpose of providing for their special wants, and soothing the diseases and healing the plagues of every soul. Confide, then, O believer, in this merciful Savior, 'in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead.' Open up your hearts to communion with him. Let him know your spiritual diseases — fear not to express to him your heart's desires — and thus all your plagues shall be healed, and your souls filled with peace and joy unspeakable. It is, moreover, of importance to bear in mind that this promised presence of Jesus is not transient

and temporary — is not reserved for some rare and solemn occasions. The expression of the text is very emphatic. *I am* in the midst of them — a much more decisive statement than if it had been expressed in the future, *I shall be* with you. For it amounts to this: It is always a present truth — *I am* with them. In no age of the world, in no country shall this be untrue. No where shall my people be gathered together in my name, but it is true concerning them at that time and in these circumstances that *I am* in the midst of them. There are, in every congregation, more or fewer who, in some measure, fulfill the conditions of the promise, who meet together as disciples. And to them Christ proves his faithfulness. The assembly is the most delightful place of resort to them, for it is their meeting-place with Christ. They feel it to be refreshing and profitable for their souls. They receive out of Christ's exhaustless stores. It is seldom that the Sabbath is to them a day lost, and if there be such times of drought and barrenness, none are so prepared to admit as they that they have lost a precious opportunity; not because Christ is faithless, but because they have not met as disciples. Nor does the experience of others afford less convincing proof of the faithfulness of Christ to his promise. When we say that Christ's promise in the text is to disciples, it is needful to guard against the inference that it is vain for others to wait upon his ordinances. Christ, it is true, has said that he is in the midst of his disciples; but this, so far from excluding others from such an assembly, contains an ample encouragement for them to come. Christ is there pre-eminently, peculiarly, powerfully, graciously there. This is the very place, then, to meet him, and to behold his glory and the power of his grace. Christ is in the midst of his disciples to strengthen and refresh them; he is there to convince and convert the unbeliever. The king is there with his quiver full of arrows, and it is there especially that he pierces the hearts of his adversaries. He is there to wound, that he may bind up and heal. None of us are without the experience of having been often gathered together with the multitude that keep holiday, and go to the house of God. How does it stand with us in respect to the experimental fulfillment of this promise? Have we met with Christ? Has he been in the midst of us? Have we seen his power and his glory in the sanctuary? If not the guilt is all on our side — it is all accumulated on our heads. And it is an overwhelming iniquity to have spent one profitless Sabbath within the courts of the Lord's house. The king, by the proclamation of the text, has invited us to come and meet with him in his court, that he might make us partakers of his grace, and to show us all his riches and power, and we have slighted the invitation, and thus insulted his majesty and his goodness. There can be no

doubt that Christ is there, and if we have not met him and been satisfied with his presence, it is because we have not been there. Our bodies may have been, but our spirits have not waited upon him. And the communion of Christ with his people is that of spirit with spirit." (Condensed from Wilson.)

C. THE GOSPEL LAW OF FORGIVENESS, ILLUSTRATED BY THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT.

Although forgiveness had not been directly mentioned in the preceding remarks of the Savior, yet the injunctions given in verses 15-17 about the treatment of erring brethren were evidently based on it. The brother that asks forgiveness is to be forgiven; but the Lord did not say how often. To this, thought Peter, there must be a limit. While Peter's question seems to imply that it was altogether optional with the injured party to forgive to a certain extent, and then to withhold forgiveness, the Lord declares that this is by no means the case, since he who is indebted for every thing can advance no claim himself. "The key-note of the whole discourse is in verse 28: '*Pay me what thou owest.*' This is the offense — this demand, so inconsistent with the position and profession of a Christian. The fact that he has been forgiven an infinite debt destroys all claim he can assert against his fellow-men. Himself being wholly bankrupt, he can not demand payment of his own debts. Nothing can be due to him who owes more than his all to another. And if his own debt be really canceled, his books must be cleared of all claims against others. He stands himself free because of an infinite forgiveness, and there must be therefore no limit to the forgiveness he extends to others. The fact of his redemption supersedes and destroys all his personal claims. Being a creature of grace, he must be gracious. By his position as a Christian he has abandoned the right of self-assertion — of claiming any thing as his own." (Wilson.)

Verses 21-35.

(21) **THEN came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?** (22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.^[1] (23) **Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.** (24) **And when**

he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. [2] (25) But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. (26) The servant therefore fell down and worshiped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (27) Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. (28) But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: [3] and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. (29) And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (30) And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. (31) So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. (32) Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: (33) Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? (34) And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, [4] till he should pay all that was due unto him. (35) So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

[1 Some prefer the reading, *Seventy-seven times*, and find in it an allusion to Gen. iv, 24.]

[2 This sum may be mentioned simply to express an indefinite, immeasurable amount — as we say, a thousand millions. If the Hebrew talent of silver is meant, it would not be less than fifteen millions; if the Hebrew talent of gold is meant, it would amount to more than two hundred millions of dollars. Gerlach thinks that the Syrian talent is meant, in which case it would amount only to about two million dollars.]

[3 Pence — that is, denarius — a Roman silver coin, equivalent to the Attic drachma, or 15-17 cents. The whole debt amounted to about fifteen dollars.]

[4 "Debtors in ancient times were put in prison not only for safe-keeping, but also for the purpose of inflicting pain on the prisoner. In the early times of Rome there were certain legal tortures — a chain weighing fifteen pounds,

and a pittance of food barely sufficient to sustain life, which the creditor was allowed to apply to the debtor, in order to bring him to terms; and no doubt they often did not stop here. In the East, too, where there is a continual suspicion that those who may appear the poorest and who affirm themselves utterly insolvent, are actually in possession of some secret hoards of wealth, torture, in one shape or another, was often applied, as it is even to the present day, to make the debtor reveal these hoards; or his life is made as bitter as possible for the purpose of wringing the money demanded from the compassion of his friends." (Trench.)]

VERSE 21. According to the Jewish rule, the limit of forgiving an offender was three times. Peter perceived that the law of love which Christ laid down for his Church required more. He proposes the sacred number *seven* as the limit. This number may have been named in reference to the falling and rising again of the righteous in Prov. xxiv, 16. (Compare Lev. xxvi, 18-28.)

VERSE 22. Our Lord's design in answering him, NOT UNTIL SEVEN TIMES, BUT UNTIL SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN, is evidently to teach Peter that in forgiving we must not count at all, and that under no provocation have we a right to retain resentment, or to cherish a desire to retaliate. Our Lord forbids an unforgiving temper, at the root of which is always a desire to render evil for evil, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." (Compare notes on chap. v, 38-41.) If we consider the injunction of our Lord in this light, there is no need of qualifying by various conditions what the Lord himself did not choose to qualify.

VERSE 23. THEREFORE. That ye may be fully impressed with the great guilt of an unforgiving temper, hear the following parable. — IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN LIKENED UNTO A CERTAIN KING. This is the first of the parables, in which God appears in the character of a king. — HIS SERVANTS. Although called δοῦλοι, they were not slaves, but officers of high rank, the disbursers of the king's money, as appears from the enormous amount of the indebtedness. — WHICH WOULD TAKE ACCOUNT — literally, who wished to take up an account with. This sets forth the nature of God's retributive justice. God will reckon with us, and he reckons with us, whether we are willing or not; he arouses the conscience, proclaims the sentence of the law, and reproves. (Ps. li, 21.) God acts so, however, for the purpose of pardoning us, (Isa. i, 18,) if we penitently ask his forgiveness, and thus this first account differs from the impending last. (xxv, 19.)

VERSE 24. ONE WAS BROUGHT UNTO HIM. The sinner, in his carnal security, does not come unto God of his own accord. — **WHICH OWED HIM TEN THOUSAND TALENTS.** This enormous amount is well adapted to express the idea intended by the parable, that the indebtedness of the sinner to his God is so great that he can never expect to pay it with his own means. The wrong done can not be undone; the good left undone can not be made up by a subsequent reform. The indebtedness is the greater the more he has received at the hands of God, like the servant in the parable.

VERSE 25. HIS LORD COMMANDED HIM TO BE SOLD. This was done according to the law of Moses. (Lev. xxv, 39; 2 Kings iv, 1; Ex. xxii, 3.) "The similitude is, however, rather from Oriental despotism; for the selling was, under the Mosaic law, softened by the liberation at the year of jubilee. The imprisonment, also, and the tormentors, favor this view, forming no part of the Jewish law." (Alford.) — **AND PAYMENT TO BE MADE.** The debt is to be paid. That the proceeds from the sale are not sufficient does not alter the command. God reveals himself unto men first as a holy and righteous God in his law and sentence of condemnation, and this must be felt by them. — *The selling of the wife and children* is a completing feature of the parable, but may incidentally teach us that the consequences of our sins are not confined to us, but drag those into ruin — e.g., poverty, disgrace, etc. — that are nearest and dearest to us. Whoever has a spark of feeling left sees in this very fact the worst feature of sin. What must be the feeling of a father that has to confess, I have made my wife and children miserable and wretched by my wickedness; and especially on the day of judgment, when his children tell him, in the language of despair, that they are lost through the influence of him through whom they received life!

VERSE 26. THE SERVANT FELL DOWN AND WORSHIPPED HIM. The customary reverence paid to a king in the Orient. — "**LORD, HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME, AND I WILL PAY THEE ALL,**" is characteristic of the extreme fear and anguish of the moment, which made him ready to promise impossible things, even mountains of gold, if he only might be delivered from the present danger. "When words of a like kind find utterance from the lips of the sinner, now first convinced of his sin, they show that he has not yet attained to a full insight into his relations with his God; that he has yet much to learn especially this, that no future obedience can make up for past disobedience, since God claims that future as his right, as only his due; it could not, then, even

were it perfect, which it will prove far from being, make compensation for the past. We may hear, then, in the words, the voice of self-righteousness, imagining that, if only time were allowed, it could make good all the shortcomings of the past. The words are exceedingly important, as very much explaining to us the later conduct of this man. It is clear that he had never come to a true recognition of the immensity of his debt. Little, in the subjective measure of his own estimate, was forgiven him, and therefore he loved little, or not at all. It is true that by his demeanor and his cry he did recognize his indebtedness, else would there have been no setting of him free; and he might have gone on, and, had he been true to his own mercies, he would have gone on, to an ever-fuller recognition of the grace shown him; but, as it was, in a little while he lost sight of it altogether." (Trench.)

VERSE 27. THEN THE LORD OF THAT SERVANT WAS MOVED WITH COMPASSION. "The severity of God only endures till the sinner is brought to recognize his guilt. It is, indeed, like Joseph's harshness with his brethren, nothing more than love in disguise, and, having done its work, reappears as grace again, granting him more than even he had dared to ask or to hope, loosing the bands of his sins and letting him go free. His lord '*forgave him the debt*,' and thus this very reckoning with him, which at first threatened him with irremediable ruin, might have been the chiefest mercy of all, bringing, indeed, his debt to a head, but only so bringing it that it might be put away. So is it evermore with men. There can not be a forgiving in the dark. God will forgive, but he will have the sinner to know what and how much he is forgiven. He summons him with that 'Come now, and let us reason together,' before the scarlet is made white. (Isa. i, 18.) The sinner shall have the sentence of death in him first, for only so will the words of life and pardon have any true meaning for him." (Trench.)

VERSE 28. BUT THE SAME SERVANT WENT OUT. "How striking and instructive," says Trench, "is that word '*going out*' — slight, as it seems, yet one of the key-words of the parable. For how is it that we are ever in danger of acting as this servant? Because we 'go out' of the presence of our God; because we do not *abide* there, with an ever-lively sense of the greatness of our sin and the greatness of his forgiveness. By the servant's going out is expressed the sinner's forgetfulness of the greatness of the benefits which he has received from his God." — AND FOUND ONE OF HIS FELLOW-SERVANTS. How easy it is to find a debtor if we seek one! From

the insignificance of the debt, it would appear that this fellow-servant was his inferior in rank; but the first officers of State, as well as the day-laborers, are the servants of the king. Special emphasis is given to their common dependence on the king, that the hardness of heart of this wicked servant may appear in the clearest light. — Can this wicked servant represent a really-pardoned sinner? Calvinistic theologians do not admit that whosoever has truly received the pardon of his sins can ever forfeit that pardon again. But how can it be denied that persons that have been truly converted really fall into the sin of which this wicked servant was guilty? On the other hand, it is hardly conceivable that the servant in question should have undergone any change of heart, especially as the time intervening between his pardon and his meeting his fellow-servant is represented as short, and the parable does not intimate that he had changed meanwhile for the worse. While we, therefore, unhesitatingly maintain the possibility of a total and final falling away from grace, we must, at the same time, admit that this wicked servant is no representative of a pardoned sinner, the scope of the parable being not to teach the whole plan of salvation, but merely to set forth, in its strongest light, the absolute necessity of a forgiving disposition. — WHICH OWED HIM AN HUNDRED PENCE. What a trifle in comparison with the debt which had been just remitted to him! We are reminded thereby how little man can offend against his brother compared with the amount in which every man has offended against God; it is as a drop of water to the boundless ocean. — AND HE LAID HANDS ON HIM, AND TOOK HIM BY THE THROAT. By the Roman law the creditor was allowed to use personal violence toward his debtor. This act is expressive of the most unfeeling harshness. — PAY ME THAT THOU OWEST — literally, pay, if thou owest any thing. If thou owest any thing — and this is the case — thou must pay; and for this reason I seize thee. The justice of the debt itself is not denied in the parable, but the principle is laid down that he that stands in need of mercy, or has obtained mercy, must show mercy in turn. This is beautifully illustrated by an anecdote which we read in Wesley's Life. Oglethorpe, the Governor of Georgia, said once, in a great passion, in the presence of Wesley: "This good-for-nothing servant does constantly wrong, although he knows that I never forgive." "Then I hope," said Wesley, "that you may never do wrong."

VERSE 29. The misery and entreaties of a fellow-man ought to have moved, before all others, him that was in the same condition himself. His fellow-servant entreats him in the same position and in the same words as he

himself had done a short time before. This itself ought to have reminded him of the grace shown to himself, and disposed him to mercy. His fellow-servant, confessing the debt, promises also payment, and the small indebtedness makes it probable that he would have kept his promise. Even this feature of the parable admits of a general application. Injuries done to our fellow-men can in most cases be repaired, while a discharge of our indebtedness to God is always out of the question.

VERSE 30. AND HE WOULD NOT. So hard-hearted and cruel is man apt to be when he is ignorant of his own need of forgiveness, or forgetful of forgiveness received. — **BUT WENT.** He went dragging his debtor along, till he could hand him over to the jailer. This shows that the violence exhibited at first was not owing to a transient excitement.

VERSE 31. SO WHEN HIS FELLOW-SERVANTS SAW WHAT WAS DONE, THEY WERE VERY SORRY. "*They* were sorry — *their lord* (v. 34) was wroth; to them grief, to him anger, is ascribed. The distinction is not accidental, nor without its grounds. In man, the sense of his own guilt, the deep consciousness that whatever sin he sees come to ripeness in another, exists in its germ and seed in his own heart, the feeling that all flesh is one, and that the sin of one calls for humiliation from all, will ever cause sorrow to be the predominant feeling in his heart, when the spectacle of moral evil is brought before his eyes; but in God the pure hatred of sin, which is, indeed, his love of holiness at its negative, finds place." (Trench.) — **AND CAME AND TOLD UNTO THEIR LORD ALL THAT WAS DONE.** As the parable speaks of a human king, who does not know every thing that his servants do, information of the deed must be brought to him, and this is done by the other servants. If we apply this trait of the parable to God, the antitype of the human king, its meaning is, that the prayers of the righteous accuse the unrighteous and unmerciful before God. Their prayer is the supplication of insulted humanity, and loudly appeals to God's stern law. For the merciful prayers are constantly rising up to God. Woe unto him whom the tears and sighs of the wronged and oppressed constantly accuse before God! Such tears avail much with God.

VERSES 32, 33. O THOU WICKED SERVANT, I FORGAVE THEE ALL THAT DEBT, [as soon as, and] BECAUSE THOU DESIREDST ME. It was self-evident that a similar conduct was his solemn duty. The unmerciful

supplies God with weapons against himself. Our own conduct is the rule according to which God deals with us. (Matt. vii, 2.)

VERSE 34. AND HIS LORD WAS WROTH, AND DELIVERED HIM TO THE TORMENTORS. "According to that word, 'He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.' (Jam. ii, 13.) Before he had dealt with him as a creditor with a debtor, now as a judge with a criminal. '*The tormentors*' are not merely the keepers of the prison as such; but those who also, as the word implies, shall make the life of the prisoner bitter to him; even as there are '*tormentors*' in that world of woe, whereof this prison is a figure — fellow-sinners and evil angels — instruments of the just yet terrible judgments of God. But here it is strange that the king delivers the offender to prison and to punishment not for his ingratitude and cruelty, but for the very debt which would appear before to have been entirely and without conditions remitted to him." (Trench.) The question whether sins, once forgiven, return on the sinner through his after offenses, is a needless one. He that falls out of grace relapses into the state of condemnation, and is, consequently, subject to all the demands the Divine law has against him. Stier remarks: "We see here that the remission of our sins is not irrevocable, but with those who fall away, the words of Ezekiel (xviii, 24; xxxiii, 13) will be verified. On that account the king, in his sentence, returns to the rigor of the law." — TILL HE SHOULD PAY ALL THAT WAS DUE UNTO HIM; that is, till he should have paid. Full payment must be made before he was to be released, and as the former was, in the nature of the case, impossible, his confinement was of endless duration. Olshausen takes a different view of the passage, considering it as teaching, with other passages, that after death there is a deliverance of some from prison. The following is the substance of his strange comment: "This hard-hearted servant willingly acknowledged [where?] his fault, and thereby manifested a disposition which showed that he was not out of reach of forgiving grace. As he had committed no wrong, from the legal stand-point, by collecting what was due unto him by force, his punishment was according to the Gospel standard, (Matt. vii, 2,) [?!] not according to that of the law, and he was imprisoned that he might learn that only a merciful disposition could set him free, and re-admit him into the kingdom of God. According to 1 Pet. iii, 19, and Matt. xii, 32, there is for some a deliverance from prison after death." This argument calls for no refutation. Very forcible is the remark of Stier: "There is no more prospect

for such a heart, that is not melted by love, to be softened by torments than for the wretch under the torture to procure the last farthing."

VERSE 35. SO LIKEWISE SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO; that is, with equal severity my Heavenly Father will treat the unmerciful and the unforgiving. It is the uniform teaching of the Word of God that the Christian, after he has found pardon by faith in the blood of the Lamb, stands daily in need of Divine mercy. He, therefore, that shows mercy will daily find mercy at the hands of God. In this sense the words refer as well to the present life as to the day of judgment. (Comp. Matt. v, 7.) But whoever is not willing to forgive his brother his trifling offenses, will receive at the hands of God no remission of his great and many transgressions, and has to suffer the full punishment due unto them. The forgiveness must be "from the heart," consequently full and perfect. — "If this parable," says Lavater, "were found in some old document; if some parchment-roll were discovered amid the treasures of a royal library containing this parable; if the reply of Jesus (v. 22) and the whole parable were put in the mouth of some Greek or Roman philosopher, what a shout of praise would arise on all sides! But what the poor Nazarene says, though it has been re-echoed a thousand times, is judged to be of no account. Who can read these words of Jesus without blushing? Ye forgiving and unforgiving, can you read them without emotion? Can the offender despair if the offended party is a Christian? Can the latter still meditate revenge? Which of us has offended but seven times? Who has, I do not say seventy times seven, but seven times, forgiven fully and from the heart? O, all ye who daily pray with me, or ought to pray, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,' have you, from these words of the Lord, learned to forgive? Inexpressible sorrow ought to fill our hearts on considering how these words of the Lord, who speaks here in the name of truth, justice, and equity, are trifled with. The whole of this passage is as clear as noonday. The king and the beggar, the philosopher and the illiterate, all understand it, if they wish to understand it. What is forgiving? Who is to forgive? How? How often? What has he that forgives to hope for? What has he to look for that is unwilling to forgive? All these questions, so important for good and wise men, are answered in this passage plainly, intelligibly, satisfactorily. In the same manner we must forgive, as we wish God to forgive us. As we wish that God may forgive us a thousand times, if we have sinned a thousand times, so we must forgive a thousand times, if we have been offended a thousand times. God is infinitely merciful toward those that are so toward

their fellow-men. Let every one that is prone to anger, to revenge, ask himself: Do I forgive, as I wish that God may forgive me? With what measure shall it be measured unto me? With what judgment shall I be judged, if God judge me as I judge others?" — Further homiletic suggestions are not necessary, as we have given them in connection with the exegetical part. The homiletic treatment is manifold. The following appears to us the plainest and most correct: *The threefold reckoning*: 1. The reckoning king, or the remission of an immensely-large debt; 2. The reckoning servant, or the forcible exactment of an insignificantly-small debt; 3. The second reckoning of the king, brought on by the conduct of the relentless servant.

CHAPTER XIX.

§ 42. CHRIST'S EXPOSITION OF THE MARRIAGE RELATION.

Verses 1-12. (COMPARE MARK x, 1-12; LUKE ix, 51.)

(1) AND it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan; (2) and great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. (3) The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? (4) And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, (5) and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? (6) Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. (7) They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce, and to put her away? (8) He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. (9) And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except; *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (10) His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. (11) But he said unto them, All *men* can not receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given. (12) For there

are some eunuchs which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

VERSE 1. HE DEPARTED FROM GALILEE. By this expression we have to understand our Lord's final departure from Galilee. But before this took place, immediately after what Matthew had recorded in the preceding chapter, we have to place our Lord's going up to Jerusalem secretly to the Feast of Tabernacles, which John records in chapter vii, 2-10; and which has been regarded as identical with his final departure from Galilee, mentioned here and in the parallel passages. (Mark x, 1; Luke ix, 51.) But this supposition is irreconcilable with the following points of difference: "1. In Luke Jesus leaves Galilee for the last time, going up to Jerusalem to suffer; in John he goes thither to a feast, some six months before his death. 2. In Luke he goes with an unusual degree of publicity, accompanied by the apostles, and sending messengers before him to make ready for him; in John, he went up unto the feast, not openly, but, as it were, in secret. 3. In Luke he goes slowly, and apparently made a wide circuit, passing through many villages; in John he goes rapidly and directly, not leaving Galilee till his brethren had gone, nor showing himself in Jerusalem till about the midst of the feast." (Andrews.) The Synoptists omit all that is recorded by John from chapter vii, 2, to chapter x, 21. (See Synoptical Table, from No. 100-107.) As nothing is said by John of any return to Galilee after the Feast of Tabernacles, it is inferred, by Robinson and other harmonists, that he remained at Jerusalem, or in its vicinity, till the Feast of Dedication. But this silence is by no means decisive, inasmuch as John's object is here to report some important discourses of our Lord, adding only those historical facts that are necessary to explain them. Mr. Andrews, after examining thoroughly all the circumstances that must be taken into consideration, comes to the conclusion that our Lord returned to Galilee after the Feast of Tabernacles. His stay there was, of course, only temporary. Immediately after his return we have to place what Luke says: "It came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." By this we have to understand that he now went to Jerusalem to finish his work — to die — and then ascend to God. There is, it is true, an apparent discrepancy between Luke, on the one hand, and Matthew

and Mark, on the other, with regard to the route which our Lord took in going up to Jerusalem. According to Luke *he purposed to go through Samaria* to Jerusalem, but Matthew and Mark, after stating that he departed from Galilee, add that "*he came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan,*" or "*into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan.*" But this discrepancy is not irreconcilable. We may well conceive that, his messengers being rejected on the borders of Samaria, the Lord passed eastward to the Jordan, and thus entered Perea, and went up through Perea to the Feast of Dedication. Matthew and Mark again omit a considerable portion of Gospel history, which is, in part, filled up by John, chap. x, 22, to chap. xi, 57, but more fully by Luke, from chap. ix, 52, to chap. xviii, 15. (Comp. Synoptical Table, from No. 109-140.) The harmonizing, in point of chronological order, of what Luke records in this large portion of his Gospel, with what the other Evangelists record, is the most difficult task of the harmonist. Mr. Andrews's arrangement, though it also is beset with unanswerable difficulties, appears to us, on the whole, the most probable. Here we give only the results of his researches. In Luke we shall examine each point, and give the reasons for and against the arrangement we have presented in the Synoptical Table. Here we need only remark that, whatever order of events we may adopt, we must assume that Luke, in this portion of his Gospel, does not relate all the events in strict chronological order.

— AND CAME INTO THE COAST OF JUDEA BEYOND JORDAN.
Inasmuch as no part of Judea proper lay beyond — that is, east of the Jordan — the meaning is either that he entered Judea by the way of Perea, or, if we adopt the reading in the parallel passage of Mark, "He cometh into the coasts of Judea *and the farther side of Jordan*" — which reading is approved by Lachman, Tischendorf, and Meyer — the Evangelist intended to say that our Lord's ministry, after leaving Galilee, was in Judea and Perea.

VERSES 3-6. IS IT LAWFUL FOR A MAN TO PUT AWAY HIS WIFE FOR EVERY CAUSE? that is, for any cause or charge whatever. This question had reference to the Mosaic law of divorce in Deut. xxiv, 1. The inquiry, What should be considered as an adequate cause of divorce? was left by Moses to be determined by the husband himself. He had liberty to divorce her if he saw in her *the nakedness of a thing*; that is, any thing displeasing or improper, as may be learned by comparing the same expression in Deut. xxiii, 14, 15 — any thing so much at war with propriety and a source of so much dissatisfaction as to be, in the estimation of the husband, sufficient ground for

separation. There was among the Rabbins a division of opinion concerning the meaning of this term. The school of Hillel contended that the husband might lawfully put away the wife for any cause, even the smallest, while the school of Shammai explained the phrase *nakedness of a thing* to mean something criminal. The question is put so as to commit our Lord either to the interpretation of Hillel or to that of Shammai. But neither was in the right, and, therefore, Jesus goes in his reply not only beyond their disputes, but also behind the law of Moses, to the fundamental reason on which the law of marriage and divorce must rest. The error of the school of Hillel consisted in this, that they confounded moral and civil law. It is true, as far as the Mosaic statute or the civil law was concerned, the husband had a right thus to do; but it is equally clear that the ground of legal separation would not absolve a man from his amenability to his conscience and his God. The school of Shammai, though they were right in viewing the Mosaic statute in its higher moral aspect, erred in ignoring that the statute was, in itself considered, designed to be merely a *civil*, not a moral law. Our Lord, by implication, denies the moral character of the Mosaic statute, but in a way not to offend their Jewish prejudices. From the constitution of the sexes, as shown in the act of man's creation, (Gen. ii, 24,) he declares, first of all, the priority and sacredness of the marriage relation beyond all others. Not by the law of Moses, but long before that, by the very act of creation, God ordained the law which is to be binding in this relation, and *what God has joined together, let not man put asunder.* — HAVE YE NOT READ? In this reference of the Lord to the first two chapters of Genesis we have the highest confirmation of the authenticity and the Divine authority of the Pentateuch. — THAT HE WHICH MADE THEM AT THE BEGINNING MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. The creation of one human pair shows that the marriage tie is to be restricted to *one*, and no more, on either side. This truth is corroborated by the following considerations: 1. Of the numerical proportion of the two sexes which has existed through all ages, from the creation of the first pair to the present moment; 2. Of the immense evils that have ever arisen, and that, in the nature of the case, must ever arise from polygamy; 3. Of the unequivocal teaching of the Bible on the subject. Paul states, in the fewest words and in the clearest manner, the doctrine of the Bible on the subject, when he says: "Let every man have his *own* wife, and every wife her *own* husband." Though polygamy was practiced in patriarchal and Jewish times, it was never sanctioned by God. — AND SAID, FOR THIS CAUSE SHALL A MAN LEAVE FATHER AND MOTHER. The words

quoted were spoken by Adam. Being a prophetic utterance — for the relation of father and mother had not yet come into existence — they are attributed by our Lord to God himself. — AND THEY TWAIN SHALL BE ONE FLESH. The words *οι δύο* (*twain*) are wanting in the Hebrew, but are in the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX, and the fact that our Lord uses them is positive proof that they existed originally also in the Hebrew. "The *essential* bond of marriage consists in the unity in the flesh, not in that of the soul, by which latter, indeed, the marriage state should ever be hallowed and sweetened, but without which it still exists in all its binding power for this life. (xxii, 30; Luke xx, 35; 1 Tim. iii, 2.) Beyond the limits of this life, the matrimonial unity is abolished by the death of the body. And herein lies the justification of a second marriage, which in no way breaks off the unity in spirit with the former partner, now departed." (Stier.) — WHAT THEREFORE GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER, LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER. In perfect keeping with the God-ordained, specific nature of the marriage state, Jesus rejects thus the principle of divorce unqualifiedly as a human putting asunder of what God has indissolubly united. The only exception to this rule is mentioned in verse 9, because in that case a dissolution has virtually taken place. — The Christian Church, by adopting these words into all its formularies of solemnizing marriage, ought not to recognize the validity of any divorce, except for the one reason stated by our Lord.

VERSES 7, 8. Mark states the conversation of the Pharisees with Jesus in a somewhat different order. (On the points of difference see the notes on Mark.) The substance of Christ's answer is in both cases the same. In justification of Moses, he reminds them that Moses *suffered* divorce to be sanctioned, only in consequence of the hardness of the people's heart. The woman was in the time of Moses, as she is still in all non-Christian countries, little better than a slave. Had it not been for the permission of divorce, and the legal forms by which Moses restrained it, and thus guarded, to some extent, the rights of the wife, she would have been exposed to the most cruel treatment, or even to death from the violence of the dissatisfied husband. The moral condition of the Israelites was such that Moses could not make the civil regulations of the nation come up to the divine law. — Our Lord here intimates, as Dr. Morison, in his Notes, remarks, an important principle. "God, in his dealings with man, adopts his specific laws and regulations to the necessities of man's condition: hence a succession of dispensations, each adapted to the

existing state of things, and preparing the way for something better. . . . This graded principle of adaptation to man's condition and capabilities in the laws which are designed for his use, even by Divine Wisdom, must always be borne in mind, by those who would study the laws of Moses, in the light of the highest philosophy. Law is always given, as St. Paul says of the Jewish law, (Gal. iii, 19,) because of transgressions, and not that which is perfect when judged by the rules of absolute rectitude, but that which is the best that men are able to bear at the time, is the law which is dictated by the highest wisdom." — The distinction between the moral law of God and the civil laws of a country is of great practical importance. Even in the Mosaic dispensation a pious Israelite could not, without moral guilt, make use of a civil law, given to the nation at large, because of their hardness of heart. Much less is the Christian justified in doing what the civil law permits if it is contrary to the moral law of God. The Christian citizen in a slave State, for instance, is no more justified by the laws of his State in buying and selling men, women, and children than he would be justified in other immoral practices which may be permitted by the civil law of the land. On the other hand, the Christian Church may learn from Christ's decision concerning the Mosaic enactment of divorce the position she is to take with regard to those civil laws that may not be in harmony with the divine law. She is not called upon *forcibly* to interfere with the institutions of the country. Every attempt of the kind would be an unauthorized pulling up of the tares. (The reader may compare Owen's remarks, on page 371.) "Jesus has never acted the part of a civil lawgiver; he has enacted no civil laws, no laws that are to be enforced to the letter under all circumstances, but he is the lawgiver for the spirit." (Olshausen.) — BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT so; that is, in the state of paradise it was different. The first instance of polygamy that we meet with occurred among the descendants of Cain, the first murderer. (Gen. iv, 19.)

VERSE 9. Here the conversation with the Pharisees closes, and the following words were spoken by Jesus to the disciples in the house, who asked him further on this subject. (See Mark x, 10.)

VERSE 10. This remark of the disciples and the Lord's reply are peculiar to Matthew. The scruple of the disciples arises not so much from the only justifying cause of divorce, which our Lord had named, as from the inference they drew from the indissolubility of the marriage relation. This relation appears

unto them, in consideration of the *hardness of heart* of men, a great risk, and an unmarried life preferable.

VERSE 11. THIS SAYING; namely, the remark of the disciples that it was best not to marry. — ALL MEN CAN NOT RECEIVE. Only those can carry it out to whom it is given. Who those are is explained in the next verse.

VERSE 12. FOR. In confirmation of what he had said in verse 11, the Lord enumerates now three different cases of celibacy. The term "*eunuchs*" must be taken figuratively, and denotes here all that live in a state of celibacy. The word is taken in this figurative sense also in other writings. — 1. THERE ARE SOME EUNUCHS WHICH WERE SO BORN FROM THEIR MOTHER'S WOMB; that is, all that are naturally incapacitated for the marriage state. — 2. THERE ARE SOME EUNUCHS WHICH WERE MADE EUNUCHS OF MEN. As the term has a figurative meaning in the first and the third case, it may be understood figuratively also in the second. The Lord refers not only to eunuchs by bodily mutilation, but to all such as against their own inclination are prevented from marrying by the caprice of men, or through unjust regulations imposed upon society, as, e.g., the priests of the Church of Rome, monks, nuns, soldiers, etc. — 3. THERE BE [literally, there are] EUNUCHS WHICH HAVE MADE THEMSELVES EUNUCHS; that is, those that abstain from marriage voluntarily and from pure motives. Unnatural self-mutilation, which incapacitates for marriage, can not be meant here, since the natural desire could not cease thereby. Origen interpreted the passage literally, and emasculated himself in order to preclude slanderous reports, to which he was exposed in his capacity of a teacher of many young Christian ladies. He acknowledged his error, however, in subsequent life. Moreover, the Lord gives here no command, but merely says that there are such as voluntarily abstain from marrying, and overcome all desire for sexual intercourse FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN'S SAKE — not for the purpose of *meriting* the kingdom of heaven, or to attain to a high degree of holiness, as the Church of Rome teaches, in opposition to the Word of God, but in order to labor the more effectually for the kingdom of God, as the apostle Paul did, and as is often deemed necessary in the case of missionaries. Those that have such a divine calling for a state of celibacy receive, also, the necessary grace to live accordingly. Therefore the Lord adds, HE THAT IS ABLE TO RECEIVE IT, [that is, he that is able to abstain voluntarily from the marriage state,] LET HIM RECEIVE IT; that is, let him do so; he is permitted,

not commanded, to do so; the grace necessary to it will be imparted to him. The Lord, by thus restricting unmarried life to the three given cases, where a man is either compelled to remain single against his own inclinations, or where he remains unmarried according to the will of God and from his own free choice, in order to devote himself the more fully to the cause of God's kingdom, leaves no excuse for those that remain unmarried either through cowardice or caprice, through avarice or love of ease and independence, through contempt of the other sex, or through licentiousness. An unmarried life chosen for such reasons is contrary to the established order of God.

§ 43. JESUS BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN.

OUR Lord is now at Ephraim. (See Synoptical Table, No. 141.) Matthew and Mark relate, from this point on, for the most part, events in the same order as Luke. Nearly all the harmonists agree in placing the bringing of the little children to Christ next in order to the discourse on the law of marriage. There is a natural fitness in this sequence. Our Lord had just delivered some thoughts of profound wisdom on the subject of marriage, in reply to questions which the captious Pharisees had put to him, for the purpose of entrapping him in some theological inconsistency. All around him is excitement, and the terrible events of his approaching suffering are gathering thick about him. His attention is arrested by mothers, and perhaps fathers, with the children in their arms, pressing their way through the crowd to him for his blessing upon them. Reproving his disciples, who were going to repulse them, he utters one of the sweetest, broadest promises of the Gospel, takes them in his arms, looks at them with tenderest compassion, and blesses them. The great teachers of past ages directed their attention to the wealthy, not to the poor; to adults, not to children; to those distinguished by splendid talents, not to those of ordinary powers. Christ preaches to the poor, and takes helpless infants in his arms. When we behold him doing this, too, in this period of his history, we feel deeper chords touched in our hearts than when we see him hush the furious tempest, or raise the buried dead. It is one of the sublimest passages in the glorious biography of our blessed Redeemer. The record of this incident is *full of comfort*, because every thing that Christ did during his sojourn on earth is the reflex of what he is constantly doing in heaven for his Church; and we can,

therefore, safely infer from it that he sustains also to the smallest children a real life-union, blesses them, and opens the kingdom of heaven unto them.

Verses 13-15. (COMPARE MARK x, 13-16; LUKE xviii, 15-17.)

(13) THEN were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. (14) But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. (15) And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

VERSE 13. THEN WERE THERE BROUGHT UNTO HIM LITTLE CHILDREN. Luke (chap. xviii, 15) uses the word **βρέφος** — an infant, a babe. The same word is used in Luke ii, 12, 16; Acts vii, 19; 1 Peter ii, 2. From this it appears, as it does also from their being carried, (**προσφέρεσθαι**,) that they were smaller than the child mentioned in Matt. xviii, 2. — THAT HE SHOULD PUT HIS HANDS ON THEM, AND PRAY. Mark and Luke say, "That he should touch them." It was customary among the Jews to lay hands on a person's head on whose behalf a prayer was offered. When Joseph brought his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to his father Jacob for his farewell blessing, the dying patriarch put his hand on the head of each in pronouncing his benediction. (Gen. xlvi, 14-20.) From 2 Tim. i, 6, we learn that the imposition of hands was practiced by the apostles in conferring spiritual gifts. — AND THE DISCIPLES REBUKED THEM. We are not told on what ground they repulsed them. They may have thought it was beneath their Master's dignity to notice little children, or they were too small to receive any benefit from him; or it was because they did not wish to be interrupted. Whatever the reason may have been, it was something very displeasing to our Lord. (Mark x, 14.)

VERSES 14, 15. BUT JESUS SAID. According to Luke, "Jesus called them unto him, and said." It would seem that those who carried the children were discouraged by the conduct of the disciples. Before, however, the parents were called, he addressed those who were laying obstructions in their way in the words: SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN, AND FORBID THEM NOT, TO COME UNTO ME; that is, to receive a blessing from me. "An infant was to

the eye of Christ an object of stupendous importance, a subject of immeasurable potentialities, a life for endless development and wondrous destinies. He saw the oak in the acorn, the waving harvests in the little seed."

— FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. *Of such* must here refer to real children, not to persons of a like disposition, since the truth that the kingdom of God belongs to adults of a childlike disposition, was evidently no reason why the disciples should not forbid the children to come to Jesus. The cause must be sought in the children themselves. — In these words the Lord positively declares that all children that die while they are unaccountable are entitled to the bliss of heaven, and for the same reason while on earth, to membership in his Church, in the same manner as children under the old dispensation were entitled to Church-membership. There can be no reasonable doubt that "the kingdom of heaven" is here, as in other passages, to be taken in its twofold meaning; namely, as the visible kingdom of grace on earth, or the Church of Christ, and as the invisible kingdom of glory in heaven; for the condition of those that are here spoken of necessarily implies that if they have part in the one, they are entitled also to the other. That unaccountable children inherit the kingdom of glory by virtue of the justification of life, which by the righteousness of one has come upon all, when they die, before they are guilty of actual transgressions, is admitted by all that believe that Christ has died for all men. From the unconditional salvation of children that die in a state of unaccountability, it plainly follows that children in that state on earth are entitled to be received into the Church of baptism; for if the congregation of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, consists not only of adults that entered heaven through repentance and faith, but also of children that were incapable of exercising these graces before they entered heaven, why should their incapacity to believe and repent debar them from membership in the Church on earth? For even in the case of adults faith is only the means or condition, not the meritorious cause of salvation. Both are saved through the universal redemption by Jesus Christ, the second Adam, as the apostle shows at full length in the fifth chapter of Romans. If a child that can not yet believe can have part in Christ, the head, it can also have part in his mystical body, the Church. There is, however, connected with this view the somewhat difficult question, If dying infants go to heaven, does this not imply that they sustain in life a real, not a merely relative or nominal, connection with Christ; and is a real spiritual union between the infant child and Jesus Christ conceivable without spiritual life imparted to the child before by the Holy Spirit? Is, for this reason,

the fundamental law of the kingdom of God, "Except a man be born again, he can not enter into the kingdom of God," not applicable as well to the infant as to the adult? The affirmative answer returned to this question has, on the one hand, given rise to the unbiblical dogma that the new life necessary to infants, also, for an entrance into heaven is imparted *through baptism*, on which point we shall say more toward the close of our remarks. On the other hand, it has been maintained, more recently: As all children are born into this world with a corrupt, sinful nature, owing to their descent from Adam, so they are all unconditionally born again through the second Adam, Jesus Christ; or, in other words, all infants have for Christ's sake, through the operations of the Holy Spirit, their nature so renewed from their birth that they are thereby not only qualified for heaven, if they die, but need, also, no second regeneration in subsequent life, if they do not lose this grace thus received in their infancy. "It is inconsistent with God's impartial love," it is said, "to suppose that the renewing of the Holy Ghost is granted to those children only that die in their infancy; and that in the others that grow up natural depravity must necessarily develop, so that they must afterward be regenerated through faith and repentance." To this view we object, on the following grounds: 1. If all children, without exception, were born again immediately after their natural birth, the saying of Christ, in John iii, 3, applied to children, would be very strange and dark; and if we understand Christ to speak of regeneration in subsequent life, the passage would teach the necessity of a second regeneration in advanced life. 2. This view of a renewal of the whole race, effected in infancy, is contradicted by experience, although we are not disposed to deny the possibility that a child, from the first dawn of self-consciousness, may yield itself to the influence of the Holy Spirit, so as to be preserved from intentional sins by God's preventing grace. 3. If the Holy Spirit is assumed to effect more in the salvation of infants that die than in those that grow up to years of discretion, the reason of it lies in the difference of the circumstances under which it pleases God to save them. We can not conceive of regeneration taking place in a child before it has awakened to self-consciousness. This takes place in the case of the dying infant in the hour of death, when the spirit leaves the body; and as there can be no opposition to the operations of the Holy Spirit in the soul of such a child, it can not be but that such a child, dying in its innocence, is regenerated at the very moment when the soul leaves the body and awakes to self-consciousness. In the case of the child that grows up, Divine grace is the same, but the circumstances are different. Here regeneration can not take place

before the soul assents to it, and it is this in which consists the difference between conditional and unconditional salvation. With the first dawn of self-consciousness and the feeling of moral responsibility the justification of life is granted to the child, according to the circumstances to which it is ordained, either for the enjoyment of bliss in heaven or for the acceptance of grace for this life. Though, for these reasons, the view of a real regeneration that runs parallel with the universal depravity of human nature appears untenable, yet there is this truth at the bottom of it: that in the same manner as every human being has inherited spiritual death through Adam's sin, the germ of spiritual life, or the susceptibility of it, is implanted in every one from his birth, without any efforts on his part, solely for the sake of the righteousness of the second Adam, and through his grace, so that every man has offered by the second Adam a perfect remedy for the injury sustained through the first Adam from his very birth. "The life," says John, "was the light of men; and that was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John i, 4, 9.) The same idea is expressed by Paul, when he says, "As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (Rom. v, 18.) The justification of life, or the new life awakened by the Holy Spirit, can, indeed, not manifest itself in the infant child; but who is, therefore, prepared to deny that grace can affect the infant child as well as sin? Why should the infant be incapable of having the principle of spiritual life in itself before it is conscious of it? If the children (*παιδία* or *βρέφη*) brought to Jesus had been incapable of receiving any spiritual blessings at his hands, would the Lord, who never did any thing that was useless, have laid his hands upon them and blessed them?— We must not bring our remarks to a close without examining into the bearing which these words of Christ and his action have on infant baptism. The children were brought to Christ, not to be baptized, but that he should lay his hands on them and pray; that is, procure and impart unto them a spiritual blessing. It must, moreover, be borne in mind that the words "of such is the kingdom of heaven" were spoken before Christian baptism was instituted. The cause of infant salvation is thus not their baptism, but, as we have shown, their unconditional redemption through Jesus Christ. But this very redemption and its results, the operation of the Holy Spirit upon every man from his birth, is the *foundation on which infant baptism rests*; for baptism is nothing else than the sacramental acknowledgment of the share which every child has in the universal redemption through Jesus Christ. It is a sign and seal that, in virtue of

the redemption by Christ, the children of Adam, *as children, are in favor with God already*; that they are heirs of eternal life in consequence of the merits of Christ, not in consequence of baptism. In so far as infant baptism is the expression of God's forerunning grace — and the whole Christian religion rests on forerunning grace — and in so far as baptism represents incipient salvation, the entry into the visible kingdom of God, and points as a sacrament of promise to the final completion of this salvation, so far *infant baptism*, and not that of adults, *represents the full idea of baptism*. For baptism rests, even in the case of adults, after all, on the unmerited grace of God, which has been purchased for all men through Jesus Christ; and in this sense the addition in Mark must be understood; namely, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." It is self-evident that in the case of adults a conscious assent and a ready reception of the Divine grace through repentance and faith are necessarily required, while in the case of infants their participation in the covenant of grace is merely passive. Inasmuch as the infant is not yet guilty of any actual transgression, and inasmuch as original sin for the sake of the righteousness of the second Adam is not imputed unto the infant, there is, evidently, nothing in it that could incapacitate it for the covenant of grace. For this very reason the infant is, through baptism, to be taken out of the world, which lieth in wickedness, and to be introduced into the family of God. The child is not to be a heathen first and a Christian afterward, but its life is to be developed from its very incipiency under Christian influences. A child of believing parents, a child that is born in the Church, is already in the kingdom of God. Baptism is its birthright, that can not lawfully be withheld from it. It has a claim on the Church and the Church on the child. It is the solemn duty of its believing parents, and of the Church, to awaken in this child, by prayer, instruction, and example, the consciousness of the grace of God, of which it has become a partaker, and to develop it into healthful life by the aid of the Holy Spirit. The duties of Christian parents to their offspring are beautifully described by Dr. Olin in the following words: "The Lord intends the Christian family to be a school of Christ — to live in a holy atmosphere, in which the children shall be bathed and baptized, and nurtured, as in a divine, genial element. He would have them put on the Lord Jesus Christ with the first garments of their childhood, and drink in Christian sentiments from the mother's loving, beaming eyes as they hang upon the breast. He intends them to learn religion, as they learn a thousand other things, from the spirit and tone of the family — from its vocal thanksgivings and songs of praise — from its quiet, joyous Sabbaths —

from the penitent tear, the humble carriage, the tender accents, the reverent look and attitude of the father when, as a priest, he offers the morning and the evening sacrifice. The new immortal that has fallen down into the midst of the Christian family is to be taken into the soul of its piety, to be sanctified by its prayer and faith, and to form a part of that reasonable and acceptable offering in which, morning and evening, the godly parents lay all that they are and that they have on the altar of sacrifice. This, with faithful and diligent instructions, and restraints adapted to the different periods and exigencies of childhood and youth, is the nurture of the Lord — the right training, which, under our gracious economy, insures the early piety of the children of really Christian families. They grow up Christians; they are sanctified from the womb. Even their childish prattle savors of divine things, and they pass on to the attainments of mature piety by gradations so easy and imperceptible that it may not be possible to fix the day of their espousals to the Savior."

§ 44. ANSWER TO THE INQUIRY OF A RICH YOUNG MAN, AND DISCOURSE THEREUPON.

Verses 16-30. (COMPARE MARK x, 17-31; LUKE xviii, 18-30.)

(16) **AND, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?** (17) And he said unto him; **Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but *one, that is,* God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.** (18) He saith unto him, **Which?** Jesus said, **Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,** (19) **Honor thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.** (20) The young man saith unto him, **All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?** (21) Jesus said unto him, **If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.** (22) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. (23) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, **Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.** (24) And again I say unto you, **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.** (25) When his disciples heard it, they were

exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? (26) But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (27) Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? (28) And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. (30) But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

VERSE 16. AND, BEHOLD, ONE CAME, etc. This individual was a young man, rich, and the ruler of a synagogue. From Mark we learn that he came running, and kneeled to Jesus in the way, while the latter was about departing from that part of the country. All these circumstances were well calculated to make a sensation, and this the Evangelist expresses by "*behold*." It is worth noticing with what humility, what freedom from prejudice and fear of men, he does public homage to Jesus, expressing thereby even a willingness and readiness to become a disciple of the Savior. — GOOD MASTER, WHAT GOOD THING SHALL I DO THAT I MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE? Here the readings vary. Codd. B D, and some important versions, read, διδάσκαλε, τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω, (Master, what good thing shall I do?) and in the next verse, τί με ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, (What doest thou ask me about the good?) Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Alford have adopted this reading. — He was conscious of having done a good many good things already, yet he did not feel fully satisfied and secure of eternal life. There lay, however, as the sequel shows, a double error at the bottom of his question. He imagines to obtain or inherit eternal life, 1. By his works; 2. By doing an extraordinary work which is to complete his imaginary righteousness. The question, What good (thing) shall I do? in its general import, is graver and more momentous than all other questions, more so than all problems of science. Whoever has never propounded this question to himself is still fast asleep in sin and carnal security. Dr. Kummacher remarks, "How far does this wealthy, influential young man excel many of his peers in rank and position, who have

lost all faith in the supernatural, and who make it their highest boast to deny every thing that is spiritual and divine!" But although eternal life was the object he sought, and although the things of this world did not satisfy him, yet he was not willing to give them up. On the other hand, he was not so completely blinded by self-righteousness as to believe that a mere conventional morality was sufficient to secure eternal life for him. It was, evidently, a deeply-felt want that induced him to come to Christ in the way described. He was not satisfied with the outward observance of the law, although he had no adequate conception of the depravity of human nature and of the spirit of the law.

VERSE 17. WHY CALLEST THOU ME GOOD? or, according to the other reading, WHY ASKEST THOU ME ABOUT THE GOOD? Stier prefers the common reading, and takes the other for an early gloss or correction, on the ground that while the reading "Why callest thou me good?" may, very naturally, have been considered by some transcribed to be objectionable and unintelligible, no one would have dared to substitute it for the true reading. The young man had addressed Jesus according to the fashion of his times, "Good Master," or "Excellent Teacher." The Lord designs to teach this youth, who entertained not the least doubt of his ability to do many good things, the unwelcome truth that no mere man — and for a mere man the young man took Jesus, notwithstanding the high veneration which he entertained for him — is good; that without God no one is good in the full sense of the word; that he must, therefore, first become good before he can do good works; and that God alone, the only fountain of the good, can make him good. For this purpose he wisely emphasized the word "good" in his reply, which implies all this, but by no means any denial of his own sinlessness; for he says not "I am not good," or "only One is good — my Father" — and such his reply would have been had he intended to deny his sinlessness. He calls himself (John x, 12) the good Shepherd, which is more than "good Master," and insists (John viii, 46) on his sinlessness, and thereby, indirectly on his divinity. Rationalists may choose between the two following syllogisms: No one is perfectly good except God. Christ is not God, therefore he is not perfectly good. Or, no one is perfectly good except God. Christ is perfectly good, therefore Christ is God. While Jesus, who knew no sin, says, with a humility that is the very opposite of the pride of self-righteousness, "No one is good, but One, that is God," and thereby vails, as it were, his sinlessness, he affirms, at the same time, his divinity by his own sinlessness, which even those are compelled to acknowledge who

deny his divine claims. — In order to impress still more deeply on the young man the mortifying truth that he was himself not good, the Lord adds, BUT IF THOU WILT ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS. The young man is referred to the Divine commandments, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. The more earnestly a man strives to keep the commandments as God desires them to be kept, the more fully he will be convinced that he can not keep them by his own strength. Thus, the law is our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ. At the same time the Lord teaches us that faith and grace do not make void but establish the law.

VERSES 18, 19. HE SAITH UNTO HIM, WHICH? The young man, according to the tenor of his question, (verse 16,) expects to be referred to commandments of a peculiar kind — to some great and meritorious work — and requests, accordingly, further information about the commandments meant by the Savior. The pharisaic distinction between great and small commandments comes here plainly in view. Mark and Luke omit this characteristic question, and give the words of the Lord at once, "Thou knowest the commandments." The report of Matthew is the fullest and most accurate. — The Lord refers to the commandments of the second Table, because, 1. We can more easily attain to a correct knowledge of our conduct toward our fellow-men, whom we see, than toward God, whom we do not see, and by this means learn best to understand our moral or religious condition; 2. Those commandments are mentioned first, which forbid things that are universally condemned by the conscience. This naturally leads to the humiliating question: Is man, who needs such commandments for the regulation of his conduct, good by nature? Is he not by nature a murderer, adulterer, thief, and liar at heart, a child without reverence, a man without love?

VERSE 20. ALL THESE THINGS HAVE I KEPT, etc. A certain outward righteousness this young man evidently had. As if wondering and amazed at the easiness of the terms, he replies in a tone which shows how little he understood what it was to observe the commandments in their thorough and spiritual application, as Jesus has explained them in his Sermon on the Mount. Yet by adding, WHAT LACK I YET? he confesses an uneasiness, a conviction that something is still wanting to secure his peace. That there was a great inward struggle going on in his heart, appears from the remark of Mark, (x, 21,) "And Jesus beholding him, loved him," and from the sorrowful state of mind in which he left the Lord. "The self-righteous are not all of one kind. The

young man in question belongs to the better class, and forms, without being aware of it, the intermediate link between the Pharisee and publican, whose contrast is set forth in Luke, (xviii, 10-12.) Legal righteousness, a keeping of the laws according to one's best knowledge, is not worthless in itself. Who would not rather see such a young man than a profligate person or an open transgressor? But mere morality does not satisfy the heart, nor pacify the conscience. The greater the effort has been to keep the law, the more irresistible is the question, 'What lack I yet?'" (Stier.)

VERSE 21. IF THOU WILT BE PERFECT. Jesus does not contradict the young man's statement, does not question his veracity, does not even directly expose the hollowness of his supposed good works, but complies with his request to show unto him what he was still lacking, by pointing out a particularly-good work; but this good work revealed the fatal defect in the young man's character, and was well adapted to bring him to a proper knowledge of himself — to the painful knowledge that, instead of having kept all the precepts of God's law, he was not even prepared to fulfill the very first, from which all the others flow, loving the creature more than the Creator. — **SELL THAT THOU HAST.** "It is self-evident," says Stier, "that the compliance with this command is not a general rule for all the wealthy that desire to be saved; and it is equally clear that the mere parting with one's property is in itself without value and merit. (1 Cor. xiii, 3.) It is here required as a test and preparation for what is immediately afterward required of him. — **AND COME AND FOLLOW ME.** But although this requirement was a particular test in a particular case, yet it must not be overlooked that it is based on the *general duty of unconditional self-denial and surrender to Christ*. The Gospel requires of every man a readiness to consecrate to God whatever he demands, be it much, or little, or all. The one thing that the young man lacked was not that he had not sold all his goods and given them to the poor, but that there was something which he valued more than his allegiance to God. In this sense the demand of our Lord is of general application. "It is a command, not a counsel — necessary, not optional — but particular, not universal, accommodated to the idiosyncrasy of his soul to whom it was addressed. For many followed Jesus to whom he did not give this command. He may be perfect who still possesses wealth; he may give all to the poor who is very far from perfection. Our Lord's words laid an obligation on the man who offered himself of his own accord, and that so unreservedly. If the Lord had

said, Thou art rich, and art too fond of thy riches, the young man would have denied it; wherefore, instead of so doing, he demands immediately a direct proof." (Bengel.) What our Lord required of the young man was, moreover, a very necessary condition of discipleship in that day, as appears, also, from the additional clause in Mark: "And take up the cross." What could a young man, then, do with his riches as a follower of Christ? Must they not have been, almost of necessity, a fatal incumbrance? For, by the invitation to follow Jesus, we have evidently to understand here a call, like the other apostles, to leave all and devote himself exclusively and permanently to the service of Christ in the ministry of the Gospel.

VERSE 22. "The young man must have deeply felt the truth of the words of Jesus; for as Jesus neither had nor claimed legal authority over him, and as the Old Testament did not require such a surrender, he might have declined compliance without uneasiness. But this he could not do. The Spirit that accompanied the words of Jesus had found its way into his heart, darkness had given way, and he saw, in the light of the Spirit, the true way of the new birth: hence his painful struggle. But the fetters that tied him were so strong that he could not break them, and thus the gate of the kingdom of God, that had just now opened, closed again before his tearful eyes." (Olshausen.) Whether this, his sorrow, produced subsequently repentance, godly sorrow — as most of the German commentators suppose — the New Testament does not state, and we, of course, do not know. The words of Jesus (verse 23) would rather indicate the contrary.

VERSE 23. The remarks of the Savior, subsequent to the departure of the young man, have more light shed upon them by the report of Mark. Lange describes the affecting scene occasioned by this incident very vividly, in the following manner: "Jesus was touched with the distress and danger of the young ruler, who went away from him sorrowful. He wished to improve the occasion for his disciples also; it was calculated to advance them in their self-knowledge. For this reason he looked significantly round about, and said, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.' This word was so new and strange to the disciples that they were greatly astonished at it. It seemed unto them to be in conflict with the Old Testament promises of temporal blessings for the just, with their own notions of the glory of the new kingdom, yea, with the fact that the Lord had some wealthy individuals among his disciples. Their amazement induced the Lord to express himself more fully.

'Children,' said he, according to Mark, 'how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God.' In these words lay the assurance that it was not the possession of wealth as such that he condemned. The trust which the rich put in their possessions is what makes it so hard for them to enter into the kingdom of God. This qualifying explanation, however, does not take away the serious import of the word. On the contrary, the manner in which the Lord speaks immediately afterward again of the rich, warrants the inference that it is really extremely hard for them to give up their pernicious confidence in their riches." — A RICH MAN SHALL HARDLY ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. The following comparison with the camel, by which not only a difficulty but an absolute impossibility is expressed, proves that the Lord does not speak of the outward possession of wealth as such, but of the frame of mind which is engendered by the acquisition and possession of wealth. At the same time the Lord's words teach plainly that a frame of mind which unfits for heaven is intimately connected with the possession of wealth, that it is extremely difficult for the rich to free himself from such a state of mind, and that without doing so he can not enter into the kingdom of God. "The cause of this," says Heubner, "lies in this, that riches not only strengthen worldly-mindedness, weaken the love of the invisible, prevent the crucifying of the flesh, but invite also to pride and haughtiness by the honor and influence which they confer. How few rich men are made uneasy and apprehensive by these plain words of Christ, that their riches might hinder them from going to heaven! The more praiseworthy are those wealthy Christians who devote their riches to the furtherance of the cause of Christ." But although the possession of riches is attended with peculiar and great dangers, impediments, and trials, it must, at the same time, not be overlooked that the same is the case with poverty, and that the real cause which unfits for heaven must be sought in the heart of man, not in his outward circumstances. The poor man that "*will be rich*," (1 Tim. vi, 9,) that sets his heart upon riches which he does not possess, can no more enter into heaven than the rich who trusts in the riches which he possesses. "In the kingdom of God every member is only a steward of God, has nothing that he calls his own, having surrendered every thing to God. This surrender the Lord makes the condition of entering into heaven. For this reason the word '*rich*' has a very extensive signification. The beggar may be '*rich*' in his sins and lusts, while the man of wealth may be poor." (Olshausen.)

VERSE 24. IT IS EASIER FOR A CAMEL, etc. Commentators have deemed this figure too strong, and have, therefore, attempted alterations. Instead of κάμηλον some prefer the reading κάμιλον, found in a few minuscules, and translate "a rope" or "a cable." But while, according to Meyer, the existence of such a word as κάμιλος is more than doubtful, the proverbial use of "camel" occurs also in chaps. 23, 24, and the Talmud uses "elephant" for the same purpose. Others, again, to soften the expression, understand by the "*eye of a needle*" a small side gate, through which men passed, but too small for the camel to pass through. But against this Lange observes: "The difficulty of the preceding verse is evidently represented here as an absolute impossibility, and for impossibility no expression is too strong. The only question, therefore, is, In what relation does the difficulty of verse 23 stand to the impossibility in verse 24? In verse 23 a rich man is spoken of, that *can* tear himself loose from his possessions, however hard the task may be, while verse 24 speaks of a rich man that is *not willing* to tear himself loose. The camel, a beast of burden, is a very fit emblem of the rich man, while the eye of a needle, as one of the smallest of orifices, represents most fitly the entrance into the kingdom of heaven."

VERSE 25. THE EXCEEDING AMAZEMENT OF THE DISCIPLES, and their question, WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED? plainly show that they had correctly apprehended the difficulty of the rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The cause of this difficulty is man's strong innate attachments to objects of time and sense. Even the poorest is strongly attached to the little he has, and no one is willing to part with what he has. The disciples have correctly apprehended their Master's words as requiring an unconditional surrender of self and every thing earthly. This appears plainly from the answer which the Lord made to their question. — Chrysostom assigns the following as the cause of the disciples' amazement: "Because they were deeply concerned for the salvation of their fellow-men, they trembled on account of their Master's declaration for the whole world."

VERSE 26. BUT JESUS BEHELD THEM. The same is also stated by Mark, (chap. x, 27.) This look of Jesus was both calming and reproofing. — **WITH MEN THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.** Man's natural strength is unable to overcome the impediments of conversion and salvation. (Compare Rom. viii, 3.) But what is impossible for man in his own strength becomes possible by the help of God, which is offered unto him. And, inasmuch as this Divine help is a

moral help, or assistance, that works in man, and in union with man's will — no physical irresistible force from without — it is evident that these words, "WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE," are identical in meaning with the words, (Mark ix, 23,) "All things are possible to him that believeth."

VERSE 27. THEN ANSWERED PETER. The disciples were well aware that the foregoing remarks of their Master were intended for them also. Recollecting what sacrifices he and his fellow-disciples had made, Peter, in answer to what our Lord had promised the young man, in verse 21, exclaims, "BEHOLD, WE HAVE FORSAKEN ALL AND FOLLOWED THEE; WHAT SHALL WE HAVE THEREFORE? The answer of Christ shows that he recognizes the expectation of a reward by his disciples as proper. He encourages them, also, on other occasions, by the promise of great rewards in heaven. (Luke vi, 23.) While he however thus admits the propriety of their expectations, and promises to all believers the richest recompense of reward, he strikes, at the same time, by his concluding remark in verse 30, and the following parable of the laborers in the vineyard, at the root of the Jewish error of seeking reward on the ground of merit.

VERSE 28. YE WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED ME. The twelve thrones promised here show that the apostles are meant. By confining the promise to those that follow — that is, shall have followed — Jesus, Judas is prophetically excluded. So in Luke xxii, 28-30. Notwithstanding the apostasy of Judas, however, the number of the thrones is not diminished; another shall receive the office of the traitor, and God's plan about his kingdom can not receive any detriment from the wickedness of a mortal. — IN THE REGENERATION (*παλιγγενεσία*) does not belong to "ye which have followed me," as the common version has it, but must be connected with "ye also shall sit," and the verse ought to read, accordingly, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, shall sit in the regeneration, etc. By "regeneration" here most of the German and some English and American commentators, as Alford and Owen, understand the *renovation of the earth*; that is, the new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell. Most of the English expositors, however, understand the whole promise figuratively as applying to the position of the apostles in the kingdom of grace; that is, the Christian Church. Dr. Whedon advocates this view very ably, as follows: "In the inauguration of the apostles, in chap. xvi, 19, the Lord appointed them rulers of his Church, after his ascension, under the symbols of the *keys*, and *binding*, and *loosing*. Here he affirms the same

appointment under the image of *thrones* and *judging*. The parallel passage in Luke xxii, 28-30, is explanatory of this, and should be diligently compared. *Ye which have followed me* is explained by *Ye which have continued with me in my temptations*. *In my temptations* is anti-thetical with *in the regeneration*. *The temptations* denote the scenes of our Lord's earthly ministry; the *regeneration*, the state of things after his ascension. As this *regeneration* is a plain antithesis to the *temptations*, the latter term needs a brief analysis. *These temptations*, first, were primarily our *Lord's own trials in his humiliation state*. Their center was his own person. But, *second*, they extended to those who *followed him*; namely, his disciples and believers. And, *third*, they characterized that period and state of things as a scene of humiliation and subjection. Antithetically to all this, the *regeneration* was at and after our Lord's resurrection. It was *primarily* centered in our Lord's own renovated person; for he then put off his servant-form and put on his immortality. He ascended on high upon *his throne of glory*, yet to rule over his Church in heaven and earth. *Second*, that renovation overspread and included his followers, especially his twelve apostles. By the pentecostal spirit they were endowed with power from on high. They entered upon the possession of the *kingdom appointed*, (Luke xxii, 29;) they received and exercised the power of the keys of that kingdom; they ascended their twelve apostolic thrones as the viceroys of the Lord in his glorification. *Thirdly*, the Church was renewed and regenerated from the old to the new dispensation. The types and shadows had departed, the reign of the *kingdom of God with power was begun*." All this is good and true; but that the promise in question was not fulfilled in the manner and at the time stated by Dr. Whedon appears plainly, from the fact, as Owen well remarks, that the time from Christ's resurrection to the death of the apostles was not the time of their reward, but of their trials and persecutions. An appeal to profane writers as to the meaning of the term **παλιγγενεσία** is of no avail, since an idea foreign to their spiritual vision was ascribed to it by the inspired penmen. Gerlach gives to the promise a primary and secondary signification, and paraphrases the passage thus: "You shall be the teachers and rulers of my Church to the end, and on the judgment-day my assistants in judging the world." — YE ALSO SHALL SIT UPON TWELVE THRONES, JUDGING. The *sitting on thrones* is to be taken figuratively, whatever view we may take of *regeneration*, and the *judging* is not to be restricted to judicial acts proper, but is to be understood in the general sense of reigning. By the TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL must be understood not the twelve tribes of

Israel after the flesh, but the spiritual Israel, the totality of the children of God, of which the Israel after the flesh was only a type.

VERSE 29. AND EVERY ONE THAT HAS FORSAKEN. Mark says, "For my sake, and the Gospel's," and Luke, "For the kingdom of God's sake." Everyone, without exception, that has left this or that object, that was dear to him, for the Lord's sake, shall not suffer any loss, but be abundantly compensated for it. Lange observes: "The relations of kin and family stand between 'homes' and 'lands,' whence it seems to follow that 'homes' is not to be understood literally, but figuratively, meaning nationality, native country, and the faith of fathers and ancestors." That "the forsaking of the wife" does not imply a dissolution of the matrimonial relation is plain from what the Lord had said but shortly before on this subject. — **SHALL RECEIVE A HUNDREDFOLD**, etc.; that is, a hundred times as much in value as they had given up for Christ. The number "hundred" is an indefinitely great one, and must, of course, not be understood literally. Luke says, "manifold more," confining this part of the promise to the present life. For every sacrifice of earthly relations and earthly good which the believers make for the cause of the kingdom of God they receive the most ample compensation, primarily, of course, in spiritual blessings. Who can doubt that the apostles and martyrs, yea, all real children and servants of God, enjoyed — notwithstanding the temptations which Mark significantly couples with the blessings — even on earth more true happiness than other men? But in many instances the Christian receives ample compensation, also, in temporal blessings for the sacrifices made in his Master's cause. Godliness has the promise of the present life as well as of the life to come.

VERSE 30. This saying, which the Lord used also on another occasion, (Luke xiii, 30,) is explained by the following parable, at the close of which it is repeated. Its meaning and bearing on what precedes we shall examine in our introductory remarks on the following chapter. We would, therefore, here say only, many that are first "with regard to time, talents, outward appearances, and in their own opinion," shall be last, and *vice versa*.

CHAPTER XX.

§ 45. THE PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD.

THE object of this parable is, as we intimated at the close of the preceding section, and as the opening conjunction *for* indicates, both to illustrate and to confirm the closing sentence of verse 30. Our first question, therefore, is: In what relation does verse 30 of chap. xix stand to what immediately goes before? Peter's question, "What shall we have in return for our forsaking every thing and following thee?" was answered by the Lord with the promise of an ample reward, both in this life and that to come. But as the apostle's question was based, to some extent, on the idea of human merit, the Lord adds a significant *but*: "But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first;" and proceeds to explain, by this parable, how the first may be last; namely, by working merely for wages, or, what amounts to the same, by appealing before God to their merits, and exalting themselves above others, whose merits they consider inferior to their own. Thus the parable sets forth two truths; namely, that God fully compensates every man for what he does, and that those who work only for wages and imagine they have higher claims on God than others, receive their penny — that is, their stipulated temporal rewards — but lose eternal life, which is the free gift of Divine grace, not the reward of merit. These are the two leading ideas of the parable, its substance and center. The details can with safety be interpreted only so far as their interpretation serves to elucidate these fundamental ideas. (See *Thirdly* in our introductory remarks to Chap. XIII, page 357.)

This is the basis on which that profoundest of all the German expositors, Dr. Stier, builds his interpretation, that appears to us the only correct one. He says: "In order to understand and interpret this parable correctly, which has always received a good deal of attention, and has, especially in our days, been distorted, yea, fairly abused, in lengthy dissertations, it is above every thing else necessary to know what the Lord means by the *penny*, or *hire*. We maintain that all who understand *eternal life* or the *bliss of heaven* by it, grievously err and miss the scope of the whole parable. That eternal life can not be meant by it, appears conclusively from the three following considerations: First, eternal life is *never* represented in the Scriptures as hire due by contract, as is evidently the case with the penny, according to verses 2 and 13. The contract is, as we see, fulfilled by the contracting parties, and the disposition or

worthiness of the hired laborers does not come at all into consideration. On such conditions no one goes to heaven. Secondly, the murmuring party received their hire, but are dissatisfied with it. That these do not belong to the number of the elect is plainly said at the close of the parable. If they did belong to them, the whole parable would contradict this its conclusion, for all the called would ultimately be saved. The abrupt, almost angry, dismissal, 'Go thy way,' (v. 14) — the original ὄπαρε is still more expressive — is perfectly inconsistent with the idea that heaven is meant here. The blessed of the Father (xxv, 34) are quite differently addressed. The words, *Take that thine is*, in connection with the ungracious dismissal, remind one forcibly of what Abraham tells the rich man, (Luke xvi, 25,) and have essentially the same meaning, although the words themselves are spoken under different circumstances: 'What thou hast stipulated for thou receivest, and with this depart; I do not desire thy further services nor thy presence.' The enjoyment of heaven without the favor of God is an impossibility. No murmurer can go to heaven, and whoever goes there can not murmur. Luther also, though he would rather ignore the penny as something unessential, says: 'If we would interpret strictly, we must understand the penny of the temporal good, and the favor of the householder of the eternal good. The murmuring laborers trot away with their penny, and are damned.' Melancthon maintains still more positively that eternal life is not to be understood by the penny. A single glance at what has been said is sufficient to convince us that the penny is, indeed, a temporal blessing distinct from eternal life, but not necessarily confined to things of an earthly nature. It is evidently the same reward, enjoyment, or compensation to which Peter's question refers, (xix, 27.) God, both according to grace and justice, connects a compensation or reward with every service man renders unto him, so that no one serves God for naught. Who has ever suffered any harm by being a follower of that which is good? (1 Pet. iii, 13.) Who has not found sufficient reward therein? All that serve the Lord have even in this life their reward, notwithstanding the persecutions which they have to suffer. But the *penny* is very different in kind. While some find in it, from the very start, a *gracious* reward and an *earnest* of the gift of eternal life, others claim it as their due, as the wages of their service, and lose thereby eternal life."

To this interpretation of the penny it is objected that, since it was paid at the close of the day, it must mean the reward of heaven. But this objection has no force. For the paying of the hire in the evening is a feature which the

complement of the parable necessarily required. Day-laborers are paid in the evening. The penny, no matter what it means, appears as the compensation for the labor performed.

This leads us to the second question; namely, what have we to understand by the *day* with its twelve hours? What by the *earlier* or *later* hours of the first and the last? On this point Alford agrees in substance with Stier, although he rejects the latter's interpretation of the *penny*. Alford understands by the day the "*natural period of earthly work*," and says that "the various hours of hiring serve to spread the calling over the various periods, and to show that it is again and again made." Stier more accurately defines the day with its hours thus: "The natural day with its twelve hours is nothing else than the parabolic representation of the manifold relations existing between the *first* and the *last*. It refers, indeed, more particularly to the earlier calling of Israel, with whom God made the covenant of works, but includes also all other references to any real or imaginary precedence. The parable does not symbolize any thing that takes place for all, in every respect, in the manner described, but something that takes place in the course of time, often and in various ways, though its primary reference is to the calling of the Jews and Gentiles. The limit in the interpretation of the parable is the warning representation of all that are called, with some real or imaginary advantages over others, and connect therewith the idea of merititiousness. To find any thing beyond this limit in the individual features of the parable is erroneous." To refer each of the various hours at which the laborers were engaged to a particular period in the historical development of the kingdom of God — either from the beginning to the end of the world, or during the New Testament dispensation — as many of the earlier Fathers and some more recent expositors have done, is trifling, and leads to inexplicable difficulties. The scope of the parable contemplates evidently only the contrast presented by the call of the first and last. As the Lord desired to warn his disciples against the idea that their services were merititious, what was more natural for him than to do this by explaining unto them the great error of the Jews, which consisted in this, that they considered the early calling of their ancestors as a great merit on their part, and murmured when the heathen converts were put on an equal footing with them? (Comp. Acts xi, 1, etc.; xv, 1, etc.) This reference of the parable to the calling of the Gentiles is well set forth by Mr. Watson, who says: "The Gentiles were to be brought into the Church, and made 'fellow-heirs,' being placed on a perfect equality with Jewish

believers as to the privileges and spiritual blessings of the Gospel, so that there should be 'no difference;' and to this several of the parables of our Lord look forward, his design being to prepare the apostles for it, and gradually to undermine those Jewish prejudices which still held possession of their hearts. These Gentiles were *last* in general estimation, and in their destitution of instruction, and yet they became *first* — the Gentile Church, in fact, ultimately superseding not only the Jewish Church, as it existed under the law, but the Churches of Jewish Christians, who, in a short time after the destruction of the Jewish polity, became extinct by absorption into the Gentile Churches. Though the believing Jews might naturally suppose that they ought to have eminence and distinction in the Church which Christ was about to set up, even if other people might be called into it, yet they had no reason to murmur at God's goodness to the Gentiles, in making them equal, and in some respects superior. The grace of the Gospel in all its fullness, as promised, was granted unto them. There was in the case no breach of the covenant stipulation, but there was nothing in that to prevent the exuberant goodness of God from flowing forth to the Gentiles also. And if, in process of time, he should make the Gentile Churches even *first* in that instrumentality by which the world was to be illuminated and converted, this was a pure matter of grace and sovereign appointment, not to be envied, but to be acquiesced in and adored." — The only question remaining is, how far this parable may be *applied* to the various calls which a man receives during his lifetime. Such an application has forced itself upon the Church so generally and naturally that we do not feel at liberty to reject it altogether; and for this reason a practical application of the various features of the parable will be made in the exposition of each verse. Yet it can not be denied that this application conflicts more or less with the correct interpretation of the parable. The different hours can but partially be applied to the personal calls of Divine grace which men experience at the different periods of life. If, for example, the laborers that were hired first are made to represent those who have been engaged in the service of God all their life long, amid sore trials and great difficulties, it would be very wrong to ascribe unto them also the disposition of their representatives. The real scope of the parable is, in fact, quite different from what it becomes if the hours are applied in the manner indicated. While in the parable itself the disposition of the first laborers is the main point, the leading idea in the application is, that God calls men from their infancy in various ways into his service, and promises to each a rich reward. That the laborers who entered into the vineyard at the eleventh hour were

preferred to those who had worked the whole day, was owing to the self-exaltation and mercenary character of the latter. How absurd would it be to infer from this that there are no degrees in the kingdom of glory, and that it is indifferent whether a man serves God from his infancy or turns to God only at the close of his life! This erroneous view is, however, avoided by a correct interpretation of the penny, and it is worthy of note that, according to this interpretation, the application to the lifetime of every individual conflicts less with the real scope of the parable, than according to any other.

Verses 1-16.

(1) FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. (2) And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny ^[1] a day, ^[2] he sent them into his vineyard. (3) And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, (4) and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. (5) Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. (6) And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? (7) They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive. (8) So when even was come, ^[3] the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first. (9) And when they came *that were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. (10) But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. (11) And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house, (12) saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. (13) But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? (14) Take *that* thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. (15) Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?

Is thine eye evil, because I am good? (16) So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

[1 The Roman denarius, a silver coin, varying from fifteen to seventeen cents. (See chap. xviii, 28.) It was the daily pay of a Roman soldier under Tiberius, a few years before this parable was uttered, and the daily wages of a laborer among the Jews. Polybius, (II, 15,) in illustrating the exceeding fertility and cheapness of the country, mentions that the charge for a day's entertainment in the inns of Cisalpine Gaul was half an as — one-twentieth of a denarius. This we may, therefore, regard as liberal pay for a day's work.]

[2 By *day* is here meant the natural day, from the rising to the setting of the sun. The chronological day the Jews reckoned from sundown to sundown. (Lev. xxiii, 32.) Before the exile there was only one more division into morning, noon, and evening. The division into hours the Jews seem to have adopted during their exile. These hours, however, were not of equal length all the year round, no more than the watches of the night. But the actual length of the day was divided into twelve equal parts, (hours,) and the actual time of the night into four watches; that is, four equal parts. The longest day in Palestine has fourteen hours and twelve minutes, the shortest, nine hours and forty-eight minutes. The third hour, therefore, answered nearly to our nine o'clock, A.M., the sixth to our noon, the ninth to our three o'clock, P.M., and the eleventh to our five in the evening.]

[3 By the Mosaic law (Deut. xxiv, 15) the wages of a hired servant were to be paid *before night.*]

VERSE 1. FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE. Because the term "kingdom of heaven" generally refers to the new dispensation, most commentators maintain that by the first hired laborers not the Jews but the apostles must be understood. But there is no force whatever in this reasoning, because the vineyard, the theme of this parable, was a well-known symbol of the Church of God under the old dispensation. The kingdom of God is very appropriately compared with a vineyard "because its fruit is delicious, but the labor it requires very hard." — **WHICH WENT OUT EARLY IN THE MORNING.** On this Stier remarks: "The invitation was given early, and all might have made use of it; if they were not present at the first invitation, or if they did not heed it, it was their own fault, and they alone were responsible for any losses which they might sustain from coming so late into the vineyard. This we conceive to be true, though the laborers excuse themselves on this point in

verse 7." — TO HIRE LABORERS. This hiring symbolizes God's invitation or call to come and work in his Church, whether made by the ministry of the Word, or by the secret working of his Spirit on the human heart, or by special providences. The similitude of the points of the parable must, however, not be pressed too far. While men *hire* laborers, that is, agree to pay them a certain sum for a specified amount of labor to be performed by the latter, so that each of the parties receives his equivalent for what he gives or does, God *never hires*, that is, he receives no equivalent from men for what he promises unto them, and he has, moreover, an undisputed claim on man's time and services as his Creator and Preserver. The rewards which he promises to those that obey him are of free grace, not of merit; and this very mercenary spirit, that fancies to have claims upon God for services rendered, etc., is sternly rebuked by the whole parable, and, if fostered and persevered in, finally excludes, as we are plainly told, from eternal life altogether. — The laborers hired are not only the teachers in the Church, but the whole membership; every believer has a work to do in the Church of God, both by his profession and by the example of his deportment; and God requires of every one faithfulness in his calling.

VERSE 2. AND WHEN HE HAD AGREED WITH THE LABORERS FOR A PENNY A DAY. Man, in his intercourse with his fellow-man, has a perfect right to demand an equivalent for what he does or gives; not so in his dealings with his God, though God does not demand service of man without offering a reward.

VERSE 3. AND SAW OTHERS STANDING IDLE IN THE MARKET-PLACE. The market-place of the world is here opposed to the kingdom of God. Whoever has not yet commenced to labor in the kingdom of God, in obedience to the drawing of God's grace, is an idler, no matter what else he may do. "However busily occupied a man is, however hard he works, day and night, if he does not work in a Divine call, if he does not look upon God as his employer, if he does not devote his labors to the best interests of the kingdom of God, he is an idler." (Draeseke.)

VERSE 4. WHATSOEVER IS RIGHT I WILL GIVE YOU; that is, what is just and equitable. "No amount is here agreed upon. While the first laborers were hired for a specified sum, these are satisfied with the householder's declaration that they are to be dealt with in justice and equity." (Lange.) "Nations as well as individuals are at different times called into the fold

of Christ; one nation has the Gospel preached before another, and even of those who from their birth are in the bosom of the Christian Church, one attains in early years, another in the years of manhood, and a third one again in the declining years of old age, to a saving knowledge of his Savior." (Lisco.)

VERSE 5. AGAIN HE WENT OUT ABOUT THE SIXTH AND NINTH HOUR. On this verse Luther remarks: "Some of the Fathers have applied this to the preachers from the beginning to the end of the world; the first hour represents, accordingly, the times of Adam, the third those of Noah, the sixth those of Abraham, the ninth those of Moses, the eleventh those of Christ and of the apostles. Such talk will do, if a man has nothing else to preach about." It is equally fanciful to understand, as Lange does, "by the first hour the times of the apostles and Jewish Christians, by the third those of the first converts from heathenism, by the sixth and ninth the age of Constantine, and by the eleventh hour the times immediately preceding the millennium."

VERSES 6, 7. AND ABOUT THE ELEVENTH HOUR HE WENT OUT. "The gracious, good lord can not but make another effort at the very last hour. Those whom he now finds unemployed he evidently censures; 'why have you stood all the day idle? why have you slighted my earlier invitations? Are you determined to lose also the last hour, and with it the whole day?'" (Stier.) — **NO ONE HAS HIRED US.** Stier comments on this passage as follows: "What a bold answer, since the householder had called from the first hour of the day, and charges them, therefore, not undeservedly, with idleness! Christ does not represent this excuse as valid, and before God it will certainly be rejected. To human eyes the case seems, indeed, often different. We say, of this or that man, 'Would to God that he had learned it earlier! but his education was wrong, he was in bad company, his religious instructor was a rationalist.' When such an individual hears the Divine call, so as to heed it, his first impression is, that he had never been called before. But when the Spirit fully enlightens him he justifies himself no longer. He feels and confesses that God has called him from his tender infancy, but that he has disregarded the Divine call, and that the blame of disregarding it is altogether his own. The heathen, indeed, can truthfully make this plea, but no one that groweth up under the benign influences of the Gospel. But God in his infinite goodness repeats his call to the very last hour; he entreats men not to stand idle, and the persons invited at the last hour are such as are fully aware of what they have deserved by their protracted idleness, and that it is mere grace that another opportunity is given

unto them to work in God's vineyard; they have confidence in the Lord, and willingly accept now his invitation; they do not make the frivolous plea, that the day is too far spent, that it is not worth while now to commence. Even the eleventh hour is still a precious hour of grace, for some evidently the last, solemn hour of decision; but we ought to consider that every call that we hear may be the last for us." (Stier.) Owen, however, applies these words differently, and says: "They had not remained idle through indolence, but because no man had required their services. They were industrious and willing to work, whenever the opportunity was offered them. They had tarried in the market to an unusually-late hour, in hopes that, even then, some one would employ them, and pay them the proportionate wages of the day. It is necessary to take all these circumstances into account in reaching the full meaning of this parable in its spiritual application. But no one must suppose, from this, that the tardiness to accept the invitations of the Gospel, which with some persons extends even to the eleventh hour, is excusable or a safe precedent."

VERSE 8. With this verse commences the second section of the parable, the paying off of the laborers and the justification of the principle, according to which this was done. While the invitation repeated at the different hours of the day is principally intended to set forth the self-righteous, mercenary disposition of those who think that because they have worked longer than others they are entitled to higher rewards, the comparatively-higher compensation of those that had wrought only one hour is mainly designed to teach us both that God rewards only of grace, that with God man can have no merit, and that God does not look so much at the amount of labor performed as at the disposition of the laborers. The laborers hired at the eleventh hour are preferred to all the others, because they advanced no claims of merit. They received more than they had earned or expected. Their receiving their pay first is a trait of the parable intended to bring out the disposition of the first laborers in its strongest light. In like manner the paying off in the evening and the mention of the steward are mere drapery, and it leads to confusion to make the steward represent Christ, and the paying off the final judgment. As we have said before, not the adjudging of eternal life, but the bestowment of temporal rewards, though of a spiritual nature, are symbolized by the penny. "That the lord orders his steward to commence with the last means, in general, that all the laborers are to be paid most liberally, without respect to the amount of labor performed, or the length of time spent in the vineyard. Moreover, there are really only two classes

recognized by the lord, according to their dispositions; namely, those who look upon themselves, on account of their merit, as the first, and those that humbly regard themselves as the last. As the Lord, however, takes delight in humility alone, which he wished to prove and to confirm, in order to bestow on it afterward something better than the penny, he makes prophetically the last first and the first last, yet orders, at the same time, that the penny be paid to all from last to first." (Stier.)

VERSE 10. THEY SUPPOSED THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED MORE. This sets forth their spirit of self-righteousness. They fancied to have, by dint of merit, claims on God's special consideration. This they plainly tell the goodman in verse 12. Their motto is, The more work, the more merit, and consequently the greater reward; but they find themselves disappointed. God judges and acts otherwise than man. He takes no pleasure in selfish, envious laborers. Even those that have worked all the day, that is, who in obedience to the first call of Divine grace have devoted their whole life to the service of God, have no legal claims on God for reward, but every thing they receive is of free grace; and the more a man groweth in grace, the more he progresses in holiness, the more this becomes his ruling conviction.

VERSE 11. THEY MURMURED AGAINST THE GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE. "Instead of being thankful, they murmur on receiving their pay, and that even against the householder, whose liberality and goodness of heart they had just witnessed. It is no cause of rejoicing to them that others are the recipients of such distinguished favors. On the contrary, this very fact excites their discontent; for if the others had received only their proportionate pay — three-fourths, one-half, one-fourth, and one-twelfth of a penny — they would have been satisfied. But as all, even those that had wrought only one hour, received each a penny, they foolishly expected to have their pay raised in the same proportion." (Stier.) On the term "*goodman*" Owen remarks: "It is the same as the word translated *householder* in verse 1. The word "*good*" has here no moral signification, but is used in an obsolete sense as an appellation of civility and respect."

VERSE 12. THESE LAST HAVE WROUGHT BUT ONE HOUR — literally, have made, as we also say, "to make an hour or a day." The whole is the language of contempt for their fellow-laborers, as the following, AND THOU HAST MADE THEM EQUAL UNTO US, WHICH HAVE BORNE

THE BURDEN AND HEAT OF THE DAY, is that of boast and self-exaltation. The word translated *heat*, literally signifies a *burning, scorching heat*, and is sometimes put for the scorching wind, the *sirocco*. "How like is this language to that of the elder son, (Luke xv, 29,) and thine own, when thou art full of envy, because others are put on an equal footing with thee, or are preferred unjustly, as thou thinkest! Attach no importance to thy labors for the kingdom of Christ thyself, then Christ will attach the greater weight to them. Charge nothing to him, if thou workest more than others, and he will set the more to thy credit." (Richter's Bible.) There are men that look upon labor as a burden, and work only for pay — of this kind are the first here — while others work without any mercenary motives, out of obedience, and with implicit confidence in God's goodness; to this class belong the last. (Compare verse 9.)

VERSES 13, 14. BUT HE ANSWERED ONE OF THEM, probably him who had expressed his discontent in the name of the others. — FRIEND. This term is used in chap. xxii, 12, with reference to the guest who had no wedding-garment; and in chap. xxvi, 50, it is applied to Judas Iscariot. It is no term of friendship, but an expression of mere civility. — I DO THEE NO WRONG. "God's strict justice does no man wrong. What a laborer earns he certainly receives. Even merely outward virtues, without any intrinsic value, as, e.g., the temperance or chastity of the miser, never go without their reward, health and a long life." (Heubner.) — TAKE THAT THINE IS. Thou hast what belongs to thee. — AND GO THY WAY — intimating that he must give up the idea of receiving more. Does this language not remind us of Luke xvi, 25? — I WILL GIVE UNTO THIS, etc. — "God has the sovereign power and perfect right to reward as he sees fit. No man has a right to complain of God's government. God has the right to dispose of us according to his good pleasure. Our duty is to obey." (Heubner.)

VERSE 15. IS THINE EYE EVIL, BECAUSE I AM GOOD? The eye is put here for the person, because the *sight* of the prosperity of others is the usual incitement to envy. — BECAUSE I AM GOOD. God thus ascribes what he had done to the last laborers to his sovereign goodness, leaving no room whatever for any merit on their part.

VERSE 16. SO THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST AND THE FIRST LAST. In chap. xix, 30, this sentence reads, "Many that are first shall be last,

and the last shall be first." The difference of the wording is easily accounted for. Verse 30 in chap. xix speaks of the possibility of the first becoming the last; this verse speaks of this possibility as realized, as is shown in the preceding parable. For this reason it is said, *So*; the last become, of God's free grace, the first, and the first, that is, those who first followed the call, and, therefore, believe that they have claims on extraordinary rewards, become, by their own guilt, the last. It is said of all of those first that are described in the parable that they become last, but not because they were first called, but because of the disposition which they manifested. It can not, therefore, be asserted of all that are called first that they become last. In contrast with those *first* ones, who are characterized by the delusion of possessing great merits and their contempt for others, appear the last as of a quite different disposition, knowing of no merits of their own, and trusting implicitly to the goodness and veracity of the Lord. — **FOR MANY BE CALLED.** This refers primarily to the first called, who, notwithstanding the long time spent in God's service, were found, at last, unfit for heaven. But, from the peculiar case of those that, in spite of their calling, do not enter heaven, for the reason set forth in the parable, the Lord takes occasion to announce the general truth that out of the great number of the called comparatively but few will approve themselves in the end worthy; that is, elect or chosen. This sentence is illustrated by the Lord on another occasion in the parable of the marriage of the king's son, (Matt. xxii, 1-14,) wherein we are taught that there are, in addition to self-exaltation and a mercenary spirit, some other causes which keep many of the called, in the end, out of heaven. This much, however, is certain, from the two parables and from the whole tenor of the Scripture teaching, that it is not an arbitrary decree of God that makes the elect, but that every one who is called has the ability and duty to make his election sure. (2 Pet. i, 10.) In order to do this it is necessary, before every thing else, to waive all claims to merit. "Many are called to work in God's vineyard; but few retain that temper of spirit, that humility, that entire submission to the righteousness of God, that utter denial of any claims as of right on their own part, which will allow them, in the end, to be partakers of his reward." (Trench.) On the other hand, we must be careful not to understand the parable so as if the last had been put on an equal footing with the first, on account of extraordinary faithfulness and zeal displayed in the short time spent in the vineyard. Nothing can be more diametrically opposed to the scope of the parable. There is a parable to this effect in the Talmud of Jerusalem, which reads as follows: "A king hired many servants. There was one among them who

did his work remarkably well. What did the king do? He called him and took a walk with him. When evening came the laborers gathered to receive their pay, and the excellent laborer received a full day's pay. On seeing this the others murmured, saying, We have worked all day, but this one only two hours, and he has received as much as we. The king said unto them, He has done more in two hours than you in the whole day." This is, undoubtedly, an imitation of our Lord's incomparable parable, conceived in the self-righteous spirit of pharisaism.

HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

THE LABOR IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND ITS REWARD.

I. LABOR IS REQUIRED OF ALL; for

1. The Lord calls laborers

(1.) Early in the morning — the morning and the third hour are the spring of life;

(2.) At noonday — the sixth and ninth hours are the age of manhood;

(3.) And still in the evening — the eleventh hour is old, declining age.

2. He reproves the idlers.

II. GOD IS JUST TOWARD ALL HIS LABORERS.

1. To every laborer is promised what is right; that is, ample reward.

2. Each receives his penny in the evening; each receives an equal reward for his labor. The last are in this respect not more favored than the first. The disparity of the amount, etc., of labor performed is balanced by the good fortune of the first to have been all day in the vineyard, while the last suffered a great detriment by standing so long idle in the market-place.

III. THE REWARD, WHICH MAN RECEIVES OF GOD FOR SERVING HIM BOTH IN TIME AND ETERNITY, IS ENTIRELY OF FREE GRACE.

1. It is grace on the part of God to call men into his vineyard, and to promise them a fixed reward.

2. Eternal life can not be earned by any thing that man can do or suffer, but is, in every instance, the free gift of God.

IV. THOSE, ALSO, THAT HAVE WROUGHT LONG AND MUCH FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE AT LAST REJECTED.

1. If they think that they can earn heaven by their works;
 2. If they in pride and envy exalt themselves above others.
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§ 46. CHRIST FORETELLS ONCE MORE HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH — THE AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF THE MOTHER OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE.

Verses 17-28. (COMPARE MARK x, 32-45; LUKE xviii, 31-34.)

(17) AND Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, (18) Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief-priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, (19) and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again. (20) Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshiping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. (21) And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. (22) But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. (23) And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. (24) And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. (25) But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. (26) But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; (27) and whosoever will be

chief among you, let him be your servant: (28) Even as the Son or man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

VERSE 17. AND JESUS GOING UP TO JERUSALEM; namely, from Ephraim, where he had sought a temporary refuge. (John xi, 54.) See Synoptic Table, No. 135-145. On this last direct journey to Jerusalem our Lord uttered his third plain prediction of his impending suffering and death, followed by only one more, two days before the Passover. (Chap. xxvi, 2.) Matthew says nothing of the impression which this sad disclosure made on the disciples. From Mark, (x, 32,) however, we learn that the Lord went in silent contemplation before his disciples, they following in amazement and fear. According to Luke (xviii, 34) they still did not comprehend the meaning of their Master's words. Unable to conceive how the Son of God, whose power over life and death, heaven and earth, they had so often witnessed, should not be able to resist all his enemies successfully, and to establish a Messianic kingdom according to the Jewish conception, they could not understand the clearest statement. They had, as appears from the subsequent prayer of the sons of Zebedee, nothing before their eyes but the glory of the Messiah. — TOOK THE TWELVE DISCIPLES APART. Lange remarks on these words: "This taking apart means, in all probability, not a mere stepping aside and a momentary leaving of the crowd of pilgrims, who went to the feast, but refers to the stay which Jesus made with his disciples in the wilderness near Ephraim. From this wilderness he joined, near Jericho, the caravan of Galilean pilgrims which went by the way of Jericho to Jerusalem, and the Evangelist describes here the moment when he stepped forth from out of the wilderness to join the caravan."

VERSES 18, 19. This prediction is more circumstantial than the two former ones. (Chap. xvi, 21; xvii, 22.) — JERUSALEM is named as the place where, for centuries, the typical sacrifices had prefigured the real sacrifice for the sins of the world, and of which the Lord says: "It can not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke xiii, 33.) A double delivering, (*παραδιδόναι*,) once rendered *betraying* and the other time *delivering*, is here spoken of. The author of the first betrayal to the chief-priests is not named. But the second betrayal, or delivering to the Gentiles — that is, the Romans — is positively designated as an act of the chief-priests and scribes;

that is, of the Sanhedrim, and thus of the whole nation represented by the Sanhedrim. Instead of the more general term *killing*, it is said here: They shall CONDEMN him; that is, pronounce the sentence of death upon him. His manner of death will be determined by the heathens, and will consist in MOCKING, (Mark and Luke add, "Spitting upon,") SCOURGING, and CRUCIFYING. "And all things that are written in the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished." (Luke xviii, 31.) (Comp. Isa. l, 6; Ps. xii, 17.) Yet through this dismal darkness shines again the promise of his resurrection, which, although not understood by the disciples, still made upon them the impression of final triumph. — This circumstantial prophecy of his death by the Lord shows, 1. That as prophet he was perfectly clear; 2. As priest, perfectly willing; and, 3. As king, perfectly certain of his final victory.

VERSE 20. THEN CAME TO HIM THE MOTHER OF ZEBEDEE'S CHILDREN. This was Salome, the sister of Mary, mother of Jesus. (See notes on Matthew xiii, 55, 56.) She had probably learned from her sons what Jesus had promised the apostles, (Matt. xix, 28,) and, as Lange thinks, also the prediction of his death, to which this scholar refers the "*then*," remarking, "Immediately after this fearfully-explicit prediction of his suffering and death by crucifixion, this woman came forward praying for the two highest places of honor for her two sons. If we take this into consideration, her boldness appears in a less offensive light. Her prayer had even something heroic about it, because she raised the flag of the firmest hope, when all others stood dejected and dismayed, and expressed the strongest conviction that her sons would unflinchingly stand by Jesus in his struggle for his kingdom." To this the question of the Lord seems really to refer; and the heroic character of this woman is confirmed by her continuing under the cross of Christ till he expired, and by her being one of the first that visited the sepulcher of the Lord. — **WORSHIPING HIM** — "doing him homage as the Messiah." — **AND DESIRED A CERTAIN THING OF HIM** — "that is, the unconditional promise that her prayer should be granted; this form of expression is common in the Oriental court style, (1 Kings ii, 20.) But the Lord insists that she should explicitly state her prayer." (Lange.) According to Mark the two brothers made the request themselves; but Matthew's account is fuller, and it is a very common practice to say of a person that he does something himself that is done for him by others. According to both Evangelists the Lord's answer is directed to the two brothers.

VERSE 21. GRANT THAT THESE MY TWO SONS, etc. The first place of honor was, among the Orientals, on the right, and the second on the left hand of the king. This prayer may have arisen from the fact, that the two brothers, in company with Peter, were on several occasions distinguished before the other disciples. Lange thinks that the near relationship and the particular love of Jesus for John had also its influence. — That such a strife for pre-eminence should have arisen among the disciples after their Master had shortly before enjoined upon them humility as the indispensable requisite for even an entrance into his kingdom, (chap. xviii, 4,) yea, that the same strife should again arise even while they were eating the Passover, (Luke xxii, 24,) shows how deeply seated ambition is in the human heart. "How early did this desire for precedence take possession of the followers of Christ! and how baneful have been its effects whenever, in subsequent times, it has crept into the Church!" (Owen.)

VERSE 22. YE KNOW NOT WHAT YE ASK. Ye know not that the first posts of honor in my kingdom can not be attained to without sharing previously those sufferings that I have to go through. (Compare 2 Tim. ii, 12; 1 Cor. iv, 8.) "They had no idea," says Lange, "what terrible places of honor they would have attained to if their request had been granted; that is, the places of the two malefactors that were crucified with Jesus, the one on his right, the other on his left hand. Ye know not what ye ask! said the Savior, shuddering at the dullness of his disciples, who, though forewarned time and again of their Master's fate, still persist in asking what is improper, dangerous, and pernicious for them." — **ARE YE ABLE TO DRINK OF THE CUP?** "*The cup* is a frequent Scripture image for joy and sorrow. (See Isa. li, 22; Matt. xxvi, 42.) It here seems to signify more the inner and spiritual bitterness, resembling the agony of the Lord himself — the baptism is an important addition in Mark, being more the *outer* accession of persecution and trial through which we must pass to the kingdom of God." (Alford.) — **TO BE BAPTIZED WITH THE BAPTISM.** The word *baptize* is used here figuratively for being overwhelmed with, immersed in, or poured upon by sufferings. — **THEY SAY UNTO HIM, WE ARE ABLE.** Though the answer evinces a spirit of too much self-confidence, the two disciples were sincere, and made good their promise. "The one of these brethren was the first of the apostles to drink the cup of suffering, and to be baptized with the baptism of blood, (Acts xii, 1, 2;) the

other had the longest experience among them of a life of trouble and persecution." (Alford.)

VERSE 23. YE SHALL DRINK INDEED OF MY CUP, etc. These words contain no special prophecy of James's and John's martyrdom, but are spoken to all the disciples in general. The way to glory in the kingdom of God leads through suffering. (Compare Rom. viii, 17; 2 Cor. i, 5.) By such a way of suffering the Lord declared (Luke xii, 50) he himself had to go on to perfection, (Heb. v, 8, 9;) according to the life-union existing between Christ and every one of his followers, these must share his sufferings as well as his glory, and only where sufferings have had their effect glory can take place. (Rom. viii, 17; 2 Tim. ii, 11, 12.) To this inward and necessary connection between suffering and glory the Lord calls their attention, in order to make them understand the nature of the conditions by complying with which alone the glory of the kingdom can be attained to. — BUT TO SIT ON MY RIGHT HAND AND ON MY LEFT. By these words our Lord does not mean to intimate that he would gratify such a request with regard to any of his disciples. But, suiting his answer to the form of their prayer, he tells them: As to posts of eminence in my kingdom, they are not given according to the fashion of men; their bestowal is not optional with me, who, as the Son of man, must myself be made perfect through suffering before I can enter into my glory. The subordination of Jesus to the Father, which is taught here and elsewhere, is of an official character. In his mediatorial, Messianic character, as the Son of man, Jesus is subordinate to the Father; but this conflicts by no means with his true Divinity and equality with the Father in being, which is taught in other passages. According to Lange, "Christ distinguishes here between the economy of the Father, the election to different degrees of glory, and the economy of the Son, or the redemption and the official calling into the service of the Church." Position, calling, influence in the kingdom of Christ, do not depend on man, but on God exclusively, according to inviolable laws and a higher necessity — ordained by Supreme Wisdom and Justice, they are given to those for whom they are prepared. "Who is foreordained for special posts of honor is also Divinely fitted out for them." (Stier.)

VERSE 24. The other ten apostles were, in all probability, absent during the whole conversation, (v. 20.) The same ambitious spirit, which had given rise to the request of Zebedee's sons, manifested itself in the displeasure awakened in the other disciples. For this reason the Lord addresses himself to them all,

and tells them once more, that, in his kingdom, humility alone is true greatness — that ministering to all leads to reigning. If the Roman doctrine of the primacy of the Pope were correct, the Lord's answer to the ambitious request of Zebedee's sons would have been about as follows: Do you not remember that the first place which you covet has been bestowed by me, near Cesarea Philippi, on Peter? He is the prince of the apostles, and my vicegerent. But how different is his answer!

VERSES 25-27. With the EXERCISE of POWER and AUTHORITY in this world the Lord contrasts the spirit of MINISTERING and SERVING in his kingdom. In the kingdoms of this world power is founded on superiority, and every one, therefore, strives to be superior to his neighbor. In the kingdom of God it is not so, and can not be so. Here only the greatest willingness to be the humblest servant of all capacitates and qualifies for greatness and pre-eminence. This is the great lesson which the Lord here teaches his disciples, and which he presently sealed by his own example. — That there are, however, different positions in the kingdom of God, reason, experience, and Scripture unite in teaching, for which reason the Lord has established different offices in his Church. This was, qualifiedly, even the case during Christ's sojourn on earth. The relation of the seventy to him differed from that of the twelve, and of these, again, three — Peter, James, and John — stood nearer to him than the rest, while John alone leaned on his breast.

VERSE 28. EVEN AS. The connection lies in the idea that ruling in a godlike manner consists in giving, not in exacting, as is the case with human rulers. You must not crave to rule, but to minister, just as the Son of man, who did not come TO BE MINISTERED UNTO; that is, to exercise power and authority after the fashion of men, as the Jews expected of their Messiah. The NOT BEING MINISTERED UNTO is still more explained by the positive BUT TO MINISTER, and this ministering goes even so far as to give his life as a ransom. The best comment on this passage the apostle gives, when he writes, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii, 6-8.) — The *redeeming* service which Christ has taken upon himself for mankind, his disciples can, indeed, not imitate, but they can enter into that disposition from which Christ's peculiar service proceeded, as

the apostle teaches in the passage just quoted. This declaration of Christ, that he did not come to be ministered unto, that is, to reign as the princes of this world do, Lange, very properly, refers to the preceding announcement, that whosoever wishes to be chief in his kingdom must be the servant of all, and thus finds therein a warning against every thing hierarchical in his Church. "Christ does not wish to exercise authority over others for his own interests, for his own glorification, or by outward means. His desire is to minister unto men in love, in order to redeem them. The whole life of Christ is characterized by a ministering spirit, and his vicarious death fully discloses the object of his life. And his declaration, 'Whosoever will be chief among you,' etc., plainly teaches that the only lawful authority in his kingdom springs from willingness to minister unto others, and that all power should be exercised only in a holy, humble ministering unto the Church. Any other Church authority is hierachial, and leads to despotism, whose germs it carries in itself, just as despotism, in turn, naturally allies itself with hierarchy, or itself acts in the spirit of hierarchy by domineering over the consciences of men. These powers — hierarchy and despotism — are the real organs of the kingdom of darkness, symbolized as such in the prophecies of Daniel and in the Apocalypse. But from these powers Christ has redeemed the souls of his followers. It would, therefore, be the most glaring contradiction to give to the organization of his Church the forms of despotism." — AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE — literally, his soul. (Compare John x, 18, where this act of Christ is declared to be voluntary.) The term "soul" is here significantly used as distinguished from the spirit. — A RANSOM — literally, the redemption-price that is paid in the place of a forfeited life, (Ex. xxi, 30,) property, (Lev. xxv, 24,) or liberty, (Lev. xxv, 47, 51,) so that the thing forfeited is thus regained. When Christ says that he gives his life a ransom for men, this can not mean any thing else than that his death was the price, by the payment of which alone men can regain what they have lost through sin. Christ gave his bodily life that our spiritual and eternal life might be restored unto us. That Christ teaches here really that his suffering and death are vicarious, an expiatory sacrifice, appears, also, from the Greek preposition ἀντί, (*for*,) which means more than ὑπέρ, whose leading idea is "in behalf of" — while that of ἀντί is in exchange for, in the place of. (See also 1 Tim. ii, 9, where redemption is also called ἀντίλιντρον.) — MANY. No stress is to be laid on this that "many" is used here instead of "all." *Many* forms here the contrast to the one life which is given — the *one* for *many* — and signifies the great multitude of the children of men. (See Rom. v, 15-20; Col. i, 20; 1 Tim.

ii, 6; Heb. ii, 9; 1 John ii, 2.) If it is objected that in the original the definite article is wanted here, as well as in Matt. xxvi, 28, and Heb. ix, 28, before *many*, and that *many* has, therefore, a different meaning from "the many" of such passages as Rom. v, 15, 19, we answer that by "the many" all mankind are meant as contrasted with Christ, and by "many" only those who, by faith, appropriate to themselves the redemption accomplished by Christ for all.

§ 47. RESTORING SIGHT TO TWO BLIND MEN.

THE cause of Jesus had attracted general attention since the Feast of Tabernacles, and especially since the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and the interest increased in the degree as it became generally known what an importance the Sanhedrim attached to it. It created, therefore, a good deal of excitement when Jesus came out of his retirement in Ephraim. Crowds flocked to him from all sides, no longer doubting that he would now at once enter upon his contest with the Jewish hierarchy, and proclaim his kingdom. (Luke xix, 11.) None of the Evangelists state at what time of the day Jesus reached Jericho; but it was most probably in the afternoon; for from Luke xix, 5, 7, we may infer that he spent the night at the house of Zaccheus. (See Synoptical Table, Nos. 146 and 147.)

Three Evangelists relate the healing of a blind man as having taken place near Jericho, on his last journey to Jerusalem; but their accounts differ in two points; namely: According to Matthew two blind men were healed; according to Mark and Luke only one; again, according to Matthew and Mark the healing took place when the Lord *left* Jericho, while according to Luke it took place while he *was coming nigh* unto Jericho. That Matthew speaks of two blind men and the other Evangelists only of one, occasions no great difficulty. (See note on chap. viii, 28.) One of the blind men may have been a more important person than the other, like the one of the two demoniacs. The very fact that Mark mentions his name seems to indicate that he was a well-known person at the time; and neither Mark nor Luke say that not more than one individual was healed. Matthew, as an eye-witness, records what neither Mark nor Luke may have known. The other discrepancy has been attempted to be harmonized in various ways. The older harmonists assumed that two healings took place; namely, that one man was healed by the Savior on entering and two on his leaving the city. Ebrard adopts this opinion, saying that Matthew, "with his

characteristic brevity in narrating miracles," combined the two healings into one. But how shall we account for the conduct of the people, that, shortly after the first healing, should have rebuked the crying out of the two blind men, just as they had done before to the one man? And, moreover, what is gained by the assumption that Matthew represents *two* different acts as *one*? Bengel supposes that one blind man cried to Jesus as he drew near the city, but that he did not cure him then, but on the morrow, on his going out of the city, cured him, together with the other, to whom, in the meanwhile, he had joined himself — the Evangelist relating by prolepsis, as is so often done in narratives, the whole of the event where he first introduces it. Another solution is that proposed by Watson, Owen, and other English expositors, after the example of Grotius. Instead of, "As he was come nigh unto Jericho," (Luke xviii, 35,) they translate, "While he was yet near Jericho." But while ἐγγίζειν means sometimes *being near*, and the preposition εἰς stands sometimes for ἐν, no instance has been pointed out yet that a verb of motion connected with a preposition implying motion, should signify rest in the same sentence. Jacobus supposes that Luke does not describe the first entry; conjecturing that Jesus was in Jericho before, left it, according to Mark and Matthew, not in order to go to Jerusalem, but in order to return soon, and that at this return, described by Luke, the healing took place. The most probable of all solutions is this: According to Josephus and Eusebius, Jericho consisted, in those days, of an *old* and a *new* town. The old town lay more to the west. Eusebius, in whose days there existed even a third Jericho, says that then only ruins of the two former cities existed. Between the two parts of the city the two blind men are supposed to have been sitting, and to have been healed by Jesus, while he left the *new* and entered the *old* town. Matthew and Mark, natives of Palestine, speak only of the eastern new town; but Luke, who wrote for the Greeks, speaks of the old town, which was a place of great commerce, and, as such, well known to the Greeks. Van Oosterzee, the expositor of the Gospel of Luke, in "Lange's Bible-work," thinks that the healing took place on entering the place, and that Luke followed an inaccurate report. He finds the admission of such a trifling inaccuracy irreconcilable only with that theory of inspiration which considers every letter of the sacred text as inspired. Whoever reads, says he, the Gospel of Luke with an unprejudiced mind can not fail to perceive that this Evangelist, toward the close of the Lord's life, narrates events not with chronological exactness. Olshausen remarks on this passage: "The very difference on such unessential points confirms the genuine historical character

of the Gospels, instead of impairing it. An agreement on such unimportant points would be the very means to create suspicion." And again, in the introduction to his Commentary, he says: "Setting out with the theory of an inspiration which supposes every word dictated by the Holy Spirit, the harmonists labored to bring about a perfect harmony both in things and words, by means however unnatural and violent. Wherever there was a difference in things or in words, the event or saying was readily doubled, even sometimes trebled. But by setting up the principle that the evangelical history must agree in each and every point, be it ever so casual and unimportant, an occasion was unnecessarily given to turn the undeniable discrepancies of the Evangelists into weapons against the Divine verity of the Gospel history. The best course is to admit at once the presence of discrepancies in the Gospel history, to seek to reconcile them where this can easily and naturally be done, but to have in no case recourse to artificial and unnatural interpretations. As in the productions of nature the greatest regularity is combined with the greatest liberty, so we have in the Gospel records perfect agreement in essentials, united with the greatest freedom in the treatment of unessentials. A literal agreement in the Gospel records would have created the suspicion of collusion. The Scripture, as it is, is both human and Divine at the same time." These views are in substance the same with those we have laid down in our Introduction. (See p. 85.) Tholuck remarks justly: "He who renounces his belief in the Bible for no stronger reasons than the discrepancies of the Evangelists on unessentials are, is no greater loss to the Church of Christ than is the gain of him who is induced to believe in the Christian religion by no stronger arguments than the proof of an absolute identity of the Gospel narratives."

Verses 29-34. (COMPARE MARK x, 46-52; LUKE xviii, 35-43.)

(29) AND as they departed from Jericho, ^[1] a great multitude followed him. (30) And behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, ^[2] when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David. (31) And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David. (32) And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? (33) They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. (34) So

Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

[1 Jericho — the city of palms — was eighteen Roman miles north-east of Jerusalem and seven west from the Jordan, in the tribe of Benjamin, (Josh. xviii, 21.) near the borders of Ephraim, (Josh. xvi, 7.) situated at the foot of the mountains which border the valley of the Jordan and Dead Sea on the west. It was destroyed by Joshua, but afterward rebuilt, and became the seat of the school of the prophets. (2 Kings ii, 5, 15.) The land around Jericho was exceedingly fertile, abounding in palm-trees and roses, and yielding large quantities of the balsam of Gilead, so highly prized in the East. After the captivity it was fortified. It was much embellished by Herod the Great, who had a palace there, and, being one of the principal cities of Palestine, there resided in it "a chief among the publicans," (Luke xix, 2;) that is, a higher custom officer. At present there is, on or near the site, only a miserable village, called Richa, or Ericha.]

[2 Begging alms of the people passing by.]

VERSE 30. "The cry with which these blind men sought to attract the pity of Christ was on their part a recognition of his dignity as the Messiah; for 'Son of David' was the popular designation of the Messiah. There was, therefore, upon their part, a double confession of faith — first, that he could heal them, and, secondly, not merely as a prophet from God, but as *the* prophet, as the one who should come, according to the words of Isaiah, to give sight to the blind. In the case of the man blind from his birth, (John ix,) we have the same confessions, but following, and not preceding the cure, and with intervals between, so that first he acknowledges him as a prophet, (v. 17,) and only later as the Messiah, (v. 38.)" (Trench.) — It is remarkable that in the three accounts Matthew gives of sight being restored to the blind the title "Son of David" appears.

VERSE 31. AND THE MULTITUDE REBUKED THEM, etc. "Some, undoubtedly with good intentions, others, possibly from enmity, but all to observe decorum." (Gerlach.) From Mark x, 49, it would seem that the multitude were filled with reverential fear of Jesus. — BUT THEY CRIED THE MORE. "Many admirable homiletic applications of this portion of the history have been made. Here, it has been said, is the history of many a soul: when a man is first in earnest about his salvation, and begins to cry that his eyes

may be opened, that he may walk in his light who is the Light of men, when he begins to despise the world and to be careless about riches, he will find infinite hinderances, and these not from professed enemies of the Gospel of Christ, but from such as seem, like this multitude, to be with Jesus and on his side. Even they will try to stop his mouth, and to hinder an earnest crying to him." (Trench.)

VERSE 32. AND JESUS STOOD STILL, etc. It is worthy of note that Jesus now suffers himself to be proclaimed the Messiah, what he had not done before. (See chap. ix, 27.) — **WHAT WILL YE THAT I SHALL DO UNTO YOU?** "Mark, who throughout tells but of the one, says 'he commanded him to be called. And he, casting away his garment,' to the end that he might obey with the greater expedition, and that he might be hindered by nothing, 'rose and came to Jesus.' This ridding himself of all which would have been in his way, is used often as an example for every soul which Jesus has called, that it should, in like manner, lay aside every weight and whatever would hinder it from coming speedily to him. (Matt. xiii, 41-46; Phil. iii, 7.) The Lord's question, 'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?' is, in part, an expression of his readiness to aid — in part uttered for the calling out into yet livelier exercise the faith and expectation of the petitioner. (Matt. ix, 28.) The man whose cry has been hitherto a vague, general cry for mercy, now singles out the blessing which he craves, declares the channel in which he desires that this mercy may run, and makes answer, 'Lord, that I might receive my sight.' Only Matthew mentions the touching of the eyes which were to be restored to vision, and only Luke the word of power, the 'receive thy sight,' by which the cure was effected." (Trench.)

VERSE 34. AND THEY FOLLOWED HIM. Probably on his way to Jerusalem, in order to bear testimony of the miracle performed on them, and out of gratitude to their benefactor. "This miracle of healing the blind men," says Owen, "has often been employed to illustrate the spiritual blindness of men. the earnestness with which they must apply to Christ — who, by his Spirit, is always passing by — for his healing mercies, and the readiness of the Savior, on any such application made in penitence and faith, to put forth his healing power. Thousands have read this simple and touching story, as a truthful history of their own sad spiritual blindness, and its removal through the abounding

grace of Jesus Christ. Thousands have sung, and we believe will sing to the end of time, the beautiful hymn:

'Mercy, O thou Son of David!

as the genuine expression of their own feelings, in view of the wondrous change wrought in them by the same Almighty Savior."

CHAPTER XXI.

§ 48. CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

THIS memorable event in our Lord's public life is minutely narrated by the four Evangelists. From John (xii, 1) we learn that Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover. According to Leviticus (xxiii, 5) the Passover properly commenced in the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, Nisan; that is, according to Jewish reckoning, with the evening which ushers in the fourteenth day. But in popular language, the day before the Paschal Supper came very naturally to be reckoned as the beginning or first day of the festival. Hence, counting backward and excluding the fourteenth day, the sixth day, or the day of the arrival at Bethany, was the 8th of Nisan. This was our Friday, provided that our Lord was crucified in the year 783 of the city of Rome, (see General Introduction, p. 150;) for the 14th of Nisan fell in that year on Thursday.

On the 8th of Nisan, (Friday,) according to what appears to us the best result of chronological research, Jesus, with his disciples and other pilgrims, set out from Jericho for Jerusalem; and if we had no other account than that of the Synoptists, (Matt. xxi, 1; Mark xi, 1; Luke xix, 29,) we should conclude that the Lord continued his journey without any interruption, and arrived at Jerusalem in the evening of the same day. The road leads through a dreary wilderness, and the distance to Jerusalem is about seventeen miles. From what John says we must infer that our Lord with his apostles went on that day only as far as Bethany, spent there the next day, which was the Sabbath — at the close of which a supper was prepared for him in the house of Simon, (John xii, 2) — and set out the day after — the 10th of Nisan — for Jerusalem. As most of the people who had accompanied Jesus from Jericho, on their way to the

Passover, seem to have joined in this triumphal entry, we may suppose them to have encamped during the Sabbath between Bethany and Jerusalem, while some may have gone to Jerusalem on Friday evening in advance of the others, and brought the news of Jesus' coming. This accounts for what John (xii, 12) says: "The next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him."

Both friends and enemies waited with anxiety for Jesus' arrival at Jerusalem — the first that they might now speedily see him in his full glory, the latter that they might put him to death. The Lord himself foresaw distinctly his impending death by crucifixion. (Chap. xx, 18.) Of his own free will he went to meet it, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, which declared the eternal purposes of God. (Matt. xxvi, 24; Luke xxiv, 26; xxvii, 46; 1 Cor. xv, 3.) As long as his and his Father's hour (Matt. xxvi, 45; Mark xiv, 41; John xii, 27; xvii, 1) had not come, he evaded all the snares of his enemies, forbade his followers to proclaim his Messianic dignity, (Matt. xvi, 20,) and withdrew from the people when they wanted to make him king by force. (John vi, 15.) But when he was inwardly certain that the time had come that he should carry out the purposes of his Father, as foretold by the prophets, he went at once to meet it without using his power to protect himself, (Matt. xxvi, 53, 54,) and became obedient to his Father even unto death. (Phil. ii, 8; Heb. v, 8.) In this light we must view also his solemn entry. It was nothing accidental, but had been foreordained of God, and was part of his Messianic office. "This entry of Christ," says Meyer, "was the final public and solemn proclamation of his Messiahship, which satisfied a deeply-felt want of the Lord's own heart, and was, at the same time, calculated to crush, by its subsequent development, the carnal Messianic expectations of all his followers. It is the reverse of the Savior's previous forbidding the publication of his Messiahship, which, from the nature of the case, had necessarily once to take place, but which the Lord, for the wisest and best purposes, put off to the end of his earthly career, thus forestalling its abuse for political purposes." Of the same import is the following remark of Stier: "Christ's entry is for himself the solemn procession to the altar, for the people of Israel the last solemn announcement of his Messiahship, but for the whole future assembly of his true people — the daughter of Zion prophetically — an abiding, constantly-renewed memorial and image of his coming in lowliness and in grandeur — 'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,

meek!" — a type and earnest of his second coming in majesty and glory. (Matt. xxiii, 39.)"

The absurd assertion of the antichristian critique, "that Jesus' entry was his last attempt to found a worldly Messianic kingdom," is sufficiently refuted not only by the uniform tenor of his previous conduct, rejecting sternly all insinuations and offers of that kind as coming from the evil one, but also by the form of the entry, which was well adapted to remove every idea of earthly power and worldly glory, even amid the hosannas of his followers and the attending crowds, and to set forth the spiritual nature of his kingdom. His followers did not carry swords or spears, but branches of palm-trees, and he himself did not ride the war-steed of a king, but the colt of an ass, the symbol of peace. That the entry had no political character appears also from the fact that the Roman Government took no notice of it.

"The entry into Jerusalem," says Heubner, "forms a memorable contrast with his subsequent suffering. Nearly all the details of the one event are in contrast with those of the other. In the one case Christ stands on the Mount of Olivet, the spot of his glory, looking over Jerusalem, which now did homage unto him; in the other he was led to Golgotha, the place of a skull, surrounded by the graves and skulls of malefactors. Here he held his solemn entry, attended by shouting multitudes; there he is thrust out of the city, tied as a criminal, and led by officers. Here he was surrounded by numbers of friends and followers, ready to acknowledge him as their King, and to protect him; there he was surrounded by a gang of enemies, who mocked, reviled, and maltreated him. Here his disciples serve him willingly, and feel themselves honored thereby; there they forsake him in dismay and despair. Here all vie with each other in honoring and beautifying his entry; there they spit in his face, and heap all kinds of ignominy upon him. Here they spread their garments in the way; there he is stripped of his clothes, which are parted by casting lots, while he hangs naked on the cross. Here branches were strewed in the way, and he walks on beds of flowers; there he is scourged and crowned with thorns. Here he enters the city as king, riding upon a beast of burden; there he is compelled to bear his cross himself. Here the prophecy of Zechariah concerning the coming King is fulfilled; there the awful prophecy of Isaiah concerning him that is despised and rejected of men. Here he is saluted King amid shouts of hosannas; there he is rejected, condemned by the highest tribunal? and crucified as a false prophet, deceiver of the people, and blasphemer. In whose life is there such a contrast

— such a sudden transition from joy and glory to the greatest humiliation and ignominy? And amid the high excitement of these rapidly-changing scenes Christ maintains a perfect equanimity, neither giving way for a moment to the importunities of his excited friends, nor overwhelmed by the apparent hopelessness of his cause."

Verses 1-11. (COMPARE MARK xi, 1-10; LUKE xix, 29-44; JOHN xii, 12-18.)

(1) **AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage,** ^[1] **unto the Mount of Olives,** ^[2] **then sent Jesus two disciples,** (2) **saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.** (3) **And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.** (4) All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, (5) **Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.** (6) **And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,** (7) **and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.** (8) **And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.** (9) **And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.** (10) **And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?** (11) **And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.**

[1] Literally, *house of figs*. According to Barclay, (see "City of the Great King," p. 65,) it lay on the southern spur of the Mount of Olives, just before reaching the point from which Jerusalem is visible.]

[2] This hill is mentioned in Zechariah xiv, 4; 1 Kings xi, 7, etc. It is a high ridge lying east of Jerusalem, parallel to the city, and separated from it by the valley of the Cedron. It is still sprinkled over with olive-trees, but less thickly probably than of old. The elevation is 2,556 Paris feet above the sea and 416 Paris feet above the valley of the Cedron. Over this ridge the Lord came when he entered Jerusalem. Here he instructed his disciples about the destruction

of the Temple and his second coming. Thither he repaired after the Last Supper, and thence he ascended up to heaven. (Acts i, 12.) During the Jewish war a false prophet led his followers to the Mount of Olives in order to force his way thence into the city. The prospect from its top is beautiful and extensive.]

VERSE 1. AND WHEN THEY DREW NIGH [literally, had drawn nigh] UNTO JERUSALEM, AND WERE COME TO BETHPHAGE. According to verse 2, not into the village, but very nigh to it, so that it lay as it were at their feet. Mark says: "And when they are drawing nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany;" and Luke: "When he had drawn nigh unto Bethphage and Bethany;" that is, to the dividing line between these two little villages. Matthew gives evidently the end of the journey for the time being, and the two other Evangelists merely state that the two villages lay close together, mentioning them in the order in which the traveler coming from Jerusalem reached them; thus the geographical difficulty is removed; Gresswell removes it in this way: "Bethphage lay upon the direct line of this route, but Bethany did not; so that one traveling from Jericho would come to Bethphage first, and would have to turn off from the road to go to Bethany." However that may be, the two Evangelists evidently mention Bethany on account of the stay which Jesus made there, but which John alone mentions expressly. The setting out of our Lord on Sunday morning from Bethany is connected with the journey from Jericho, without mentioning the interruption which the stay at Bethany had caused.

VERSES 2, 3. This order of our Lord shows that he intended to enter Jerusalem in an extraordinary manner. The language of the Evangelists implies evidently a miraculous knowledge on the part of Jesus. There is no evidence that there had been any previous understanding between Jesus and the owner of the animals. Yet we may safely infer that the owner was a friend of the Lord, and well acquainted with the apostles personally. Alford takes the word "Lord — κύριος" — here in its proper sense of Jehovah; the disciples should say that it was needed for the service of God; but it seems rather indicative of Jesus' royal dignity as Messiah. — AN ASS, AND A COLT WITH HER. In the prophetic passage the Lord is represented as "sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." According to the Hebrew parallelism the ass is thus more fully defined as the foal of an ass. The four Evangelists state emphatically that

Jesus rode on a colt, and Mark and Luke add, "whereon never man sat." His royal dignity required that he should ride, on this occasion, an animal whereon never man sat. (Comp. Num. xix, 2; 2 Sam. vi, 3; Luke xxii, 53.) But if the colt was unbroken, the presence of the mother was, if not necessary, at least very useful for taming and quieting the same.

VERSES 4, 5. THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED. This expression has here its literal meaning, representing the fulfillment as designed; there is no doubt that Jesus chose this kind of entry with special reference to the prediction of the prophet, and thus, as a symbolical representation of the unwarlike, peaceful character of the true Messiah and his kingdom. For, "although this description of the prophet seems to be in the first place only figurative, yet Providence fulfills such prophecies often to the letter, combining the greatest with the smallest in the boldest freedom and the most scrupulous exactness" (Olshausen.)— As to the prophecy itself, the Evangelist gives it in a condensed form, and introduces it with the words, "TELL YE THE DAUGHTER OF ZION," taken from Isaiah lxii, 11. "Daughter" is, in Hebrew, the symbolical designation of the inhabitants of a city or country. "Daughter of Zion," therefore, means the inhabitants of Jerusalem by synecdoche, Zion being the highest of the hills on which Jerusalem was built. The passage of Zechariah (ix, 9) reads, as translated from the Hebrew by Dr. Hengstenberg: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh to thee; he is just, and protected of God — afflicted, and riding upon an ass, even the foal of an ass." It would lead us too far to set forth the connection of this passage with the whole prophecy. It may, therefore, suffice to call attention only to the fact: 1. That the King is represented as a sufferer, though protected of God, and as a prince of peace, for which reason he rides an ass — the kings and prophets of Israel being expressly commanded not to ride horses, (the symbol of war,) but asses, (the symbol of peace;) 2. That it is expressly said, in the following verse, (v. 10,) that his kingdom shall be a kingdom of peace, and extend over the whole earth; and the salvation which this victorious King accomplishes is ascribed, in verse 11, not to force of arms, but to the blood of the covenant. This prophecy of Zechariah has been referred to Zerubbabel, or Nehemiah, or Judas Maccabeus. But to none of them the following passage is applicable: "And he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth." If the Jews had properly pondered this whole prophecy, they would not have

persevered in their erroneous notions of a warrior-Messiah and the temporal character of his kingdom.

VERSE 7. AND PUT ON THEM THEIR CLOTHES. Though Jesus rode only on one of the animals, it was becoming to put the garments on both. — AND THEY SET HIM THEREON; in Greek, *on them*, which may be referred to the garments put on the colt. But there is no impropriety in referring *them* to the animals, as both are to be considered as being the equipment of our Lord. A specimen of the frivolous critique of Dr. Strauss is his absurd remark that "the Evangelist represents the Lord as sitting on the two animals at the same time."

VERSE 8. AND A VERY GREAT MULTITUDE, consisting of those that had come with him from Jericho, and those who came forth to meet him from Jerusalem. These two parts of the multitude are expressly named in verse 9. — SPREAD THEIR GARMENTS; that is, the loose overcoat. (Compare chap. v, 40.) — OTHERS CUT DOWN [were cutting] BRANCHES FROM THE TREES; John says, *of palm-trees*. The leaves of the mature palm-tree are very broad when spread out. Palm branches were used as symbols of peace and victory. — AND STREWED THEM IN THE WAY. It was customary to celebrate the arrival of kings or victorious generals by such honors (2 Kings ix, 10.)

VERSE 9. "The road by which the Lord passed over Olivet was probably the southern or main road, which passes between the summit which contains the tombs of the prophets and that called the Mount of Offense. This was the usual road for horsemen and caravans; a steep footpath leads over the central peak, and a winding road over the northern shoulder, neither of which he could have taken." (Andrews.) At the descent of the Mount of Olives, when they saw Jerusalem lying before them, as Stanley eloquently describes the scene, the people burst out into those triumphant shouts. Jesus, instead of being carried away by this joyous excitement, weeps over Jerusalem, as we learn from Luke. — HOSANSA; a word of Hebrew origin, signifying *save now, be propitious now*, used as a term of supplication, and afterward of joyous acclamation. It is taken from a triumphal song, (Ps. cxviii, 25,) typical of the coming of the Messiah. — To THE SON OF DAVID. In these words they saluted Jesus as the Messiah, from the house and lineage of David, as "King of Israel." — IN THE HIGHEST — literally, in the highest regions, that is, in heaven. Meyer

translates the words, "May salvation come down from heaven upon the Messiah!" De Wette, "May our hosanna be ratified in heaven!" This note of acclamation is varied somewhat in the other Evangelists, the very thing that we would expect from the nature of the case, the multitudes that went before the Lord singing it in one form, and those that followed responding in another.

VERSE 10. AND WHEN HE WAS COME INTO JERUSALEM. The murmuring of the Pharisees is omitted by Matthew. We refer the reader to Luke and John for a full statement of all the facts connected with Christ's triumphal entry. **ALL THE CITY WAS MOVED** by the sight of the Messianic procession, but in very different ways. Heubner calls it justly into question, that some who shouted on this occasion joined, a few days afterward, in the "Crucify, crucify him!"

VERSE 11. THIS IS JESUS, THE PROPHET, the well-known prophet. The crowds that came with Jesus had proclaimed him Messiah in the plainest language; but the more cautious, less-excited people of the city wish to know his name, his profession. Hence the full answer, **OF NAZARETH OF GALILEE.** The attending hosts seem to have been for the most part Galileans, and they may have mentioned the residence of the Great Prophet not without a feeling of national pride.

§ 49. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

A CLEANSING of the Temple similar to the one described here was performed by our Savior in the first year of his public ministry, while he attended the feast of the Passover: (John ii, 13.) The synoptic Gospels make no mention of this first cleansing, for the simple reason that they describe only the Galilean part of our Lord's ministry up to his solemn entry into Jerusalem. Some critics have identified these two cleansings, "because," they say, "the repetition of such an act is inconceivable." But we ask, why is it inconceivable? What was, in the first place, more proper for Jesus than to enter upon his prophetic office with this reformatory act in opposition to the priests? We find, accordingly, that he was not severely censured for it. It would also seem that these abuses ceased afterward because Jesus did not feel called upon at any of his subsequent visits to the Temple to repeat the same act. But at the last Passover these buyers and venders are there again, possibly encouraged by the

priests, as Ebrard suggests, to defy Jesus and to challenge a repetition of the act. However this may be, when the abuse reappeared, it was to be expected that Christ would correct it again, and this the more because he had now been publicly declared to be the Messiah, who, by his public entry, had fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah, and had now to fulfill also that of Malachi by coming to his Temple to purify and purge the Sons of Levi, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Of this spiritual cleansing of the house of God the act of outward cleansing was the proper symbol. The second cleansing differs also from the first by the increased severity of the rebuke administered in connection with it. According to Mark, (xi, 16,) he did not even suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the Temple. While at the first cleansing he said, (John ii, 16:) "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise," he says here: "Ye have made it a den of thieves." At the second act he does not use the scourge. He acts now with the full authority of the Messiah, before which the multitude quailed, as shortly afterward a mere word of his brought his captors to the ground.

As to the act itself, *the modern scribes* have questioned Jesus' authority to do it, and have, accordingly, charged him with a passionate act of violence. To these objectors Dr. Ullmann replies: "Jesus does not stand as a Jewish Rabbi over against Jewish traffickers, but as the divinely-appointed Purifier of the genuine theocracy over against those who were profaning his Father's house, and this position gave him the right to act in a way which perhaps could not, and certainly needed not, to be justified by precedents. He exercised that power which belonged to the prophetic office — that power which has been and should be exercised in all ages and among all nations by higher natures, called with such a vocation, whenever earthly relations and the course of justice, according to existing laws, are unable to stem the growing corruption. Such an action, however, could never have been performed but under the influence of an overpowering earnestness and an intensely-ardent zeal. Such earnestness and zeal are at once truly human and humanly grand. Whoever is incapable of that zeal which is free from all personal feeling is incapable also of any great action. In this position a pure mind will see and feel that the exalted character of Jesus remained untarnished." Olshausen adds to this truthfully: "Just because love is revealed in Jesus in its truth and fullness, its two sides, severity and mildness, manifest themselves in him. As the latter is shown to the humble and contrite, so is the former to the proud, and as the Lord here *acts*, so he

speaks on many occasions." Having exercised his Messianic authority in cleansing, he once more blesses the people by his miracles of love and mercy.

Verses 12-17. (COMPARE MARK xi, 15-18; LUKE xix, 45-48.)

(12) AND Jesus went into the Temple^[1] of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, (13) and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. (14) And the blind and the lame came to him in the Temple; and he healed them. (15) And when the chief-priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the Temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, (16) and said unto him. Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (17) And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany;^[2] and he lodged there.

[1] To obtain full information concerning the Temple, its inner structure, etc., the reader must consult special treatises with drawings. The following quotation from Lange may here suffice: "The Temple was divided into three parts; namely, the outer court, the sanctuary, and the holy of holies. The tabernacle had only a simple court, the place of the altar of burnt-offering. (Exod. xxvii, 1-8.) The difference between the place of the people and that of the priests seemed to be indicated only by the place of the laver of brass, which was nearer to the sanctuary than to the altar of burnt-offering. (Ex. xxxviii, 8.) In the Temple of Solomon the court of the priests — the inner court — is distinguished from the great court. (2 Chron. iv, 9.) The former lay probably a few steps higher. The altar of burnt-offering belonged now to the court of the priests. In the Temple of Zerubbabel the court of the priests was separated from the outer court by wooden cross-bars. (Jos. Ant., XIII, 3, 5.) These wooden cross-bars were replaced in the Temple of Herod by rails of stone two-thirds of a yard high. In this Temple the court of Gentiles was entirely by itself. The Temple itself was surrounded by terraces, which formed the various courts in a rising succession. The outermost space — called in the Talmud Hill of the House, in 1 Maccabees xiii, 53, Hill of the Temple — around the whole Temple had several gates. It was surrounded by beautiful halls, and the floor was paved with variegated stones. A few steps higher there was a

stone rail, two yards high, interspersed here and there with pillars that had inscriptions in Latin and Greek, enjoining it on Gentiles not to go further on pain of death. (Jos. Bell. Jud., VI, 2-4.) This hill of the Temple is called by Christian archaeologists the court of the Gentiles. Beyond this court was the court proper, containing in front the court of the men, and higher up the court of the women and the court of the priests. The court of the Gentiles became the more necessary as the distinction between proselytes of the gate and proselytes of righteousness became more prominent, and as it occurred more frequently that pious Gentiles made presents to the Temple.]

[2 Bethany means, according to the Talmud, "house of dates," according to others, "house of the valley;" it was a village on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, fifteen stadia, or nearly two English miles from Jerusalem. At present it is a wretched village, with about twenty to thirty Arabian families, and is called El-Azirijeh, from *el Azir*, the Arabic name of Lazarus.]

VERSE 12. AND JESUS WENT INTO THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

Matthew, who, as we have seen again and again, often relates events not chronologically, but according to their inward connection, connects the cleansing of the Temple with Christ's triumphal entry. Mark's account is chronologically exact. In the evening of the day of his entry, the Lord visited the Temple, and "when he had looked round about upon all things, he returned unto Bethany with the twelve," where he made his home at night during the feast. On the following morning — Monday, the 11th of Nisan — the barren fig-tree was made to wither, while the Lord went back to the city; then followed the cleansing of the Temple. The few remaining days of his ministry the Lord spent, for the most part, teaching in the Temple. — **AND CAST OUT ALL THEM THAT SOLD**, etc. This scene took place in the court of the Gentiles, which consisted in a large, paved place before the courts proper. (See foot-note.) In this court, to which Solomon had alluded in his dedicatory prayer, (1 Kings viii, 41,) animals, incense, oils, wine, and other articles necessary for sacrifices were offered for sale, and thus the place itself was converted into a real market-place. There is no trace of this abuse in the Old Testament, and it seems to date from the return from exile, when many strangers came to Jerusalem from distant countries. This would also account for the money-changers, as it was unlawful (from Exod. xxx, 13) to bring foreign money for the offering of atonement. — **AND OVERTHREW THE TABLES OF THE MONEY-CHANGERS**. They exchanged the foreign money into Jewish, especially into didrachms. (See chap. xvii, 24.) As the tribute-money

was due in the month of Adar, and was received in the country towns by officers appointed for this very purpose, it would seem that these officers paid over the money at the Passover, and got the foreign money, which they had received, exchanged into didrachms. The frauds connected with this money-changing are also referred to by our Lord's rebuke. — AND THE SEATS OF THEM THAT SOLD DOVES. When one was too poor to bring a lamb or kid for a trespass-offering, he was permitted to bring in its stead two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. (Levit. v, 17; xiv, 22.) Turtle-doves and young pigeons constituted also part or the whole of the sacrifice of women at their purifying. (Levit. xii, 8; Luke ii, 24.) By these worldly pursuits, which had the sanction of the Sanhedrim, and the frauds connected with them, the place was desecrated and devotion disturbed. By cleansing the house of God of these abominations, Jesus symbolically sets forth the purity of heart, which he requires of his Church in general and of each individual believer. (1 Cor. iii, 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi, 16.)

VERSE 13. MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED THE HOUSE OF PRAYER; that is, truthfully, for which reason Luke says, "*is*" a house of prayer. (See Isa. lvi, 7; 1 Kings viii, 29.) Mark adds: "Of all nations," which was of the greater importance, as the changers and venders carried on their business in the court of the Gentiles. — BUT YE HAVE MADE IT A DEN OF THIEVES — literally, ye make it. (Comp. Jer. vii, 6.) Their filthy pursuits are compared with the distribution of booty in a robber's den. The word "thief" means in the original also a man of violence, and even a murderer. Luther's translation, "a den of murderers," is, therefore, very proper. Jeremiah (vii, 6) speaks of the shedding of innocent blood at this place. Thus the Lord castigates by the use of this term not only the body and soul-destroying pursuits of the occupants of the Temple, but hints in even plainer language than he had done before [destroy this temple!] at their now-ripened plan to take away his life by violence, which is, therefore, immediately added by Mark and by Luke. (Stier.)

VERSE 14. Even in the Temple the Lord continued to dispense, as long as it was possible, blessings unto all that by faith were prepared to receive them, while the Pharisees and their party hardened themselves completely against all impressions which his whole conduct was so eminently calculated to produce.

VERSES 15, 16. AND WHEN THE CHIEF-PRIESTS AND SCRIBES SAW THE WONDERFUL THINGS; that is, the cleansing of the Temple and the cures performed. — AND THE CHILDREN CRYING IN THE TEMPLE, etc. The miraculous healings, the thanksgivings, and shouts of praise of the individuals healed and their companions call forth in these children the echo of yesterday's hosannas; they imitate what they saw in the adults. — HEAREST THOU WHAT THESE SAY? With this question they give him to understand that they do not recognize the honor expressed by the hosannas, and intimate, at the same time, that he must have overheard their acclamations, as he could certainly not acquiesce in their import. They may, at the same time, have designed to express their contempt for children as improper subjects to receive homage from. Jesus replies, that he heard them indeed, but puts them to shame by asking them in turn: HAVE YE NEVER READ? The passage is quoted from Psalm viii, 3. The Hebrew has for "praise," "*strength*," which has, however, the same meaning. (Comp. Ps. xxix, 1; xcvi, 7; Ex. xv, 2; Is. xii, 2; Rev. iv, 11; v, 12.) In order to understand correctly the relation of this event to the words of the Psalmist, we must apply here the exegetical truth, *that the outward fulfillment of a prophecy becomes in turn the typical representation of its own inner, spiritual meaning.* In this sense Stier and Watson understand the passage. Watson, especially, expounds the passage thoroughly and intelligibly; he says: "The eighth Psalm celebrates the praises of God for our redemption by him who was made 'a little,' or for a little while, 'lower than the angels,' and then, 'crowned with glory and honor,' having all things 'put under his feet.' This the apostle Paul applies directly to Christ, and includes in it the wonderful exaltation of fallen human nature in him. The Psalm is thus introduced: 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens!' But who acknowledges this glory of God in human redemption? Not the 'enemies' mentioned in the next verse, but the 'babes and sucklings,' 'out of whose mouth' God is said to have ordained '*strength*' because of his enemies, and to still the enemy and the avenger. Now, since this strength was ordained out of the *mouth*, it must be understood of the *strength of speech*, strength of doctrine, and strength of praise; which most fitly applies to the disciples and apostles of our Lord, who were, in the estimation of the world, weak and inefficient as babes and sucklings, and yet by their asserting the claims of Christ, and proclaiming his praises, they silenced his most potent enemies, making the glory of God, in the redemption of mankind by his Son, to fill the civilized world, and to be almost

universally acknowledged. Thus by these weak instruments were those mighty results accomplished, which brought so much glory to God, and so mightily confounded his 'enemies.' Now, of this the praises of the little children in the Temple were a beautiful type; Christ was first publicly acknowledged and publicly praised in his Temple by children, and that to the confusion of his enemies, who were struck dumb themselves, but could not silence them; and there is nothing improbable in supposing that as a fine emblem was thus exhibited of the manner in which the enemies of Christ would be 'stilled' or silenced by that strength which God was about to ordain out of the mouths of the apostles, so this emblematical representation of a most interesting truth and important fact was not the result of accident, but of the overruling providence of God. For that there was something remarkable in the case appears from the children not being mentioned as taking a part in the hosannas of the procession on the way to, and through Jerusalem, but only in the Temple, and that in the very presence 'of the enemies,' the chief-priests and scribes; and also that then only their acclamations are mentioned, not those of any others. It would seem as if these children were collected there and moved upon by a supernatural impulse to repeat the joyful songs and hosannas, which had been sung by the multitudes in the streets and along the way to Jerusalem. And if so, we may conclude that this singular event, arranged by God to be an emblem of one much higher, even of that which should fully and in the highest sense accomplish the prophecy, was also referred to in this prophetic Psalm itself, and was in its degree a direct accomplishment of it. It is no small confirmation of this view — that the children in the Temple, publishing the claims and honors of Christ, were emblems of the apostles and other disciples — that Christ himself calls them 'babes,' in contrast to the learned and influential of the world. 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.'" — Heubner has on this passage the following excellent practical remarks: "May God in mercy protect us from such theologians and priests as are offended by children and their harmless songs! Children, too, are to sing the praises of God and of Christ. Would that our children were trained from early infancy for such praise! At a conference in Tergau, where the discussions had been long and all were greatly discouraged, Melancthon was called out and had to go through a room where some mothers were assembled with their children to pray for the reformers. This had such an effect on Melancthon that he said to Luther: 'We need not fear; I have seen those that will fight for us, and can not be overcome.'"

§ 50. THE BARREN FIG-TREE WITHERED, AND ITS LESSON OF FAITH.

THE night from Sunday to Monday Jesus spent in Bethany, and set out early in the morning for Jerusalem. On this morning the symbolical act of causing the fig-tree to wither took place. Luke does not mention it, but he gives the parable of the fruitless fig-tree, based on Hosea ix, 10, and Joel i, 7, (Luke xiii, 6-9,) which seems to be a commentary on the act of our Lord here recorded.

That the cleansing of the Temple, which Matthew records in connection with the solemn entry of Christ, took place on the day after the entry — that is, on the same day on which the fig-tree was made to wither, as Mark (xi, 15) expressly states — we have mentioned already in the preceding section. Matthew's statement does, however, by no means come into conflict with that of Mark. The former merely states that the event in question took place on a certain morning while Jesus was going from Bethany to Jerusalem. Whether this was the morning of the day on which the Temple was cleansed or the following morning, is not stated. In the same way Matthew also states that the fig-tree presently withered away, while Mark describes minutely how and when the disciples found the tree withered. By thus describing the two parts of the event, the words pronounced upon the tree and its withering, as one act, he does not contradict Mark, who does not state *when* the withering took place, but only that the apostles noticed it the day following. This they did on Tuesday morning, (Mark xi, 10,) while they returned with their Master to Jerusalem, which they had left late the preceding evening.

"This withering of the fig-tree," says Dr. Morison in his Notes, "stands apart from all the rest of our Savior's miracles as a work of destruction. Amid the impressive and solemn imagery which Jesus, in those last days, is throwing around the subject by his terrible words of warning, this blasted tree stands forth a perpetual type and symbol of the curse of death which rests on all unfruitful lives, whether of nations or of men. Especially did it then apply to the Jews, whose political history was drawing rapidly to a close. In Mark, (xi, 21,) Peter says: 'Master, behold the fig-tree which thou didst curse has withered away.' We shrink from applying the word *curse* to any expression used by our Savior. It has an air of harshness and almost of profaneness in our language

which it has not in the Greek. In order to understand its meaning here, we have only to bear in mind the words which called out Peter's remark, '*Let no man eat fruit from thee hereafter forever*', or, as in Matthew, '*Let there be no fruit from thee forever*'. Neither of these expressions implies disappointment, vexation, or anger. It is only the calm and terrible sentence of death pronounced upon the unfruitful tree, as a symbol of the more terrible ruin which must fall on man's unfruitfulness." Similar symbolic denunciations of Divine judgments, without, however, being connected with a miraculous effect on the object of the symbol, had been pronounced by the prophets of old. Lange remarks: "This miracle was no real judgment, but only the symbol of such a judgment as Israel had to look for. And this solemn warning, which was intended to confirm to the disciples the following predictions of fearful catastrophes, and more especially to detach their hearts from the false belief in the sanctity of the Temple worship, constituted the great object of this miraculous act. He executed a symbolical punishment on the tree, which mocked the hungry traveler, designing hereby to show unto his disciples that they must no longer expect spiritual food from the leaf-covered but fruitless priesthood, but look forward for the Divine judgments, which would cause the withering of Judaism."

The frivolous charge which critics like Strauss have brought against Christ, for interfering with the property of others in causing the fig-tree to wither, is scarcely worthy to be mentioned. The fig-tree standing by the roadside was, in all probability, no one's property. At any rate He who, by a word, could make a fig-tree wither had certainly a right to do it, and would not have done it without a worthy purpose.

Verses 18-22. (COMPARE MARK xi, 20-26.)

(18) **NOW in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered.**
(19) **And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.**
(20) **And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away!** (21) **Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this**

mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. (22) And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

VERSE 18. From the hungering of the Lord at this time of the day, it appears that he had not taken the time to partake of the morning repast; so great was his anxiety to spend the short time left to him in Jerusalem.

VERSE 19. AND WHEN HE SAW A [one] FIG-TREE IN THE WAY, [Mark, "Seeing a fig-free afar off,"] AND FOUND NOTHING THEREON, BUT LEAVES ONLY. Mark adds, "For the time of figs was not yet;" that is, *the time for harvesting figs was not yet*. The early figs, which ripen in May, are evidently meant here. The peculiarity of the fig-tree is, that its leaves do not appear till after the fruit is formed. Our Lord, therefore, had reason to expect, from its full-leaved appearance, that he would find some figs on it sufficiently matured to be pleasant, in which condition figs are frequently found before the season of gathering them. Finding no fruit of any sort on this tree, it served as a significant emblem of the Jewish nation. As all the sap of the tree was wasted in putting forth leaves, without any fruit whatever, so the whole religion of the Jews consisted in the punctilious observance of forms and ceremonies, without any fruit meet for repentance. In making it to wither, our Lord prophesied by a symbolical act. — Unfruitfulness and ruin are inseparable. (Heb. vi, 7, 8; Matt. iii, 10; vii, 19; John xv, 2, 6.) — LET NO FRUIT GROW ON THEE HENCEFORTH FOREVER. "The tree was punished, not for being without fruit, but for proclaiming by the voice of those leaves that it had such — not for being barren, but for being false. And this was the guilt of Israel, a guilt so much deeper than that of the Gentiles. The attentive study of the Epistle to the Romans supplies the true key to the right understanding of this miracle; such passages especially as ii, 3, 17-27; x, 3, 4, 21; xi, 7, 10. Nor should that remarkable parallel, Ezekiel xvii, 24, 'And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord . . . have dried up the green tree and made the dry tree to flourish,' be left out of account. And then the sentence, 'No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever,' will be just the reversal of the blessing, that in them all the nations of the earth should be blessed — the symbolic counterstroke to the ratification of the Levitical priesthood, through the putting forth, by Aaron's rod, of bud and blossom and fruit in a night. Henceforth the Jewish synagogue is

stricken with a perpetual barrenness; it once was every thing, but now it is nothing, to the world; it stands apart, like a thing forbid; what little it has it communicates to none; the curse has come upon it, that no man henceforward shall eat fruit of it forever. And yet this 'forever' has its merciful limitation, when we come to transfer the curse from the tree to that of which the tree was as a living parable; a limitation which the word itself favors and allows; which lies hidden in it, to be revealed in due time. None shall eat fruit of that tree to the end of the present aeon, not till these 'times of the Gentiles' are fulfilled. A day indeed will come when Israel, which now says, 'I am a dry tree,' shall consent to that word of its true Lord, which of old it denied, 'From *me* is thy fruit found,' and shall be arrayed with the richest foliage and fruit of all the trees of the field. The Lord in his great discourse upon the last things (Matt. xxiv) implies this, when he gives this commencing conversion of the Jews under the image of the re-clothing of the bare and withered fig-tree with leaf and bud, as the sign of the breaking in of the new aeon, which he does, saying, 'Now learn a parable of the fig-tree. When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that Summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.'" (Trench.) — AND PRESENTLY THE FIG-TREE WITHERED AWAY. Matthew emphasizes the instant of withering away, which, though not expressed, yet was contained in the words of Jesus, and brought about by them. "The withering fig-tree was a type, 1. Of the expiring theocracy; 2. Of the actual drying up of the country, so near at hand, when the palm-trees disappeared, the fig-trees withered away, the fountains dried up, and the fertile country became a waste; 3. Of the withering old earth." (Lange.)

VERSE 20. Though the disciples had been witnesses of so many stupendous miracles, they are filled with wonder at every new and striking manifestation of their Master's divine power.

VERSE 21. Olshausen finds the connection of the Lord's answer to the wondering expression of his disciples difficult, "because Jesus performed his miracles not by virtue of his faith in God, but by his own imminent divine power." To this Stier replies, that "Christ also, as the Son of man, wrought his miracles by faith, in dependence on his Father, (see John xi, 41, 42;) and that his faith, having been always perfect, he is placed before us for imitation as the author and finisher of our faith." However we may view this, our Lord's object was evidently, as Meyer remarks, to show his disciples "*how* they, too, might

perform similar and still greater miracles; namely, by an implicit confidence in the power of God working through them and verifying their prayers, the condition of faith excluding all abuse of this promise by making the efficacy of the prayer dependent on its agreement with the Divine will." (Compare notes on chap. xvii, 20.) This lesson of faith our Lord seems to repeat here, "because," as Dr. Whedon remarks, "he is soon to leave them amid the state of surrounding ruin, pre-figured by the withering fig-tree." Lange finds in the *mountain* an allusion to the mountain on which the Temple stood, as an emblem of the superstitious Temple-worship of the Jews, which became so great an obstacle for the apostles in their efforts to spread the Gospel over the world.

VERSE 22. BELIEVING, "with a faith that God inspires and you exercise. God will not give pure faith for a prayer or a work which he will not fulfill, nor yet will he promise the fulfillment unless you exercise the faith he empowers." (Whedon.) John defines believing prayer to be prayer offered in the name of Jesus, (xiv, 13; xv, 16; xvi, 24.) Prayer in the name of Jesus implies the mind and spirit of Christ, and is produced by the Holy Spirit, and such prayer is necessarily efficacious. Self-willed petitions are not prayers of faith. Owen remarks: "The promise made here to the apostles most unquestionably had primary reference to the miraculous powers with which they were endowed, as confirmatory of their apostolic mission. But in its restricted sense, as above explained, it may be regarded as a promise made to all God's people. Many things were primarily spoken to the apostles, which, when those features are left out of account that rendered them peculiarly applicable to them, may be considered as addressed to all the followers of Christ." — Our Lord improves every opportunity to enjoin upon his disciples the duty of believing prayer. Faith is the soul, prayer is the body; both must be combined in the service of God. We have so many promises, that God will hear and answer the prayer of faith, and yet men are so slow and sluggish in prayer!

§ 51. CHRIST'S ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF HIS AUTHORITY.

WE have now come to Tuesday of the Passion-Week, that memorable day on which the Lord, after having met successfully the varied assaults of all his enemies in turn, silencing one party after another, pronounced terrible woes

on the Pharisees and Sadducees, (chap. xxiii,) and then took his final leave of the Temple. The first attack is described in the following section. He had scarcely entered the Temple when a formal deputation of the Sanhedrim met him, demanding to know by what authority he was acting. Although they may have considered themselves authorized to ask this question, as the highest ecclesiastical tribunal, yet it had evidently its origin in criminal unbelief and unparalleled impudence; for they had felt often enough the power of truth that proceeded from him in their own hearts, and he had demonstrated his mission by the most powerful miracles. For this reason they do not dare to ask him, as they had done at the beginning of his ministry, "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" (John ii, 18.) Such a question would have convicted them before the people. Being unable to assign any fair motive for their procedure, they are at a loss how to entrap him. Instead, therefore, of answering their question, the Lord asked them a question in turn, which exposed their hypocritical unbelief to the people and their own conscience, and then added three parables — namely, that of the two sons, (vs. 28-32,) that of the wicked husbandmen, (vs. 33-44,) and that of the marriage of the king's son, (xxii, 2-14) — by which he compelled them to pronounce judgment against themselves before all the people. As these three parables are intimately connected with each other, and form part of the answer which the Lord returned to the official question of the chief-priests and scribes, we premise here, for the better understanding of this section, the following admirable synopsis of Lange: "With the question, 'The baptism of John, whence was it?' the Lord intended three things; namely, 1. To compel them to declare their dissent from the popular belief in John's baptism; 2. To convince them irresistibly of their guilt in having slighted the testimony which God's appointed messenger had borne of the Messiah; 3. To extort the confession from them that they were incompetent to discharge the duties of their office. In this way his defense became an attack, and the picture, which he draws of their guilt and the Divine judgments hanging over them, comes to a fearful climax. Despisers of the preacher of repentance, John the Baptist, worse than the publicans and harlots! was the first sentence; faithless stewards in God's vineyard, murderers of the Messiah, to be condemned and deposed from their office, the second sentence; being, with their whole nation, insane despisers of God and his salvation, and rebels against God, their city is to be burned and they themselves destroyed, and the kingdom of God shall pass over to the heathen — the third sentence, which the Lord himself pronounces in allegorical prophecy."

Though the severity of these rebukes, warnings, and threats was, to some extent, veiled, yet the veil that enveloped the truth was so transparent and the application so pointed, (v. 43,) that his hearers could not but perceive that he spoke of them, (vs. 44, 45;) and thus they became the more bent upon his destruction, (v. 46; chap. xxii, 15.) In such manner the Lord had not spoken to them before; but as his mildness was only abused, and his enemies became more and more hardened, he spared them no longer, if possibly some at least might, by the severity of his address, be brought to repentance, and Luke (xx, 16) records that some of the hearers, terrified by the awful portrait of the impending judgments, actually exclaimed: "God forbid!"

Verses 23-32. (COMPARE MARK xi, 27-33; LUKE xx, 1-8.)

(23) **AND when he was come into the Temple, the chief-priests and the elders of the people came unto him, as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?** (24) And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. (25) The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? (26) But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. (27) And they answered Jesus, and said, We can not tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. (28) But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. (29) He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. (30) And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. (31) Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. (32) For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and you believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

VERSE 23. THE CHIEF-PRIESTS AND ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE.

The use of the plural with regard to the chief or *high* priests is accounted for by the condition of the high-priesthood in those days. By Divine appointment the office was for life, and prior to the Babylonian captivity there occurred only one deposition from office. (1 Kings ii, 27.) But after that epoch the high-priests were often changed by the civil rulers, sometimes by religious factions, and even by mobs. Under the Roman Government these changes increased. Thus Annas had become high-priest, A.D. 7. Seven years afterward Ishmael was put into the office by order of the Roman procurator, (Jos. Ant., XVIII, ii, 2,) then Eleazar, son of Annas; a year afterward a certain Simon, and after another year Joseph Caiaphas, a son-in-law of Annas. This Caiaphas was thus the official high-priest for the time being. But the stricter party of the Jews, who denounced all interference of heathen magistrates, continued to regard Annas as the legitimate high-priest; he may have gone by this name also as the vicar of the high-priest, or as the president of the Sanhedrim. That he exercised a great influence, appears from the fact that Jesus was taken to him for a preliminary examination. (John xviii, 13.) The heads of the twenty-four classes of priests were also called high-priests. The deputation in question was certainly a very imposing one, headed by the high-priests. — **AND SAID, BY WHAT AUTHORITY DOEST THOU THESE THINGS?** Being unwilling to recognize the authority of Jesus, they used intentionally this indefinite expression, including the whole public ministry of the Lord, but especially his solemn entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the Temple. The import of their first question is: what authority dost thou claim, (Divine or human?) Whom dost thou claim to be? There is no doubt that they desired to get from him that answer which he gave them afterward, (chap. xxvi,) and which they construed into a capital offense. The second question — **WHO HAS GIVEN THEE THIS AUTHORITY?** that is, who has commissioned or authorized thee? — indicates that he held no commission from them.

VERSE 24. What wonderful wisdom does this answer of the Savior show? In the form of a question he appealed to the testimony of John the Baptist; for by asking them whether John's baptism was from heaven or from men, he left them the alternative either to reject John against the universal belief of the people, or to recognize Him of whom John had testified. The question of the Lord's enemies and the Lord's reply suggest two practical reflections: 1. The enemies of the truth are always ready to question the authority of those that

do more good than themselves. This means has often been resorted to to suppress efforts for the revival of religion and the reformation of the world. The only question asked is: By what authority doest thou these things? The success of ministerial labor is of no account — the diploma every thing. 2. We ought to act very wisely and circumspectly in our intercourse with the enemies of the kingdom of God. Let us learn from the example of Christ how to answer calmly such zealots.

VERSES 25, 26. THE BAPTISM OF JOHN, WHENCE WAS IT? By the baptism of John, Jesus means (as in Acts i, 22; x, 37; xviii, 25) the whole office of the Baptist, his Divine commission and public ministry, his preaching of repentance and testimony of Jesus (see v. 32) included. — **FROM HEAVEN**; that is, did John act as a true prophet with Divine authority? The antithesis; "OR OF MEN," denotes a self-assumed office; a fanatical zeal in the place of Divine inspiration, seconded by the party spirit of men. By declaring for this alternative, the Sanhedrim would not only have come into conflict with the general belief of the people, but they would have condemned themselves as false leaders of the flock intrusted to their care. But by recognizing the Divine mission of John, they could not but recognize also the Messiahship of Jesus; for John had solemnly declared himself to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and pointed out Jesus to the people as the Messiah. (John i, 33, 34.) — **AND THEY REASONED WITH THEMSELVES**, that is, apart by themselves, before they answered. Their private consultation is related by three Evangelists in almost the same words, and may have been reported to them by Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. However this may be, they exhibit a remarkably-faithful picture of the mental state of these priests; they are condemned in advance by their own conscience — "Why, then, did ye not believe him?" This question they would like to evade at any hazard.

VERSE 27. AND THEY ANSWERED, WE CAN NOT TELL — literally, we do not know. "In the midst of the Temple, in the presence of all the people, these deputies of the Sanhedrim found themselves constrained to the confession of their ignorance, and that a hypocritical one. With this lying declaration they ceased being a legitimate Sanhedrim in the estimation of the Lord. Hence his reply — *Neither do I tell you.*" (Lange.)

VERSE 28. BUT WHAT THINK YE? Inasmuch as you can not answer my last question~ what do you think of the following case? — A CERTAIN

MAN HAD TWO SONS. These two sons represent two great moral divisions of men, under one or other of which might be ranged almost all who were within reach of our Lord's ministry, or to whom now the Gospel is preached. Of one of these classes the Pharisees were the representatives, and to it belong self-righteous moralists and formalists, nominal professors of religion in all ages. The second class, of which the publicans and harlots stand as representatives, comprises all who make no pretension to keep the law of God, but openly and boldly transgress it. — SON, GO. The father's kind address sets forth God's paternal tenderness and affection, with which he deals with the worst of sinners in his endeavors to induce them to repent, while the self-righteous Pharisees looked with the utmost contempt upon this class of men.

VERSE 29. I WILL NOT. Impudent as this reply was in the very face of the Father, it being without any title of respect, such as father or sir, a flat refusal without assigning any cause for it, such as, "I can not," (Luke xiv, 20,) or something like it; yet this son is no hypocrite, he is honest, at first in his defiance, afterward in his return to his duty. By saying, *I will not*, he confesses truly his state of mind, the wicked and perverse will of the sinner being the source from which all disobedience to God, whether open or concealed, flows. — AFTERWARD HE REPENTED AND WENT. "The grace of God and the workings of conscience produce a reaction. Repentance and obedience follow upon this outburst of a proud, rebellious heart. The notoriously-wicked man becomes a meek, humble, obedient child of God. He enters the vineyard, and cheerfully and faithfully performs his allotted task." (Owen.)

VERSE 30, AND HE ANSWERED AND SAID: I GO, SIR — literally, I, sir — a polite but indifferent assent with the lips. — AND WENT NOT. He contents himself with making fair promises, and does nothing. His words and work do not agree; this want of harmony between the heart and the outward appearance is the very substance of hypocrisy, and this becomes sanctimoniousness, when a great, religious profession conceals the moral corruption of the heart. An acknowledgment of, and compliance, to any extent, with the law of God, is indeed, in itself, considered preferable to throwing off its yoke altogether. Yet, as Trench remarks, it is far better "that the sinner should have his eyes open to perceive his misery and guilt, even though it be by means of manifest and grievous transgressions, than that he should remain in this ignorance of his true state; just as it would be better that disease, *if in the frame*, should take a decided shape, so that it might be felt and acknowledged

to be disease, and then met and overcome, than that it should be secretly lurking in and pervading the whole system, and because secretly, its very existence denied by him whose life it was threatening. From this point of view St. Paul speaks, (Rom. vii, 7-9,) and the statue lesson is taught us in all Scripture — that there is no such fault as thinking we have no fault."

VERSE 31. THE PUBLICANS AND THE HARLOTS GO [are going] INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEFORE YOU; that is, rather than you; because they, acknowledging and feeling themselves to be sinners, are ready to comply with the conditions necessary for entering there, such as repenting and believing. Trench remarks: "When our Lord says, '*they go before you*,' or take the lead of you, he would indicate that the door of hope was not yet shut upon them, that they were not yet irreversibly excluded from that kingdom. The others indeed had preceded them, but they might still follow, if they would. It is worthy of note, that the parables which the Lord addresses here to the Pharisees, severe and threatening an aspect as they have, are words of earnest, tenderest love — spoken, if it were yet possible, to turn them from their purpose, to save them from the fearful sin they were about to commit, to win *them*, also, for the kingdom of God."

VERSE 32. JOHN CAME UNTO YOU IN THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; that is, he preached not only the way of righteousness, but he walked in it himself. — AND YE BELIEVED HIM NOT. (Comp. Luke vii, 28, 30.) — AND YE, WHEN YE HAD SEEN IT; that is, that the publicans and sinners believed. A very cutting reproof, that Jesus places the most-despised men before the highly-respected Pharisees, as models for imitation.

§ 52. THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

Verses 33-46. (COMPARE MARK xii, 1-12; LUKE xx, 9-19.)

(33) HEAR another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, ^[1] and digged a wine-press ^[2] in it, and built a tower, ^[3] and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: (34) And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. (35) And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one,

and killed another, and stoned another. (36) Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. (37) But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. (38) But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. (39) And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*. (40) When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? (41) They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. (42) Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? (43) Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. (44) And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (45) And when the chief-priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. (46) But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

[1 The hedge was made, generally, of perfectly-dense thorn-bushes, planted round about a field or vineyard, to protect it against animals, especially foxes, dogs, and marauders of any kind. Sometimes a wall of stone was added. (Comp. Num. xxii, 24; Ps. lxxx, 12; Prov. xxiv, 31; Isa. v, 5.)]

[2 These wine-presses, or troughs, consisted of two receptacles. Into the first, which was built of stone, or hewn out of a large rock, the grapes, when gathered, were thrown, and trodden out by men. Near to the bottom of this there was an opening through which the juice flowed off into another and lower vat or trough. As this cistern was below the other, it was almost of necessity subterranean, and hence the expression, *He digged a wine-press.*]

[3 This turret, or watchtower, answered the twofold purpose of a place of abode for the keeper of the vineyard and a post of observation to protect it from thieves. They are still found in Oriental countries.]

VERSE 33. HEAR ANOTHER PARABLE. While in the parable of the Two Sons the conduct of the Pharisees and scribes was delineated with

reference to their *personal* character as individuals, it is now more their *official* character which is brought to view, both historically and prophetically. The Lord holds up to them what their predecessors had done to God's prophets, and what they were about to do to God's own Son. Yea, in verse 38, he puts the confession in their mouth that he is the Son, and thus they must pass the sentence of condemnation upon themselves, which he then solemnly confirms. "There is this apparent difference between the accounts of the several Evangelists, that while Matthew and Mark relate the parable as addressed to the Pharisees, it was, according to Luke, spoken to the people. But the Sacred Narrative itself supplies the helps for clearing away this slight apparent difference, Luke mentioning the chief-priests and scribes (v. 19) in a way which shows that they were listeners also; and thus, being spoken in the hearing of both parties, in the mind of one narrator the parable seemed addressed mainly to the people; in that of the others, to the Pharisees." (Trench.) — THERE WAS A CERTAIN HOUSEHOLDER WHICH PLANTED A VINEYARD. An image very common with the prophets, especially with Isaiah, (chap. v, 1-6,) where there are many features similar to this parable. As the kingdom of God is represented under the image of a marriage-feast with regard to the enjoyments which it offers, so it is represented under that of a vineyard with regard to the labor that must be done in it. The householder was more than the possessor of this vineyard — he had himself *planted* it. (Ex. xv, 17.) The planting of this vineyard took place under Moses and Joshua, in the establishment of the Jewish polity in the land of Canaan. (Deut. xxxii, 12-14; compare Ezek. xvi, 9-14; Neh. ix, 23-25.) — *Hedge*, *tower*, and *wine-press* are used by Isaiah merely for the purpose of filling up the portrait, and the meaning to be conveyed by them is probably only the general statement, that the Lord did every thing for his vineyard that could be done. The hedge, however, has an unmistakable reference to both the ceremonial and the civil law which separated the children of Israel from the surrounding nations. "This meaning is suggested by passages like Ephesians ii, 14, where the law is described as 'the middle wall of partition' between the Jew and Gentile. By their circumscription through the law, the Jews became a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations. (Num. xxiii, 9.) That law was a hedge at once of separation and of defense, since in keeping distinct the line of separation between themselves and the idolatrous nations around them, lay their security that they should enjoy the continued protection of God. That protection is called a wall of fire, (Zech. 5, 5; and compare Ps. cxxv, 2; Isa. xxvi, 1; xxvii,

3.) Nor is it unworthy of observation, that outwardly also Judea, through its geographical position, was hedged round — by the bounty of nature on every side circumscribed and defended — guarded on the east by the River Jordan and the two lakes, on the south by the desert and mountainous country of Idumea, on the west by the sea, and by Anti-Libanus on the north." (Trench.) — An essential difference between the parable of Isaiah and that of our Lord consists in this, that the vineyard of the prophet is represented as unfruitful, as producing only wild-grapes, while in our Lord's parable the main point is the criminal conduct of the husbandmen, who withheld the produce from the rightful owner. — AND LET IT OUT TO HUSBANDMEN. "These must be different from the vineyard which they were to cultivate, and must, therefore, be the spiritual leaders and teachers of the people, while the vineyard itself will then naturally signify the great body of the people, who were to be instructed and taught, to the end that, under diligent cultivation, they might bring forth fruits of righteousness. By the letting out of the vineyard to these, we must understand the solemn committal which the law made of this charge to the priests and Levites; their solemn commission is recognized and pressed in such passages as Malachi ii, 7; Ezekiel xxxiv, 2. It is worthy of observation, that the parable is so constructed as to imply that the disobedience, the contumacy, the unprofitableness of the Jews, were to be looked at not merely in the light of common wickedness, but as a breach of the most solemn trust — as ingratitude of the darkest dye; for no doubt it was a great benefit to the husbandmen to be put in possession of a vineyard so largely and liberally furnished, (compare Neh. ix, 25; Deut. xvi, 11,) and every thing implies that they had entered into covenant with the proprietor concerning what proportion of the fruits they were to pay to him in their season — even as the Jewish people made a solemn covenant with God at Horeb, that, as he would be their God, so they would be his people." (Trench.) — AND WENT INTO A FAR COUNTRY. After the vineyard had been planted, that is, after Israel had been led out of Egypt, the law had been given, and the people had been settled in Canaan, God revealed himself no more in so extraordinary a manner. (Deut. xxxiv, 10-12.) But this going into a far country may also be applied to the belief of the husbandmen, that God was paying no attention to their administration. (Ezek. viii, 12; ix, 9.)

VERSE 34. AND WHEN THE TIME OF THE FRUIT DREW NEAR, HE SENT HIS SERVANTS, etc.; that is, extraordinary ambassadors, the prophets, whose special duty it was, as the accredited messengers of God, to

preach repentance and to remind princes, priests, and people of their covenant obligations. — THAT THEY MIGHT RECEIVE THE FRUITS OF IT. The Lord had done so much for his people from the time of Moses to the time of the first prophets, that he was justified to expect from them true penitence and an ardent desire for the promised Redeemer. It was the solemn duty, and was justly expected of the husbandmen, that they should take proper pains from the beginning, that the Lord might find at his coming a well-prepared people ardently desiring him, such as John the Baptist wanted to prepare at last, and such as Zacharias and Elizabeth and a few more actually were.

VERSE 35. This feature of the parable has no specific historical signification. A threefold treatment is mentioned only to indicate that a sufficient number was sent, and the beating, killing, and stoning form a gradation of the abuse heaped on God's messengers. For the stoning implies, as we learn from Mark, that they pelted the third messenger with stones, not even suffering him to come near them.

VERSE 36. AGAIN, HE SENT OTHER SERVANTS, etc. "The patience of the householder under these extraordinary provocations is wonderful; that he sends messenger after messenger to bring back, if possible, these wicked men to a sense of duty, and does not at once resume possession of his vineyard, and inflict summary vengeance, as the end proves that he had power to do, upon them; and this his patience is thus brought out and magnified, that it may set forth the yet more wonderful forbearance and long-suffering of God: 'Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, O, do not this abominable thing that I hate.' (Jer. xliv, 4.) 'Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets who testified against them, to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.' (Neh. ix, 26.) The whole confession made in that chapter by the Levites is in itself an admirable commentary on this parable." (Trench.)

VERSE 37. BUT LAST OF ALL, HE SENT UNTO THEM HIS SON. "Or in the still more affecting words of Mark, (v. 6,) 'Having yet therefore one son his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.' (See Heb. i, 1.) This was the last and crowning effort of Divine mercy, after which, on the one side, all the resources even of heavenly love are exhausted, on the other the measure of sins is perfectly filled up. The

description of the son as the only one, as the well-beloved, marks as strongly as possible the difference of rank between him and the servants, the worth and dignity of his person, who only was a Son in the highest sense of the word, (see Heb. iii, 5, 6;) and undoubtedly they who were our Lord's actual hearers quite understood what he meant, and the honor which in these words he claimed as his own, though they were unable to turn his words against himself, and to accuse him on the strength of them, of making himself, as indeed he did then affirm himself, the Son of God. When the householder expresses his conviction, that, however those evil men may have outraged his inferior messengers, they will stand in awe of and reverence his son, it is hardly worth while to make a difficulty here, as some have done, from the fact that he whom the householder represents must have fully known from the beginning what treatment *his* Son would receive from those to whom he sent him — not that there is not a difficulty, but that it is the same difficulty which runs through every thing, that of the relations in which man's freedom and God's foreknowledge stand to one another — and it does not in truth come out more strongly here than it does every-where else, and requires not to be especially treated of in this place." (Trench.) Stier remarks: "These words imply a direct, although parabolically-expressed answer to their question in verse 23. I am the Son, as ye know very well! Yet the Lord does not introduce himself to them so much as the promised Messiah and Redeemer, but rather as the last witness of truths, preacher of repentance and pardon according to his prophetic office; this is *quite* in order, inasmuch as the rejection of the Son, the last and greatest of the prophets, consummates the rejection of all the earlier messengers of God. The Son also commences his public ministry by preaching repentance and reformation of life."

VERSE 38. THEY SAID AMONG THEMSELVES. The thought of men's hearts is their true speech, and therefore here given even as though it were the words of their lips. We are not to infer that the Pharisees, even in their secret counsels, ever trusted one another so far, or dared to look their own wickedness so directly in the face, as with their lips to say, *This is the Messiah, therefore let us slay him!* Yet the manifold testimonies that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God, his miracles, his spotless life, the irresistible power of his preaching, the fullness of his love, and every thing that God did, to place his Divine mission beyond every reasonable doubt, produced really on many of the leading men of the nation the conviction here expressed, (John iii,

2;) and although they rejected in their obstinate unbelief all this, and even the solemn declaration of Jesus concerning himself, (Matt. xxvi, 63-66,) yet they could not but know that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah and the Son of God. — THIS IS THE HEIR; that is, the future proprietor. Christ is called the heir of all things, (Heb. i, 2,) as the Son of man, (Phil. ii, 9-11.) — COME, LET US KILL HIM. This is a literal quotation of Gen. xxxvii, 20 — according to the LXX — where the sons of Jacob plot in the same way the death of their brother Joseph, who may be considered a type of Christ with regard to his subsequent exaltation. — LET US SEIZE ON HIS INHERITANCE. They were anxious to remain in undisputed possession of their theocratic power, which they apprehended to lose through Christ.

VERSE 39. Casting the son out of the vineyard, like the exclusion from the camp of Israel, implies a cutting off from the people of God. It has reference to the delivering of Jesus into the hands of the Gentiles, and, at the same time, to his suffering without the gate. (Heb. xiii, 13.) By this very act the vineyard is laid waste, the sanctuary left desolate, and a new Church founded upon the rejected cornerstone.

VERSE 41. THEY SAY UNTO HIM. According to Mark and Luke the Lord himself pronounces the sentence, while according to Matthew those whom he addresses do it. The two accounts can, perhaps, be best reconciled by supposing that the answer given by the Pharisees was confirmed and repeated by Christ. It may be that they, as yet, had missed the scope of the parable, and pronounced sentence against themselves before they were aware; but it is more probable that they merely pretended not to perceive its drift, and thus gave occasion to our Lord to add the more explicit words, (vs. 42-44,) which they could not affect to misunderstand. The "*God forbid,*" which, according to Luke, the people uttered when they heard the terrible doom of the husbandmen, gives evidence that the scope of the parable had not escaped *their* comprehension — that they had understood it, even before its plain interpretation. "The convicted hypocrites must needs pass sentence upon themselves, and they do it with consummate hypocrisy, affecting an apparent ease, as if they did not know that they were pronouncing judgment upon themselves. This reply is the fullest justification of the Divine judgments upon the Jews, out of their own mouth, as it were, the first note of that fearful imprecation recorded in chap. xxvii, 25. We may, at the same time, look upon this parable as the last possible warning from a long-suffering God — they are

warned against deeds which they are about to commit, and are compelled to pass judgment upon their own acts. They were forewarned, and yet they did it! In the whole history of the world, as in its central point, the crucifixion of Christ, the decrees of God, and the free agency of man work together most mysteriously. Gen. 1, 20." (Stier.)

VERSE 42. JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM. In confirmation of the sentence that had just been pronounced upon the husbandmen, and, as it seems, in answer to the exclamation *God forbid*, which, according to Luke, the people had uttered, the Lord quotes a prophecy from the Old Testament.—**DID YE NEVER READ IN THE SCRIPTURE?** "The quotation is from Ps. cxviii, 22, 23, a psalm of which, as already has been noted, the Jews recognized the application to the Messiah, and of which there is the same application in Acts iv, 11; 1 Pet. ii, 7; and an allusion somewhat more remote, Eph. ii, 20. The passage quoted forms an exact parallel with this parable. The builders answer to the husbandmen; they were appointed of God to carry up the spiritual building, as these to cultivate the spiritual vineyard. The rejection of the chief corner-stone answers exactly to the denying and murdering the heir. The reason why he leaves for a moment the image of the vineyard, is because of its inadequacy to set forth one important part of the truth, which yet was needful to make the moral complete; namely this, that the malice of the Pharisees should not defeat the purpose of God — that the Son should yet be the heir — that not merely vengeance should be taken, but that he should take it. Now this is distinctly set forth by the rejected stone becoming the head of the corner, on which the builders stumbled and fell, and were broken — on which they were now already thus stumbling and falling, and which, if they set themselves against it to the end, would fall upon them and crush and destroy them utterly. *They* fall on the stone who are offended at Christ in his low estate; (Isa. viii, 14; Luke ii, 34;) of this sin his hearers were already guilty. There was yet a worse sin which they were on the point of committing, which he warns them would be followed with a more tremendous punishment; they on whom the stone falls are they who set themselves in distinct and self-conscious opposition against the Lord — who knowing who he is, do yet to the end oppose themselves to him and to his kingdom; and *they* shall not merely fall and be broken, for one might recover himself, though with some present harm, from such a fall as this; but on them the stone shall fall and shall grind them to powder — in the words of Daniel, 'like the chaff of the Summer

thrashing-floors,' destroying them with a doom irreversible, and from which there should be no recovery." (Trench.)

VERSE 43. THEREFORE SAY I UNTO YOU. Therefore, because the stone rejected by you has become the head of the corner. — THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL BE TAKEN FROM YOU; that is, from Israel after the flesh, whose representatives they were. — AND GIVEN TO A NATION. Most commentators understand by it *the Gentiles*, the singular being used in contrast with the Jewish nation. But as this nation is described by the addition "bringing forth the fruits thereof," we may understand by it the real people of God, the spiritual Israel, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles. The fruits brought forth by the members of the Messianic kingdom are described in chapter v, 3-10.

VERSE 44. Our Lord returns to the figure of the stone, but views it in a different position than that assigned it in the building as the head of the corner. The stone falls upon no one that has not first fallen upon it; that is, unbelievers, that have rejected Christ first, will be judged and rejected by him also. But there is a double form of punishment indicated by this antithesis. — WHOSOEVER SHALL FALL UPON THIS STONE — Christ the head of the corner — that is, whoever rushes against it, making it the stone of offense, shall be broken like an earthen vessel that falls upon a rock. (Comp. Isa. viii, 14; 1 Pet. ii, 8.) — BUT ON WHOMSOEVER IT SHALL FALL. The first half of this verse spoke of the activity of the unbeliever in his attack upon Christ, the second speaks of that of the stone, as is done by Daniel, who describes the severe chastisements inflicted by the Messiah under the similitude of a stone, which, cut out of the rock without hands, crushes every thing that opposes it. "In the first case the stone is, as it were, passive; in the second, it is in motion and active. The stone at rest is Jesus, not judging, but waiting that every one may repent. The stone that crushes the gainsayers is Jesus as he shall reveal himself in judging the world, in his power and glory. Reader, be on thy guard! The corner-stone is every-where in thy way; thou must either be built upon it as a living stone by faith, or stumble against it in unbelief. And woe unto thee if it shall once fall upon thy guilty head!" (Stier.) — IT WILL GRIND HIM TO POWDER — literally, *it will make him to be winnowed by the winds*, like chaff. (Dan. ii, 34, 35.)

CHAPTER XXII.

§ 53. PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

THIS parable was spoken immediately after the preceding to the people and the disciples — probably after the departure of the chief-priests and elders. A parable resembling this in several particulars we find in Luke xiv, 15-24; but it is evident that they are not to be confounded with one another, as if they were two different versions of the same discourse. That of Luke was spoken at a meal to which one of the chief Pharisees had invited the Savior, at a much earlier period of our Lord's ministry, when the hostility of the Jewish hierarchy had not yet reached the point of a formal determination of putting Jesus to death. It moreover stands in connection with the truth, which the Lord had impressed upon those who sat with him at meat, *that men ought not to give in order to receive in turn, but from disinterested kindness*. Having illustrated this proposition by stating what guests ought to be invited to a social repast, our Lord took occasion, from the remark of one of the guests concerning those *that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*, to show that the invitation to the kingdom of God rests upon the same principle — of free grace — and that only those who feel their need and indigence are willing and prepared to accept the offers of Divine mercy. The invitation is, indeed, declined in both parables by some; but how different is the manner of declining! In that of Luke the invited guests civilly excuse themselves; in this they mark their contempt for the invitation as strongly as they can, not thinking it worth their while to make any excuse, and some of them maltreating and killing the bearers of the message. There it is "the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind" who come in the place of the first-invited guests, while here "all are gathered, both good and bad." Again, "as the contempt would be aggravated in proportion to the honor and dignity of the person inviting and the solemnity of the occasion, this increased guilt is set forth by the fact of its being a king, and no common man, as in that other, who makes the festival; so that rebellion is mingled with their contempt — and the festival no ordinary one, but one in honor of his son's marriage — by which latter circumstance is brought out the relation of the Jews not merely to the kingdom of God in general, but their relation to Jesus, the personal theocratic King; and in every way the guilt involved in their rejection of him is heightened. While in the parable recorded by Luke nothing more is threatened than that God would turn from one portion of the Jewish people — from the priests and the Pharisees — and offer the

benefits which they counted light of to another part of the same nation — the people that knew not the law, the publicans and harlots — with only a slight intimation (v. 23) of the call of the Gentiles; in Matthew it is threatened that the kingdom of God shall be taken wholly away from the Jewish people, who had now proved themselves in the mass, and with very few exceptions, despisers of its privileges, and should be given to the Gentiles." (Trench.)

Strauss, ignoring all these circumstances, which perfectly explain the appearance of the parable in forms so different, asserts "that here Luke is the only accurate narrator of Christ's words, and that Matthew has mixed up with them some heterogeneous elements, such, for instance, as the wedding garment." To this Trench replies: "How fitting was it, in a discourse which sets forth how sinners of every degree were invited to a fellowship in the blessings of the Gospel, that they should be reminded likewise that, for the lasting enjoyment of these, they must put off their former conversation — in Theophylact's words, 'that the entrance, indeed, to the marriage-feast is without scrutiny, for by grace alone we are all called, as well bad as good; but the life of those that have entered, hereafter shall not be without scrutiny. The King will make a very strict examination of those who, having entered into the faith, shall be found in filthy garments' — a most needful caution, lest any should abuse the grace of God, and forget that while, as regarded the past, they were freely called, they were yet now called unto holiness."

Verses 1-14.

(1) AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, (2) The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, (3) and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. (4) Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my fatlings are killed*, and all things *are ready*: come unto the marriage. (5) But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: (6) And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*. (7) But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. (8) Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but

they which were bidden were not worthy. (9) Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. (10) So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. (11) And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: (12) And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. (13) Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (14) For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

VERSE 1. AND JESUS ANSWERED. If the chief-priests and elders were still present, when this parable was spoken, it must be taken for a direct answer to their murderous plan. It is, however, more likely, from Mark xii, 13, that they had gone away after the first parable. In this case the "he answered" must be taken for a general answer to the thoughts and ideas called forth in the hearers by chap. xxi, 42, 43. What had been said there, is here more fully stated and confirmed. — **BY PARABLES.** The plural here merely indicates the method teaching which the Lord made use of.

VERSE 2. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE. In the preceding parable he had compared the preparatory and typical kingdom of God with a vineyard. Now he speaks of the establishment of his own kingdom in the New Testament. This transition from the times of the Old Testament to those of the New is worthy of special consideration. The former was a parable of the Old Testament history; even Christ himself appears there rather as the last and greatest of the line of its prophets and teachers, than as the founder of a new kingdom. In that, a parable of the law, God appears demanding something from men; in this, a parable of grace, God appears more as giving something to them. There he is displeased that his demands are not complied with — here, that his goodness is not accepted; there he requires here he imparts. And thus, as we so often find, the two mutually complete one another; this taking up the matter where the other left it. — **UNTO A CERTAIN KING, WHICH MADE A MARRIAGE FOR HIS SON.** The two favorite images under which the prophets set forth the blessings of the new covenant, and of all reunion with

God — that of a festival, (Isa. xxv, 6; lxv, 13; Cant. v, 1;) and that of a marriage, (Isa. lxi, 10; lxii, 5; Hos. ii, 19; Matt. ix, 15; John iii, 29; Eph. v, 32; 2 Cor. xi, 2) — are united and interpenetrate one another in the marriage festival here. The latter has reference not only to the enjoyments of the guests, but also to the joy and honor intended for the king's son. Of the *bride* there is intentionally nothing said here, because the aim of this parable is not to represent the intimate relations existing between Christ and the Church, but to describe the different conduct of the guests invited to the feast of the Messianic kingdom and its consequences, and it impedes only the proper understanding of the parable to apply the similitude of the marriage to the close relationship between Christ and his Church. The believers are elsewhere represented as Christ's bride, but here as subjects doing homage to the king's son; and the marriage festival, with all the preparations for it, lasts from the enthronement of Christ to the completion of the Kingdom, an idea which is also hinted at by the "coming in of the king to see his guests."

VERSE 3. AND SENT FORTH HIS SERVANTS. These servants are not the prophets, as in the preceding parable, but John the Baptist and the apostles during the lifetime of our Lord. To have mentioned, in this connection, the king's son himself as inviting would have impaired the unity of the parable. — **TO CALL THEM THAT WERE BIDDEN TO THE WEDDING;** that is, to tell them that they should come now. The invitations given to the Jews in the Old Testament, as the chosen guests in the kingdom of God, are presupposed here. The Oriental custom of ancient and modern times to bid the guests twice furnishes the appropriate and simple figure of the Old and the New Testament invitation of Israel — from which it is plain that the "bidden guests" are the Jews generally. — **AND THEY WOULD NOT COME.** (Compare chap. xxiii, 37; John v, 40.) There was no actual maltreatment of the servants sent out during the ministry of our Lord.

VERSE 4. AGAIN HE SENT FORTH OTHER SERVANTS. The second sending forth of the servants describes the renewed invitations to the Jews from the day of Pentecost to the destruction of Jerusalem. "It need not perplex us to find these spoken of as '*other*' servants, while, in fact, many of them were the same. In the first place, there *were* many others now associated with them — Stephen, and Barnabas, and Paul, and a great company of preachers. Those, too, who were the same, yet went forth as new men, full of the Holy Ghost, and with a somewhat altered message, not preaching generally

a kingdom of God, but preaching now 'Jesus and the resurrection;' declaring, which they had not done before, that all things were ready — that all the obstacles which man's sin had reared up, God's grace had removed, (Acts ii, 38, 39; iii, 19-26; iv, 12;) that, in that very blood which they had impiously shed, there was forgiveness of all sins, and freedom of access to God." (Trench.) — **TELL THEM WHICH ARE BIDDEN.** "Let us not miss in the parable or in its application the infinite grace which gives to the guests the opportunity of coming to a better mind and making good their first contempt. The king — as though he thought it possible that they deferred coming, because not being aware that the preparations were yet completed, or that some other misunderstanding had found place, instead of threatening or rebuking — told his servants only to press the message with greater distinctness and instance. So tell them that they can not mistake, that every anterior preparation is made. And exactly thus was it with the apostles after the crucifixion; how willing were they to look upon all that was past in the mildest possible light! thus Peter, (Acts iii, 17,) 'And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it' — how did they refuse to dwell upon the past sin, urging rather the present grace!" (Trench.) "O how anxious is this king to get guests for his feast — to win back his rebellious subjects! All their former unwillingness is to be forgiven, a new 'behold' sets forth the New Testament blessings and privileges, purchased by the death of Christ, in all their fullness and glory. But being unwilling to submit to the Son, they refuse to come, and if they persist in this disobedience they must at last be judged as incorrigible rebels. God's grace in Christ is preventing, all-sufficient, repeatedly-calling, and urging, but not *compelling*." (Stier.) — **ALL THINGS ARE READY.** Every thing necessary for our salvation is prepared by Infinite Mercy and Goodness. All things wait, as it were, for man to be appropriated and enjoyed by him.

VERSES 5, 6. BUT THEY MADE LIGHT OF IT. This contempt of the gracious invitation rises, with some, to open rebellion. If the Gospel is repeatedly urged upon men without success, the natural enmity which is at the bottom of this indifference becomes manifest.

VERSE 7. By referring to the prophecy of Daniel, (ix, 26, 27,) the Lord explains, and, in reality, ends the parable. — From God's punitive justice, expressed by the words, "THE KING WAS WROTH," we can clearly see how earnest God is in inviting sinners to come unto him. "If I invite a person to dine with me merely for a compliment, and he declines the invitation, my

feelings are not hurt. So with God; if his invitations given to men were a mere formality, if he was not in full earnest about them, he would not be wroth if his supper is despised." (Rieger.) Wrath of holiest love! God is wroth, because men are unwilling to be saved from their sins! God is wroth, not because men are sinners, but because they are bent on being wretched. Who, then, that is lost, can say that God is too rigid, too severe? Is not the very opposite the case? Men are hard upon themselves, not God. — AND HE SENT FORTH HIS ARMIES, etc. A similar expression of the unconscious instruments of God's wrath is used by Isaiah, (x, 5; xiii, 5;) Jeremiah, (xxv, 9;) Joel, (ii, 25.) The hostile armies of Rome were the executive angels of Jehovah's judgments upon the Jews but not only they, but also the invisible powers of heaven, as Titus himself acknowledged, the elements, and the powers of nature. — AND BURNED UP THEIR CITY. Jerusalem is no longer the city of God; since they had rejected the Son of God, it is now *their* city. The fate of Jerusalem ought to teach every despiser of God's messengers what is in store for him.

VERSE 8. THEY WHICH WERE BIDDEN WERE NOT WORTHY.
"Their unworthiness consisted in their rejection of the invitation, even as the worthiness of those who did find a place at the festival consisted — not in their previous state, for in that regard they were most unworthy of the honor of sitting down at the king's table, but in their acceptance of the invitation. 'Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.' Here the doctrine so hateful to Jewish ears, (see Acts xxii, 21, 22,) the calling of the Gentiles, and that by occasion of the disobedience of the Jews, is again plainly declared. By the breaking off of the natural branches of the olive, there shall be room made for the grafting in of the wild olive in their stead, (Rom. xi;) so Paul sets forth the same truth which here his Lord declares under the image of the exclusion of the guests, who in the natural order of things would best become the wedding, and were invited to it, and the reception of those gathered in from the highways in their stead. Compare Matt. viii, 10-12, of which this parable is only the ampler unfolding." (Trench.)

VERSE 9. The calling of the Gentiles, as described here, indeed took place before the destruction of Jerusalem; the Gospel having been preached unto them forty years before that catastrophe. But it is here inserted in the parable, partly because it was proper to bring that part, that referred to the Jewish nation exclusively, first to a close; partly, also, because the total rejection of the Jews, and the stepping of the Gentiles into all their forfeited

rights did not take place before the destruction of Jerusalem. The substitution of others, not previously called, for the rejected guests is the theme discussed by the apostle in Rom. xi, where the Jews are represented as broken-off branches of the olive-tree, in whose place others — the fullness of the Gentiles — are grafted in. (Comp. Acts xiii, 46-48.) — GO YE, THEREFORE, INTO THE HIGHWAYS — literally, *into the confluences of ways*. In Luke's parable the servants are sent into the streets and lanes of the city, the resorts of the poor and beggars. Here they are sent far beyond the confines of the burned city, to the distant crossings of the world's highways. The time of the indiscriminate invitation of all nations to the kingdom of God is still going on, and will not elapse till the Gospel shall have been preached to all nations of the world. — AND AS MANY AS YE SHALL FIND, BID TO THE MARRIAGE. Divine grace and the offers of mercy are universal, not restricted to nations or individuals. (John iii, 16; Matt. xxviii, 18, etc.; Luke xxiv, 46, 47.)

VERSE 10. BOTH BAD AND GOOD. This does not refer to the subsequent — moral — state of the guests, but to their state at the time when they were called and accepted the call. The inviting servants paid no respect to the character of the persons whom they invited; the only question was whether they would accept the offers of mercy by faith, or reject them through unbelief. The separation of the good from the bad, in the true sense of the term, was to be made subsequently by the king himself. Although this refers, like chapter xiii, 48, to the present mixed state of the Church, yet it does not exclude the administering of wholesome discipline, which is enjoined in other places of the New Testament. — AND THE WEDDING [that is, the feast] WAS FURNISHED WITH GUESTS. All these enjoy the royal honor and favor to some extent; each keeps his place up to the close of the time of probation and trial, and the gathering continues all the time.

VERSES 11, 12. AND WHEN THE KING CAME IN TO SEE THE GUESTS. This scene is generally referred to the day of judgment, and that justly, so far as the execution of the sentence is concerned; yet we may give it a wider application. "At every other judgment," says Trench, "whereby hypocrites are revealed, or self-deceivers laid bare to themselves or to others, the king enters in to see, or, rather, diligently to regard, the assembled guests — at every time of trial, which is also in its nature a time of separation, a time when the thoughts of many hearts are laid bare; though for the day of the last judgment the complete and final separation is, of course, reserved, and then all

that has been partially fulfilling in one and another will be completely fulfilled in all." The hall or reception-room, in which the guests are represented to be assembled, is evidently to be distinguished from that mentioned in the parable of the Ten Virgins; for no one can enter the latter hall without the righteousness of God. There is, however, no discrepancy between the two parables. In this parable the kingdom of God in its temporal manifestation, the mixed, visible Church on earth, has thus far been brought to view; in the remaining portion of the parable the Lord teaches us that not all that apparently accept the offer of mercy, and thereby become members of the visible Church, are members of Christ's body. This truth is symbolized by the coming in of the king to see the guests, and with this truth there is connected another; namely, that the time of probation and grace will come to a close when the everlasting destiny of all shall be immutably fixed and revealed. — HE SAW THERE A MAN. The one is mentioned as an example for the many, (v. 14.) "So diligent and exact will be the future scrutiny that not so much as one in all that great multitude of men shall on the last day escape the piercing eyes of the Judge." (Gerhard.) — WHICH HAD NOT ON A WEDDING GARMENT. The custom of Oriental kings to present those that are about to appear before them with festal garments — caftans — (comp. Gen. xlvi, 22; Judg. xiv, 12; 2 Kings v, 22,) which is said to be still in vogue, is presupposed here, and is, as we shall see, a beautiful symbol of what the Lord intends to teach us in this part of the parable. De Wette and Meyer maintain, without good reason, that the existence of this custom can not be sufficiently established; the guilt of the guest, they say, consisted in violating a self-evident rule of good breeding and decorum, which required him to appear on such an occasion in festal array. But even admitting that the custom in question could not be sufficiently established, yet the parable itself shows that the wedding-garment was presented to the guests by the king, since many of the guests, that had come from the lanes and streets, could not procure it elsewhere; if the individual without the garment had not had a chance to get it from the king's wardrobe, he could have pleaded his poverty as an excuse of his appearance. We admit, however, that no especial stress is to be laid on the idea that the wedding-garment was presented to the guests, no more than on the supposition that each guest had to provide himself with the garment. The main point is, that each guest was to appear at the feast in the proper garment, and had, therefore, to take the proper pains beforehand to get it. The question, How it could be procured? did not come within the scope of the parable. If the guest had not taken sufficient pains to procure the garment, he was guilty of

positive disrespect to the inviting king, and of a profanation of the feast. But what have we to understand by this *wedding-garment*? Lange answers this question as follows: "Imputed righteousness, as such, can not be meant by it, because it is implied by the invitation to the marriage and the enjoyment of the feast. Faith, as such, can likewise not be meant, because it is simultaneous with the acceptance of the invitation. The wedding-garment is, therefore, the state of the heart corresponding to the invitation and the feast." With this fully agrees what Meyer says: "By the garment is meant that righteousness, [holiness,] which those that have been called into the Messianic kingdom, have to appropriate to themselves by a change of heart through faith in Jesus Christ." Olshausen says: "The garment — the outward ornament — represents the inward ornament of the soul, which is called righteousness. This inward righteousness, however, is nothing acquired, nothing self-made, but a gift, a present, the very refusal of which is the act that is here condemned. Whoever is destitute of this righteousness must be cast into the kingdom of darkness. Man's call is thus not an irresistible grace, but something that appeals to his free self-determination. Even in the hearts of those that accept the invitation, sin can, and does, remain, if they do not become humbly-obedient, accepting with the invitation the freely-offered robe of righteousness." Stier says: "Whenever the Lord calls, we may and are in duty bound to *come*, such as we are; but in order to see him and to be admitted to the marriage feast of the Lamb, we are not allowed to *remain* what we are." Fully agreeing with these expositions is the following of R. Watson: "Nothing can be more clear than this: as this garment would have constituted the *meetness* of a man to be received as a guest at the feast, so it must represent all those qualities *collectively* which constitute our meetness for heaven. And as we are so expressly informed that 'without holiness no man can see the Lord;' and as habits of dress are constantly used figuratively to express moral habits of the mind and life, the virtues wrought in man by God's Spirit, and exhibited in a course of external obedience to his will, (Rom. xiii, 14; Gal. iii, 27; Col. iii, 10; Eph. iv, 22-24; 1 Pet. iii, 4; Rev. vii, 13-15; xix, 8,) — that one word *holiness*, implying, as it does in the Christian sense, both the regeneration of those who have penitently received Christ as the propitiation for sin, and the maturing of all the graces of their new nature by the same influence of the Holy Ghost, will fully express all that is comprehended by having the wedding or festal robe." Those, then, are adorned with the wedding-garment who possess the righteousness of faith and life. (Comp. Isa. lxi, 10.) Destitute of the garment are those who boast of their

faith in Jesus Christ, and pretend to rely on his merits, but whose faith is no vital power, renewing and sanctifying the heart. — AND HE WAS SPEECHLESS — literally, his mouth was stopped; he had no plea to allege for his contemptuous behavior; he stood self-condemned, and judgment, therefore, immediately proceeded against him.

VERSE 13. THEN SAID THE KING TO THE SERVANTS. The word translated servants here is διάκονοι, and means the angels; the word used for servants in the previous verses is δοῦλοι. — BIND HIM HAND AND FOOT. Figurative expression of the utter helplessness to which the sinner will be reduced. The hands by the aid of which resistance, the feet by whose help escape, might have been meditated, are alike deprived of all power. In the command, TAKE HIM AWAY, is implied the sinner's everlasting exclusion from the Church triumphant. — AND CAST HIM INTO OUTER DARKNESS, so called because it lies wholly beyond God's kingdom of light and joy. The WEEPING of the damned signifies their intense pain; and the GNASHING OF TEETH is the expression of the impotent rage, which is unable to avert the sentence of condemnation.

VERSE 14. FOR MANY ARE CALLED, etc. This refers not merely to the expulsion of this unworthy guest; but in the *called* and *not chosen* must be included those others also that did not so much as embrace the invitation, and who were for their contumacy destroyed with their city. "Great is the number of those that are called to Messiah's kingdom; but only few are chosen of God. This choice is not arbitrarily made; but those are chosen, by God's eternal counsel, of whom he foresaw that they would have the necessary meetness, by appropriating unto themselves the only availing righteousness. (Comp. xxv, 34; xxiv, 22; Luke xviii, 7.)" (Meyer.)

§ 54. INSIDIOUS QUESTION CONCERNING TRIBUTE TO CAESAR.

Verses 15-22. (COMPARE MARK xii, 13-17; LUKE xx, 20-26.)

(15) THEN went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk. (16) And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for

thou regardest not the person of men. (17) Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? (18) But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? (19) Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. (20) And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? (21) They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. (22) When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left him, and went their way.

VERSES 15, 16. THEN WENT THE PHARISEES. "Of the deputation of the Sanhedrim, that was to crush Jesus by the weight of official authority, the Pharisees had been the principal element. Their object, however, had signally failed; instead of destroying or even weakening the confidence of the people in Jesus, they had greatly increased it; Jesus had fully vindicated his claims to the Messiahship, while they stood before the people as virtually deposed of their office, having been compelled to leave the Temple by an ignominious flight." (Lange.) — **THEY TOOK**, therefore, **COUNSEL**, in order to reach their object in another way. Their device was very insidious. They attempt to drag him on the dangerous arena of a political question, to make him appear as a political Messiah, in order to charge him with sedition before the Roman magistrate, or to destroy his influence with the people, if he should unqualifiedly declare for submission to the Romans. — **AND THEY SENT UNTO HIM THEIR DISCIPLES WITH THE HERODIANS.** "It was a part of the stratagem, that the pharisaic dignitaries of the Sanhedrim, that had just returned from an official attack on Jesus, came not *themselves* as submissive inquirers after the truth. This would have created suspicion. Therefore, they sent their *disciples*, younger, unknown persons, students of the law. For their attendants they had succeeded in procuring some politicians, *Herodians*, probably likewise younger persons. The students and young aristocracy of Jerusalem were every way qualified to be used as tools in an attempt at a theocratical revolution." (Lange.) It must, likewise, not be overlooked, that the tetrarch Herod Antipas happened to be at Jerusalem. (Luke xxiii, 7.) "The Herodians," says Meyer, "are that party of the Jews that were devoted to the royal house of Herod, a party neither hierarchical nor strictly Roman, royalists in opposition to the principle of theocracy, but likewise opposed to the unpopular rule of the

Romans. Cunningly enough the orthodox hierarchs unite with this royalistic party in order to embolden Jesus to an answer unfavorable to the payment of tribute." But it is more probable that the combination of the Pharisees and Herodians was a *feigned* dispute between two parties, known to be radically opposed to each other, the Pharisees as the fierce repudiators of the Roman rule, and the Herodians as the adherents of the Roman dynasty. — MASTER, WE KNOW THAT THOU ART TRUE, AND TEACHEST THE WAY OF GOD IN TRUTH. They speak as if they desired to learn from him and to submit to his authority, yea, as if they were ready to acknowledge him as the Messiah. — NEITHER CAREST THOU FOR ANY MAN. "Thou accommodatest thyself to no man — a truth which the scribes had, indeed, found out often enough. Thou hast no regard for the person and authority of men when the truth of God is at stake. This lofty praise of a truthful teacher is here given to the faithful witness from the lips of his enemies, who are compelled to speak the truth, while they mean to lie. No poet could portray the combination of falsehood and truth with more psychological truth than these persons are described here by the Evangelists in these few words." (Stier.)

VERSE 17. Is IT LAWFUL TO GIVE TRIBUTE UNTO CAESAR OR NOT? The tribute (**κῆνσος**) was a poll-tax, which had been levied since Judea became a province of Rome. By the "or not" they wish to induce Jesus to answer by *yes* or *no*. Mark (xii, 15) has the addition, "Shall we give, [it,] or shall we not give [it]?" The real point of the question was this: whether it was *morally* right for the Jews, the people of Jehovah, to submit to the heathen Roman emperor? whether this submission did not involve an apostasy from the theocracy and was inconsistent with the Messianic kingdom? In this sense Judas Gaulonites (Jos. Ant., XVIII, 1) had rejected the payment of the Roman poll-tax as a characteristic mark of servitude. If Jesus — so reasoned the questioners — approves of this tax, he contradicts all theocratic ideas, and stands before the people, that anxiously look for deliverance from the Roman yoke, as a false Messiah. But if he pronounces our submission to Rome to be wrong, the Herodians will accuse him as a rebel, and we shall be ready as witnesses. If he refuses to answer our question — the only alternative left — he has not less undermined his authority with the people.

VERSES 18-21. The Lord gives his questioners a practical demonstration that he teaches the truth without respect of person, by addressing them: YE HYPOCRITES, WHY TEMPT YE ME? He might have stopped here, but in

his great condescension he continues teaching to the very last moment of his life, pronouncing a truth of the highest importance not only for the Jews, but for the whole world. In order, however, to give the more force to his word, he prefaces it with a very significant act. He bids them to show him the tribute money — the Roman denarius — and read what was written thereon. The image and superscription on the coin furnished conclusive evidence that the Jews were under the authority and protection of the Roman emperor. — RENDER, THEREFORE, UNTO CAESAR THE THINGS WHICH ARE CAESAR'S; that is, pay unto him the expenses of governing you. The truth of this position was so self-evident, that no party could say aught against it. The question of his enemies is answered, and its design frustrated, but he is not satisfied with this. In order to remind the Jews that their submission to the authority of the emperor did not release them of their obligations to the God of their fathers — in order to meet beforehand the charge of teaching *that the theocratic people ought or might do something at variance with their duty toward Jehovah*, the Lord adds the significant words: AND UNTO GOD, THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S. This second clause of the answer involves not only the idea that they owed no other obedience to the emperor than such as was consistent with their obedience to God, but also the humiliating reason why they, the theocratic people of Jehovah, were obliged to pay tribute unto Caesar. If ye had rendered to God — this is the meaning of the Lord's significant reply — the things that are God's, you would not now be obliged to pay tribute unto Caesar. Your subjection to a heathen power is only the consequence and punishment of your apostasy from God. Thus these words of stern rebuke point back to the scene in the wilderness, (Numb. xiv, 40-44,) and the establishment of the kingdom of Israel under Saul, at first disapproved of by Jehovah. In order, therefore, to attain again to the true liberty of the people of God, it is their first and imperative duty to render unto God again the things that are God's. They must first shake off the yoke of sin and seek the kingdom of God. Instead of doing this, they denied unto God the homage due him by rejecting his Son; and by disregarding the injunction to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, they brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and their total dispersion. "Briefly and strikingly," says Meyer, "Jesus disarmed his adversaries and laid down the Christian doctrine, subsequently more fully developed by his apostles, (Rom. xiii, 1, etc.; 1 Tim. ii, 1, etc.; 1 Pet. ii, 13, 14, 17,) that the Christian must not rebel against existing forms of government or other civil institutions, (1 Cor. vii, 21,) but must unite with his

obedience to God, obedience to the powers that be. If these twofold duties at any time conflict with each other, it can not be doubtful for a moment which of them has the first claims, (see Acts v, 29;) yea, obedience to magistrates, in order to be more than slavish subjection, must be rooted in obedience to God, (Rom. xiii, 5.)" With regard to the inference — drawn by some from our Lord's words — "that no nation or people has a right to overthrow or abolish a tyrannical government," we must not lose sight of the fact that Jesus answered this political question not in the character nor from the stand-point of a civil arbiter, but as a teacher of religion. He does not, accordingly, enter upon the question at all, whether the Roman Government was a usurpation, and what the Jewish people had in that case a right to do, but he simply maintains that the *de facto* recognition of the Roman Government by the Jews involves also the obligation to pay the taxes imposed by them. "Changing," as Stier says, "the law question into the question, *What is your de facto government?*" he wisely teaches the oppressed people conscientiously to answer the other question, implied in it — *Whence has it sprung?* whereby they might be led to fulfill their obligations to God. Each government involves the submission to certain conditions in lieu of certain privileges. Thus every citizen or subject of a government is in duty bound to give up a part of his property to the government in consideration of the protection which he enjoys from it. He owes the safety of his person and property to the laws which the government enacts and enforces. If the government transcends its limits, if it enacts laws which contravene the laws of God, the Christian must in this case obey God more than men. This, however, is not the question here. The Lord does not discuss the question, what a people has a right to do if the government curtails its civil rights. Nevertheless, his admonition given to the Jews is — even from the political point of view — the only correct one for every nation that, like the Jews at that time, is oppressed in consequence of its demoralization, and, for the same reason, unable to achieve its independence. That nation alone that renders unto God the things that are God's, is able to secure true civil liberty. The whole history of Israel confirms the truth, that righteousness exalts a nation, but sin causes national, social, and individual ruin. True civil liberty is conditioned by the acknowledgment of God's claims upon man. Utterly false is, therefore, the notion, that the Christian must be unconcerned about his political rights, that he can not serve God acceptably without yielding life, and property, and every thing to the demands of civil government, be they ever so arbitrary. Such absolutistic principles were neither taught by Christ nor by his

apostles; and the direction of Christ, "to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," is by no means at variance with the principles laid down in the Declaration of American Independence, to-wit: "We hold these truths to be self-evident — that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such a form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and their happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience has shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such a government, and to provide new guards for their future security."

§ 55. REPLY TO THE SADDUCEES RESPECTING THE RESURRECTION.

Verses 23-33. (COMPARE MARK xii, 18-27; LUKE xx, 27-40.)

(23) **T**HE same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, (24) saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. (25) Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: (26) Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. (27) And last of all the woman died also. (28) Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. (29) Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. (30) For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. (31) But as touching the resurrection of the

dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, (32) I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. (33) And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

VERSE 23. The Sadducees were the rationalists of their age in the Jewish Church. They went so far as to deny the immortality of the soul as well as the resurrection of the body, (Acts xxiii, 8.) Although they looked with contempt upon the Pharisees, as narrow-minded dogmatists, yet they agreed with them in their opposition to Christ. Feeling, perhaps, a little gratified with the baffled and confounded state in which their old opponents had been driven from Christ's presence, they, with their self-sufficient pride, now venture to assail him. They select for this end a doctrine that was grossly perverted by the sensual notions of the Pharisees, with the expectation to extort an answer from him that would conflict with the law of Moses, or expose himself and the Pharisees to ridicule.

VERSES 24-27. "They bring, before Jesus," says Stier, "as actual history, a curious case, which was at least possible: in order to put their question in the sharpest form — a case which was probably not then for the first time imagined, but which was already a common and hackneyed jest against the resurrection; as, indeed, the like are current enough among the Sadducees of our day. From the commandment of Moses, that, if a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, they imagine they can conclusively prove that Moses could not possibly presuppose a resurrection; and, scarcely suppressing a smile, they put the question: Did Moses, when he made such ordinances of this life, take for granted another life?" — MOSES SAID. They refer to the provisions of the so-called levirate law, (Deut. xxv, 5, etc.,) which, however, was, according to Genesis xxxviii, 6: in vogue, as to its substance at least, long before Moses. The quotation is from memory, and accordingly differently worded by the Evangelists. If a man died without male issue, his brother had, by the provisions of this law, to marry the widow, and the first son from this marriage had to be entered in the public registers as the son of the deceased. The object of this law was to prevent the extinction of any family of the tribe — the occupancy of the land in Canaan being regulated by the number

of the families of a tribe. For the same reason the first-born was regarded as the heir of the deceased, and as his real son in all the civil relations of life.

VERSE 28. THEREFORE IN THE RESURRECTION, [They admit, *for argument's sake*, the truth of the resurrection. According to Mark, they say, "When they shall rise," using, as Stier thinks, ironically, ὅταν, (when,) for εἰ, (if,)] WHOSE WIFE SHALL SHE BE OF THE SEVEN? How is the confusion to be settled, that shall arise when seven men shall claim one woman, each for his wife? What wonderful patience and mildness does our Lord exhibit in his reply to such folly!

VERSE 29. YE DO ERR. They erred in two respects: 1. In denying the resurrection; 2. In taking it for granted that, if there was a resurrection, society in the future life must be organized upon the sexual relationship of the present.

— While the Lord concedes to the Pharisees some knowledge of the Scriptures, the possession of the keys of knowledge, (Luke xi, 52,) charging them, at the same time, that they did not desire to understand them better, he accuses the Sadducees, who looked upon themselves as the only knowing ones, of total ignorance. — NOT KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES. The cause of their erroneous conceptions of Divine things was their not being versed in the Scriptures — and so it is still in our day; at the bottom of the unbelief of most men there is a total ignorance or misunderstanding of the Scriptures. The revealed Word of God dispels all error by its truth. — NOR THE POWER OF GOD. Most interpreters understand by this, that the Sadducees denied the resurrection on the ground of its impossibility, and that our Lord called to their minds that with Omnipotence nothing can be impossible. But Olshausen remarks: "There is no proof that the Sadducees called in question the power of God, as seen every-where in nature; but they lacked a knowledge of the power of God, as revealed *in the Scriptures*. They did not perceive the Divine, the spiritual in the Scriptures, (1 Cor. ii, 14;) hence their ignorance of the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection." In the same sense the passage is understood by Stier, who says: "Every word of the Scriptures, coming from the Spirit, from the mind of the ever-living God, teaches us that man is called to live for God and in God. The spirit of all the Scriptures points to eternal life, and bears testimony to the resurrection denied by the Sadducees. But, as infidelity ignores the being of a personal God, beyond and above nature, so it fails to perceive in the Scriptures God as revealing himself to us as *our* God." To the point is also the remark of Kleuker: "The possibility of the resurrection we must find in the

power of God, (Rom. iv, 17; Acts xxvi, 8; Rom. viii, 11; 1 Cor. vi, 44; xv, 43,) and its final realization in the spirit of all the Scriptures, where it is set forth as the consummation of the whole counsel of God."

VERSE 30. IN THE RESURRECTION. By this term we have to understand here not only the beginning of the resurrection life, but its whole subsequent state or condition. — THEY NEITHER MARRY, [said of the man,] NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE — said of the woman, with reference to the Oriental custom, according to which fathers gave their daughters into marriage. Where there are no deaths there is no need of a propagation of the race. — BUT ARE AS [the] ANGELS OF GOD IN HEAVEN. As the resurrection state is here considered simply as the higher sphere of existence, into which the body enters by the resurrection, the Lord refers only to the resurrection of the just, as appears still more plainly from Luke's parallel passage, (xx, 35.) From the fact that the saints in their glorified bodies shall be like the angels, Stier infers that the angels are not mere spirits, but are clothed with some kind of a body, and that the form of the angelic bodies is like that which the glorified bodies of men shall have. (Rev. xxi, 17.)

VERSES 31, 32. BUT AS TOUCHING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, HAVE YE NOT READ? Having refuted or rejected the sensual notions about the resurrection, on which the Sadducees founded their objection to that sublime doctrine, the Lord proceeds to prove it directly from the Old Testament Scriptures, quoting, however, not the apparently-plainer passages in the prophetical writings, such as Isaiah xxvi, 9; Ezekiel xxxvii; Daniel xii, 2; but a word spoken by God himself, and recorded in Exodus iii, 15 — probably because the Sadducees placed the Pentateuch above all other writings of the Old Testament. But, even apart from this consideration, the passage chosen by Christ was most to the point, although many of the modern critics can see therein only a proof of the immortality of the soul, not of the resurrection of the body; for in this passage the Lord points out, as Lange well remarks, the root of all proofs for the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body; namely, *the doctrine of a personal God and his covenant relation to men as the basis of their own eternal self-conscious existence.* The bush that burned, but was not consumed, and from which God spoke the words quoted by Christ on this occasion, was, at the same time, a beautiful symbol of God's power to preserve what nature seems to destroy. That the Scriptures attach more importance to the resurrection of the body than to the mere

self-conscious existence of the soul in its disembodied state, arises from the fact that the disembodied state of the soul is considered in the Scriptures as something imperfect, abnormal, so much so that even the souls of the just look forward with intense desire to their reunion with their bodies. (Rom. viii, 11, 23.) Without the body man has not his whole full life. — GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD, BUT OF THE LIVING. When the eternal God makes a covenant with a created intelligence, the latter can not die any more, becoming by this covenant a partaker of the Divine nature, and therefore immortal as God is immortal; for this reason he is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob long after their death. The promise, "I am thy God," includes necessarily eternal life, not only the immortality of the soul, but also an earnest of the resurrection of the body. The whole argumentation of our Lord can, indeed, be appreciated only by those who are in personal covenant relation to the living God; and as Gerlach well remarks, Christ gave, by what he said, a plain hint to the Sadducees that, in order to assure themselves of the truth of the resurrection, they must enter into personal covenant relations with God, like Abraham; for only the soul's real union with God secures its true life, whose completion is the resurrection of the body, while the rising of the damned is followed by the real death of the soul — not, indeed, the destruction of the substance of the soul, but the state of endless and complete separation from the fountain of life, God. Stier, however, understands by *the dead* the totality of the dead, and says: "As certainly as God has created all men as persons, and wishes to save them as persons, so certainly they will be God's after the present life, not as dead persons, for all live unto God, as Luke has it. They are to live unto him, and they must and shall live unto him for the purpose of being judged, and every one shall, in the totality of his being, his body included, (2 Cor. v, 10,) render an account of what has been bestowed upon him by God's promise, 'I shall be thy God.'"

VERSE 33. The words of the Savior made a deep impression, not only on the better disposed of the people, but, according to Luke, even on *some* of the Pharisees. After he had so powerfully advocated the doctrine of the resurrection they said, "Master, thou hast well said."

§ 56. THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

Verses 34-40. (COMPARE MARK xii, 28-34.)

(34) BUT when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. (35) Then one of them, *which was a lawyer*, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying, (36) Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law? (37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

VERSE 34. BUT WHEN THE PHARISEES HAD HEARD. Whether they were present, mixed up with the crowds, or absent, so that they learned what had taken place through their spies, does not appear. After the Sadducees are silenced, the Pharisees, though defeated once before, make a second attempt to extort from him an answer which they might use as a handle against him. — THEY WERE GATHERED TOGETHER; that is, they met together in order to lay a new plot. While the lawyer was to engage Jesus, they were to gather, and did gather, around the speakers, (v. 41.) The following account of the question concerning the great commandment, propounded by a Pharisee, is omitted by Luke; the conversation of Jesus with a scribe, recorded Luke x, 25-37, is, in all its details, so different from the present incident, that there is not a shadow of reason for confounding them, as Strauss does. The account of Mark treats of the same incident, but from a different point of view. Matthew relates the fact that a plot was laid by the corporation of the Pharisees for the purpose of insnaring Jesus by certain questions; the personal character and conduct of the individual, who acted as the mouth-piece of the Pharisees, he does not take into consideration; while Mark lays particular stress on this point, the individual in question being decidedly better than the party to which he belonged. Such an impression seems to have been made by our Lord on this scribe, that he could not but admire him; and such overwhelming impressions upon his adversaries are types of the subsequent conversion of Saul and other members of the Pharisaic party.

VERSE 35. THEN ONE OF THEM, WHICH WAS A LAWYER, [νομικός, a person skilled in the law, an actual teacher of the law,] TEMPTING HIM. Interpreters differ as to what constituted the *tempting* in the following question. Olshausen and Alford do not see any bad intention in the question, but suppose that the questioner, struck with the answer given to the Sadducees, really admired Jesus, and asked the question for his own information. Others refer the whole question to the rabbinical disputes as to the great and small commandments. They counted six hundred and thirteen of them; namely, three hundred and sixty-five prohibitions, and two hundred and forty-eight injunctions. As not all of them could be of equal force and importance, the question naturally arose, which of them took precedence of the other. But it is hard to perceive how Jesus could possibly have exposed himself to danger by naming this or that commandment as great. The only intelligible interpretation is that given by Lange. Before giving it we shall merely state that the English version is inaccurate; the translation ought to be, "What kind of a (= which) commandment is great in the law?" Lange says: "The tempting character of the question must be gathered from the reply which Jesus made, and the question which he asked in turn. The Pharisees expected, undoubtedly, a part of the answer which Jesus actually gave, or something like it, as: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, or thou shalt have no other gods before me. In short, they expected that he would mention the inviolability of monotheism. But their monotheism was deistical; they inferred from the oneness of God, as Mohammed afterward did, that God could have no Son. For claiming to be the Son of God, they had, on a former occasion, charged Jesus with blasphemy. (See John x.) From the expected answer of Jesus, therefore, 'Thou shalt love God supremely,' they wanted to draw this inference: *By pretending to be the Son of God, thereby claiming equality with God, who is supreme, thou blasphemest God.* That this was the end they had in view in their catechisation appears plainly from the question asked by Jesus in turn, how David could call the Messiah his son — a mere man his Lord; that is, God or the Son of God? Their attempt to make him a political Messiah had failed. They seek, therefore, to extort from him the confession, unmeaning, indeed, before the Roman tribunal, but the more dangerous before the people, that he was in open, blasphemous contradiction to monotheism, the very foundation of Judaism."

VERSE 37. THOU SHALT LOVE, etc. The passage is a free quotation of Deuteronomy vi, 5, according to the LXX. The Hebrew reads, *Jehovah,*

thy God. "The God of Israel," says Lange, "was not a deistical abstraction, but Jehovah, the personal, living, self-revealing God, who became incarnate." Mark gives also the introductory words on which the commandment rests: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." In the same manner as, and because, God is one, his law also, though consisting of a variety of precepts, must be a unity flowing from the being and will of God. "The Lord, by calling the commandment to love God supremely the first and great commandment, does evidently not design to represent it as one out of many, though greater in degree than others. On the contrary, the love of God is *the* commandment, and the whole law, with all its injunctions and prohibitions, is only a development of this one commandment: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.' By this love we have to understand the unqualified surrender of our whole being to God. Of such a love man is capable, though not by his own strength, but by Divine grace, because he finds in God alone all his wants fully and everlastingly satisfied." (Olshausen.) Dr. Adam Clarke has the following comment on the nature of love: "A sovereign preference given to one above all others, present or absent; a concentration of all the thoughts and desires in a single object, which a man prefers to all others. Apply this definition to the love which God requires of his creatures, and you will have the most correct view of the subject. Hence it appears that by this love the soul eagerly *cleaves* to, affectionately *admires*, and constantly *rests* in God, supremely *pleased* and *satisfied* with him as its *portion*; that it acts *from* him as its *Author*; *for* him as its *Maker*; and *to* him as its *End*; that by it all the faculties and powers of the mind are *concentrated* in the Lord of the universe; that by it the whole man is willingly surrendered to the Most High; and that, through it, an identity or sameness of spirit with the Lord is acquired — the man being made a partaker of the Divine nature, having the mind in him which was in Christ, and thus dwelling in God and God in him."

— WITH ALL THY HEART, WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND; that is, with all thy higher and lower faculties, intellect, will, emotion, desires, etc. R. Watson remarks: "The terms *heart*, *soul*, *mind*, to which Luke adds *strength*, are not intended so much to convey distinct ideas, as to give force to the precept by the accumulation of words of nearly the same import. All interpretations, therefore, built upon the supposed variety of meanings which these terms are held to convey, are too refined. The words evidently mean that God is to be loved with the entire affection of the soul, maintained in its most vigorous exercise, so that all its faculties and powers shall be consecrated wholly to his service. This vigorous and entire appreciation of

the soul to an object is expressed in like forcible and reiterated terms in 2 Kings xxiii, 25: 'And like unto him there was no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses.'"

VERSE 38. THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT. It is the sum-total of all existing or conceivable commandments. "It is," says Watson, "the greatest commandment — 1. In respect of its object; love being directed to the greatest and best being, our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. 2. In the absolute character of its obligation; being bound upon us by the supreme and infinite excellence of God, and by the innumerable benefits which we have received, and shall be forever receiving at his hands. 3. In its sanctifying influence upon the heart; for as it is the intense love of a holy being, it necessarily implies the intense love of holiness, and is, indeed, the vital, purifying flame of holiness itself. 4. Because it compels us by a sweet constraint to obedience to every other command; and so love is the fulfilling of the law; while the freedom of this obedience, as being that of entire choice and supreme delight, gives the noblest character to submission. 5. As it impels to the most arduous duties, and makes us willing to submit to the severest sufferings for the glory of God. 6. Because of that full and entire satisfaction of soul, which it produces by bringing us into communion with God himself, and feeding its own strength and the strength of every other virtue, by its devotional intercourse with him; and, 7. As being the root and principle of every other act of obedience, without which it can have no genuineness of character, and is considered as but a formal hypocrisy before God."

VERSE 39. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE UNTO IT; that is, equally obligatory; although subordinate as the second to the first, yet it comprises, like the first, all others, (comp. 1 John iv, 20, 21; Rom. xiii, 9.) As the love of God comprises the commandments of the first table, so the love of our neighbor includes those of the second; but both are in reality one again, since none can be conceived of without the other. The love of God is the root, the love of our neighbor its manifestation. Their juxtaposition was the more necessary, as the Pharisees fancied to satisfy the first commandment by the fulfillment of outward religious duties, such as fasting, prayer, sacrifices, etc. — THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR. (Levit. xix, 18.) Quoted from the LXX. "The word rendered by love" here — ἀγαπᾶν — does not, like φιλεῖν, mean the emotion of love, which is not an object of command, but a proper regard and

esteem, and a corresponding conduct. Where the emotion of love — φιλεῖν — exists with regard to the world, (Jam. iv, 4,) and where it is wanting with regard to God, (1 Cor. xvi, 22,) there is condemnation." (Meyer.) — AS THYSELF — in the same manner as thou lovest thyself; that is, as far as thou art justified and in duty bound to love thyself. Self-love is conditioned and limited by the love of God. Only in so far as a man loves God, he has the proper measure of self-love. To love one's neighbor as one's self is nothing else than to wish that our neighbor may obtain from God and men what we wish for ourselves; consequently the practical carrying out of the golden rule, (Matt. vii, 12.) To love our neighbor more than ourselves, God neither requires nor commands.

VERSE 40. ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. To the interpretation of these words Stier adds the following remarks, which we subjoin in the place of homiletic suggestions: "Who can conceive of any thing more perfect and comprehensive than what these two commandments set forth? But our case is not reached by it: the commandment can not give us what we have lost through the fall; that is, the love of God and the love of our neighbor. We are stubborn children and undutiful servants from our very birth. We have by nature, before we have received the spirit of bondage, (Rom. viii, 15,) not even a slavish fear, much less filial love and reverence of God, but only the wicked, defying, and sin-loving fear of Adam after the fall. And yet there is the commandment — *Thou shalt love!* However fully entitled God is to this supreme love, yet this commandment, as addressed to man, appears unsuitable to man's fallen state, because love is the spontaneous act of the heart that can not be forced on man by any commandment. This very unnatural 'thou shalt' is the writing that attests our guilt; if there was any love in our hearts no such commandment would be necessary, much less a specification of what is contained in it. The Ten Commandments are so many witnesses against thee! But the Lord, thy God, will circumcise thy heart, as even Moses has testified."

§ 57. OUR LORD'S QUESTION CONCERNING THE MESSIAH AND DAVID.

Verses 41-46. (COMPARE MARK xii, 35-37; LUKE xx, 41-44.)

(41) WHILE the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, (42) saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son of David.* (43) He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, (44) The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? (45) If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? (46) And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.

VERSES 41, 42. WHILE THE PHARISEES WERE GATHERED TOGETHER. Mark adds, "in the Temple;" that is, in one of the courts or halls belonging to the Temple, where all the incidents, related from chap. xxi, 23, may have taken place. The answer which Jesus gave to the lawyer, made so deep an impression on all, that, according to Mark, henceforth no one dared to ask him any further question. But now the Savior asks his adversaries, whose attacks had all been directed against his Messiahship, a question, which was to convince them that they did not even know what the nature of the Messiah was, although Psalm cx was so plain on that subject. Stier finds the internal connection between what had gone before and this question of the Lord, in the idea underlying the two great commandments, that man, by his own strength, is absolutely unable to fulfill them, that he, therefore, needs a Savior. But we prefer the view of Lange, who connects this question of the Savior with the tempting character of the question of the lawyer. The Lord's object is to prove to his adversaries by a psalm admitted by themselves to be Messianic, that the Messiah could be both David's son, that is, a real man, and at the same time the Lord of David, that is, the Son of God. In this twofold aspect the Old Testament presents him every-where. He is the *offspring* and the *root* of David; the *child* and the *ancient of days*; the *man of sorrows*, and the *mighty God*, etc. The Messiah was to be, in one word, *the God-man*. — WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? The connection of this question with what goes before seems to be this: ye have propounded to me a question concerning the law; let me now ask you a question concerning the Messiah, of whom the law

and the prophets testify. — WHOSE SON IS HE? He asked them this question, well knowing what answer they would return, and that this their answer would give him an opportunity to prove from a psalm his Divine-human personality, from which alone the sin-pardoning and law-establishing grace and gift of God could spring. — THEY SAY UNTO HIM, THE SON OF DAVID. The answer of the Pharisees was correct, as far as it went. They knew that the Messiah should be of the house and lineage of David, but they overlooked his higher nature altogether.

VERSE 43. HOW, THEN, [that is, in what sense,] DOES DAVID IN SPIRIT CALL HIM [that is, the Messiah] LORD? Mark (xii, 36) says: "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost," etc. Before we comment upon the words quoted from Psalm cx, let us call to mind the whole Psalm, as it stands in Dr. Noyes's translation:

1. Jehovah said to my Lord,
 "Sit thou at my right hand,
 Until I make thy foes thy footstool."
2. Jehovah will extend the scepter of thy power from Zion;
 Thou shalt rule in the midst of thine enemies.
3. Thy people shall be ready, when thou musterest thy forces in holy splendor [in the beauty of holiness.]
 Thy youth shall come forth like dew from the womb of the morning.
4. Jehovah has sworn, and he will not repent: "Thou art a priest forever,
 After the order of Melchisedek!"
5. The Lord is at thy right hand,
 He shall crush kings in the day of his wrath.
6. He shall execute justice among the nations;
 He shall fill them with dead bodies;
 He shall crush the heads of his enemies over many lands.
7. He shall drink of the brook in the way;
 Therefore shall he lift up his head.

Dr. Morison, to whose Notes we are indebted for the above extract from Dr. Noyes, though a Unitarian, nobly defends our Lord's quotation of this Psalm against the attacks of rationalistic commentators, as follows: "We will suppose this Psalm to be, as our Savior himself assumes in speaking of it, composed by

David. Could the opening words be applied by him to any one of his successors? The question of Jesus still comes in with all its original force: 'If David call him Lord, how is he his son?' Must there not then be a different and higher sense in which the language is used than in its application to a king of Israel? Besides, what Jewish monarch was there who united, in the manner indicated in verse 4, the priestly with the kingly character and office? There is no suitable correspondence between the words and the subject. But if, on the other hand, David, in spirit, had a glimpse of the higher and holier kingdom of the Messiah with its attendant conflicts, and victories, and glories, are not the images here such as a warlike king, like David, might fittingly employ to body forth the essential facts of the case? 1. The exalted condition of the Messiah whom the prophet-king looks up to as his Lord. 2. The scepter of his power going forth from Zion, the seat of the Jewish religion, gaining its ascendancy even in the midst of his enemies. 3. His people in the beauty of holiness, and his followers coming forth in the freshness of their youthful zeal, like dew from the womb of the morning. 4. His joining the priestly to the kingly office. 5 and 6. Jehovah putting down and destroying his enemies, when kings and rulers rise against him, and executing justice among the nations, while he, 7, like one in a desert land suddenly refreshed by a running brook, lifts up his head in joy and triumph. Is there not here, under these various images, 1-4, a picture of the Messiah in his exaltation and holiness, while the warlike images that follow show how amid violent opposition and bloody conflicts, where kings and people are overwhelmed and destroyed, his kingdom shall be established, and he, notwithstanding these wearisome wars, shall, like one refreshed by a stream in the sultry day, lift up his victorious head? The cruelties spoken of in the Psalm are objected to. 'The least,' says Dr. Palfrey, 'that such a supernatural inspiration, had David possessed it, might have been expected to do, would be to keep him from describing the future Messiah, the meek and peaceful Jesus of Nazareth, as a furious soldier who should strike through kings, and pile up heaps of bloody and helpless corpses, and slay till he should be exhausted with weariness and thirst? But is not this a caricature? Do these images in the Psalm of war, and cruelty, and desolation not truthfully describe the condition of things through which the religion of Jesus, extending the scepter of its power from Zion, passed in its victorious progress? And do they not accord with the wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, which Jesus himself has spoken of as among the signs of his coming? We wish to state the matter precisely. Here is a Psalm which the Jews received as

written by David, and as referring to the Messiah. Jesus, in quoting from it, speaks of David as saying these things in spirit, and with reference to the Messiah. The presumption from all this is that Jesus believed David to be the author of the Psalm, and that the Psalm was, or at least contained, a prediction of the Messiah and his kingdom. The Psalm itself, in the first four verses, is altogether in harmony with this view of its Messianic character, and can hardly be explained naturally and intelligibly on any other supposition. Is there in the last three verses any thing inconsistent with this view? We leave it for the careful reader to judge whether the latter clause is not also perfectly in accordance with the dark and destructive conflicts which marked the early progress of Christianity, and whether its language may not without any violence be interpreted as a highly-impassioned and condensed figurative description of the struggles, and slaughters, and conquests by which God in his providence was preparing for the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom." — More positively and profoundly is the Messianic character of this prophetic Psalm unfolded by Stier, of whose extended comment we give the following brief synopsis: "The Lord takes in his argument two things for granted, and confirms them by his own authority; namely, that the 110th Psalm was written by inspiration, and that David speaks in that Psalm of his descendant, the promised Messiah. It is true, David's own life furnished an occasion for this typical Psalm. Having restored the old Salem of Melchisedek on Mount Zion, he can be considered as Melechisedek's successor. After many sufferings and struggles he brought the ark of the covenant into Zion, that it may henceforth remain in the house of God, and he receives through Nathan the promise that the throne of his seed shall be an everlasting throne. (2 Sam. vii, 12; compare also the last words of David on this subject, 2 Sam. xxiii, 3, etc.) On the basis of these typical events the spirit of prophecy teaches David to call his antitype, the promised seed, his Lord (Adonai.) Jesus confines himself here to the very beginning of the Psalm, leaving it to the Spirit of inspiration to explain in the Epistle to the Hebrews what is said about the priesthood after the order of Melchisedek, while the last three verses are still waiting for their explanation by their fulfillment. When he says, that the words quoted were spoken by the Holy Spirit, he evidently does not mean that they simply might be applied to the Messiah, as Peter applies (Acts i, 16) other words of the Psalmist to Judas; for he says: 'David calls him, in spirit, Lord,' that is, David had clearly before his mind a man clothed with Divine dignity. That David really looked upon the Messiah as a Divine personage appears from the words, '*unto my Lord*,' and

more particularly from his assigning unto him a place on the right hand of Jehovah. Jesus might have quoted many other Old Testament passages which prove the Divinity of the Messiah, such as Micah v, 1; Ps. xlv, 7, 8; Mal. iii, 1; Isa. vii, 14; ix, 5; Jer. xxiii, 6. But he quotes the passage which speaks of the Messiah as David's son and David's Lord at the same time, consequently as God and man in one person. — The question arises: What did David know of Christ when he called him in spirit his Lord? Not as much, indeed, as we now read and find in the inexhaustible Word of the Spirit spoken by the mouth of David, since the priest-king has been exalted to the right hand of God. But as Moses already had some insight into the deep and far-reaching meaning of his typical laws and institutions, (Num. xii, 6-8;) so David could not have been unconscious of the higher nature of that son promised him through Nathan. Else how could he have spoken prophetically in the 16th Psalm of the resurrection of Christ, (Acts ii, 30, 31,) or in the 2d Psalm of a universal king, whom he calls "the Son" in a unique sense, and in whom he enjoins to trust for salvation as in God? In short, the burden of all prophecy of the Old Testament is what God has determined to do in the days of the New Testament through the incarnation of his Son, and what he has, therefore, foretold in the preparatory dispensation. (Acts iii, 24.) The whole history of the people of God in the old dispensation becomes absolutely meaningless, if viewed as having no reference to the coming of Christ into the world. To look forward to the future was for the people of God nothing else than to look for the coming of the seed of the woman; of the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations were to be blessed; of Shiloh, to whom the obedience of all nations is due; of the son of David, whose kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom. His coming was pointed out not only by God's special dealings with his chosen people, but especially by the direct testimonies, given from time to time, that is, prophecy proper. The special prophecies concerning the person of the Messiah and his kingdom, becoming gradually more and more definite and having all a direct bearing on the history of Israel, had a threefold end. In the first place, the faith and hope of the children of God living in those days were to be strengthened; both the prophets and the people were to search diligently into the hidden meaning of the Divine oracles, they being not of human origin, but given by God unto men to satisfy the cravings of their hearts. In the second place, Israel had the infallible marks by which to recognize their Messiah at his coming, and the unity of all the revelations of God in Christ should thereby become manifest to the believers under the new dispensation. Thirdly, these prophecies so scrupulously

preserved by the Jews, in their sacred books, will be the means in the last days to open their eyes and induce them to accept their long-rejected Messiah."

VERSE 44. THE LORD SAID UNTO MY LORD — literally, Jehovah said unto my, that is, David's, lord or sovereign, (Adonai.) It is true that Adonai is not exclusively applied to God, but also to angels and human potentates; but the fact that David, a sovereign king called his descendant his king or sovereign, shows that he looked upon him as a higher than merely human being.

— **SIT THOU ON MY RIGHT HAND.** These words are addressed by Jehovah to the Messiah. The right hand was the seat of honor and exaltation. No one took this seat but the heir of the throne, or one raised to a participation in the regal power and dignity. A seat at God's right hand was, therefore, an honor to which no human being could attain. — **TILL I MAKE.** "The eternity of his sitting on the right hand," says Bengel, "is not denied; but it is denied that the assault of the enemies will interfere with it. The warlike kingdom will come to an end; the peaceful kingdom, however, will have no end. (Compare 1 Cor. xv, 25, etc.)" — **THINE ENEMIES [including all wicked men, the fallen angels, and death itself] THY FOOTSTOOL.** Allusion is here had to the custom of kings putting their feet on the necks of conquered foes, as the sign of their complete subjugation. In quoting this description of the Messiah as the conqueror of his enemies, the Lord passes, at the same time, judgment upon the Pharisees, and thus this quotation forms the transition to the following denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, uttered before the large crowd of people assembled in the Temple.

VERSE 45. IF DAVID, THEN, CALL HIM LORD, HOW IS HE HIS SON? If the son of David, the Messiah, is a mere man, a mere temporal monarch, as the carnal Jews fancied him to be, he can not be the Lord of his ancestor David, however widely extended and brilliant his dominion may be. The question proposed to the Pharisees can find its answer only in this, that the Messiah was to have, according to the Scriptures, both a Divine and a human nature, (Rom. i, 3, 4,) and that his kingdom was to be not a temporal, but a spiritual kingdom. "Applying the subject to his own person, Jesus, as it were, asks, in these words: Am I a blasphemer when I call God my Father, and myself his Son? (John v, 18.) Does not David testify the same of me, his promised seed, who is to sit on the right hand of God?" (Stier.)

VERSE 46. Unable to answer our Lord's question, and despairing of entrapping him by any of their questions, his enemies harden themselves to lay violent hands on him. Hence follows the last denunciation of the Lord against them, and his departure from the Temple.

CHAPTER XXIII.

§ 58. CHRIST'S DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

HAVING silenced all his assailants, the Lord takes now the offensive, and passes on the hierarchy, without the least reserve, the judgment of condemnation. "It is remarkable," says Dr. Morison, "that in enumerating the crimes which made a national existence no longer possible for the Jews, Jesus did not dwell on the vices of the people, but on the spiritual wickedness, the vainglory, hypocrisy, and religious insensibility of their spiritual teachers and guides." Not less worthy of note is it that, although Sadducees were also included among the scribes, yet our Lord in his terrible condemnation singles out the Pharisees, who for the last one hundred and fifty years had enjoyed the highest respect of the people for their zeal and rigid observance of the law. During his whole ministry he had been making pharisaic formalism the constant object of reproof, while almost ignoring the unbelief of the Sadducees.

Dr. M. Baumgarten in his "Geschichte Jesu" says of this discourse of the Savior: "As he once commenced his Sermon on the Mount in Galilee with pronouncing eight beatitudes, so he closes his last public address with pronouncing eight woes on Mount Moriah, declaring thereby most distinctly that all manifestation of his Divine love and meekness had been in vain, and must now give way to stern justice. Of that awful delusion which has done at all times so much harm in the Church — namely, that the office sanctifies the officer, at least before the people — there is here not the most distant trace, but the very opposite. The office held by the scribes and Pharisees Jesus fully recognizes; but the sacredness of the office, instead of furnishing any apology for their corrupt morals, increases only their guilt, and he, therefore, exposes with the utmost severity the wickedness of their lives. Never did any prophet deliver such a discourse as this. We see here turned into wrath the holy love of Jesus, which is unwilling to break the bruised reed or to quench the smoking

flax, (chap. xii, 19,) which seeks and fosters what is lost, which casts out none, but attracts any that shows himself in the least degree susceptible."

Because Mark and Luke give only short epitomes of this discourse, and because Luke gives some portions of it in a different connection, some commentators will see in this discourse, as in the Sermon on the Mount, a compilation of remarks made by the Savior on different occasions. But against this speaks the tenor of the whole discourse, as has been admitted even by critics whose lax views of inspiration would not have prevented them from maintaining the very reverse. — The discourse consists of three parts: The first part characterizes, by way of introduction and warning, the scribes and Pharisees in distinction from the disciples and followers of Jesus, (vs. 2-12;) the second, making a sudden transition, pronounces seven woes against the hypocritical and willfully-blind leaders of the people, (vs. 13-28.) With the eighth woe, that comprises all the preceding seven, the Lord passes over from the leaders to the whole people, as ripe for the judgment, and closes with announcing in portentous words his final leave of Jerusalem and the Temple, the city and house of God, (vs. 29-39.) Looking upon himself as already raised above the earth, he does not mention again what they shall do to his person, but contents himself with foretelling how he shall continue his ministry among them through his chosen organs, whom, however, they would persecute as all former witnesses of the truth, thus filling up the measure of the sins of their fathers, with whom they agreed in sentiment, and so bringing about the final catastrophe prepared by the accumulated guilt of successive generations. He concludes with the affecting words which point from Jerusalem's awful punishment to the future conversion of Israel, thus completing the picture of God's dealings with his peculiar people.

A. WARNING AGAINST THE EXAMPLE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

Verses 1-12. (COMPARE MARK xii, 38, 39; LUKE xx, 45, 46.)

(1) THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, (2) saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: (3) All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. (4) For they bind

heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. (5) **But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,** (6) **and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,** (7) **and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.** (8) **But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ;** and all ye are brethren. (9) **And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.** (10) **Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.** (11) **But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.** (12) **And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.**

VERSE 2. THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES [that is, those of the latter class who were at the same time scribes] **SIT IN MOSES' SEAT.** Some understand by Moses' seat the pulpit set up in the synagogues, (Neh. viii, 4, 9,) for the declaring and interpreting the law to the people, and therefore maintain that our Lord spoke here of the scribes and Pharisees as the interpreters of the Divine law given by Moses. But this appears to us incorrect, for reasons given in our comment on verse 3, unless we lay especial stress on the word *sit*, which may be translated, *have seated themselves*, implying that they arrogated to themselves the character of Divinely-authorized interpreters of the law of God. It seems to us more fitting to the context, to understand by those that sit in Moses' seat the Sanhedrim. (Compare Num. xi, 16.)

VERSE 3. ALL, THEREFORE, WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU OBSERVE. The Lord does not speak here of the scribes as the authorized teachers of religion in the Old Testament, as plainly appears from verses 16-22, and the many other warnings against their false doctrines. (Chaps. v, 22, 43, 44; ix, 16, 17; xiii, 14; xv, 9; xvi, 11.) But in virtue of their office they were to apply the provisions of the law to individual cases; in this capacity the Savior honors them, because he was himself obedient to the law; and as the time for abolishing the Mosaic polity had not yet come, he taught his disciples and hearers, who were still bound by the Mosaic law, to respect the judicial decisions of the scribes and Pharisees. — The proper interpretation of our

Lord's injunction is of practical importance, because it has been maintained that he commanded in this passage to recognize and to honor the ministry of unconverted, yea, even of immoral ministers, with the only caution not to follow their bad example. Nothing of this kind is to be inferred from this passage. For although many of the scribes might act as public teachers of religion in the synagogue, in addition to their official position in the Sanhedrim or the lower courts, yet they were not authorized by the law to do so before others. The public worship in the synagogue consisted in the recital of public prayers, the reading of the lessons of Scriptures — which had to be translated from Hebrew inter the vernacular tongue, keeping as close as possible to the letter — (Neh. viii, 4-9;) after this every Jew had the privilege of addressing the congregation. *Divinely-authorized teachers of religion were, after Moses, only the prophets*, not the priests and scribes. All that Christ enjoins in this passage, therefore, is obedience to their judicial decisions. But as teachers of religion the Lord warns against them, saying, "Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (Luke vi, 39.) Nor are their traditions, which make the Word of God of no effect, any more to be followed than their example, in not fulfilling the requirements of the law which they enforced upon others.

VERSE 4. FOR THEY BIND HEAVY BURDENS, AND GRIEVOUS TO BE BORNE. By these burdens we are not to understand their additions to the law of God, since they excelled other people in observing them; others understand by them the ceremonial law, which Peter calls (Acts xv, 10) a yoke which their fathers were not able to bear. But it can not be said of the Pharisees that they did not move the ceremonial law with one of their fingers. More profound and correct is Stiers's comment: "They hand down the law haughtily and readily in its whole rigor, are fond of repeating the thunder of Sinai, '*Thou shalt*,' '*Thou shalt not*,' without even thinking of their own obedience. (Rom. ii, 21-23.) Just as our modern moralists preach of duties, and of nothing else but duties! They lay the burdens on men's shoulders without moving them with one of their fingers. (Luke xi, 46.) This involves, then, the idea that the Pharisees make the law of God an insufferable burden by the rigor and formality with which they cling to the letter while they lose sight of its spirit, thus falsifying the law even by their manner of inculcating it." — **BUT THEY THEMSELVES WILL NOT MOVE THEM WITH ONE OF THEIR FINGERS.** What hypocrisy! In their own hearts the law is unto them so grievous a burden that they will not touch it with one of their fingers, and yet

they take delight in laying it upon the shoulders of others! Lange calls attention to the fourfold rebuke contained in the Savior's word: "1. They make religion a burden; 2. A grievous burden; 3. Lay it on the shoulders of men; 4. Do not move it themselves with one finger."

VERSES 5-7. BUT ALL THEIR WORKS THEY DO, etc. For doing their duty in the sight of God, they care nothing; whatever they do, they do in order to be seen of men. Ostentation prompts all their actions. (Comp. vi, 1.) — THEY MAKE BROAD THEIR PHYLACTERIES. The Greek word signifies *preventives*. These phylacteries were scrolls of parchment, on which were inscribed certain passages of the law, and which were worn on the forehead and left arm, in order to obey literally the injunction of Moses, in Deut. vi, 8. They came into use after the exile. In later times they were regarded as amulets or charms to keep away evil spirits, diseases, and other evils, but it is not probable that this was the case in the days of our Savior, or he would, most probably, have exposed their superstition as well as their sanctimoniousness. "There was no more appropriate instance and symbol of an *opus operatum* than this wearing passages of the law on their persons, as if they could fulfill thereby the spirit of the injunction in question. To wear such trinkets for a show, and under the delusion that a religious duty is performed thereby, is the quintessence of all pharisaism. Whether it is done by the Jewish Pharisee, or by the Christian monk, or by the Indian fakir, makes, in reality, no difference." (Stier.) — AND ENLARGE THE BORDERS OF THEIR GARMENTS. The wearing of such fringes, etc., was, indeed, commanded, (Num. xv, 38,) but the Pharisees enlarged them beyond their usual breadth, thus making a show of them instead of being reminded by them of their duty, for which purpose they were designed by Moses. — AND LOVE THE UPPERMOST ROOMS [that is, seats] AT FEASTS. If the *love* of the uppermost seat in the synagogues, where the rank of office determined the order of the seats, is reprehensible, it is still more so to seek it even in the social circle, (Luke xiv, 7.) "It is not," says Matthew Henry, "possessing the uppermost seats that is condemned — some one must be uppermost — but *loving them*." — AND [love] TO BE CALLED OF MEN, RABBI, RABBI. This term comes from the Hebrew *Rab*, a great one. It was an honorary title given to Jewish teachers, like our "*Doctor*." It was used in three forms: *Rab*, master; *Rabbi*, my master; *Rabboni*, my great master.

VERSE 8. BUT BE NOT YE CALLED RABBI. On what ground this prohibition rests is clear from the reason assigned by our Lord: FOR ONE IS YOUR MASTER, which ought to be translated, *for one is your teacher*, (**διδάσκαλος**,) according to a reading adopted by the best critics, who omit also the word *Christ*, considering it interpolated from verse 10. The Jewish Rabbins claimed, in connection with their title, as Owen observes, "the prerogative of supreme jurisdiction in all religious matters, imposing whatever rites, forms, or ceremonies they pleased, and lording it over the consciences of the common people." Alford understands by "*one is your teacher*," not Christ, who is mentioned in verse 10, but the Holy Spirit, and says: "He is not named here, because the promise of the Holy Spirit was only given in private to the disciples. If he is meant here, we have God, in his Trinity, here declared to us as the only Teacher, Father, and Master of Christians, the only One on whom they can rest or depend. They are all *brethren*, all substantially equal — none by office or precedence nearer to God than another; *none standing between his brother and God*." This remark of Alford throws a flood of light upon this passage. The titles *teacher*, *father*, *master* are prohibited by our Lord with reference to their hierarchical sense and use, but not absolutely, as is evident from the harmless and proper use of the word *father*. "To understand and follow such commands, in the slavery of the letter, is to fall into the very pharisaism against which our Lord is uttering the caution." (Alford.)

VERSE 9. AND CALL NO MAN YOUR FATHER UPON THE EARTH. It could not be the Lord's intention to interdict to children the use of the name "father," in their intercourse with their parents; and the apostle Paul, who had the mind of Christ and understood his precepts, calls himself *father*, in a spiritual sense, (see 1 Cor. iv, 15.) The word is also used in the New Testament as a term of respect to aged and venerable men. (See Acts vii, 2; xxii, 1; 1 John ii, 13, 14.) But we are forbidden to apply this term to any man, as expressive of such spiritual authority as belongs only to God our Heavenly Father. In this very sense it is used of the Pope, who suffers himself to be addressed by his followers as the Holy Father.

VERSE 10. NEITHER BE YE CALLED MASTERS. The Greek word for "master" here (**καθηγητής**) means a leader of a school or party, whom his followers have to obey *implicitly*. Against setting up any such party leader the apostle Paul warns the Corinthians. (1 Cor. i, 12.) No one shall assume the position of master in the Church of Christ. He is the only master, and all the

members of the New Testament Church are to sustain a real life-union with the one Head of the Church, and the relationship of brethren to one another. "Christ's prohibition is against two things, though opposed to each other, yet still related, and often found in the same individual — the *haughty* spirit that would domineer over others, and would play the little lord; and the *servile* spirit, that would basely cringe to the dictates of assumed superiority. It is not against intellectual or moral, but official, lordship our Savior speaks — the pride of the office. The true lord, the man endowed with lordly attributes, never has the *haughty* spirit which Christ prohibits, would not have the lordly office, spurns the very name; the true *Rabbi* laughs at the title. Christ's prohibition, however, against *servility* is as strong as against lordly assumption. He not only says, "Be not called masters, but call no man father." Ye men, even of feeblest intellect in the Church, cherish the spirit of religious independence, acknowledge no human authority in matters of religion, scorn the assumption of primates and popes. 'One is your Master, even Christ.' No authority is to be acknowledged but that of Christ; but the haughty spirit thinks of his own authority, and the servile spirit bows to the dictates of pretenders." (Homilist.)

VERSES 11, 12. BUT HE THAT IS GREATEST [literally, greater] AMONG YOU, SHALL BE YOUR SERVANT. (Comp. chap. xviii, 1; xx, 25; Luke xiv, 11; xviii, 14.) The higher the personal endowments of an individual are, the greater is his obligation to serve others, and to use his gifts for the good of the Church. Different degrees of usefulness, based upon a difference of gifts, are not excluded in the kingdom of Christ, but the measure for greatness is humble, self-sacrificing love. (See chap. xx, 26.) It is worthy of note, that the Pope, who violates this commandment most flagrantly and constantly, causes others to do the same, calls himself, in pretended obedience to Christ's injunction, "the servant of all the servants of God." — AND WHOSOEVER SHALL EXALT HIMSELF, etc. These words refer primarily and especially to religious teachers that labor and study merely for the purpose of ranking themselves higher than others.

B. THE SEVEN WOES AGAINST THE SCRIBES.

Verses 13-28.

(13) BUT woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. (14) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore you shall receive the greater damnation. (15) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; ^[1] and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. (16) Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the Temple, he is a debtor! (17) Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold? (18) And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. (19) Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? (20) Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. (21) And whoso shall swear by the Temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. (22) And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon. (23) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, ^[2] and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone. (24) Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. (25) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. (26) Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. (27) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchers, ^[3] which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. (28) Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

[1 There were two kinds of proselytes: First, the proselytes of the gate — foreigners who lived among the Jews, who were not circumcised, yet conformed to some of the Jewish laws and customs; they were admitted into the outer division of the Temple, called the court of the Gentiles. Secondly, the proselytes of righteousness, who embraced the Jewish religion in its full extent, and shared in all the rights and privileges of Jews themselves. The first were despised by the Pharisees because they were unwilling to take the whole yoke of the Jewish law upon themselves. The second class is meant here.]

[2 *Mint* — a sweet-scented herb, like our garden or spear-mint, with which the Jews strewed the floors of their houses and synagogues. It grew in great profusion. *Anise* — an aromatic plant, answering to our *dill*. *Cummin* — the seeds of this plant were of a warm, bitterish taste, like our caraway seeds, and were used by the ancients as a condiment. These plants were of little repute, and so abundant as to be within reach of all. (Owen.)]

[3 The graves were natural or artificial caverns in groves, (Isa. xxii, 16; Gen. xxiii, 17; John xix, 41.) They were sometimes perpendicular, (Luke xi, 24,) sometimes horizontal, and were closed with doors or large stones. (Matt. xxvii, 60; John xi, 38.) Once a year — on the 15th of the month Adar — the Jews were accustomed to paint or whitewash this stone door, or the whole external portion of the sepulchers, in order that those who came up to the Passover might distinguish them, and not defile themselves (Num. xix, 16) by coming in contact with them.]

VERSE 13. YE SHUT UP THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AGAINST MEN — literally, *in the face of men*. Upon their unwillingness to enter the Messianic kingdom the first woe is pronounced, forming a contrast with the first beatitude, (chap. v, 3,) and verifying the immediately-preceding declaration that whoever is unwilling to humble himself shall not be exalted, These occupants of Moses' chair, however, are not content with not entering themselves, but prevent others from doing so. According to Luke, (xi, 52,) the Lord had told them the same once before, and had added: "For ye have the key of knowledge." Having usurped the monopoly of knowledge, the scribes abused it for shutting up instead of opening. By their authority they prevented the poor people from acknowledging the Messiah, saying to them that were willing to believe in him, "We know that this man is a sinner," and after the ascension they prevented, as much as they could, the Gospel from being preached to the Gentiles. (1 Thess. ii, 16.) These hierarchs use all their influence which learning,

office, standing, etc., give them to keep people from complying with the terms of salvation.

VERSE 14. Not content with shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men, they rob them also of their property, and that under the cloak of religion. — YE DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES; that is, ye defraud them of their property by abusing their weakness and helplessness, as well as your social standing, for your own aggrandizement. This was done in two ways: 1. They appealed to their legal erudition while pretending to keep the law perfectly. Thus they induced widows and others to intrust unto them the administration of their estates as guardians or administrators, and then they took advantage of, and cheated them. Possibly they succeeded also by their reputed sanctity to secure places in the wills of testators, etc.; this became even in the Christian Church a common practice at an early date, so that the Emperor Justinian had to forbid by a law to make clergymen heirs in testaments. 2. They pretended long prayers. In this way they surrounded themselves with the halo of great sanctity, and induced their victims to make them large donations for religious or charitable purposes. In return, they promised to pray much for these widows and orphans. Does it not seem as if the Lord designed by these words also a prophetic reference to legacies to the clergy to pay for prayers and masses to be said for souls in purgatory? — THEREFORE YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GREATER DAMNATION. There are degrees in damnation. Avarice in any form insures damnation; but avarice will receive greater damnation when directed against the widow and the fatherless, whom "to visit in their affliction," says James, "is pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father."

VERSE 15. YE COMPASS SEA AND LAND — a proverbial expression of the zeal of the Jews to make proselytes, which is often mentioned by heathen authors. This zeal was, apart from its motive, premature, because Israel's mission was to prepare for the Gospel dispensations not to convert the heathen world. But the Lord finds fault with this zeal of the Pharisees especially, because it flowed from impure motives. While they neglected their own people, they wanted to have the appearance as if their zeal for the glory of God was so great as to impel them to bring people from a great distance into covenant-relations with Jehovah. — TO MAKE HIM TWOFOLD MORE THE CHILD OF HELL THAN YOURSELVES. He that went over to pharisaism from heathenism could not do it with a good conscience; and it is not strange that such converts were reputed to be unprincipled men, inasmuch

as they added Jewish corruption to their unchanged inward heathenism. — This passage teaches us to distinguish between genuine missionary zeal and the spirit of proselytism. True missionary zeal insists on repentance and conversion, a thorough change of heart; while proselytism contents itself with inducing men to give their assent to a creed, or to observe certain outward forms and ceremonies. The latter employs, where practicable, force instead of argument. Experience, moreover, has shown that conversion to the mere form, whether of worship or of a doctrine, without the regeneration of the heart, leads invariably to fanaticism. "There is an essential difference between sectarian zeal and godly zeal; the one is selfish and mean, the other is self-denying and magnanimous. Godly zeal is a generous and noble passion, it is a zeal not for human systems, but for Divine truths; not for the letter of a doctrine, but for its spirit; it is a zeal for the progress of the true and just, the honorable and the lovely throughout the world, and which rejoices in them wherever they are found; it is a zeal which enables a man's heart to see and love the good everywhere. Sectarian zeal is kindled and fed by the few peculiar opinions that distinguish its own class. These opinions, whether they refer to doctrine or ritual, are supreme in the mind of the sectarian; 'his principles,' as he calls them, 'his Church,' 'his denomination,' are every thing to him. There is no good outside his little pale; the men that join his Church are converted; all else, at the best, are in a doubtful state. All this is pure selfishness. It is the glorifying of our own little opinions, the idolizing of our own notions." (Homilist.)

VERSES 16-22. WOE UNTO YOU, YE BLIND GUIDES. The Lord proceeds now to hold up to public view some of their false doctrines which they inculcated upon their people at home and upon their proselytes abroad, selecting examples of which he had spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, (v, 34,) and subsequently, (xv, 5;) for, as he pronounces here their final sentence, he does so on charges previously proved. The spirit of the conduct exposed (from us. 16-22) is *the exalting of the human at the expense of the Divine*; making "the gold" and "the gift" which men had brought to the Temple something more sacred and divine than the Temple itself, and the God whose dwelling-place it was. And why did these men exalt the gold and the gift above the Temple and the altar? In order to encourage the people to bring their gold to the Temple and their gifts to the altar. Setting the human above the Divine, and that from sordid considerations, was the evil which Christ denounced in the Pharisees. They are, alas! only the servants of the Temple and the altar, not of

God, whom they forget. — In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord had condemned all their frivolous oaths; here he shows them more fully why the validity of an oath rested not upon the thing from which it was taken, but upon its tacit reference to God himself, who dwelleth in the Temple, and who sitteth upon the throne.

VERSE 23. In this fifth woe the Lord exposes the doubly-criminal hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who scrupulously attended to small matters, not even commanded by the law, in order to earn the reputation of eminent saints, while they disregarded the cardinal principles of true morality altogether. — FOR YE PAY TITHE OF MINT. (Compare Luke xi, 39.) The legal enactments (Lev. xxvii, 30; Num. xviii, 21; Deut. xiv, 22-27) made fruit and the produce of the field titheable, but the Pharisees extended these enactments arbitrarily to the most insignificant of herbs, such as mint, anise, and cummin. — AND HAVE OMITTED THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS OF THE LAW. The Greek, ἀφήκατε, (aor. 1,) is the aorist of repetition; that is, you have done it before, and do it again, it is your uniform practice. The Lord had in all probability the rabbinical distinction between easier and harder commandments in view, and reminds them, in allusion to Micah vi, 8, (compare Hos. xii, 7,) of three requirements of the law, which he might have summed up, as he did in chapter xxii, 40, by the love of God and of our neighbor, or, as Luke has it, (xi, 42,) by "judgment and the love of God." — These requirements are: JUDGMENT, the administration of the law according to the principles of justice, (Isa. i, 17;) MERCY, with which the administration of the law is to be tempered; AND FAITH, such faith as implies the love of God and man, faith that worketh by love, (Gal. v, 22.) Stier and others understand by *faith* here, faithfulness or sincerity, as opposed to the hypocrisy and duplicity of the Pharisees. — THESE OUGHT YE TO HAVE DONE, AND NOT TO LEAVE THE OTHER UNDONE — literally, these ye ought to do, etc. (Compare chap. v, 19.) The Lord's meaning is not, that tithe ought to be paid of these small herbs, but, referring to the above-quoted passage in Micah, where it is said that the fulfillment of the moral law is better than all offerings, etc., he admits the obligatory nature of the ceremonial law. — Alas! that the evil, against which Christ hurls here his woe, is also found in the Christian Church! There are professing Christians who attend with the greatest exactness to all the formalities of religion, but are hard-hearted toward the poor.

VERSE 24. WHICH STRAIN AT A GNAT, should be translated, *strain out the gnat* (by filtering.) "The straining of the gnat is not a mere proverbial saying. The Jews — as do now the Buddhists in Ceylon and Hindooostan — strained their wine, etc., carefully, that they might not violate Leviticus xi, 12, 23, 41, 42." (Alford.) — AND SWALLOW A CAMEL. The camel is named not only on account of its immense size, but also because it is an unclean animal. (Lev. xi, 4.)

VERSES 25-28. The lying contrast between the external deportment and internal character of these hypocrites our Lord now sets forth by a double comparison, a vessel full of filth, but externally clean, and a sepulcher, externally adorned and white, but internally filled with the corruptions of death. This is the finishing touch of the picture of hypocrisy. "The power of man to falsify the state of his heart by his outward conduct is remarkable; he can appear to be what he is not. The most corrupt can so thoroughly counterfeit goodness that they may pass undetected for a long time, perhaps to the end of their life. In proportion to the vileness of the heart is the force of the temptation to this hypocrisy. Were a bad man to leave his heart thoroughly uncovered in his daily life, corrupt as society is, it would shun him with horror, and his existence would scarcely be tolerated. Was this hypocrisy confined to the Pharisees? By no means; it has ever been one of the most common sins of mankind. Bad men every-where counterfeit goodness, and seek to pass for what they are not. This hypocritical acting Christ denounces as a "*blind*" policy, and it is so. A thousand times better let the outside be filthy, bad though that would be, and the inside clean, than for the inside to be defiled and the outside pure. Blind policy, too, because the *whited* sepulcher must one day be thrown open and expose its contents to the sun. Justly, then, does the Heavenly Teacher fling his terrible woes against this abominable hypocrisy." (Homilist.)

C. CONCLUSION AND LAMENTATION OVER JERUSALEM.

Verses 29-39. (COMPARE MARK xii, 40; LUKE xx, 47.)

(29) WOE unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, (30) and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

(31) Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. (32) Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. (33) Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (34) Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city: (35) That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the altar. (36) Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (37) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! (38) Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (39) For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

VERSE 29. "The eighth woe combines the preceding seven into one. Charging the wicked offspring and the wicked fathers with one common sin and guilt, it is a woe pronounced not only upon the scribes, but upon all pharisaic Israel, as being ripe for judgment. Though they sanctimoniously disclaim all share in their fathers' guilt, (vs. 29, 30,) yet they are no better, (v. 31,) yea, they fill up the measure of their guilt, (vs. 32, 33.) And thus the whole generation becomes with them ripe for judgment. For they will reject Christ's last messengers sent unto them for a witness of their incorrigibility, and thus bring down the final judgment on the accumulated guilt of preceding ages, (vs. 34-36;) Jerusalem, especially, has scorned the grace so long and so liberally offered; now, however, it is withdrawn — till in the far-distant future Israel shall humbly and penitently return to its rejected Messiah, (vs. 37-39.)" (Stier.) — BECAUSE YE BUILD THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS AND GARNISH THE SEPULCHERS OF THE RIGHTEOUS. (Comp. Luke xi, 47, etc.) Lange thinks that the phraseology employed here sets forth the different treatment which the two classes of the dead receive at the hands of succeeding generations. "The righteous," he says, "had their merits speedily acknowledged, and monuments arose over their graves to proclaim their

virtues; but the prophets lay for centuries in humble, sometimes ignominious, graves; only the latest generations commence to do justice to their memories by erecting splendid tombs over the spots that contain their dust." There is no proof for such a distinction as Lange makes. Owen correctly remarks: "There is a parallelism between the two members of the sentence, by which the sentiment of the first is repeated in varied language in the second."

VERSES 30, 31. By erecting monuments to the prophets they pretended to proclaim aloud that they disapproved the persecutions of the prophets by their ancestors, while they acted in diametrical opposition to the words of the prophets, by rejecting the greatest of the prophets — John the Baptist — and the Messiah of whom they bore witness. "While ye thus disclaim all participation in the crimes committed by your ancestors, you show, by your conduct, that you are their genuine descendants, actuated by the same spirit of unbelief and murder." Stier very forcibly remarks: "Men are very apt to praise the departed witnesses of the truth, whom they would reject if they were still alive; they are, as it were, glad that they have nothing else to do with these witnesses than to set monuments to their memories."

VERSE 32. FILL YE UP THEN. "Words similar to those that the Lord addressed to Judas — 'That thou doest, do quickly.' The last means of deterring the villain from the perpetration of a contemplated crime is to challenge him to do it at once. If there is any moral principle left, the horror of the guilt which he is about to contract will seize him, and his courage fails." (Lange.) The imperative "*fill*," however, is often used in the sense of the future, "*ye shall or will fill*," (see note on chap. xiii, 14, 15.) — THE MEASURE OF YOUR FATHERS. The sense is not, as Meyer says, "fill ye also the measure, [of iniquity,] as your fathers have filled it," but "ye, who blame the murderers of the prophets, shall even fill the measure of their guilt." When the measure of guilt is full, the judgment commences. As the individual man can tire out God's long-suffering and bring upon himself the judgments of punitive justice, so, also, a nation, viewed as an organic whole. From this point of view the Savior represents the guilt of Israel as one national sin, commenced by the fathers and consummated by the murder of Christ. "There is a *measure* of sins which, when filled up, never fails to bring down upon nations the special visitations of judgment. To fill up this measure is seldom the work of one age. Successive generations adopt the principles, and imitate the practices of their ancestors, adding sin to sin, and iniquity to iniquity, till either by the natural consequence

of such public vices as tend to subvert the strength and security of society, or by the special visitations of Divine vengeance, they receive the full reward of their sins. The punishment of individuals may be deferred to another life; but nations, who are treated under the Divine administration as political persons, have no existence but in time, and in this life, therefore, are rewarded according to their works — subject, however, to this consideration, that they, as well as individuals, are under a mediatorial government, receive greater blessings than they could claim of right, are treated with much longsuffering, and can turn away God's anger by repentance and prayer. But when that point is once reached, beyond which it is inconsistent with the character of a wise and righteous government, though founded in mercy, to extend impunity, the *measure* is full, and the terribleness of God's judgments proves to all the world that none ever hardened his heart against God and prospered." (Watson.) The increasing guilt of a nation is similar to family sins, spoken of in Exod. xx, 5, on which Olshausen remarks: "The visiting of the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, necessarily implies that the sins of the fathers do exist in the children, since a just God punishes sin only where it is. Yet it is a fundamental truth, set forth in the Bible, that men are not and must not be viewed as isolated beings, perfectly disconnected from each other, but as members of an organic whole; it is part of the curse of sin and part of the blessing of righteousness, that they affect each other for good or evil. As the prodigality of the father makes his children beggars, so the parents' sins affect the children morally. The false inferences that might be drawn from this fundamental idea of the Scriptures are obviated by the possibility which exists in the case of every individual descendant, to be converted by a conscientious use of the means of grace placed within his reach, and to secure thereby the pardon of all his sins. To this refer the words in verse 37 — 'ye would not.' The Jews did not realize the full consequences of their sins before they had frustrated all attempts on the part of God to bring them to a sense and confession of their crimes."

VERSE 33. YE SERPENTS, YE GENERATION OF VIPERS; [no longer, as with John the Baptist, (iii, 7,) "Who hath warned ye to flee from the wrath to come?" but] HOW CAN YE ESCAPE [more correctly, how shall ye escape] THE DAMNATION OF HELL? "These words," says Watson, "were uttered, not in anger, but in the spirit of calm, piercing judgment, by Him who knew the hearts of men, and, as it has often been justly observed, afford no precedent to justify us in using harsh terms in reproving the most notorious

sinners. John the Baptist acted and spoke under special inspiration; our Lord spoke as a sovereign and a judge. We are to deal faithfully with men in showing them their true character, and endeavoring to open their eyes to their spiritual dangers; but we are to remember that we, who address them, are their fellow-sinners. To us it belongs to instruct, persuade, and reason; but it does not belong to us to pronounce the sentence."

VERSE 34. WHEREFORE; that is, *as this is the case*. Since ye are bent upon filling up the iniquities of your fathers, I send unto you my messengers, though you will reject them also, and thereby fill up your measure of iniquity. The unintended effect of an act is often represented in Scripture language as its cause. (See note on chap. xiii, 13, 14, 15.) The mission of inspired messengers, which brings peace and eternal life to the humble believer, becomes for the perseveringly impenitent the occasion of their ruin. Thus Christ is, in his messengers also, "set for the fall of many." (Luke ii, 34.) — I SEND UNTO YOU. Thus Jesus speaks in the consciousness of his Messianic dignity; although he was to be crucified first, yet his exaltation was so unchangeably present to his mind that he puts himself at this time already in the place of Jehovah, who sent the prophets of old. (Isa. xli, 27.) In an earlier discourse very similar to this, (Luke xi, 49,) Christ used the expression: "Therefore also said the wisdom of God." — PROPHETS, AND WISE MEN, AND SCRIBES formed the three classes of teachers of religion among the Jews; their places are to be filled by apostles, evangelists, teachers, and other holy ministers of Christ. — AND SOME OF THEM YE SHALL KILL, etc. These predictions were literally fulfilled in the first era of Gospel history. The Acts of the Apostles abound with illustrations. Stephen was stoned; James was beheaded; some of the disciples were imprisoned, scourged, driven from city to city; and tradition informs us that some of the apostles were nailed to the cross. To Christ's eye all the sufferings that his messengers would meet with in Jerusalem and elsewhere, in that age and all future times, stood as clear as in the light of day. And by giving them strength according to their day, and enabling them to glory in their tribulations, he has furnished the world with the highest demonstrations of the power, the divinity, and blessedness of his truth.

VERSE 35. THAT (*ὅπως* — in order that.) See the remarks on "wherefore," in verse 34. — UPON YOU. As the scribes and Pharisees were the representatives of the Jewish people, the whole nation must be understood by the "you," the generations both of past and of coming ages.

("Whom ye slew," verse 35, and "shall come upon this generation" of verse 36.) — ALL THE RIGHTEOUS BLOOD; that is, the punishment due for the shedding of this blood. (Comp. chap. xxvii, 25.) The meaning of these words is not that those, whom Jesus addressed, were to suffer the punishment for crimes which they had not committed, but that, as Watson remarks, "a punishment equal to the accumulated woes brought upon men for the crime of rejecting the truth, and persecuting its righteous preachers in all these ages, should be heaped upon the devoted heads of the Jews. And this was an act of manifest justice, since they put one, infinitely greater than all the prophets, to death, even the Messiah himself; and in opposition to stronger evidences of a Divine mission than any former prophets had given." (See also note on verse 32.) — FROM THE BLOOD OF RIGHTEOUS ABEL UNTO THE BLOOD OF ZACHARIAS. Of the blood of Abel it is particularly said, that "it cried unto God from the ground," and Zacharias said, while he was expiring, "The Lord took upon it and require it;" that is, avenge it. (2 Chron. xxiv, 22.) It must be noticed, also, how very like the punishment of the Jews was to that of Cain and of the murderers of Zacharias. Since the overthrow of their polity, and the destruction of their Temple by the Romans, the Jews have borne the curse of Cain; have been fugitives in the earth; and yet the Lord had set a sign on their nation so that it could not be destroyed. And as, in consequence of the murder of Zacharias by Joash, the army of the Syrians took Judea and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the chief men of the nation, so the Jews were punished by the Romans, though much more severely and on a larger scale. That the last judgment of the Jews was typified by earlier and partial judgments, we see from 2 Chron. xxxvi, 16-19. A critical difficulty arises from the addition, "Son of Barachias," because, according to 2 Chron. xxiv, 20, Zacharias was the son of Jehoiada. But as the Jews had often two names, and as the two names, "Jehoiada" and "Barachias," have the same meaning, that is, "the praising of Jehovah," it is probable that "Jehoiada" and "Barachias" were names of one and the same individual. Ebrard thinks that Jehoiada was the grandfather of Zacharias. Jerome says that the Gospel to the Hebrews had the correct name, *Jehoiada*. Meyer is of the opinion that Jesus did not mention the father's name at all, (Luke xi, 51,) and that it crept afterward erroneously into the text; the Zacharias in question being confounded with the well-known prophet Zechariah, whose father's name was Barachiah. Some think that the horrid murder of a just and good man by that name is meant, which, according to Josephus, (Ant. IV, 19,) took place in the Temple shortly before the

destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. But this can not be, because "Barachias" and "Baruch" are different names, and the words, "whom ye slew — ἐφονεύσατε," are too plainly the statement of a past act to be taken for a prophetic future. — BETWEEN THE TEMPLE AND THE ALTAR. The altar for burnt-offering stood in the court of the priests, just in front of the Temple proper.

VERSE 36. UPON THIS GENERATION. Most commentators understand by "generation," (*γενεά*,) the then living Jews. "The Heavenly Teacher seemed to look upon his age as the great reservoir into which all the crimes of the persecutors of all past ages, like so many streams, had flown; or, as a great harvest-field, in which all the iniquities of all past times had ripened, and now awaited the scythe of Eternal Justice. Josephus, one of their countrymen, an opposer of the Gospel, bears important, because impartial, testimony to their abandoned condition. He says that they had carefully imitated, and even exceeded, all the deeds of their ancestors." True as this remark is, we prefer, with Stier and other German commentators, to understand by "this generation" here — and in chapter xxiv, 34, where we shall give our reasons — not the then living generation, but the Jewish people as such.

VERSE 37. In view of this terrible doom, he breaks out into a wail, which, for tenderness and pathos, has never been equaled. According to Luke, (xiii, 34,) the Lord had spoken these words once before. — JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM. From the scribes and Pharisees, he now addresses himself to Jerusalem, the central point of the hierarchy, the metropolis of Judaism. — THOU THAT KILLEST AND STONEST — literally, thou that art killing and stoning; indicative of the habit to which that doomed city was addicted. It had become a proverb among the Jews, that no prophet could perish out of Jerusalem. (Luke xiii, 33.) — HOW OFTEN WOULD I HAVE GATHERED THY CHILDREN. How majestic is this *I* of the incarnate Logos! He refers not only to his own personal ministry, but to all the messengers through whom he had invited them from time to time. — AND YE WOULD NOT. (Compare Isa. xxviii, 12; xxx, 15.) Israel's Messiah is a Savior that yearns to save, but can not save the perseveringly unwilling. Who will dare to say, "The calling and bidding was not meant in earnest; for if it had been, the irresistible grace of God would have subdued the stubborn will?"

VERSE 38. BEHOLD YOUR HOUSE. It is no longer the house of God, the house of my Father; primarily the Temple must be understood here, which Jesus leaves with these words, indicating thereby that God has withdrawn his gracious presence from it forever. But the city, the country, the whole nation, shares the fate of the Temple — Jehovah has withdrawn, the theocracy has ceased. — IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE. The Greek word for "desolate" (*έρημος*) means solitary, deserted, not laid waste. Because it is wanting in several Codices, Meyer and others consider it spurious. But the meaning is the same: desolation and destruction are the necessary consequences of the Divine withdrawal, as the Lord had foretold even unto Solomon, (1 Kings ix, 7-9.) This declaration of the parting Messiah has been literally fulfilled, not only by the destruction of the Temple, but also by the futile attempt of Julian the Apostate to rebuild it, and by the condition of Jerusalem up to this day.

VERSE 39. FOR I SAY UNTO YOU. A solemn declaration. — YE; that is, the whole generation of stubborn unbelievers, including the descendants, as verse 35 includes the ancestors. — SHALL NOT SEE ME HENCEFORTH; that is, in the discharge of my Messianic functions. After his resurrection he appeared only to his disciples. — TILL YE SHALL SAY. "To understand by these words the involuntary acknowledgment of the coming Judge, is against the 'blessed is he' and the whole 118th Psalm; their plain meaning is, and only can be, till ye, that is, your distant descendants, shall acknowledge and welcome him whom ye reject. The Lord takes leave of Israel, clearly foretelling that the day shall come when Israel as a nation does him homage. The final restoration of Israel after the flesh is foretold throughout the whole Old Testament, from Deuteronomy iv, 30, to Zechariah. Whoever has not found this in the prophets, has not yet read them aright. (1 Chron. xv, 3, 4; Hos. iii, 4, 5; Zech. xii, 10; xiv, 8-11; compare Rom. xi, 25, 26.)" (Stier.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

§ 59. OUR LORD'S PREDICTION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE, AND THE DISCIPLES' ENQUIRY ABOUT THAT EVENT.

Verses 1-3. (COMPARE MARK xiii, 1-4; LUKE xxi, 5-7.)

(1) **AND Jesus went out, and departed from the Temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the Temple.** (2) **And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.** (3) **And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?**

VERSE 1. AND JESUS WENT OUT. Before he left the Temple, some incidents, related by the other Evangelists, took place. (See Synoptic Table, Nos. 161 and 162.) The day — Tuesday of the passion-week — was far spent, and he leaves for Bethany. — HIS DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM [a usual form of expression when they were about to address him on some particular subject] TO SHOW HIM [that is, to call his attention to the subject. They did so, no doubt, under the impression made upon them by his declaration, in chap. xxiii, 38; Luke xix, 44] THE BUILDINGS OF THE TEMPLE; that is, the Temple with its courts, walls, towers, etc. The second Temple was enlarged and beautified by Herod the Great, who employed 18,000 men on the work for nine years, before the building could be used at all; and additions were continually making afterward till 64, A.D. According to Mark, they direct his attention especially to the stupendous size of the structure. Some of these stones, Josephus tells us, were forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad. These stones composed the wall built up from the bottom, on three sides of the hill Moriah, and filled in with earth, so as to form an area on which to rear the edifice. Luke notes how it was "adorned with goodly stones and gifts." Among the costly gifts belonging to the Temple was a golden table given by Pompey, and several golden vines of great size, having clusters, as Josephus says, as tall as a man. The same Jewish historian says, that the marble of the Temple was so white that at a distance it appeared like a mountain of

snow, and the gilding, when the sun shone upon it, was so dazzling and beautiful, that it caused those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn away their eyes as they would have done at the sun's own rays. Even Tacitus, accustomed as he was to the splendor of Roman architecture, speaks of the Temple as of unmeasured opulence.

VERSE 2. SEE YE NOT ALL THESE THINGS? This is an emphatic confirmation of the declaration he had made a few moments before of the speedy desolation of that which appeared so grand and so stable. What ye see now, shall soon and surely disappear. — **VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU.** When Christ uttered the prediction of the total destruction of the Temple, few things in the history of the world seemed less likely to transpire. The massive structure seemed indestructible, as Titus himself confessed. (*Jos., Wars of the Jews, VI, ix, 1.*) And what people existing at this time would desire to destroy such an edifice? Would the Jews? The thought was inconceivable to a Jew. Would the Romans? Rome and Judea at this time were on tolerably-friendly terms. Besides, though Rome might in coming years lay siege to the city, would it not spare, according to its custom, such a magnificent building, as a trophy of its victorious arms? Yet scarcely had forty years passed away, before the Temple was utterly destroyed in spite of the earnest efforts of the Roman general to save it. The Jews, themselves, in the depth of their desperation, set fire to it; and one of the Roman soldiers, contrary to the will of the Roman commander, threw a burning firebrand in through one of its windows, and thus consummated the catastrophe. A short time after, one of the Roman generals, left in command of Jerusalem, demolished the Temple and the places about it so entirely, that our Lord's prophecy has been fulfilled to the utmost letter. Some of the deep substructions, which remained to show where the Temple once stood, belonged to Solomon's original Temple, which was not the object of our Lord's malediction.

VERSE 3. AND AS HE SAT. The foregoing prediction was spoken as they were leaving the Temple. They had now passed out of the city and ascended the Mount of Olives, from which a commanding view was had of the Temple and whole city. Here, as our Lord lingered, taking, as it seems, a lonely seat, a few of the prominent disciples — Peter, James, John, and Andrew, according to Mark — came to him *privately*; the prediction, which they knew would be regarded by the Jews as blasphemous, was so amazing to them, that it seems they did not dare to speak of it even among themselves. — **TELL US,**

etc. Most expositors contend that the disciples inquire after two distinct events, namely: 1. The destruction of Jerusalem, (when shall these things be?) 2. The personal second coming of Christ to the final judgment. This view we regard to be entirely untenable, and the root of the confused expositions of our Lord's answer to the inquiry. Let us first compare the parallel passages. In Mark we read: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign, when all these things shall be fulfilled?" In Luke: "Master, when shall these things be? and what sign will there be, when these things shall come to pass?" We see Mark and Luke agree with Matthew in inquiring after two points — *the time when*, and the *preventive sign*. The only difference is, that Matthew explains the term, "*these things*" — used by him, as by the other Evangelists, with reference to the destruction of the Temple, in the first question about the *time*, in the second question about the preventive *sign* — by substituting for "*these things*" the words, "*thy coming and the end of the world.*" That it is one and the same event, concerning which the disciples wish to know the time and the sign, appears still more clearly, when we compare the words used by Mark in the original with those of Matthew. The word used by Mark, and translated *fulfilled*, is συντελείσθαι, expressive of the same idea as the συντέλεια τοῦ οὐâνος — the end of the age — in Matthew. Before we examine into the meaning of the term, "end of the world," let us place ourselves on the stand-point of the disciples, and ask ourselves, what idea they could, at that time, connect with their Master's *coming*. Let us remember, they had not been able to understand what the Lord had told them repeatedly of his death and resurrection. They believed him to be the Messiah, and as such, they thought with their countrymen, he would abide forever, and establish the kingdom that should not pass away or be destroyed. Judge Jones is the only English commentator who considers the passage in this light. He says, in his Notes on Scripture, p. 311: "The disciples had heard their Master's parting words: 'Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' This declaration implied that his ministry at Jerusalem was ended, and that he was about to withdraw from the city, and remain absent from it, at least for a time, the length of which would depend upon the disposition of the people toward him. But it contained no intimation of the place he was about to retire to, nor of any sign or token of his return, after the people should be willing to receive him. On these points, or such as these, the disciples desired him to speak; but their own conceptions of them, we are justified by other passages in saying, were very imperfect. We must not suppose the disciples

had in their mind the Lord's appearance from heaven in glory and power, or that they intended to inquire about such an appearance. They did not at that time even know whither he was going; but wherever it might be, it is probable they expected to accompany him, and remain with, and return with him. This is evident from John xiii, 36, 37; xiv, 5; xvi, 17, 18, 28, 29. They had no conception or thought of his going out of the world, nor of the means by which his exit from the world would be accomplished. We must, therefore, understand the word **παρουσία** — translated *coming*, in its primary signification — of *being present in person*, as in 2 Cor. vii, 6, 7, where Paul speaks of the personal coming (**παρουσία**) of Titus. See 1 Cor. xvi, 17; 2 Cor. x, 10; Phil. i, 26; ii, 12, where it is used as the contrasting word to **ἀπουσία**, *being absent.*" We add: **παρουσία** means to be or become present; referring to a future event, it is, properly, translated *coming*. Before the ascension the apostles did not expect the Lord's coming, as a return from heaven, (comp. Acts i, 6, with i, 11; iii, 20;) and even then, whenever his coming is referred to in the Epistles, it is, as Meyer remarks, connected with the idea that he will come to establish fully his Messianic reign on earth. The full manifestation and establishment of his kingdom on earth, *the coming of the Lord in his kingdom*, (chap. xvi, 18,) was evidently uppermost in the minds of the disciples, when they proposed their question to the Lord. And, "that the disciples," remarks Auberlen, "should associate, in their thoughts, the coming of their Master, to establish his reign on earth, with the judgment falling on the Jewish people in consequence of their rejection of the Messiah, is not surprising. It would have been analogous to God's dealings with his people and their enemies in the Old Testament — the heathens which had been used as instruments in the Divine chastisement of Israel, having always themselves been given up to judgment sooner or later. The prophetic passage in Zech. xiv, where Jehovah is represented as smiting on the Mount of Olives all the people that had fought against Jerusalem, may have been before the disciples' minds. However that may be, it is natural to suppose, that when the disciples were told of the certain destruction of the old theocracy, they would — in the state of mind in which they were then, not having received the Holy Ghost — expect Jesus, the Messiah, to establish a new one of greater glory. It is, therefore, *his personal coming for that purpose*, to which their inquiry is chiefly directed. We see this not only from the form of the question, as recorded in full by Matthew, but also from the answer of Jesus, which is almost entirely confined to his coming." The establishment of the Messiah's kingdom was naturally and

properly viewed by the disciples as the closing of the former dispensation, the end of the then existing aion, translated *world*. It is of importance to observe that the Greek word for "world" here, and wherever "the end" is spoken of, is not κόσμος, the planetary system, but αἰών, age or dispensation. To express the idea of the close of the then existing αἰών or age, the following terms of like import are used in other passages: "The last days," (Acts ii, 17; Heb. i, 2;) "these last times," (1 Pet. i, 20;) "the last time," (1 Pet. i, 5; 1 John ii, 18.) When in other passages (chap. xiii, 39, 40, 49; xxviii, 20) the term "end of the aion" is used as synonymous with the final judgment or dissolution of the present planetary system, it is on the same principle on which the prophets of the Old Testament speak of the Messiah without distinguishing clearly his second from his first coming. The full establishment of the Messianic reign is represented as a concomitant of the final judgment, inasmuch as the former is in reality the earnest of the latter — a point which we shall elucidate more fully toward the close of our investigation. For the present we will only add another remark of Judge Jones: "The disciples took it for granted that the Levitical economy would continue till it should be superseded by Messiah's reign. This is evident from the form of their question, 'What is the *sign* of thy coming *and* of the end of the aion?' One and the same sign, they supposed, would serve for both these events. Had they understood the Divine purpose to open a dispensation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, of long continuance, between these two events, it is natural to suppose they would have changed the order of their questions, and asked a sign for each event — 'What will be the sign of the consummation of this dispensation, and what the sign of thy coming fully to establish thy kingdom?' Not knowing of the dispersion of their nation, and of the calling of the Elect Church out of the Gentiles, to be continued through many generations, they thought the kingdom would immediately succeed the Levitical economy. (Acts i, 6.) The Savior knew the misconception, but left it for the Holy Spirit to correct; while he adapted his language to the course of events *as he foresaw them.*" Considering, then, the destruction of the Temple, the coming of their Master to establish his kingdom, and the end of the age as concomitants, the disciples are anxious to know at what time and by what signs they might expect these great events.

§ 60. OUR LORD'S ANSWER TO THE QUESTION CONCERNING HIS COMING.

THIS prophetic discourse of our Lord has always, and justly, been considered one of the most difficult problems of exegesis. All the interpreters, however great in number and differing in detail, may be reduced to three classes:

1. The whole prophecy has been applied exclusively to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish polity, up to verse 43, "where there is," according to Owen, who adopts this view, "a distinct and well-marked transition, and following which there is nothing which can well be referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, but every thing points to the final coming of our Lord at the day of judgment, which event is still further developed in the following chapter, especially in verses 31-46." The only apparent support for this view can be found in verse 34: "*This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled,*" on the supposition that the word *yēvēā* (generation) has no other meaning than "the then living Jews." That this is not so we shall show *in loco*. How unnatural and untenable the exposition is which is built upon this supposition will appear in our exegetical notes, especially on verses 29-31.

2. Most of the modern expositors apply the whole prophecy literally to the destruction of Jerusalem, and typically to the final judgment, so that the former predominates up to verse 28, after which — that is, from verse 28 — the lesser subject begins to be swallowed up in the greater, till in the latter part of the chapter, and in the whole of the next, the second advent and, at last, the final judgment are the only subjects spoken of. This double-sense interpretation is entirely rejected by Owen and Whedon as self-contradictory, arbitrary, and fanciful — the latter, however, admitting that the first part of our Lord's discourse, from verse 4 to 42, treats of both events, the destruction of Jerusalem and the final judgment, and venturing upon an entirely-novel interpretation, according to which he assumes that "our Lord, in describing the destruction of Jerusalem and its prevenient signs, distinguished that event at the same time from his second coming, (1.) By a general caution not to confound the destruction of the city with the end of the world, (vs. 4-6;) (2.) By contrasting the commotions and persecutions preceding the destruction with the evangelization of the world before the end, (vs. 7-14;) (3.) By a contrast between the coming of the false Christs and the advent of the true Christ, (vs.

15-27;) (4.) By a contrast between the prolixity of the slaughter and captivity attendant upon and, through ages, succeeding the destruction of the city on the one hand, and the suddenness of the end on the other hand, (vs. 28-31; Luke xxi, 24;) (5.) By a contrast between the easy calculability of the approaching destruction of the city and between the Divine concealment of the knowledge of the end, (vs. 32-41.)" This theory appears to us entirely unsupported by the text, and far more arbitrary and fanciful than the double-sense interpretation. In support of the latter it may be urged that it is the peculiar character of prophetic vision to make the successive appear as co-ordinate. Just as the prophets of the Old Testament beheld the first and second coming of Christ so closely joined together that the distinction of the two events could not be understood without the light shed upon the latter by the fulfillment of the former, so the destruction of Jerusalem and the final judgment appear to coalesce in the prophecy of Christ. To this we object, however, that though the destruction of Jerusalem may be considered a type of the final judgment, the former stands, in this discourse of our Lord, not only in a typical, but also in a *historical*, and therefore *chronological*, relation to the coming of the Son of man, described in verse 30. To ignore the chronological order of the prophecy, so unequivocally expressed in verse 29, appears to us incompatible with the principles of sound exegesis.

3. Such is the force of the chronological order pointed out in verse 29, that the most distinguished modern expositors, such as Stier, Lange, Ebrard, Auberlen, Alford, and others, find themselves compelled to adopt the interpretation of the premillenarians, according to which at the close of the long period of tribulation — during which Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles — Christ will appear in person on earth to usher in the millennium. Philologically this interpretation is more natural than any other. That our Lord describes, from verse 4 to 28, the condition of his Church prior to his second coming to establish fully his reign on earth — after the establishment of which the disciples inquired — and that from verse 29 to 31 the ushering in of the millennium is portrayed, can, we think, be shown conclusively. But whether we have to understand verses 29-31 literally of a personal coming of Christ to introduce the millennium, or whether we may take it figuratively and understand by it a judicial visitation of nominal Christendom by Christ, in order to destroy all ungodly institutions and principles in Church and State, of which judicial visitation the overthrow of the Jewish polity was but a type, and which in itself

is, in turn, the full type of the final and total overthrow of all powers of darkness on the great day of judgment — this question we shall examine when we come to the exegesis of that part of the discourse.

After these preliminary remarks let us proceed to the analysis of the discourse. Its strictly-prophetic part extends to verse 36. What follows after this is a hortatory application of the prophecy. In his answer to the disciples' question, the true import of which we have ascertained, the Lord shows them (vs. 4-28) that not only the destruction of the Jewish Temple and city, but many other judgments and great events should precede his coming, in order fully to establish his reign on earth. This part of the prophecy falls, according to Lange, into two parallel cycles, (vs. 4-14 and 15-28,) each of which describes the same period of time, but for different purposes. Having indicated the divisions of the discourse, we will now consider each one by itself.

A. A GENERAL SURVEY OF WHAT MUST PRECEDE CHRIST'S JUDICIAL COMING.

In this first cycle, (vs. 4-14,) as Dr. Lange calls it, whose interpretation we follow, the Lord gives to his disciples the general outlines of what shall precede his coming and the end of the world, after which they had inquired. Instead of especial outward signs, he delineates the fundamental features of the course of the world, the dangers surrounding them and awaiting his future followers, and requiring the utmost vigilance and perseverance. "Take heed that no man deceive you." With this warning the Savior opens his discourse, portraying to them the daring pretensions of men who shall arise to assume, in different ways and shapes, his office and work in relation to the human race. He then prepares their minds for the perturbations of nations, the persecution of his followers, the manifold distresses which shall characterize the whole period, the apostasy of many, and the increasing wickedness of the masses. The impression made upon the mind is evidently that it will be difficult for the Church and the individual believer to pass safely through all these dangers. Yet "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." And the cheering key-note echoing through and above all the doleful sounds of this prophecy is: "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations." Though ever so many dazzling pseudo-Messiahs arise, though bloody wars and wild tumult fill the world, though the existing order of things be overturned by

the storm of revolutions or by the migrations of whole nations, though the earth be visited by devastating pestilence, or be shaken in its very foundations — notwithstanding all this, the Gospel of the kingdom, of that glorious kingdom of God and his Anointed, shall be published to all nations, so that all may have an opportunity to accept it, and that it may be a witness against them if they reject it. — It is evidently the intention of Christ to raise his disciples, who viewed his coming as simultaneous with the destruction of Jerusalem, to a loftier and broader stand-point, bidding them to look beyond the narrow confines of Jerusalem and Israel out upon the almost boundless world of Gentile nations, reminding them, at the same time, that these nations are not, as the Jews imagined, to be an object of Divine vengeance, but that, on the contrary, they must first receive the glad tidings of salvation. "And then," not before, "shall the end come."

Verses 4-14. (COMPARE MARK xiii, 5-13; LUKE xxi, 8-19.)

(4) AND Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. (5) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (6) And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. (8) All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. (9) Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. (11) And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. (12) And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. (13) But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (14) And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

VERSE 5. FOR MANY SHALL COME IN MY NAME. All those who apply the prophecy exclusively to the destruction of Jerusalem find a perfect

fulfillment of these words in those men who arose in the apostolic age falsely promising to the Jews deliverance from the Roman yoke. Owen remarks: "Josephus says that, during the procuratorship of Felix, there were numbers 'who deceived and deluded the people under the pretense of Divine inspiration,' instancing an Egyptian false prophet who got together thirty thousand deluded men, and led them to the Mount of Olives, where they were met by the Roman soldiers, and the greater part slain or made prisoners. He also speaks of Theudas — not the one mentioned in Acts v, 36, 37, who must have lived nearly forty years previous — a certain magician who persuaded many people to follow him to the Jordan, which he promised to divide for their easy passage over it. He and his followers perished miserably, having been unexpectedly fallen upon by a troop of Roman horsemen. Simon Magus, Dositheus, and others might be mentioned as among the deceivers of that time." We do not deny that the general prediction and warning, which the Lord gave concerning false Christs, found a first and partial fulfillment in those political impostors who inspired the people with vain hopes that the time of deliverance from the Roman servitude was at hand; but inasmuch as these men did not profess to be the Messiah (Christ) in the proper sense of the word; and as the Christians were in no great danger of being led astray by them, we are not justified in applying the warning of Christ specifically and exclusively to those deceivers that arose prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. As many prophecies of the Old Testament had a primary and secondary fulfillment, so we may also ascribe to this prophecy of our Lord, more or less, a repeated fulfillment, "corresponding," as Judge Jones remarks, "to the different conceptions which the disciples and the Savior had of the things inquired about, as appears most clearly in verse 14. The universal promulgation of the Gospel is the true sign of the end, both in the sense in which the disciples put their question, and in the sense which, in the Savior's mind, it really involved. The end of the Jewish State or polity came when the Gospel had been preached throughout the inhabited portions of the earth. The answer, thus understood, fully met the question in the sense it was put by the disciples. They were, in fact, incapable at that time of understanding it in any other sense, owing to their ignorance of the Divine purposes in regard to the calling of the Gentiles. But according to our Lord's conception of the question, as interpreted by the Divine purposes, the end will not come before this Gospel shall have been preached throughout a much more extended area than that *then* occupied by the nations."

VERSE 6. With regard to the rumors of war, Owen remarks: "For many years previous to the final war, there were rebellions, outbreaks, and risings of the people against Roman rule, so that the whole land was in a state of commotion, and much blood was shed. Reference is thought, by some, to be had also to the wars and commotions which, about that time, agitated the Roman Empire, in which four emperors, in the short space of eighteen months, came to a violent death. The country was kept in agitation and alarm by reports of wars and invasions which never actually took place. Josephus particularly refers to several of these reported hostilities, as the declaration of war against the Romans by Bardanes, and afterward by his brother, Volagases, both Parthian kings. But special reference is doubtless had to rumors and reports of risings and rebellions in the land of Judea against Roman domination, and of threats of Roman invasion to punish the refractory Jews, which kept the people in a state of continual agitation and alarm. It is worthy of note, that, when our Lord uttered this prediction, the Roman Empire, internally, was in the enjoyment of profound peace." — FOR NATION SHALL RISE, etc. Commentators refer for illustration to the disturbances among the Jews at Alexandria, the massacre of fifty thousand Jews at Seleucia, and a similar tumult at Jamnia, a city near Joppa. But the prediction evidently takes a much wider sweep, and prominent as wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes may have been in the years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, they are more or less common to every age prior to the promised millennium. — FAMINES, AND PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES. Owen remarks: "Although the clause '*in divers places*' belongs grammatically to *earthquakes*, yet it is to be referred in sense also to the preceding evils, famines and pestilences. All these were widely prevalent in the earth. *Famines* and *pestilences* are often joined together in profane writings, inasmuch as pestilence usually follows upon the footsteps of famine. The Greek words, λιμός, famine, and λοιμός, pestilence, are nearly alike. The etymological signification of both is a pining or wasting away. This prediction of our Lord was fully verified. The famine in the days of Claudius, mentioned in Acts xi, 28, which, by a reference to the historian Josephus, will be seen to have lasted with greater or less severity for many years, under the two procuratorships of Caspius Fadus and Tiberius Alexander, was probably but one of many which raged, not only in Judea, but in the neighboring country. There were also pestilences, one of which is recorded by Josephus as having raged in Babylonia in the reign of Caius Caligula, and another is spoken of by Tacitus as having visited Italy A.D.

66. *Earthquakes* were regarded by the ancients as evidence of the anger of the Deity and the impending of Divine judgments. Some take the word here as metaphorically denoting civil commotions; but the context, in which natural events are spoken of, forbids such an interpretation. In the time referred to, there were many violent earthquakes. One took place, according to Tacitus, in the reign of Claudius. In Asia Minor, during Nero's reign, several cities were destroyed by an earthquake. Pompeii was nearly destroyed by a similar convulsion of nature. Luke adds in this connection, '*and fearful sights and great signs shall be from heaven.*' Although there is scarcely any thing which is to be received with more caution, and even distrust, than reports of remarkable sights and appearances seen by individuals, and even by an excited community, yet there is no doubt that many strange and wonderful sights preceded the downfall of Jerusalem. Josephus says that 'a star [that is, meteor] resembling a sword stood over the city, and a comet that continued a whole year.' Previous to the final rebellion and war, while the people in crowds were attending the feast of unleavened bread, at the ninth hour of the night, a light shone around the altar and the holy house, as bright as day, and lasting for half an hour. The eastern gate of the Temple, which was so heavy that it was with difficulty shut by twenty men, and had been as usual strongly barred and bolted, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. A little before sunset chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds and surrounding cities. At the feast of Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner temple to perform their accustomed ministrations, they felt a quaking, after which they heard a great noise, and the sound as of a multitude saying, Let us go hence. A man of the common people, Jesus by name, four years before the war began, when the city was in peace and prosperity, came to the Feast of Tabernacles, and began on a sudden to utter in a loud voice woes against the city. This he continued to do, by day and night, in all the streets and lanes of the city. He was terribly scourged, but, at every stroke of the whip, his reply was, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' He continued this melancholy cry for seven years and five months; when, during the siege, as he was going round upon the wall, he cried in his loudest tones, 'Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!' and, just as he added, 'Woe, woe to myself, also!' he was struck by a stone from one of the enemy's engines, and killed instantly. No one will charge upon Josephus that he forged these stories in order to meet the terms of our Lord's prediction. It is doubtful whether he had even read or heard of it; and,

had it fallen under his eye, such was his Jewish prejudice against the Christians, that he would have been unwilling to do or say any thing which could advance their cause." We make this large quotation, in order to let the reader know all that may be said in favor of the fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; but we do not think this militates against the position we take, that the prophecy was intended to have a more general and abiding application, the reasons of which we shall presently see. Our view is unwittingly confirmed by the following remark of Dr. Whedon: "Our Lord further cautions the disciples that the ensuing troubles are not the tribulation preceding the end, from the fact that the Gospel must have a universal sway before the world ends. As the atonement is for all the race, so the preached Gospel is for all the world. Hence the disciples, in supposing that the end of the world was nigh at hand, and, *confounding* the tribulation of Jerusalem with the tribulation that precedes the end of the world, were destroying the true length and breadth of the Christian dispensation."

VERSE 9. THEN; that is, at this time, during this period, not "after these things have happened." "Hence it does not conflict with Luke xxi, 12: 'Before all these, [commotions, calamities, and fearful sights,] they shall lay their hands,' etc., the beginning of persecution being there referred to, which, waxing more bitter and deadly, reached in time the culminating point, at which Matthew takes it up and groups it with the fearful and ominous signs of coming wrath, spoken of in verses 6-8." (Owen.) — AND SHALL KILL YOU. Luke says: "And some *of you* shall they cause to be put to death." This was fulfilled in some whom the Lord addressed. James, and probably Peter, and Paul, and James the Less, were put to death before the destruction of Jerusalem. Others of the apostles also may have suffered martyrdom before that event. But the prediction of persecutions is certainly not to be restricted in its application to the apostolical age. The apostles are here addressed as the representatives of the followers of Christ up to the end; they were the first-fruits of the innumerable company of Christian martyrs. — AND YE SHALL BE HATED OF ALL NATIONS. (Compare Acts xxviii, 22; 1 Pet. ii, 12; iii, 16; iv, 14.) Tacitus charges them with being enemies of the human race.

VERSES 10-12. The apostasy from Christianity, as described here, in consequence of the persecutions of its professors by the world, and the corruptions gaining ground in the Church, manifested themselves even in the lifetime of the apostles, as plainly appears from many passages of the apostolic

writings, (Rom. xvi, 17, 18; 2 Cor. xi, 13; Gal. i, 7-9; Col. ii, 18; 1 Tim. i, 6, 7, 20; vi, 3-5, 20, 21; 2 Tim. ii, 18; iii, 1-9; iv, 16; Jude 4,) and especially from the Epistle to the Hebrews and that of James. Yet it was only a faint image of the subsequent constantly-increasing corruption of the Church, which Paul (2 Thess. ii, 3) characterizes as the falling away, and against which the apostles raise their warning voice in other passages. (Acts xx, 30; 2 Pet. ii, 1-3.) On verse 12 Meyer makes the very appropriate remark: "The abounding of iniquity — that is, of the non-fulfillment of the Divine law, against which the Epistle of James is for the most part directed — among Christians will be the cause of brotherly-love waxing cold with the majority of them. The moral degeneracy of the Christian world will have in its train, along with other evils, a wide-spread heartlessness, the very opposite of genuine Christianity."

VERSE 13. BUT HE THAT SHALL ENDURE. (Comp. chap. x, 22.) This is the opposite of the apostasy from either the Christian faith altogether or from the genuine Christian life, designated in verse 10 a "being offended," and verse 12, "a waxing cold." — **UNTO THE END;** that is, till the distress or persecutions from within and without shall have come to an end. In the case of the Church at large this end means the second coming of Christ; in the case of the individual Christian, who does not live till that event comes to pass, it means the day of his death. It is absurd to understand by the "end" the destruction of Jerusalem, and by the "being saved" the deliverance of the Christians at Jerusalem by their flight to Pella.

VERSE 14. The deplorable state of things, both within and without the Church, described in the preceding part of the discourse, is more than counterbalanced by the preaching of the Gospel in all the world. That more is meant by this than the preaching of the Gospel in *the Roman Empire*, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, appears plainly from the addition: **FOR A WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS; AND THEN SHALL THE END COME.** By the "end" the destruction of Jerusalem can be meant only in a very limited, subordinate sense, with reference to the conceptions of the disciples at that time, as explained in the note of Judge Jones to verse 5. In the sense which the Savior attached to it, the end of the whole great period is meant during which Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, closed by the judicial coming of the Lord. The Gospel, that is, the tidings of the fullest revelation of God, must be preached unto all, so that each and every man is thereby, as it were, compelled to take

the part either for or against Christ. The preaching of the kingdom of God itself prepares thus the way for the judgment of the nations, as is indicated by the addition *for a witness*. "Although the Gospel had been preached prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in all parts of the then known world, yet these words of the Lord did not find their literal, complete fulfillment in those days. After the Roman world had been for a long time the theater of the kingdom of God, a new world opened with the so-called middle ages, and another with their close; and even in our days the kingdom of God is almost completely shut out from more than one-third of the human family — in the interior of Africa, and in Eastern and Middle Asia; yet there is ground to expect that even these parts of the world will soon be thrown open unto us. The gigantic missionary operations of our days have brought us considerably nearer to the fulfillment of this word of our Lord." (Gerlach.)

B. THE PREMONITORY SIGNS OF CHRIST'S JUDICIAL COMING.

In the second cycle (vs. 15-28) the Lord describes the same period as in the first, but with special reference to the destruction of the Temple and city of Jerusalem. After having placed the disciples on the right stand-point with regard to his second coming and the end of the world, which events they erroneously considered as simultaneous with the destruction of the Temple, after having raised their narrow Jewish views to the height of the universal scope of the Gospel, the Lord returns to the subject which, in the mind of the disciples, was the most prominent. The particle *οὖν*, in verse 15, improperly translated *therefore*, is simply used to note the recurrence to the question in verse 3; but it is worthy of special note that our Lord does not treat of the destruction of the Temple for and by itself, as the disciples, according to their question, desired him to do. Instead of giving to the question, "When [at what time] shall these things [that is, the destruction of the Temple] take place?" a direct answer, such as, "When this or that shall take place, then the desolation shall come," he says: "When the desolation shall come, flee," etc. He refers to that fearful catastrophe only parenthetically and for a double purpose; namely, not only to enable such of his followers as would then be in or near Jerusalem to save themselves by a timely flight, but also to enlighten his apostles concerning the nature and extent of that judicial visitation. "When ye see," the Lord means to say, "the abomination of desolation in the Temple, as foretold by Daniel, then do not

think that the end has come — that I shall come for your miraculous deliverance by taking vengeance on the destroyers of the Temple. On the contrary, leave the Temple to its doom, and flee without delay." The prophecy of Daniel, (chap. ix, 27,) to which the Lord refers, literally reads thus: "Till the determined consummation [of the judgment] it [the curse] shall be poured upon the desolate." We have, here, not a momentary catastrophe — the destruction of Jerusalem forthwith to be followed by the Messianic judgment on the Roman, and the erection of his kingdom on the ruins of the old theocracy, as the disciples fondly supposed — but the whole long period of affliction, those "days of vengeance and wrath," (Luke xxi, 22, 23,) during which "Jerusalem shall be [being] trodden down [*έσται πατούμενη*, not *πατηθήσεται*] by the Gentiles, until their times be fulfilled," (Luke xxi, 24,) exactly corresponding to what the Lord had said in Matt. xxiii, 38, and to the period which, in the Apocalypse, (chap. xi, 2,) is said to last forty and two months, and which (chap. vii, 14) is designated by the term "the great tribulation." It is the times of the Gentiles, the period in which there is no visible theocracy on earth, the old having disappeared with the fall of Jerusalem, and the Messianic dispensation being not yet developed into a visible organism, although the Gospel shall be preached unto all nations, and believers shall thereby be gathered out from all nations, and kindred, and people, yet so that they shall not constitute the ruling party, but be subject to hatred and persecution, the Church of Christ being, in her state of humiliation, analogous to the state of her head during his sojourn on earth. (Comp. Auberlen's remarks on the Kingdom of God, Matt. vi, 10.) This period of tribulation for the people of Israel is, at the same time, a period of tribulation for the true disciples of Christ, for the people of God in the New Testament, because, as we are taught in other passages of Holy Writ, the millennial state of the Church of Christ shall not commence before the restoration of Israel. The insuperable difficulties we meet with, if we limit the phenomena described from verse 23 to 28 to the state of things before the destruction of Jerusalem, we shall show in the exegetical notes.

Verses 15-28. (COMPARE MARK xiii, 14-23; LUKE xxi, 20-24.)

(15) WHEN ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand,) (16) then let them which be in Judea flee

into the mountains: (17) Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: (18) Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. (19) And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! (20) But pray ye that your flight be not in the Winter, neither on the Sabbath day: (21) For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (22) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (23) Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe *it* not. (24) For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (25) Behold, I have told you before. (26) Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he* is in the secret chambers; believe *it* not. (27) For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (28) For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

VERSE 15. WHEN YE, THEREFORE, SHALL SEE. Some readings have for "οὖν — therefore," "δέ — but." At all events, the particle used here does not connect the command given, verse 16, with the last mentioned "*end*," (v. 14,) but forms the transition from the general instruction of verses 4-14, that the disciples should not look for the end as so near at hand — to the first terminus, the first type of the end of the world. — THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION. As this was to be the God-given sign for the flight of the disciples, we can not understand by it, after the example of most of the early fathers, any event which took place after the taking of the Temple by Titus, such as the erection of the statue of Titus or Hadrian. But no more can we understand by the "abomination of desolation" the Roman standards or ensigns, because they were seen in the holy place many years before the destruction of Jerusalem, yea, at the very time when Christ uttered these words. As Luke designates the siege of Jerusalem as the sign for the flight of the disciples, it might seem that the Lord meant this very siege by the abomination of desolation. To this Meyer objects, justly contending that by the "holy place" the Temple itself must be understood, and not the environs of Jerusalem. It is best

to understand, with Stier and Alford, by the "abomination," a desecration of the inside of the Temple by the zealots, coincident in point of time with the approach of the besieging army mentioned by Luke, so that the Christians received a double warning to flee, and the words of Christ contain the idea: the desecration of the sanctuary by Israel is consummated and revenged by its total destruction through the Romans. We can not be at a loss about the reasons why Matthew and Mark, who wrote mainly for Jewish converts, pointed out the inner sign, the desecration of the Temple, while Luke, who wrote his Gospel mainly for heathen converts, called attention to the state of things from without, simultaneous with this internal sign. To this Stier adds: "According to Daniel, the abomination proceeds from Israel itself, and only when thus viewed it answers both to its earlier analogy before the exile, (2 Kings xxiv, 2-7; Ezek. v, 11; vii, 8, 9; viii, 6-16,) and to its final fulfillment in its antitype, when the two ingredients meet, where Antichrist himself comes forth from out of the midst of Christendom and takes his seat with his idolatry in the midst of the Temple of God (2 Thess. ii, 4.)" — SPOKEN OF BY DANIEL THE PROPHET. The Lord does not quote the passage, Dan. ix, 27, *verbatim*, but only *ad sensum*, in connection with Dan. xi, 31; xii, 11. To enter into a full exposition of this prophecy of Daniel, would lead us too far. "The Lord calls Daniel expressly a prophet, probably because some of the Jews did not number him with the prophets; in this way he confirms, plainly and solemnly, the authenticity of the book bearing his name in the Jewish canon, thus refuting beforehand every other result of learned criticism." (Stier.) — WHOSO READETH, LET HIM UNDERSTAND. De Wette, Meyer, and others, take these words for a parenthetical addition of the Evangelist, indicating thereby that the signs spoken of are drawing nigh already; Stier, however, rejects this view, and says: "These words come from the lips of Christ himself, and exhort to a proper understanding of the dark saying, referring to the passages (Dan. chap. xii, 4, 10; ix, 23, 25) where Daniel himself is exhorted to listen closely in order to understand."

VERSES 16-19. So suddenly will destruction then set in, that nothing but a bare escape with life is possible. *The mountains*, mean the mountainous regions in the neighborhood, well known as places of refuge. "Many of the Jewish Christians, in obedience to this command of their Savior, at the siege, fled to Pella, a town forming the northern boundary of Perea, (see Jos. Jewish Wars, III, iii, 3,) and thus preserved their lives. On their way thither they had

to pass over mountains, and it is not improbable that many of them fled still further north to Mount Libanus itself. It was a very remarkable fact, that when the Romans, under Cestius Gallus, first marched against the city, and taking advantage of the consternation caused by his unexpected and sudden approach, was on the point of obtaining possession of it, he recalled his soldiers from the place, and retired from the city, as Josephus says, without any reason in the world." (Owen.) — WHICH IS ON THE HOUSETOPI. From the flat roofs one could come by means of the outer staircases into the streets, and likewise on the city walls. — WHICH IS IN THE FIELD; that is, whoever is at work in the field, having on no outer garment. — WOE UNTO THEM THAT ARE WITH CHILD. A woe, not of cursing, but of compassion, expressive of the Lord's strong sympathy with suffering humanity. (Comp. chap. xxiii, 29.)

VERSE 20. The instruction, which Jesus here gives to his disciples to pray for alleviating circumstances at the consummation of the woes foretold here, teaches us that special interpositions of Divine Providence are dependent on Christian prayer. WINTER and SABBATH are mentioned as circumstances impeding traveling and flight. "By leaving the city on a Sabbath, at a time when fanaticism was at its hight, the Christians would have been in the utmost danger of the worst persecutions by the Jews. They would thereby have exposed themselves to the charge of heretics and traitors." (Lange's Leben Jesu.)

VERSE 21. With these words the Lord refers again to a prophecy of Daniel, (chap. xii, 1, etc.,) which, like the one quoted in verse 15, did not find its full and last fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem, but pointed to a judicial coming of the Lord, of which the judicial destruction of Jerusalem was but a type. Whoever understands by the "great tribulation" nothing but the destruction of Jerusalem meets with insurmountable difficulties in explaining verses 22, 24, and 27. An expositor of the Scriptures has here only two ways left open; namely, either to refer the whole section, inclusive of verse 28, to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to adopt the view that the Lord, having given his disciples the necessary warnings and instructions concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, now speaks of the tribulation connected with this catastrophe as the type of the tribulation, which shall be connected with his judicial coming described in verses 27-31; or, in other words, that what took place shortly before and at the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple is only

a type of what is coming to pass when the end, described in verses 14-28, shall come, or, as Luke has it, when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.

VERSE 22. AND EXCEPT THOSE DAYS SHOULD BE SHORTENED, etc. "If God had not in his mercy shortened those days — the days of vengeance, (Luke xxi, 22) — *the whole nation* — in the ultimate fulfillment, *all flesh* — would have perished; but for the sake of the chosen ones — the believing or those who should believe — or perhaps for the preservation of the chosen race whom God has not cast off, (Rom. xi, 1) — they shall be shortened. It appears that, besides the cutting short in the Divine counsels, (Mark xiii, 20,) which must be hidden from us, various causes combined to shorten the siege. 1. Herod Agrippa had begun strengthening the walls of Jerusalem in a way which, if finished, would have rendered them impregnable, but was stopped by orders from Claudius, A.D. 42 or 43. (Jos. Antiq., XIX, vii, 2.) 2. The Jews, being divided into factions among themselves, had totally neglected any preparation to stand a siege. 3. The magazines of corn and provisions were burnt just before the arrival of Titus. (Jos. Bell., V, i, 5.) 4. Titus arrived suddenly, and the Jews voluntarily abandoned parts of the fortifications. (Bell., VI, viii, 4.) 5. Titus himself confessed: 'God himself has been our ally; it is he who took the fortifications, for what could human power and engines avail against these towers?' (Bell., VI, ix, 1.) Some such providential shortening of the great days of tribulation, and hastening of God's glorious kingdom, is here also promised *for the latter times.*" (Alford.)

VERSES 23-28. These verses have only a partial and subordinate reference to the time of the siege. They would, indeed, tend, as Alford remarks, "to correct the idea of the disciples that the Lord's coming was to be simultaneous with the destruction of Jerusalem, and to guard them against the impostors who led people out into the wilderness, or invited them to consult them privately, with the promise of deliverance." But *their principal reference is to the latter days.* We find no where any record in profane or sacred history that, before or at the destruction of Jerusalem, there arose "*false Christs and false prophets, showing great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect.*" Again, by *the lightning coming out of the east and shining unto the west,* the judicial coming of Christ to destroy the city by means of the march of the Roman legions under Titus has been understood; but this theory, started by Bishop Pearce, and adopted by others without examination, has no foundation. We learn from

Josephus that the Roman legions did not attack Jerusalem from the east; they came from the south-western frontier of Judea, marched in a north-west direction, and assembled on the north, not on the east, side of Jerusalem to lay siege to the city. There is no other way left us but to apply what is said from verse 21-28 to the whole period of tribulation—to the times of the Gentiles—terminating in the judicial visitation of the nominally-Christian nations, which will then be ripe for judgment, just as the Jewish nation was at the destruction of Jerusalem. On this very account we find also the phenomena preceding each catastrophe similar in character. Those false Messiahs and impostors, arising in the Jewish nation before the overthrow of their polity, were faint types of those false Christs and false prophets that, according to Paul, (2 Thess. ii,) as well as according to various passages in the Apocalypse, (chap. xix, 20; xiii, 13, 14,) are to arise in the latter times, during the long period of tribulation, and perhaps more especially toward its close, when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled. By those false Christs and false prophets, as we remarked above, are meant various pseudo-Christian principles, appearing in new phases and exerting an almost magical influence — showing great signs and wonders — upon the Church and the world, so that even true believers are in danger of being led astray; the more so because they long for a fuller manifestation of Christ's reign on earth than is realized during this period of tribulation. But these false pretenses of establishing the kingdom of Christ may be readily detected by the partial and contradictory representations which are made of Christ: "*Lo, here is Christ, or there; behold, he is in the desert; behold, he is in the secret chambers.*" The true coming of the kingdom of Christ, as well as of Christ personally, needs no heralds; lightning-like, it will force a sudden and general conviction. "*For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles [or vultures] be gathered together.*" Cadaver-like, such as the Jewish Church was before the destruction of Jerusalem, will be the condition of nominal Christendom — not of the true believers — when the times of the Gentiles are coming to a close. "The fundamental law," says Stier, "in all Divine judgments is the same; a city or nation ripe for destruction brings down upon itself its punishment, not only deservedly, but by a kind of self-evident necessity, just as eagles or vultures belong to, and are found, where there is a carcass. The corpse passes into putrefaction, and the putrid mass is removed by God's appointed instruments and servants in order to purify the air." The relation of this yet distant Divine judgment to the destruction of Jerusalem is forcibly set forth by Van Osterzee: "The downfall of the city and the Temple was the first

of those great catastrophes which ushered in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth. In increasing glory Christ appears on the ruins of fallen temples and thrones. At last the kingdom of light celebrates its highest triumph, after the kingdom of darkness has shortly before gathered all its forces, and the downfall of the present and yet future powers hostile to Christ, is but the continuation and completion of the downfall of Jerusalem." In full accordance with the above, and preparatory for the subsequent results of our investigation, are the following remarks of Dr. Schenkel in his "Dogmatik," (p. 1190:) "The more the Gospel spreads in the world, the more stir there is among the powers of darkness, the more fiercely they prepare for the last decisive struggle. The present is the time of development in the midst of two great judicial epochs in the history of the Church of God. Jerusalem, the seat of the demoralized old theocracy, destined to destruction with all subsequent false churchism, and Rome, the center of all ungodly secular power, which, after having executed God's judgment on Jerusalem, lent in turn its aid to a false theocracy for the persecution of the true believers, are the pivots on which turns the development of the kingdom of God up to the time of its consummation. The Apocalyptic Babylon is idolatrous Rome, the prophetic emblem of that secular power, which, though at first in league with the false theocracy, is destined to be the means of its final destruction, and whose overthrow in turn ushers in the complete establishment of Christ's reign on earth. Inasmuch, therefore, as Christ's victory commences with the destruction of Jerusalem, and becomes complete with the destruction of Rome, the development of his kingdom on earth is a continued judgment on an unscriptural ecclesiasticism and on an antichristian world-power, both of which, at first in league, then in deadly conflict with each other, must finally give way to the Church of Christ. When the whole manifestation of Antichrist in Church and State shall have been overcome by the spirit and power of Christian truth and liberty, then Satan shall be bound; that is, the kingdom of darkness shall no longer exist in an organized form, but only here and there in individuals. There will then be a time of rest and peace, a time of undisturbed communion with the Lord and with the brethren, figuratively set forth by the marriage of the Lamb with his bride. This is the epoch of the so-called millennium, that grand triumph of God's cause on earth, which, though once more to be momentarily interrupted by all uprising of the power of Satan, will issue in such a total and final defeat as to render it forever impossible for him to do further injury in the universe of God."

C. THE JUDICIAL COMING OF THE SON OF MAN THE VIRTUAL BEGINNING OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

Having given, in the two preceding parallel cycles, the premonitory *signs of his coming and of the end of the world*, after which the disciples had inquired, the Lord proceeds now to describe this "coming of the Son of man," from verse 29 to 36, stating that it will take place *immediately* after the tribulation, which he had portrayed, and which, according to Luke xxi, 24, is to terminate with the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles. But what have we to understand by this coming of the Son of man, here described? Let us examine the different views.

1. Those commentators who apply the whole prophecy, up to verse 36 or 43, to the judgment executed by Christ on the Jewish nation, take it to be a highly-figurative description of *that* judgment. We admit freely that the phenomena mentioned in verse 29 — the darkening of the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars — are often figuratively used by the prophets to indicate great commotions and revolutions in Church and State, heavy judgments impending over nations and smaller or greater portions of the human family. (Isa. xiii, 10; xxxiv, 4; Ezek. xxxii, 7, 8; Amos viii, 9; Hagg. ii, 21.) But how can we find in verse 29 a figurative description of the destruction of Jerusalem, when it is expressly declared that these phenomena will take place — whether sooner or later matters not here — *after* the tribulation of those days mentioned in verse 21, by which they themselves understand the destruction of Jerusalem? They endeavor, indeed, to avoid this contradiction by claiming that the *dissolution of the Jewish polity*, in consequence of the destruction, is meant by the obscuring of the sun, etc. But this will not do; for, according to Josephus, this dissolution took place *before*, not *after* the destruction of Jerusalem. This interpretation is beset with so many difficulties that every effort to remove one creates two new ones, and must, therefore, be abandoned as untenable. It must be borne in mind that, a few days before, Christ, at his solemn entry into Jerusalem, foretold its destruction before all the people in the following plain words: "The days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another:" In equally-plain, historical

language the Lord had described the destruction of the city in verses 15-21. (Compare the parallel passages in Mark and Luke.) How, then, can we suppose that what Christ had described in language so plain he should now clothe in language so highly figurative as to lead the apostles to the notion that the destruction of Jerusalem would forthwith be followed by the great final judgment of the world? It is still more surprising that Dr. A. Clarke and nearly all the commentators who understand by the darkening of the luminaries the dissolution of the Jewish polity, appeal, in confirmation of their view, to Joel iii, 4-20, a prophecy in which the prophet evidently denounces judgments not against Israel, but against the surrounding heathen nations, for the wrong done to the people of God, promising the most gracious deliverance to Jerusalem. This prophecy therefore must refer to the time of Israel's restoration, foretold by all the prophets, which the Lord calls "the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles." (Luke xxi, 24.) The application of the prophecy by Peter to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost is by no means contradictory to this view. The period predicted by Joel is ushered in by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and Peter appeals to the prophecy in order to show that the period, called by the prophets "the last days," had commenced, that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost was the conclusive proof of it, and that "these days," ushered in by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, will continue "until the times of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets," (Acts iii, 21;) that is, till the end of Israel's tribulation and the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles. — If, in addition to all this, we consider the unnatural interpretation of verses 30 and 31 (see the notes on these verses) to which those are forced who see in this coming of the Son of man, nothing but the judicial visitation upon the Jews, it is unaccountable how any expositor can still hold this view.

2. Most of the modern expositors, both English and German, understand by it the visible coming of Christ to the final judgment, the destruction of the present planetary system and the general resurrection of the dead. But the "*immediately* after the tribulation of those days," or, as Mark has it, "*in those days* after that tribulation," presents an insurmountable difficulty to this view. The period of tribulation immediately preceding the coming of the Son of man, and lasting till the times of the Gentiles shall have been fulfilled, is, as we have seen, a time "in which iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold;" a time in which "there shall rise false Christs and false prophets, and shall

show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect;" a time in which the Gentile nations shall be like the Jewish people at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, "a carcass, around which the eagles are gathered;" a time of which the Lord says, in verse 38, that it will be "like the days before the Flood." Now, if such a time immediately precedes the coming of Christ to the final judgment, where is there any room left for the glorious epoch of the so-called millennium, in which, no matter what we understand by it, the kingdoms of this world shall be God's and his Christ's, that is, shall be under the rule of the Spirit of Christ; in which all Papal errors and all antichristian scandals shall have been removed, and at the close of which an abounding of iniquity, as it was in the days before the Flood, is both incompatible with the testimony of the Scriptures and psychologically inconceivable? In order to obviate this difficulty the advocates of the theory in question maintain that the ἐνθέως of verse 29 merely means the suddenness of the opening of this epoch, and that it ought to be translated, "suddenly;" that is, *unexpectedly*. But granted that ἐνθέως means *unexpectedly*, nothing is gained. Whether the event predicted in verses 29-31 shall take place sooner or later after that tribulation — the total omission of the intervention of a period of time long enough to account for those religious phenomena which, by the clearest declarations of many Bible passages, must take place before the final judgment — we mean the complete victory of the Gospel and the binding of Satan, etc. — would be too great a chasm in the whole prophecy, and utterly unaccountable. Such an abounding of iniquity, as was before the Flood, can not be the characteristic mark of the time immediately preceding the final judgment.

3. It is, therefore, no wonder that some of the most distinguished expositors, such as Stier, Ebrard, Auberlen, Alford, adopt the premillenarian interpretation of this passage; namely, that Christ will appear in person on earth to usher in the millennium. Philologically this interpretation is more natural than any other; but there seem to be insuperable dogmatical difficulties in the way. Paul (1 Thess. iv, 13-17) connects Christ's coming down from heaven with the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and with the being caught up of the then living in the clouds, and in 2 Thess. i, 7-9, he says: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." And Peter says in his second

Epistle, (chap. iii, 10:) "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Now, if these events are simultaneous with the visible coming of Christ, his visible coming involves the last judgment, a total breaking up of the planetary system; the present state of probation ceases, and we see — on this theory also — no room left for the millennium, for the perfect moral victory of Christianity over the powers of darkness, for the complete realization of the idea of the Church of Christ, all of which the Word of God declares most distinctly will take place under the dispensation of the Gospel; for, even assuming that a state of probation might continue, it would have to be conceived as taking place on the new earth, and constituting a new order of things, entirely different from the dispensation of the Gospel.

4. After weighing all the difficulties besetting the case, we venture to suggest a new solution. It is this: that we take what is said of the coming of Christ, in verses 29-36, figuratively, and understand by it *a judicial visitation of nominal Christendom by Christ, in order to destroy all ungodly institutions and principles in Church and State, of which (providential) visitation the overthrow of the Jewish polity was but a type, and which itself is, in turn, the full type of the final and total overthrow of all powers of darkness on the great day of judgment*. Since commentators have not hesitated to take the destruction of Jerusalem for a type of the final judgment, no one should find it strange that, in the description of the judgment upon Antichrist, which, in its extent and consequences, is of much greater importance than the judgment on Jerusalem, figurative expressions are used, that shall be fulfilled literally in the final judgment.

The great error in the figurative interpretation of verse 29 is, that it is referred to the overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth, while according to the context it must be referred to the restoration of Israel and to the overthrow of the nominally-Christian but apostate nations of the world. Now, inasmuch as this great judgment on apostate Christendom, or Antichrist, is not only a type but the very beginning of the final judgment, the Lord uses, in describing it, figurative expressions, which will be literally fulfilled in the total change of the present heavens and the present earth, when he comes to the final judgment. In a similar manner he had described the events taking place before and at the destruction of Jerusalem in words, which are to be completely fulfilled at his

coming for the introduction of the millennium. The difference between this and the common view, which, taking the destruction of Jerusalem as the type of the final judgment, refers the words of the Savior, in verses 29-31, to his visible coming to the final judgment, is very great, inasmuch as the latter view is irreconcilable with the plain words, "Immediately after the tribulation of these days."

The only question to be answered is: Are we warranted to ascribe to a prophecy a *double meaning*? All expositors, with the exception of the premillenarian literalists, return an affirmative answer to this question. We agree, however, with the literalists in so far as to admit that the literal import of such words of the Lord as are recorded in verses 29-31 must not be deviated from, except the literal sense is contradicted by other plain declarations of the Bible — this we believe to be the case with the interpretation that, at the opening of the millennium, Christ will appear in person, and that then the righteous will be raised — or by well-authenticated historical facts; and such, we think, forbid us to find, in verses 29-31, a literal declaration of the personal coming of Christ to the final judgment. In allowing to these words a double meaning, in order to avoid the difficulties that beset the two other interpretations, we arrive at almost the same conclusions as Stier, who, though he applies the whole of chap. xxiv, and chap. xxv, 1-30, to the *personal* premillennial coming of Christ, and only chap. xxv, 31-46, to his final coming to judgment, discourses in his introductory remarks to the prophecy as follows: "The fundamental error, which most interpreters of this prophecy commit, consists in their losing sight of the relation which the great catastrophes sustain to each other. For the destruction of Jerusalem is, in itself, the first coming of the Son of man; only as such it has prophetic significance. It is a typical judgment of the world; the kingdom of the Lord appears typically established among the nations, in opposition to the rejected theocratic people; the two subsequent catastrophes — the Lord's coming at the opening and at the close of the millennium — are typified in the judgment on Jerusalem. In this light the Lord beholds the latter, and this is the reason why he uses, in chap. xxiv, 4-14, and again in 23-28, so strong expressions, that they find their complete fulfillment in the more distant events, although the intervening verses (15-22) contain a plain and unequivocal reference to Jerusalem. While in verse 29 the first (typical) coming of Christ — to the destruction of Jerusalem — disappears almost entirely out of view, and a second (typical) coming of the Son of man

for the purpose of gathering his elect into a visible kingdom appears in the foreground, it must not be overlooked that this second coming is likewise not the coming of Christ to the final judgment, but an intermediate one, and this intermediate coming of Christ is the key to the full understanding of the whole prophecy. From this intermediate coming of the Son of man is greatly to be distinguished the great final judgment day of the King of kings, the real end of the world, Christ's final coming for the purpose of separating the righteous and the wicked, and fixing their everlasting destinies immutably, (chap. xxv, 31-46.)"

To determine in detail how the events connected with the close of the days of Israel's tribulation will correspond to the portraiture given in verses 29-31, and in what the sign of the Son of man will consist, is impossible before the prophecy shall have been fulfilled. Yet the characteristic marks are fully revealed to us; namely, a dissolution of those powers and institutions of the world that are arrayed in hostility against Christ and his cause, (v. 29;) a conviction forcing itself upon all the inhabitants of the earth that a revelation of Christ's judicial power is near at hand, a complete consternation of the wicked and the subsequent transformation of the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of Christ, (v. 30;) which necessarily involves a partial separation of the wicked from the righteous, the union of all the true followers of Christ, and the conversion and restoration of Israel, (v. 31; comp. Rev. xix, and xx, 1-6.)

Is it not perfectly Scriptural to assume such a radical change of the moral state of the world by means of moral or providential instrumentalities and agencies, so that the present state of probation, which is founded on faith, not on sight, continues uninterrupted up to the end of the millennium? But if such an assumption is both rational and Scriptural, how could this moral revolution of the world be symbolized more fitly than by the sublime scenes at the personal coming of Christ to the final judgment; namely, the dissolution and transformation of the present heavens and the present earth — that final completion of the probationary state of which the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ by moral means is both the earnest and germ? In short, what is more natural than that the Lord should describe the opening of the great judicial epoch with a providential judgment and its closing with his visible coming, by the same words, since the typical meaning of the first will fully correspond to the literal fulfillment of the latter?

In conclusion, the interpretation upon which we have ventured differs from all others in this: We do not take the judicial visitation of Israel, in the destruction of Jerusalem, as the full type of the final judgment; but we take as such a second providential coming of the Lord for the purpose of taking vengeance on the antichristian powers, which have come out of nominal Christendom. We need scarcely say that, while we understand by the Lord's coming, described in verses 29-36, a providential coming, we do not thereby throw any doubt on the reality of his final, personal coming. On the contrary, we can well apply to our view what Lange says on the relation of a spiritual or providential coming of Christ to his final, personal coming: "The talk of a spiritual coming of Christ is in reality an absurdity, if this spiritual coming is not at the same time taken as the warrant of his final personal coming. The spiritual coming of Christ is related to his final personal coming, as the period is to the epoch. A new epoch comes in reality in every moment of the preceding period, especially with every forward move of this period. In the same manner, Christ's personal coming is prospectively seen in all that the Church and the individual believer passes through, but especially in all Divine judgments upon every corrupt form of theocracy, in all reformations and purifications of the Church. This was the consciousness that fully pervaded the apostles. They knew that the Christian age or world had commenced already in the center of the world's history, in the center of their own hearts, in the heart of the human race; and, therefore, they constantly anticipated the last times, the final winding up of all sublunary affairs. They had the inward consciousness that Christ had conquered sin, and Satan, and death, and thereby the whole old-world system, and from this overflowing feeling they declared: He is at the door. They could not doubt that the Church would welcome her Lord at his coming, as the bride does her bridegroom. . . . Yet they did not determine the exact time, day or hour, but referred frequently to those conditions from which it appeared improbable that the Lord's visible coming was near at hand."

Verses 29-36. (COMPARE MARK xiii, 24-32; LUKE xxi, 25-33.)

(29) IMMEDIATELY after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: (30) And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then

shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (31) And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (32) Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that Summer is nigh: (33) So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even at the doors.* (34) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (35) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (36) But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

VERSE 29. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THESE DAYS. In order to let the reader fully see how those, who refer this and the subsequent verses either to the destruction of Jerusalem or to the final judgment, interpret this passage, we quote from Owen and Whedon. Owen remarks: "I can have no hesitancy in referring these verses to the coming of Christ to inflict the final stroke, and close up the scene of calamity and suffering by the total destruction of the city. His messengers had gone before him. Pestilences, famines, earthquakes, wars, commotions, had been raging in the earth. The Roman armies had beleaguered Jerusalem. The Christians had fled to the mountains. False Christs and false prophets had arisen and lured multitudes to ruin. The nation was ripe for destruction. Around the carcass the birds of prey were beginning to hover. *Immediately* after these preliminary events the Son of man was to come, and the destruction of the city was no longer to be deferred. This is the obvious and natural explanation of the passage. That the language is similar to that in which Christ's final coming is described, can not be denied. But this is not strange, when we consider that the one event is typical of the other, and that his coming to destroy Jerusalem is a representation, faint, indeed, but real, of his glorious and awful coming to take vengeance upon the finally impenitent, and that language is therefore used of it, which seems appropriately to belong to the final judgment. Dr. Robinson refers verses 29-31 'to the overthrow and complete extirpation of the Jewish people fifty years later under Adrian, when they were sold as slaves, and utterly driven out from the land of their fathers, which was the final catastrophe of the nation, and far more terrible than that of the destruction of Jerusalem; though the latter,

in consequence of the vivid description of it by Josephus, has come to be usually considered as the last act in the great tragedy, which it was not.' There is no serious objection to this view, but yet the great key-passage (v. 34) compels us to refer it rather to the time of the burning of the city and the Temple." The refutation of this interpretation we have already given in our introductory remarks, though we are inclined to agree with that commentator in taking the darkening of the heavenly bodies, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the heavens, in a metaphorical sense. His comment on these atmospherical phenomena is as follows: "*Shall the sun be darkened.*" Professor Stuart remarks, 'nothing is more frequent in the Scripture than the indication of great changes, especially great calamities, by a description of earthquakes, and tempests, and eclipses of the heavenly luminaries, or the mention of their bloody aspect, occasioned by a murky atmosphere.' The ancients almost always connected eclipses and changes of the heavenly bodies with the wrath and judgment of the Deity. The language employed here has reference to the sun's obscuration in a total eclipse, or by a smoky, lowering atmosphere, such as usually precedes earthquakes, tornadoes, and similar convulsions of nature. *The moon*, etc. There is a parallelism between this and the preceding clause, after the manner of Hebrew poetry. The darkening of the moon is to be referred to the same causes which obscured the sun. Luke calls these obscurations 'signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;' because they were regarded as the signs or symbols of God's wrath. *The stars shall fall.* The atmospheric heavens, the region of the falling-stars or meteors, is here referred to. The cause of these falling bodies being inexplicable, they were regarded by the ancients with great terror. *And the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.* The same general idea of calamities and dangers is continued in this parallelism. The heavenly bodies, in highly-figurative language, are said to be shaken — literally, tossed to and fro, as a ship on the waves of the sea — so that, although after the notion of the ancients they were fixed in the heavens, as in a solid expanse, some of them became loosened and fell to the earth, (Isa. xxxiv, 4; Rev. vi, 13.) The language is based on what is philosophically untrue. But it was not the province of the sacred writers to teach philosophy or natural science. They employed the current language of the times in which they lived. They drew their illustrations and figures of speech from the forms of thought and expression, familiar to the age and country in which they lived. They described the movements and changes of the heavenly bodies according to their phenomenal appearance; that is, as they appeared to the

senses. All this was just as it should be. The terms of science are ever changing and inconstant. But the phenomenal appearance of the heavenly bodies is the same now as it was when Moses, David, Isaiah, Matthew, and other sacred writers looked upon them. Their language, founded upon this appearance, is familiar to us, and will be so to all who shall come after us. The sun will ever, in common language, rise and set, the heavens will be concave, the extremities of the sky will touch the earth, etc. Had the sacred writers departed from these universal and familiar forms of speech, their revelation would have been dark, obscure, incapable of translation, from want of sympathy with the common forms, idioms, and laws of language. In respect to the falling of the stars being represented as preceding the shaking of the heavens, commentators find what is called a *hysteron proteron*; that is, an inversion of terms, or placing of the last first. But it is better to regard the latter clause as an emphatic repetition of the preceding one. Luke adds other convulsions of nature, such as 'the sea and the waves roaring,' a phenomenon which usually accompanies violent earthquakes." Dr. Whedon rejects entirely all metaphorical interpretation of this passage, and applies it to Christ's visible coming to the final judgment. The objections to this interpretation we have also stated. There is certainly great force in the reasons he adduces against the figurative interpretation of Owen; but, if we take the passage in a literal sense, we have no other alternative left than to understand our Lord to speak of his personal coming at the beginning, not at the end of the millennium. Dr. Whedon's comment is as follows: "We have obviously here a picture of the visible phenomena of the heavens at the visible appearance of Christ to judgment. *First.* This whole passage (29-31) is evidently the forepart, of which chap. xxv, 31-46, is the afterpart. If either is figurative both are figurative. If either is literal both are literal. *Secondly.* This passage embraces six particular events: 1. The visible firmamental convulsions. 2. The sign of Christ's coming. 3. The visible judge. 4. The consequent wailing of the tribes of the earth. 5. The angels with the trumpet sound. 6. The gathering of the elect. None of these things took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, nor any literal events worthy to be described in these terms. *Thirdly.* The contenders for a figurative interpretation quote instances of similar language, as they think, used in the Old Testament figuratively, as Isa. xiii, 9; Ezek. xxxii, 7. But these passages are very poor parallels indeed; they simply describe an obscuration of the heavens, such as takes place when smoke or vapor fills the concave, as at an earthquake or conflagration of a great city. Such passages present at best but the *first* of the above *six* particulars. In fact, they are far

from filling out that. These false parallels describe an obscuration of the heavens; the present passage, a sensible convulsion of earth and heaven, with an outline of specific and peculiar events. Let any one study the clear, specific import of the *last five* of the *six* particulars — of which the first is a comparatively-unimportant prelude — and say whether any thing in the supposed parallels quoted from the prophets at all meets this case. These five particulars are plainly an organic part with chap. xxv, 31-46. *Fourthly.* The suddenness of the event described in this passage is the entire point illustrated by verses 36-51. The suddenness of the judgment advent is one of the points frequently asserted in the New Testament. But the destruction of Jerusalem was not a sudden, but a very slow, long-foreseen, well-forewarned event. There was no suddenness or surprise about it. The war slowly approached; the city was gradually surrounded with an overpowering force; post after post was painfully taken, and there was no particular day on which the downfall could be dated. *Fifthly.* Some commentators defend the allegorical interpretation by finding here what they call a double sense. Both great events, they think, are described in the same language. Now we admit that prophecy does sometimes describe one event in terms that allusively picture another event. But the language ought, in such case, when reduced to literality, not to express falsehood. Now, if this passage describes the destruction of Jerusalem, it does contradict the truth of history. It describes it as a sudden, incalculable event. History contradicts such prophecy. *Sixthly.* If this passage be figurative, where do we find a literal description of the judgment-day? What passage describes or announces that event, which may not be with equal propriety reduced to figure? *Seventhly.* We have shown in our note on verse 21, that the term *tribulation* covers the entire period of Jewish downfall. But the firmamental phenomena were *after* that tribulation, and were no part of it."

VERSE 30. AND THEN SHALL APPEAR THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN. Wherein this sign shall consist, the Lord does not say; and the commentator, as a matter of course, does not know. This much, however, is certain, that all the inhabitants of the earth will thereby be convinced of the nearness of Christ's coming to judgment, as lightning filling the whole horizon forebodes the impending storm. — **AND THEN SHALL ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH MOURN;** that is, all unbelievers, all hypocrites, all enemies of Christ. Those expositors, who apply this section to the destruction of Jerusalem, translate "all the tribes of the [Jewish] land." This

is not only a very forced interpretation, but altogether inconsistent with the parallel passage in Luke, which reads: "And upon the earth [shall be] distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." (Luke xxii, 25, 26.) — AND THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN. The prophets speak likewise of the coming of Jehovah in the clouds of heaven, when they announce the execution of Divine judgments upon the nations, (comp. Isa. xix, 1; Neh. i, 3.) — WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY. Stier, though apparently believing in the visible coming of the Lord for the establishment of the millennium, understands, nevertheless, these terms figuratively; he says: "By '*power*' we must not understand hosts of angels or saints attending the Lord, but in contrast with the before-mentioned powers of the heavens which are shaken, an overwhelming manifestation of Divine power in his coming to the judgment, as the '*great glory*,' the flood of light encircling him, now shines alone, after the luminaries of heaven have been darkened, as the last type of what will literally be fulfilled at his last coming." Luke here adds, significantly: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

VERSE 31. AND HE SHALL SEND HIS ANGELS, etc. To apply this verse to the Jewish Christians, who saved themselves by fleeing to Pella at the approach of the Roman armies, or to understand by the angels the apostles, and by the trumpets the preaching of the Gospel, is deservedly characterized by Meyer as exegetical outrages. Such forced interpretations carry their refutation in themselves. In explaining this passage, the only question is whether the coming of the Lord spoken of will take place at the beginning or at the end of the millennium, and whether it is a personal and visible, or a providential and spiritual coming. For dogmatical reasons we declare, as we have remarked before, in favor of a spiritual, providential coming of the Lord for the purpose of establishing the millennium, which coming is, at the same time, typical of, and preparatory to, his last visible coming to judgment. According this view, "*the angels*" mean — in the first fulfillment of the prophecy — not angels proper, that visibly appear, but the manifold visible and invisible powers and instruments, which God at that time shall set in motion and make use of as ministering servants. — HIS ELECT are all true Christians living at that time upon the earth, and especially Israel, that shall have embraced with penitence

and faith its rejected Messiah. It is not necessary here to discuss all the prophecies that speak of the return of Israel to Canaan, the land of its fathers; it may suffice merely to quote the principal ones, as Leviticus xxvi, 40-45; Deuteronomy xxx, 1-9; Hosea iii, 4, 5; Joel iii, 19-26; Amos ix, 14, 15; Micah vii, 15-20; Ezekiel xxxvii, 21-28; Jeremiah xxviii, 5-8; Isaiah xi, 12, 13; Zechariah xii, 7-12. Compare Romans xi, 1-7, 25-28. It is true, most of those expositors who understand these and similar passages literally, and refer them to the conversion of Israel as a nation and its return to Canaan, connect therewith the visible appearance of Christ, his personal reign upon earth, the first resurrection, and the change of the then living believers on earth, etc., appealing in support of this view to Ephesians i, 9-14; 1 Thessalonians iii, 13; iv, 13-17; Jude 14; 1 Corinthians xv, 23, 52; Philippians iii, 20, etc. Much might be said, indeed, in favor of a visible appearance of Christ at the beginning of the millennium, and of a first resurrection connected with it, and this very text (v. 31) is mainly relied on in support of this view. But the difficulties that may beset our interpretation are by no means as great and as many as are those of the premillenarian view. The New Testament passages which are generally quoted in support of it we shall examine impartially when we get to them. Stier, although favoring the premillenarian view, does not express himself distinctly when he comments on this verse: "Although we do not know these things in detail, yet the return of Israel is evidently most intimately connected in the word of prophecy with the (intermediate) coming of Christ for the purpose of establishing the millennium. This mystery, as well as the resurrection, the Lord still vails here, yet the gathered elect are mainly the believing portion of Israel, as appears also from the close resemblance of the expressions used here and in Deuteronomy xxx, 4; Isaiah xi, 11, 12; Isaiah xlivi, 5, 6; Zechariah ii, 6-13. Yet the fullness of the Gentiles is added to his elect, both together forming his people, that were dispersed, but are now brought together. (1 Pet. i, 1; Jam. i, 1.) Opposed to the mourning generations of the earth is the chosen generation as the people of heaven, hence gathered from the ends of heaven — whereby the resurrection is again obscurely hinted at. The somewhat different expression used by Mark, 'from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven,' indicates that heaven and earth shall then have been brought wonderfully near each other." Lange also seems to adopt an intermediate, visible appearance of Christ, and remarks on this passage: "That the end of the world is not brought about suddenly, abruptly, is also taught by Paul, (1 Cor. xv, 23, 24:) 'Christ, the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his

coming; then (cometh) the end.' Between the first and the second event intervenes a long period, wherefore there will probably be one also between the second and the third. This period is only hinted at in John v, 25. (Compare verse 28.) But in our section a succession of judicial acts is clearly distinguished. First, judgment is executed on the ministerial office, (v. 45;) then on the Church in general, (chap. xxv, 1-13;) on her individual members, (chap. xxv, 14-30;) then on all nations, (chap. xxv, 31-46.) This succession of judicial acts points to a period of Christ's reign on earth, which is represented in the developed eschatology, (Rev. xx,) as the millennium in symbolical form. The Church that, up to this time, had been scattered and hid among the nations of the world, will be gathered by his appearance and put on her bridal array. As the great catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem is thus developed into a period that does not come to its close before the appearance of Christ, so is the act of Christ's appearance in turn the germ of a period that comes to its full close with the universal judgment and the end of the world. The millennium is, even in its totality, the great day of separation, the last cosmical catastrophe, from out of which the present world shall go forth transformed into heavenly splendor."

VERSES 32, 33. NOW LEARN A PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE.

"The fig-tree differs from other trees in producing blossoms before the leaves, and in developing the fruit simultaneously with the formation of the leaves. When, therefore, the leaf bursts, Summer or harvest is at hand. The leaves are, consequently, the signs that have been described." (Lange.) Stier remarks: "In this parable the Lord reminds his disciples of that fig-tree that had withered away in consequence of his curse, but which now again brings forth leaves and fruit. He thus points out the revival of Israel, an increasing success attending the mission among the Jews, as infallible signs that the Lord's coming to his people is near at hand, as the addition in Luke, '*all trees*,' points to the blessed results of the preaching of the Gospel among all the nations of the earth. (Compare Rev. xxii, 2.)" — So LIKEWISE YE, etc. As the nearness of harvest is to be inferred from the fig-tree putting forth its leaves, so believers, when they see the premonitory signs above described, shall infer that the coming of the Lord is nigh. But in this very way the Lord intimates to his disciples that his coming, in the way in which they expected it, could not take place during their lifetime. In a similar manner the apostle Paul instructs the Thessalonians, (2 Thess. ii, 1-3.)

— WHEN YE SHALL SEE ALL THESE THINGS, etc.; that is, the signs preceding the coming of Christ, given in verses 14 and 23-28.

VERSE 34. VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THIS GENERATION [οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη] SHALL [certainly] NOT PASS, [away,] TILL ALL THESE THINGS [which he had told them should precede his coming] BE FULFILLED; that is, shall have come to pass, (Ἐώς ἀν πάντα τῶν γένηται.) Those expositors that refer the whole prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem, as a type of the final judgment, consider this passage the key to the whole prophecy, and contend that the word γενεὰ can mean nothing else than the *then* living Jews. We readily admit that, in itself considered, this *might* be the meaning of the text, and that, if this were the *only* meaning of γενεὰ, nothing but the destruction of Jerusalem could be meant by "all these things." Rationalistic writers, denying that γενεὰ ever has any other meaning than the one under consideration, refer "all these things" to the destruction of Jerusalem, and do not hesitate to assert that our Lord was mistaken both with regard to the events that he foretold in verses 23-27, as preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and with regard to his coming to the final judgment immediately afterward! But, happily, it can be proven, beyond the possibility of a successful contradiction, that γενεὰ has other meanings than that of a *generation living at a certain time*. In classic Greek this is, in reality, only the last of its meanings; its first is *actual birth*, the second, *descent, lineage, pedigree*, and the last, *generation*, in the sense stated. In Iliad, VI, 146, e.g., the γενεὴ φύλλων may mean both the generation, the annual growth of leaves, which issue in Spring and drop in Autumn, or it may mean the race, the kind, equal to φύλλα, that is, perishable as leaves are so are men, (γενεὴ ἀνδρῶν;) but *ibid*, VI, 151, it has evidently the meaning of descent, lineage, pedigree, including his ancestors as well as Glaukos himself. In the same sense the word is used in the New Testament. In Matthew xxiii, 36, the Jews living in the days of our Savior are declared by Christ to be liable to the whole punishment due to the crimes of their ancestors, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, whom the Savior says "ye slew." The then living Jews were not only like their ancestors in disposition, but *formed an organic whole with them*; and on this rests the justice of what the Savior tells them, that, upon this generation — "ἐπὶ τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην" — all the punishment due to the crimes of their ancestors should be inflicted. In the same sense the term is used in Matthew xvii, 17, and Acts ii, 40. (Compare with Acts vii, 51-53.) In

Philippians ii, 15, where the English version renders it "nation," it has evidently the same meaning — not that of a generation living at a certain time, but of "race," embracing ancestors and descendants as a unit, an organic whole, looking both forward from father to children and children's children, and backward from the children to the father and his ancestors. The LXX translated the Hebrew *dor* with γενεὰ, and Jeremiah viii, 3 — rendered in the English version by "this evil family" — means evidently the Jews as a race, looking forward from the fathers to the children and children's children. And this meaning, it seems to us, the word has evidently in our text. "*All these things*" were certainly not fulfilled before the then generation of Jews had died out, as the violent and unnatural attempts of those writers who refer them to the destruction of Jerusalem too plainly show. But they will be fulfilled before the Jews cease being a race, a nation distinct from all others. Thus we have in this word of the Lord a very significant reference to the historical miracle of God's hand resting upon Israel — according to the ancient prophecy, Numbers xxiii, 9 — whose continued existence as a separate, peculiar people, even under the curse of Jehovah, has for nearly two thousand years withstood the power and wisdom of all the nations, and contravened all the laws of history. The answer of that divine was, therefore, most appropriate, who said, when Frederic the Great desired him to give in one word a striking proof of the divinity of the Bible, "*the Jews.*"

VERSE 35. HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY, not by being annihilated, but by being changed into a new and more beautiful form. (2 Pet. iii, 12, 13; Heb. i, 11, 12; Isa. li, 6; Rev. xxi, 1.) "What the Lord had said in the opening of the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. v, 18,) and again, (Luke xvi, 17,) of the law, what the Old Testament had testified of the Word of God in general, (Ps. cxix, 89, 96; Isa. xl, 8,) the same the Lord says here of his own words, whose prophetic portion will, therefore, also be fulfilled. Yea, his words find their final fulfillment when heaven and earth shall pass away; that is, when their present form shall be changed." (Stier.)

VERSE 36. BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR. According to the common view the Lord speaks, in verse 34, of the destruction of Jerusalem, and here of the universal judgment. But this exposition destroys the connection of the whole discourse, while by the interpretation adopted by us the connection is preserved, and all its parts beautifully harmonize. In one sense the Lord has clearly marked the time of his coming described in verses 29-34 —

he will not come "before the Gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations;" again the sign of the Son of man shall not appear in heaven before the period of great tribulation, during which Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, comes to a close, the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and Israel, the withered fig-tree, puts forth leaves again. The Lord has mentioned certain premonitory signs by which his people can, and shall, know when his coming is at hand; but the knowledge of the exact time, both as to when these signs shall have fulfilled their mission, and when this present world period — οὗτος ὁ αἰών — shall be completed, is hidden in the bosom of the Deity alone. Mark adds: "*Neither the Son knoweth.*" Lange considers this not knowing of the Son as a humble unwillingness on his part not to know it, as opposed to the unauthorized curiosity of the disciples. According to this scholar the Lord, by not desiring to ascertain the exact point of time, set his Church an example which she should imitate. Stier, on the other hand, says more correctly: "The Lord does not say, 'This I have not to tell you; this I do not know for you;' but plainly, 'The Son knoweth it not.' To say that Christ, as a man, knoweth it not, but as God knoweth it, is self-contradictory; to know and at the same time not to know a thing would destroy the unity of the personality of the God-man, and can not be ascribed to the Son of man, who is, indeed, the Son of God, but for the time being in the form of human existence. It was proper for him, who became like unto us to be our pattern in his walking by faith, that in the state of his humiliation he should not know the completion of the aeon. But that he now knows it, sitting at the right of his Heavenly Father, no one doubts. As to whether the 'revelation of Jesus Christ to show his servants' (Rev. i, 1) includes also the revelation of the day and hour, we doubt, and all the manifold calculations made on this point can not but confirm us in our view. We simply believe that it will not be given to any believer to know more before the end than Christ knew during his stay on earth."

D. CLOSING EXHORTATIONS.

Verses 37-51. (COMPARE MARK xiii, 33-37; LUKE xxi, 34-36.)

(37) **BUT as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** (38) **For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day**

that Noe entered into the ark, (39) and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (40) Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (41) Two *women* shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (42) Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. (43) But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. (44) Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (45) Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? (46) Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (47) Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. (48) But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; (49) and shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; (50) the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of, (51) and shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

VERSES 37-39. Having instructed his disciples that his coming, which they had conceived of as intimately connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, and, therefore, as near at hand, was, in the sense of a full establishment of his kingdom, still afar off, the Lord informs them, and through them the Church of all times, that the world would utterly disregard the signs of his judicial coming, and this very disregard is represented as a frightful sign of approaching judgment. The coming of the Son of man here is identical with that spoken of in verse 30. To his coming to execute judgment on Jerusalem, or to the final judgment, the state of things described here is only in so far applicable as a disregard of God's Word and warnings precedes the execution of every Divine judgment, or, rather, forms part of the judgment itself; as it was the case in the days of the Flood. "The security here spoken of is not inconsistent with the fear spoken of by Luke, (xxi, 26.) They say, peace, and outwardly act as if it was really so, but in their hearts and consciences they feel the pangs of the approaching judgment, (1 Thess. v, 3.)" (Stier.)

VERSES 40-44. In full accordance with the train of ideas we have presented in the Lord's answer to the question of his disciples, Stier defines the connection as follows: "With the repeated, 'so shall also the coming of the Son of man be,' the Lord comes back to the general warning — take heed — with which he set out. But the first warning — *the end is not yet near at hand* — passes over into the very opposite one — *the Lord comes unexpectedly; be, therefore, always ready!* This contrast gives much material for serious thought, and forms part of the wonderfully deep import of the whole discourse. In verses 40, 41, we are told, in the first place, that in the very midst of the ordinary labors of life the sifting judgment will come upon men. Then this sifting is represented as breaking all the bonds of society. These verses, moreover, contain also the hint, that those worthy of the kingdom, though keeping themselves in constant readiness by watching and prayer, shall, nevertheless, not separate themselves from the natural order and avocations of life." Alford calls attention to the fact, that verses 41, 42, can not possibly be referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, as verses 16-18. He says: "*Then* it is a question of voluntary flight; *now* of being taken [by the angels, v. 31] or left. Nor again do they refer to the great judgment of chap. xxv, for then (v. 32) all shall be summoned — but they refer to the millennial dispensation, and the gathering of the elect to the Lord *then.*" We have, however, to remark that, what the Lord says in verses 42, 43, of our not knowing the hour of his coming, and the consequent necessity to be always ready, is applicable to any period, when the Lord comes as the Judge to individuals, (in the hour of death,) or to whole nations, (in national judgments,) or to the whole race, (on the great judgment-day.) The point of comparison with the "thief of the night" (comp. 1 Thess. v, 24; 2 Pet. iii, 10; Rev. iii, 3; xvi, 15) is the perfect surprise. If the lord of the house knew the exact time of the thief's coming, there would be no necessity for constant watching. "The Son of man will come at a time when the world lies buried in deep sleep. When men open their eyes, all their possessions are taken away, the whole appearance of the world, wherein they enjoyed their false existence, will be gone." (Lange.) The advocates of Christ's personal, visible coming for his millennial reign appeal in support of their view mainly to the often-repeated, express declaration of the Lord, that, his coming to judgment shall take place quite unexpectedly, and that, for this very reason, believers ought to be always ready. Rev. D. D. Buck, in his Harmony and Exposition of Matt. xxiv, remarks: "The coming of the Lord is represented to us, not as the gradual disappearance of the night, not as a slowly-approaching

morning of the millennium, but as a sudden event, unexpected to the most watchful, whence follows the necessity of being always ready, since it will come so suddenly that there is no time left for preparing for it, after the premonitory signs have appeared. But how can we reconcile this state of things with the commonly-entertained view, that the Lord shall not come personally before the lapse of a thousand years of uninterrupted righteousness and blessedness? If the second Advent does not take place before the millennium comes to a close, how shall we account for it, that our Lord and his apostles speak of it as something that might take place at any time during the Gospel dispensation? Christ tells us expressly, that he will come speedily *after the tribulation of that time, or when the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.* But when their times shall be fulfilled, whether sooner or later, God has not revealed to us, and no man can determine it. And it is surprising, that those, also, who contend for a literal interpretation of the prophecies, are nevertheless inclined to determine the time of Christ's coming by this or that event, without any regard to the fact, that it will not take place before the Jews have repossessed Jerusalem and the nations of the earth meet for the conflict against Israel, (Zech. xiv.) Since it is not revealed unto us when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, and the time of Israel's tribulation be ended, it is incontestably certain, that the day of the Lord, together with the preceding premonitory signs, will come suddenly and unexpectedly, like a thief of the night or the travail of a woman, like the Flood, like the destruction of Sodom." This argument, which we have given in a condensed form, appears to us conclusive as to the point, that the millennium will be ushered in, not like the dawn of morning, but by a sudden and fearful catastrophe, though we prefer — with the light we have at present upon the subject — to take this catastrophe, described in verses 29-31, in a symbolical sense.

VERSE 45. The proper readiness or preparedness the Lord now illustrates in three successive parables, closing chap. xxv, 30. The first parable (verses 45-51) refers evidently to the servants of the Lord in the proper sense of the term; that is, to the ministerial office. According to Luke (xii, 42-46) the Lord had spoken this, as well as the parable of the talents, (xxv, 14-30; comp. Luke xix, 12-27,) on an earlier occasion. Mark (xiii, 34-37) seems to have condensed the two parables about the servant into the one idea expressed in verse 43. (See more about this in Mark.) — WHO THEN IS? This question the Lord asks in order to arouse and exhort every one to ask himself the

question: Is it I? At the same time the question seems to suggest the idea, whether there will be many such servants when the Lord comes. — WHOM HIS LORD HAS MADE RULER OVER HIS HOUSEHOLD. "It is worthy of note that the servant, who ministers to his fellow-servants, giving them their meat — spiritual food, the Word — in due season, is represented by the Lord as having been made ruler over his household, while the evil servant, who acts the despot toward the whole household, is not represented as having been thus appointed, and appears in his quasi-official maltreatment of his inferiors as a criminal abuser of his fellows." (Lange.)

VERSE 48. AND IF THAT EVIL SERVANT SHALL SAY IN HIS HEART. In his official capacity he can not publicly express his unbelief, for which reason he will have his portion appointed with the hypocrites. (V. 51.) — **MY LORD DELAYETH HIS COMING.** As in chapter xxv, 5, so is here a tarrying of the Lord hinted at.

VERSE 49. Lange has on this verse the ingenious remark: "The evil servant is guilty, on the one hand, of despotic overbearing and abuse of those to whom he ought to give their meat in due season; and, on the other hand, of too great laxity in his intercourse with the evil members of the household and the unbidden guests with whom he riots. One can here scarcely help being reminded of the great contrast in the dealings of the Church of Rome, of the Inquisition, and her indulgences." — The conduct of the evil servant who, in the delusion that his lord delayeth his coming, smites his fellow-servants, and indulges in the gratification of carnal desires, is very instructive. If the coming of the Lord to judgment were a living reality for the professors of Christianity, if they would constantly look for it, as the first Christians did, there would certainly not be so much strife and contention, bitterness, envy, ambition, domineering, revengefulness among the different branches of the Church and the members of the same Churches; they would, on the contrary, rather take to heart the exhortation of the apostle: "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God." (1 Cor. iv, 5.) Nor would there be so much luxury and extravagance in the Church; the contributions for the support of the preaching of the Gospel at home and abroad would be much more liberal. To the doctrine of the visible coming of Christ at the opening of the millennium it has been objected, that it would dampen the missionary zeal of the Church for

the conversion of the world. This objection, however, is unfounded, if for no other reason, at least for this: that those, also, who do not look for Christ's visible coming before the end of the millennium, do not believe that all men will be converted to God before Christ comes to judgment. It is not more than just to listen to what the premillenarians have to say to the objection in question; we quote again from Buck's Harmony and Expositions: "But who will contribute to the missionary cause, if the premillennial-advent doctrine prevails? Who will contribute? Do you think 'the evil servant' will, who says in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming? Will *he* give largely, regularly, and from principle, to the cause of missions? What is the chief impediment to the world's conversion? What is it that locks up the hearts and hands of the wealthy and would-be-wealthy Christians? Is it not the seemingly-irresponsible extravagance, lusts, and worldly ambition of the present age? How should we all feel if we were deeply impressed with the reality of the Lord's judgment-coming, and with the certainty that it may be immediately? Would there be as much vanity and disposition to consume not, only our wealth, but our religion too? Would the general cry be, What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed? (Titus ii, 12, 13.) Would there be so much laying up treasure on earth? What is the principal difficulty in the way of the largest liberality? Could the infidelity of the world and the worldliness of the Church withstand the general, clear, and Scriptural conviction that the Gospel must be preached to all nations before the Lord shall come in order to destroy Antichrist, but that he will come as a thief in the night, not at the end of the millennium, yea, that the day of the Lord will come as a snare upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."

VERSE 51. AND HE SHALL CUT HIM ASUNDER; a capital punishment common in ancient times, (1 Sam. xv, 33,) answering to our "quartering," pointing to that punishment that will be connected with the dividing asunder and laying open of the wicked heart. (Heb. iv, 12.)

CHAPTER XXV.

§ 61. THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

Verses 1-13.

(1) THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. (2) And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. (3) They that *were* foolish, took their lamps, and took no oil with them. (4) But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (5) While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (6) And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. (7) Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. (8) And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. (9) But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. (10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. (11) Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. (12) But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (13) Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh.

VERSE 1. THEN; that is, at the time of Christ's judicial coming, at the time spoken of in chap. xxiv, 45-51. The premillenarians refer all that is said from chap. xxiv, 45, to chap. xxv, 30, to Christ's judicial coming at the beginning of the millennium, when, by the first resurrection and by the transformation of the living believers, he completes his Church, which shall reign with him during the millennium. On this point we shall say more in our introductory remarks to § 63. — SHALL THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BE LIKE UNTO TEN VIRGINS. Ten was a favorite number with the Jews, indicative of completeness; ten men formed a congregation in the synagogue, and a family to eat the passover; ten lamps or torches were also the usual number in marriage processions. The bride herself is not mentioned, because the Church is not the bride, in the full sense, while in her mixed, terrestrial condition. In that condition she is represented by the parable of the Marriage-feast as the guests

who have accepted the invitation; here, as bridal virgins waiting for the bridegroom. The ten virgins, therefore, constitute the aggregate of all that have a part in the kingdom of heaven *on earth*, of all that know themselves called to it and are distinct from the world that lieth in wickedness. According to the premillenarian theory the restored Jewish Church is the bride, and the ten virgins represent the Gentile congregations, accompanying her, a notion which is rather favorably noticed by Stier and Alford. In chap. xxiv, 38, 39, the Lord had described the carnal security of the great bulk of mankind at the time of his coming, in verses 45-51 the corruption and apostasy of the pastorate of his Church, and here he sets forth the mixed condition of its membership in general.

— WHICH TOOK THEIR LAMPS. The marriages in the East taking place invariably at night, the friends and attendants are mentioned as carrying lamps or torches. — AND WENT FORTH TO MEET THE BRIDEGROOM. The circumstances of an Oriental wedding, so far as they supply in part the groundwork of the present parable, are these: The bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, goes to the house of the bride, and brings her with pomp and gladness to his own home. She is accompanied from her father's house by some of her young friends and companions, while others — *as the virgins in this parable* — meet at some convenient place to join the procession and enter with the rest of the bridal company into the hall of feasting. This last-mentioned circumstance was the one best adapted to the scope of the parable. Stier and Alford make a distinction between the going forth of the virgins, in verse 1, and that in verse 6. But there is no ground for this. The whole story is given in a condensed form in verse 1.

VERSES 2-4. There was no *outward* distinction between the wise and the foolish. The foolish were not conscious of their fatal defect, nor was it discovered by the wise before the very last decisive moment. They were all companions of the bride; they all went forth to meet, and waited for, the bridegroom; they all had sufficient oil in their lamps to make them burn up to a certain time. For these reasons, and oil being the standing symbol of the Holy Spirit, it is mistaking the aim and scope of the parable to understand by the foolish virgins nominal professors, having a dead faith and being without the Spirit. The only difference between the wise and the foolish consisted in this, that the one made provision for the supply of oil, the others did not. The meaning of this is: The wise ones give all diligence to make their calling and election sure. (2 Pet. i, 5-8, 10,) providing a supply of spiritual food for the light

within, by seeking in the appointed means of grace more and more of God's Holy Spirit, that they may be "sanctified wholly by the God of peace, and their whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. v, 23.) The foolish virgins — vainly imagining that the light, once burning, would burn forever — make no such provision for the strengthening of the inner man; having tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, they are satisfied therewith and feel no need of growing in grace and knowledge. Whether the division of the number ten into two equal parts has any symbolical meaning or not, we can not say; it may be so.

VERSE 5. WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM TARRIED. It was not tarrying on the part of the bridegroom, (2 Pet. iii, 9,) but the virgins considered it such, having expected him at an earlier hour. This feature of the parable was, undoubtedly, designed as a hint to the disciples that the second coming of the Lord was not so near at hand. — **THEY ALL SLUMBERED AND SLEPT** — literally, they all *nodded* and *fell asleep*. The expression denotes the gradual approach of sleep to such as occupy a sitting position, and strive at first to withstand the disposition to slumber. These virgins made efforts to keep awake, but finally yielded to the influence of sleep. To understand by this falling asleep a spiritual drowsiness or lukewarmness involves a self-contradiction; for, how can such a state exist when the heart is filled with the Holy Spirit, as is indicated by the wise having oil in their vessels? Though the wakefulness of the holiest Christian may be called a sort of slumber when compared with what it should be, how improbable is it that our Lord would make the wise and foolish alike on this point, and that he would make, as it were, an allowance for a certain degree of negligence in a parable, the very aim of which is to teach that we should be found ready at all times! Most expositors, therefore, modern as well as ancient, understand by this sleeping the sleep of death. But this interpretation is inconsistent with the unity and scope of the parable. It may be, as Trench suggests, merely "a circumstance required by the conveniences of the parabolic narration. For, had the foolish virgins been in a condition to mark the lapse of time, and the gradual waning of their lamps, they, knowing that they had not wherewithal to replenish them, would naturally have bestirred themselves before the decisive moment arrived to procure a new supply. The fact that they fell asleep, and were not awakened except by the cry of the advancing bridal company, gives an easy and natural explanation of their utter and irremediable

destitution of oil at the moment when there was most need that they should have it in abundance. And had the wise virgins not slept as well — had they been represented as watching while the others were sleeping — it would have seemed like a lack of love upon their part not to have warned their companions of the lapse of time and the increasing dimness with which their lamps were burning while yet help was possible." If, however, *the falling asleep* constitutes a point in the interpretation, it is best, with Stier and Lange, to understand by it a giving up of the expectation that Christ would *speedily* appear. The fact, that only a comparatively-small number of Christians cherish the expectation of Christ's speedy coming is to be accounted for on the same ground as the fact that the day of our death generally appears to us as afar off, however well prepared we may be for it. To be ready for the coming of the Lord does not consist in expecting it at a certain time, but in having made the proper provisions for it.

VERSE 6. AND AT MIDNIGHT THERE WAS A CRY MADE.

Midnight is the time when every thing is shrouded in darkness and buried in slumber, (comp. Luke xviii, 8,) the most unsuitable time to make up what has been neglected. The cry we may suppose to have been made by a part of the retinue running before. "The spiritual signification of it," says Trench, "has been variously given. Most are agreed to find in it an allusion to 'the voice of the archangel and the trump of God,' (1 Thess. iv, 16,) which shall be heard when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout. Some, however, explain the cry as coming from watchers in the Church, such as shall not be altogether lacking in the last times — by whom the signs of the times have been observed, and who would proclaim aloud the near advent of the Lord, the Heavenly Bridegroom, when he draws nigh, accompanied by the angels, the friends of the Bridegroom, and leading home his bride, the triumphant Church, and looking to be met and greeted by the members of his Church yet militant on earth, themselves a part of that mystical bride, so that he may bring her to the glorious mansion, the house of everlasting joy and gladness which he has prepared for her." Lange remarks: "It is midnight for the Church of Christ when the spirit of the world has so far the ascendancy that it seems as if the development of the Church was no other than that of the world and of nature, as if the kingdom of God on earth was not to be completed, as if Christ was not to come again. In such a time the believers are more strongly tempted than ever to lose their consciousness of the final regeneration of the world. More than once is the cry

raised in the dark hours of the Christian Church, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! These cries are, undoubtedly, the prophetic warnings of faithful watchmen in connection with the solemn signs of the times. Heavy judgments and powerful revivals preach also the nearness of the Lord's coming, and at last he actually comes. In such times the Church is sifted."

VERSES 7-9. THEN ALL THOSE VIRGINS AROSE, [literally, were awakened,] AND TRIMMED THEIR LAMPS. The trimming means to pour on fresh oil and to remove the fungi from the wick. The wise virgins found no difficulty in getting their lamps burning, but the foolish discovered, to their dismay, that THEIR LAMPS WERE GONE OUT, which ought to be translated, *were going out*, were on the point of expiring for lack of nourishment, and that they had not wherewith to replenish them. "When the day of Christ comes it will be impossible for any to remain ignorant any longer of his true state, for that day will be a revelation of the hidden things of men, of things which had remained hidden even from themselves; a flood of light will then pour into the darkest corners of all hearts, and show every man to himself exactly as he is, so that self-deception will be no longer possible." (Trench.) Lange remarks: "The difference between the wise and foolish is always existing and more or less discernible, but it comes to full light in the day of judgment. They all have lamps, professions of faith, their various creeds, and ecclesiastical positions. But in that decisive hour it will appear whether or not the outward forms of religion are the genuine expressions of the Spirit of Christ or not." Stier says: "With some Christians all would be right if the Lord would come for them at once, when their lamp is being lit, when their first love is in a full blaze. But he will tarry and then surprise them. At present thou prayest fervently. See to it that the Lord may find thee watching and praying. At present thy lamp blazes, but consider that the good oil is being consumed; lay in a supply, therefore, for the hour of need." — BUT THE WISE ANSWERED. The request of the foolish virgins, and the refusal which it calls out — like the discourse between Abraham and Dives — are only the clothing and outer garment of the all-important truth, that we shall be miserably disappointed if we think to borrow, at the close of our probation, what we ought to have *bought*, that is, won, by earnest prayer and diligent endeavor in our day of grace. — NOT SO — literally, never. The answer in the Greek is strongly elliptical, as spoken in a moment of earnestness and haste. — LEST THERE BE NOT ENOUGH. These words constitute a conclusive argument against the Romish doctrine of

works of supererogation; see also 1 Pet. iv, 18. — BUT GO YE RATHER TO THEM THAT SELL; that is, procure oil where it is to be obtained. According to Revelation iii, 18, we are admonished to buy of the Lord gold, white raiment, and eye-salve, and every thing that we need; the sellers, then, must be those whom God has appointed as channels of his heavenly grace, or as some would explain it, the prophets and apostles, from whose teaching they are told to learn how to revive the Word of God in their souls if yet there be time. Two weighty truths are inculcated by this feature of the parable; namely, the necessity of hearing, learning, and receiving through the divinely-appointed channels of grace in the time of probation, and the solemn warning that it will be impossible to do this after that time has come to a close.

VERSES 10-12. AND THE DOOR WAS SHUT. "What door?" exclaims the author of an ancient homily quoted by Trench. "That which now is open to them coming from the East and from the West, that they may sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven — that Door which saith, Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. Behold how it is now open which shall then be closed for evermore. Murderers come, and they are admitted; publicans and harlots come, and they are received; unclean, and adulterers, and robbers, and whosoever is of this kind, come, and the open door does not deny itself to them; for Christ, the Door, is infinite to pardon, reaching beyond every degree and every amount of wickedness. But then what saith he? The door is shut. No one's penitence, no one's prayer, no one's groaning shall any more be admitted." — AFTERWARD CAME ALSO THE OTHER VIRGINS. Not that they have now found the oil, but having sought it in vain they come looking for mercy, when now it is the time of judgment. — SAYING, LORD, LORD. In addressing the bridegroom *Lord* they claim to stand in a near relation to him, and their repeating it is an evidence of the earnestness with which they now claim admission. — I KNOW YOU NOT. He does not know them in the sense in which he says, "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." On the exclusion of the foolish virgins Bengel observes, "That there are four classes of persons: those that have an abundant entrance into the kingdom, entering, as it were, with sails set into the haven; those again that are saved, as shipwrecked mariners, reaching with difficulty the shore. On the other side, there are those who go evidently the broad way to destruction, whose sins go before them; while again there are those who, though they seemed not far off from the kingdom of God, yet miss it after all; such were

these five foolish virgins, and the fate of these, who were so near, and yet after all fall short, appears the most miserable of all. Lest that may be our fate, he says to us, *Watch, therefore.*" Three great evils fall upon these unwise virgins. 1. *Their labor was lost*, all the preparations they had made, the lamps which they had purchased, the amount of oil they consumed for naught, the cold, dark hours in which they had been watching. So with those professors of religion who will ultimately fail of salvation. 2. *The opportunity of redress was lost*, and with it, 3, their hope forever.

VERSE 13. FOR YE KNOW NEITHER THE DAY NOR THE HOUR. This being so, the only certain way to be ready on *that* day, is that you be ready on *every* day. Unreadiness on that day is without a remedy; the work, which should have been the work of a life, can not be huddled up into a moment.

§ 62. THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

"WHILE the virgins were represented," says Trench, "as *waiting* for the Lord, we have here the servants *working* for him. There the inward spiritual rest of the Christian was described — here his external activity. There, by the end of the foolish virgins, we are warned against declensions and decays in the inward spiritual life — here against sluggishness and sloth in our outward vocation and work. That parable enforced the need of keeping the heart with all diligence — this the need of giving all diligence also to the outward work, if we would be found of Christ in peace at the day of his appearing." Alford finds in the two parables also this contrast, that the foolish virgins "failed from thinking their part too easy, while the wicked servant fails from thinking his too hard."

As to the relation of this parable to that in Luke xix, 12, etc., it is true that the latter has several features in common with the parable here recorded. But this similarity does by no means prove the identity of the two parables; for the time, place, scope, and arrangement of the two parables are quite different, as we shall fully show in our notes on the parable in Luke.

(14) *FOR the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.* (15) And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. (16) Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents. (17) And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two. (18) But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. (19) After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. (20) And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. (21) His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (22) He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. (23) His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (24) Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: (25) And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine. (26) His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed: (27) Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. (28) Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents. (29) For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. (30) And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

VERSE 14. FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AS A MAN TRAVELING INTO A FAR COUNTRY. The words, "*The kingdom of heaven is,*" are supplied by the translators. Our Lord commences with, "*For as a man traveling,*" etc., as though he would close the parable with the application, "*so shall the Son of man do.*" Christ is the man that traveled into a far country. This withdrawal of the Lord from his Church, after the object of his first coming was accomplished, corresponds with the withdrawal of God from his people after they had been settled in Canaan. (Comp. chap. xxi, 33.) But the absence is only temporary, and is followed by a return. — Who CALLED HIS OWN SERVANTS. The word *ἰδίους*, translated *own*, is used pleonastically; yet by the servants slaves are meant. The Christian's relation to Christ being that of unqualified dependence — *we are not our own* — it is set forth by the relation of a slave to his master. But to understand the outward circumstances of the parable, we must bear in mind the peculiar relation that existed between master and slaves in antiquity. Slaves were often artisans, or were allowed otherwise to engage freely in business, paying a fixed yearly sum to their master; or, as here, they had money given them wherewith to trade on his account; the gain belonged to the master, who, however, rewarded his faithful servants handsomely. — **AND DELIVERED UNTO THEM HIS GOODS.** The parable was first addressed to the apostles, and *the goods* signify primarily the powers which Christ has given to his Church. They were most manifestly and most abundantly communicated to his servants on the day of Pentecost; but he has been from that day evermore bestowing his gifts to each successive generation. This being so, the parable has a general application to all times. All Christians have a spiritual vocation, and are intrusted with gifts, more or fewer, for which they will have to render an account. While it has a relation first to spiritual gifts, it has also a relation to other endowments, such as wealth, reputation, ability, which, though not in themselves spiritual, are yet given to men that they may be turned to spiritual ends, and for the use or abuse of which the possessor will have to render an account. An illustration of this is the English word *talent*, which has come to signify any mental endowments, faculties, or powers whatever. (Condensed from Trench.) In relation to the distribution of the goods, note, 1. That the talents of all were the *free gifts* of the master. This being the case, the man of the greatest talent has no cause for self-boasting, and the man with the least need have no self-reproach. 2. That the talents of all were *given in trust*. The giver still *retained a claim* upon them. The receiver did not become the

proprietor, but merely the steward. 3. That the talents of all were *given to be employed*. They were not to be wrapped in a napkin. As the man who borrows money on interest is responsible to the owner for the interest as really as the principal, so we are responsible to God for the *use* we make of our powers as much as for the power itself. The man of *one* talent was no less bound to employ his one talent than the man of five to employ his five.

VERSE 15. AND UNTO ONE HE GAVE FIVE TALENTS, etc. To one a larger sphere of usefulness in the kingdom of God is assigned than to another; but the services expected of each are in exact proportion to what has been intrusted to him. — TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS SEVERAL ABILITY. "The natural gifts are as the vessel, which may be large or may be small, and which receives according to its capacity; but in each case the vessel is filled; so that we are not to think of him who had received the two talents as incompletely furnished in comparison with him who had received the five, any more than we should affirm a small circle incomplete as compared with a large. Unfitted he might be for so wide a sphere of labor, but altogether as perfectly equipped for that to which he was destined; for 'there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit;' and, as the body is not all eye, nor are all in an army generals or captains, so neither in the Church are all furnished to be leaders or governors. Yet while we speak of natural capacity as being the vessel for receiving the wine of the Spirit, we must not leave out of account that comparative unfaithfulness will narrow the vessel, even as fidelity has the tendency to dilate it, so that the person with far inferior natural gifts, yet often brings in a far more abundant harvest than one with superior powers, who yet does bring in something." (Trench.) Let us learn from this feature of the parable, 1. That spiritual gifts are apportioned to men, generally, according to their natural attainments and capacities, whether mental or physical. Thus natural endowments become spiritual gifts; but the former are not less the gift of God than the latter, since no man has created and made himself what he is. 2. Every one has his duties assigned according to his ability. There is in the kingdom of Christ a variety of higher or lower callings; but no one receives a calling for which his strength is insufficient; and, since the gifts are the Lord's, and he distributes them according to his supreme wisdom and goodness, every one ought to be satisfied with his position; he that stands higher ought not to despise him that stands lower, nor the latter envy the former. — AND STRAIGHTWAY HE TOOK HIS JOURNEY. "In the things earthly the

householder's distribution of the gifts naturally and of necessity *precedes* his departure; in the heavenly it is not altogether so; the ascension, or departure, goes before Pentecost, or the distribution of gifts; yet the 'straightway' still remains in full force: the interval between them was the smallest, one following hard upon the other, however the order was reversed. The four verses which follow (16-19) embrace the whole period intervening between the first and second coming of Christ." (Trench.)

VERSES 16, 17. Two of the servants — those to whom the largest sums have been intrusted — lay them out with equal diligence and success. These are the representatives of all that are diligent and faithful in their office and ministry, whatsoever that may be. The case, so frequently occurring, that even faithful laborers may differ from one another in diligence and success, is brought out in the parable, recorded by Luke, and not mentioned in this because it does not come within its scope, which is the truth, that *according as we have received will be expected from us.*

VERSE 18. BUT HE THAT HAD RECEIVED ONE. Not one of the servants can say, "Lord, thou hast given me nothing." — WENT AND DIGGED IN THE EARTH. This trait of the parable seems to have no other design than to set forth the absurdity of his conduct. Instead of putting forth any efforts in order to gain another talent with the one he had, he goes to the trouble of digging in the earth and hiding it. We must not infer from this feature of the parable, that our Lord meant to teach that only those who have little intrusted to them are indolent or faithless in the trust committed to them. The contrary is frequently the case; but this truth did not come within the scope of the parable. (See note on verses 16, 17.) — HIS LORD'S MONEY. It was given to him to trade with it, not simply to guard it against loss and theft. What was the real cause of his strange conduct? We answer, want of love to his master, manifesting itself clearly in his slavish dread of him. What characterizes this servant is a cold, selfish indifference toward his master. "The class of men represented by this unworthy servant," says Owen, "are by no means to be regarded as the naturally inactive and indolent. They are often the most diligent and enterprising. But in their Master's service they manifest no energy and industry. They are as worthless to him as though they slept during their whole lives. Every man, be he ever so active and successful in his worldly pursuits, comes within the class here spoken of, if he does not labor with an eye single to the glory of his Savior and the good of his fellow-men."

VERSES 20-23. The good servants, whose accounts are first settled, come with a joyful consciousness of having done their duty, yet they do not claim any praise for themselves, but gratefully confess that they were enabled, solely through their master's goodness, to make what they made, as indicated by saying, *Thou deliveredst unto me*, etc. Every gift of God has the inherent virtue of reproduction and increase, if faithfully improved. The smallest talent intrusted to us will double itself if we use it conscientiously. What a momentous thought, that the Lord commits to us trusts, in which the interests of his kingdom are involved! — I WILL MAKE THEE RULER OVER MANY THINGS. This implies either new spheres of activity in the kingdom of glory, or, as Stier and Alford think, enlarged fields of usefulness during the millennial reign. — ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD. "The image underlying this language is, that the master celebrates his return by a great festival, to which each of the servants, as soon as he has rendered his accounts, and shown that he has been true to his master's interests in his absence, is bidden freely to enter. (Comp. Luke xii, 37.) It is well known that under certain circumstances the master's inviting his slave to sit down with him at table, did itself constitute the act of manumission; henceforth he was free." When we have served Christ on earth, we shall reign with him in glory. (Rev. iii, 20.) The joy into which the faithful servant enters is called the Lord's joy, because he participates in the same kind of joy which the Lord himself has, and which arises from the completion of his own redeeming work in his faithful servants. (Heb. xii, 2.)

VERSES 24, 25. THEN HE WHICH HAD RECEIVED THE ONE TALENT CAME. At last the wicked servant's turn comes to render his account; but he has no cheerful "*behold!*" before his lord, like his fellow-servants. Trench sees in this servant the representative of the *fearful*, (Rev. xxi, 8,) or of those who, shrinking from the liberty of evangelical activity, abide, as the Jew, in the law and in the spirit of bondage, or of such as would make excuses such as this: The care of my own soul is sufficient to occupy me wholly; the responsibility of any spiritual work is so great, so awful, that I dare not undertake it; while I am employed about the souls of others, I may perhaps be losing my own. "In his speech, half cowering and half defying, he gives evidence that he has mistaken the nature of the work to which he was called as entirely as the character of the master for whom it should have been done. He did not believe in his Lord's forgiving love, and in his gracious acceptance of the work with all its faults, which was done for him out of a true heart, and with

a sincere desire to please him. This was his willful and guilty ignorance concerning the true character of the master whom he was called to serve. To know God's name is to trust in him. They, indeed, who undertake a ministry in his Church, or any work for him, are well aware that they shall commit manifold mistakes in that ministry, which they might avoid if they declined that ministry altogether. But would they be justified or excused in doing so? Would they not, so acting, share in the condemnation of this servant? Would they not testify, thereby, that they thought of God as he thought of his master, that he was a hard lord, extreme to mark what was amiss, making no allowances, accepting never the will for the deed, but watching to take advantage of the least failure or mistake on the part of his servants?" Stier takes a different view of the case of this wicked servant, ascribing his conduct not to his *pretended fear* — the falsehood of which is proved by his impudent charge against his master — but to his heartless, selfish indifference about his master's cause. This wicked servant reasoned thus: If I gain something it will not be mine, but I shall have to give it up to my master; but if I lose any thing, I shall be held responsible for the loss; it is, therefore, best for me to have nothing at all to do with his money. Of this cold egotism, of this black ingratitude against God, all those nominal Christians are guilty, who, without committing acts of gross immorality, are unwilling to do any thing for the Lord and his cause, suffering their time, talents, and opportunities of doing good to pass by unimproved. *They do not love the Lord Jesus Christ.* To say that God requires more of man than he can do, without imparting the needful grace, is the grand lie by which the sinner ever tries to excuse and deceive himself. — LO, THERE THOU HAST THAT IS THINE. "By these words," says Stier, "the servant confesses that he never really accepted the gift or trust of his master. He was unwilling to have any thing to do with it." It need scarcely be remarked, that a gift of God can not be thus restored to him. "Suffering God's gifts to lie idle is, in fact, one form of wasting them. It is only that men imagine they can be given back, when they suppose that keeping the negative precepts is all that God requires of them, and that by doing this they will restore to him his gifts entire, as they received them." (Trench.) Dr. Whedon paraphrases in his nervous style: "I gave you back all you gave me. I have done no harm. We now are about even."

VERSES 26, 27. The wicked servant has condemned himself. The master does not concede his allegation, but, admitting it for argument's sake, he draws the opposite and legitimate inference from it; namely, that this very fact of his

believing him to be a hard master ought to have stimulated him to do at least *something* for his master, which he might have done even without toil or risk; an idea indicated by the words, "*Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers.*" A literal rendering of the Greek would read, "Thou oughtest to have *thrown* my money to the exchangers;" expressive of the perfect ease with which the thing might have been done. The exchangers, brokers, and bankers, then, as now, received money on deposit at interest, in order to loan it out to others at a higher rate. They are introduced here to complete the parable, but have no further significance than the one mentioned.

VERSE 28. TAKE THEREFORE THE TALENT FROM HIM. "This taking away of the unused talent, which will find its complete consummation at the day of judgment, is, also, in this present time, continually going forward. And herein is mercy, that it is not done all at once, but by little and little, so that, till all is withdrawn, there is still the opportunity of recovering it; at each successive withdrawal there is some warning to hold fast what still is left, 'to strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.' It is true that at each successive stage of the decline the effort required is greater, while the strength for it is less; this is the course of sin. Yet it is possible, till the last spark is extinguished, to blow up that spark again into a flame; even the sense of the increasing darkness may be that which shall arouse the man to a serious sense of his danger, and to the need of an earnest revival of God's work in his soul. But this servant had never awoke to the sense of his danger till it was too late — till all was irrevocably lost." (Trench.) — **AND GIVE IT UNTO HIM WHICH HAS TEN TALENTS.** Another takes his crown. We see this even in the present state of probation. By the providence of God one steps into the place and opportunities which another left unused, and so has forfeited.

VERSE 29. FOR UNTO EVERY ONE THAT HAS, etc. "Here, in the last parable which our Lord spoke," says Stier, "we have again the same fundamental law of God's kingdom and economy by which the parables were introduced. (Matt. xiii, 12.) This is worthy of notice, and indicates that both the giving and the taking away by the Lord take place according to the same rule. The giving, distributing, and sowing of the Lord are, indeed, general, his offers being made to all; but a real giving is possible only where there is a willingness to receive the gift. Only those servants who had come at the Lord's bidding, had trusts committed to them. A small trust was committed to the slothful servant, because the ability to improve more was not to be expected of him.

But in that little he might and ought to have been faithful. Instead of being so, he had it as if he had it not — he made no use of it; his receiving it was therefore only apparent, not real; and it was accordingly taken from him. According to this principle God deals with every man: whoever wishes to have a permanent possession of God's gifts must conscientiously improve them." Roos, understanding the Lord's words as referring to the still remaining natural endowments, says: "We can form no conception of the utter nakedness and deformity of such a man, because there is no man living on earth from whom his talent is quite taken away, however wicked he may be."

VERSE 30. AND CAST OUT THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT INTO OUTER DARKNESS, etc. While there is light, and joy, and feasting within, where the faithful servants enjoy the fruit of their labors, his portion is without in the place of darkness and torment.

§ 63. THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF ALL NATIONS.

THE Lord closes his discourse on his coming and the end of the present world-period by a description of the final judgment of all nations. Lange finds in this description the following points: "1. The Son of man appears now as the judge of the whole world, and reveals his sovereign glory, (Acts x, 42; xvii, 31;) 2. He now sits in judgment on the whole human race, on all nations of the earth, and on all ages of the world. The general resurrection must, therefore, be connected with this judgment; 3. He judges now every individual member of the human family according to his individual character, and finding in every one his moral character fully developed, he separates them from each other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; 4. Every one is judged according to his works, as the fruit and evidence of his real character, good works being represented as works of love and mercy; 5. These works of love and mercy spring from an acknowledgment of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The verdict of every one will therefore turn on his personal relation to Christ: Ye have done it unto *me* — ye have *not* done it unto *me*. Active manifestations of Christian philanthropy or of philanthropic love of Christ, being the exponents of faith and a sincere heart, will alone avail before the Judge; 6. The sentence to be formally passed on every one is decided beforehand by the individual's personal relation to Christ, but is now executed, by one party inheriting their Father's kingdom, while the other departs into everlasting fire, prepared for the

devil and his angels; 7. With this final separation of the righteous and the wicked coincides the transformation of the earth. On the one hand, we have now the kingdom of God in its completion; on the other, hell with its wretched inmates.

According to the premillenarian view, advocated by Olshausen, Stier, and Alford, the judgment here described does not include those that constitute the Church triumphant; that is, those who, at Christ's personal coming to introduce the millennium, are either raised from the dead, or, if still living, are glorified and caught up together into the air, to meet the Lord, (1 Thess. iv, 16, 17; 1 Cor. xv, 23, 24, 51, 52) — to reign with Christ, and with him to judge the world, (1 Cor. vi, 2.) The term "all nations," (*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*,) it is said, is used in the same sense as the Hebrew "the nations, or Gentiles," as distinguished from God's chosen people, and stands here in antithesis to the "brethren" of verse 40, who had already received their reward as wise virgins and faithful servants. In support of this view the following arguments are advanced: 1. "Those only are said to be judged who have done it or not done it *to my brethren*; but of the brethren themselves being judged there is no mention." In this argument we can see no point. The love of the brethren is the mark by which, our Savior says, all men shall know that ye are my disciples. 2. "The verdict turns upon works, and not upon faith." Surely this will be the case with every believer or Christian, when he is brought before the judgment-seat of Christ, whether at the beginning or close of the millennium, in so far as works are the fruit of faith, or true saving faith is only that which worketh by love, (Matt. vii, 21; Rom. ii, 6; 2 Cor. v, 10; Gal. vi, 8,) and in so far as our good works spring from sincerity of heart, to which the Lord looketh, (Acts x, 35.) Moreover, unless the plan of salvation is entirely changed in the millennial state — which, if we mistake not, the premillenarians deny — the nations living during the millennium will be judged according to their works, no more and no less than those that lived before the millennium. 3. Another objection to the common view is stated by Alford thus: "The answer of the righteous appears to me to show plainly that *they* are not to be understood as being the covenanted servants of Christ. Such an answer it would be impossible for them to make, who had done all distinctly *with reference to Christ*, and for his sake, and with his declaration of chap. x, 40-42, before them. Such a supposition would remove all reality, as, indeed, it has generally done, from our Lord's description. See the remarkable difference in the answer of the faithful servant, (vs. xx, 22.)" The reply that the

language in question is that of humility is said not to be satisfactory; but we know not why. Besides, the difficulty appears to us to be the same with regard to the people that have lived during the millennium. If they are to be saved, they also must have done their works for Christ's sake, and, if so, they must have been conscious of it. We have given the grounds on which the premillenarian interpretation is based. In objection to it, it may further be urged that it is against common Scripture language to call any other than believers, the members of Christ's mystical body, "sheep," or "righteous," or "the blessed of the Father, for whom the kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world."

With regard to the difficult question of our Lord's second advent, Alford makes, at the close of his comments on the twenty-fifth chapter, a declaration breathing the docile spirit of the true Christian and of the thorough scholar. He says, (p. 238:) "I think it proper to state, in this third edition, that having now entered upon the deeper study of the prophetic portions of the New Testament, I do not feel by any means that full confidence which I once did in the exegesis, *quoad* prophetical interpretation here given of the three portions of this chapter xxv. But I have no other system to substitute, and some of the points here dwelt on seem to me as weighty as ever. I very much question whether the thorough study of Scripture prophecy will not make me more and more distrustful of all human systematizing, and less willing to hazard strong assertion on any portion of the subject. July, 1855."

Verses 31-46.

(31) **WHEN the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:** (32) **And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:** (33) **And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.** (34) **Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:** (35) **For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:** (36) **Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.** (37) **Then shall the righteous answer him,**

saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? (38) When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? (39) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? (40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. (41) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: (42) For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: (43) I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. (44) Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? (45) Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. (46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

VERSE 31. WHEN THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME. Not the Father will hold the judgment, but the Son of man, whose divinity, when he performs this most solemn act of judging mankind, will no longer be veiled by his humanity. — IN HIS GLORY. These words say more than "with power and great glory," of chapter xxiv, 30. — AND ALL THE HOLY ANGELS WITH HIM. "The first-born of God, the morning stars of creation — beings that excel in strength, whose intelligence is immense, whose love for God and his universe glows with a quenchless ardor, and whose speed is as the lightning. Who can count their number? They are the bright stars that crowd in innumerable constellations every firmament that spans every globe and system throughout immensity." — THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY. A throne is the highest symbol of earthly glory, and hence Christ is here represented as appearing on it. John represents him as coming on a great white throne. It is called "*great*, as the fountain of all authority — that to which all intelligent creatures are amenable; *white*, because it is the center of unsullied purity and incorruptible justice."

VERSES 32, 33. AND BEFORE HIM SHALL BE GATHERED ALL NATIONS. "All nations are now before him, and ever have been. He sees them; he sustains them; he speaks to them by his providence and his Word. But millions have denied his very existence, and millions more have lived in utter indifference to his claims, but now all nations are brought into *conscious* contact with him. The blaspheming atheist, the cruel idolater, the degraded savage, the foul apostate, and the hardened worldling will feel his presence more intensely than Isaiah did when he fell down and cried, *Woe is me!* All the men that ever have been, that are, or that ever will be, will see him in the overwhelming glory of his character as the judge of all mankind. As the great Sun of righteousness, he will pour his burning rays upon every human soul. All nations shall see him, ay, and see every thing through him — see themselves, see the past, the present, and the future, as we see nature through the light of heaven." (Homilist.) There seems to be no room left whatever to the idea of a final resurrection preceding that of the wicked by a thousand years. Yet premillenarians contend that the separation which is to be made at the close of the millennium between the unnumbered millions of the earth's population during the millennial age, as well as between the dead, that died not in the Lord, and did, therefore, not belong to the triumphant Church, without being on that account lost, is comprehensive enough for the term "*all nations.*" — AS A SHEPHERD DIVIDETH HIS SHEEP FROM THE GOATS. The wicked are compared with goats, partly on account of their uncleanness, partly on account of their wild stubbornness in contradistinction to the meekness of sheep. Meyer and De Wette find the point of comparison in the inferior value of the goats. — AND HE SHALL SET THE SHEEP ON HIS RIGHT HAND. The right hand denotes a position of the highest honor; the left, if put in antithesis to the right, that of dishonor. (Eccl. x, 2.) Perhaps there is an allusion to the Sanhedrim, by which the acquitted was put on the right hand, and the condemned on the left.

VERSE 34. YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER. Being saved from the curse of sin, and, therefore, the blessed of the Lord, their character is now manifested in its full glory. — INHERIT THE KINGDOM; the kingdom of God in its full completion, the new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth, where nothing impure can enter. — FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. Instead of ἀπὸ, *from*, we find the preposition πρὸ, *before*, in Ephesians i, 4; John xvii, 24; 1 Peter i, 20; the meaning is the same, the corresponding preposition in Hebrew — the letter *mem* as prefix — being

used in both senses, and, as Bengel remarks, there being no need of making a distinction between eternity and the foundation of the world. The words *prepared for you* teach no unconditional predestination to eternal life. Although no one can be saved and sanctified without the Divine will and election, yet the Divine prescience takes in the election man's free self-determination into account. It is the eternal purpose of God to save all that believe in Christ, and persevere to the end. The gates of heaven are thrown open for all descendants of fallen Adam; whoever will may inherit heaven.

VERSES 35, 36. That merit is out of the question appears from the preceding "blessed" and "inherit." The conjunction "*for*" introduces, accordingly, not the cause of their blessedness, but must be viewed as the proof of their having been in a state of grace — similar to the "as we forgive" in the Lord's Prayer. Heubner says: "The acts of love here named are not such as require merely an outlay of money, but such as involve also the sacrifice of time, strength, rest, comfort," etc.

VERSES 37-40. The righteous are introduced as declaring, by word of mouth, what they feel in their hearts; true humility knows nothing of its good works, and has to advance no claims founded on merit. Stier, rejecting the view that works of love wrought in conscious faith in Jesus Christ are here spoken of, says: "All those are blessed whose hearts have not been closed against the love of God that draws all nations; that a dogmatically-developed faith in the Lord is not required of all men is here positively declared against all narrow dogmatism that would set limits to God's infinite love." The same sentiment is expressed by Alford: "The sublimity of this description surpasses all imagination — Christ, as the Son of man, the Shepherd, the King, the Judge — as the center and end of all human love, bringing out and rewarding his *latent* grace in those who have lived in love — everlastingly punishing those who have quenched it in an unloving and selfish life — and in the accomplishment of his mediatorial office, causing even from out of the iniquities of a rebellious world *his sovereign mercy to rejoice against judgment.*" — INASMUCH AS YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE MY BRETHREN, YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME. Most interpreters understand by "*the least of these my brethren,*" the apostles and all the preachers of the Gospel to the end of time, and appeal in support of their view to Matthew x, 40. Meyer, however, objects to this, and says: "The apostles and preachers of the Gospel are, indeed, represented as the brethren of Christ, (Matt. xxviii, 10;

John xx, 17,) but not as the least of his brethren compared with other Christians. But as Christ was, during his ministry on earth, generally surrounded by the poor and the despised — publicans and sinners, etc. — that sought his salvation, so he represents himself here as surrounded by the same characters at the judgment. Their ardent desire of him and his salvation (2 Tim. iv, 8) has brought them near the throne of his glory, and the Lord, as it were, singles them out. They are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the persecuted, who were pronounced blessed in the Sermon on the Mount, and are now receiving the promised blessing." Watson understands by "my brethren" all men, and remarks in support of his view: "Those who restrain the term *brethren* to poor and destitute Christians, have no warrant from the words or from the scope of the discourse. To narrow up the obligations of beneficence to those of our own faith would have been rather in the spirit of Judaism than according to the liberal and expansive genius of Christianity; the term *brethren* is to be taken in its largest sense for all mankind. By taking upon him our nature, Christ became the brother of every man, and even in his exalted and glorified state recognizes us under that relation." Worthy of note is also what Bengel says in his "Gnomon," on the word *brethren*: "The higher men rise the more overbearingly they treat their fellow-men. Jesus called his immediate followers at first disciples, once little children, (John xiii, 33,) and friends, (John xv, 15;) after his resurrection he called them children (John xxi, 5) and brethren, (Matt. xxviii, 10; John xx, 17; comp. xiii, 1,) and by the latter name he shall call them on the day of judgment. What an honor for believers! (Comp. Heb. ii, 10.) During the time of Christ's humiliation the term brethren seems not to have been used, lest he might be taken to be a mere man; but since he has been exalted this danger no longer exists. At the same time, it must not be overlooked that Christ addresses no man directly as his brother; the passages, Matthew xii, 48, etc., and Hebrews ii, 11, do not disprove this assertion; and the Scriptures nowhere call Christ directly our brother. Thus it would have been unbecoming, *e.g.*, in Peter, to call Christ 'brother' instead of 'Lord.' (John xxi, 15; xx, 7; xiii, 13.) So James, that was called by others 'the brother of the Lord,' calls himself a 'servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ,' and Jude calls himself also 'the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,' (verse 1.) See also Matthew xxi, 8; Luke xxii, 32. — Among men the term 'brother' does not always denote equality, nor is it used invariably by the two parties at once; he that holds a higher office, *e.g.*, while he calls his inferiors 'brethren,' is not called by them 'brother.' In the same way the term friend is used; so the Lord calls his

disciples 'friends,' while it would have been unbecoming in them to call him 'friend.' (John xv, 15.)"

VERSE 41. "The two verdicts of the Judge (vs. 34 and 41) are so completely decisive, that between this right hand and the left no intermediate third is henceforth possible. This is the first and last, the only and the irrevocable *curse* from the lips of Him m whom all nations were to be blessed. That they had before heard a 'come unto me!' in a manner that authenticated it as a Divine invitation, and had rejected it on their part, is so self-evident, that the Judge does not deem it necessary to state it here. The banishing sentence of the wicked is couched in terms that form a complete antithesis to the terms of the gracious acceptance of the righteous; in the one case, '*Come*,' in the other, '*Depart*,' strengthened by the addition, '*from me*.' Again: '*Ye blessed*,' and '*ye cursed*,' but not 'of my Father,' as they have themselves chosen their curse that banishes them forever from the Son, while the others come now fully through the Son to the Father. Again, on the one side, *the kingdom* with all its glory and delight, on the other *the fire* with its insufferable pain. The kingdom is '*prepared for you*,' the fire '*is prepared for the devil and his angels*;' for men there was no previous preparation of damnation, no book of death, because the blood of Christ has purchased life for all; only those that choose to belong to the devil will finally share his doom. The *kingdom* is prepared from the foundation of the world; *of the fire* this is not said. For even for the devil, who was created an angel, hell was no more foreordained than his sin, although it was prepared for him as soon as he became a devil. The '*inheriting*' of the blessed neither has, nor can have, any other antithesis than that the cursed are excluded from it. The curse shows the termination of the high-priesthood of Christ, in which office he only intercedes and blesses. Henceforth he is king and Lord, his enemies being now forever put under his feet." (Stier.)

VERSES 42, 43. Not positive crimes or sins of commission are mentioned as causing the condemnation of the wicked, but only sins of omission. That every transgression shall meet with condign punishment is self-evident. But here we are taught that those in whom not even *one* good work can be found shall be damned. Each genuine work of love is a practical recognition of Christ, who is hid in his followers, both because true faith works by love, and because love is in general the surest proof of the presence of a divine element in the human heart. In the same sense, Olshausen remarks: "As he that is capable of loving

is also capable of receiving love, yea, as love in itself is blessedness and eternal life, so the destitution of love disqualifies for blessedness." John says: "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God. For God is love." (1 John iv, 7, 8.) The exact repetition of details shows with what exactness the Judge shall examine every one's case, not overlooking even a single item.

VERSE 44. As the righteous are ignorant of their good works from humility, so the wicked are ignorant of their misdeeds, of their omissions from the arrogant spirit of self-justification. Luther's comment on this passage is: "That the cursed are unwilling to admit the charge of neglected duty shows their callousness and hauteur, that made them unwilling in the time of grace to know either Christ or his members; and so the state of their mind is fully revealed only on the day of judgment."

VERSE 46. AND THESE SHALL GO INTO EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT. The adjective qualifying "punishment" and "life," though differently rendered in the English version, is the same in the original. Life is the diametrical opposite of punishment or pain, including not only the idea of self-conscious existence, but also of blessedness. If the "punishment" were only of limited duration, "life" could, likewise, not be endless. "The endlessness of the punishment is just as certain as that of life. The endless pain of the devil, and of those who share his doom, is as deep a mystery as the fall of the devil, but as fully attested as eternal life itself, the mark of our heavenly calling in Jesus Christ. Reader, follow the Good Shepherd now, when he kindly bids thee to come unto him, and thou shalt never hear the fearful word, 'Depart from me!'" (Stier.) We close this solemn section with the following remark of Dr. Morison, which ministers, preaching on the final judgment, should lay to heart: "The great facts of the Divine retribution — the eternal bliss into which the righteous are drawn up, and the eternal woe into which the wicked are cast down — are too plainly set forth to be the subject of criticism. These central and indisputable facts stand unaffected by any just principles of criticism. The images of uplifting or appalling grandeur in which they are enveloped can not act too powerfully on the imagination and the heart of man. The obscurity in which the particulars of our future being are left, was undoubtedly intentional on the part of our Savior. For, though the whole matter, in its blissful or terrible details, may have been disclosed to him, he knew that we, in our present state of existence, could not comprehend them, and would only be confounded or misled by any

language in which they might be described. We can not understand, except in a general way, that which in all its particulars must lie so far beyond all our experience here."

CHAPTER XXVI.

§ 64. OUR LORD FORETELLS THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, WHILE HIS ADVERSARIES ARE YET AT A LOSS HOW TO BRING IT ABOUT.

THE Evangelist emphatically indicates the commencement of the history of the Passion by connecting the Savior's prediction concerning the time of his death with the words, "*When Jesus had finished all these sayings.*" By *all these sayings* commentators generally understand the immediately-preceding discourses of our Lord concerning his second coming; and if so understood, they present us with a highly-significant contrast: "I shall sit upon the throne of my glory, to dispense eternal woe and eternal life; but now I give myself up to be crucified." Stier and Lange, however, take the words *all these sayings* in a wider sense, as including with the last prophetic instructions to his disciples all his public teaching, and indicating that his prophetic office had come to a close, and that he was now entering upon his high-priestly functions. The Son of man, who testified of himself as the Son of God, had given the sublimest and purest witness to the truth of God, in unison with a holy life and mighty wonders; but for man's salvation something more was wanting than *words*, be they even the perfect words of the eternal *Word*. They could only work preparatorily, and, dreadful as the thought is, their primary effect with the Jewish people was to evoke that enmity that brought about the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Henceforth his discourses become naturally and necessarily fewer and fewer, while the passion of the silent Lamb itself speaks forth all the more impressively.

Worthy of consideration is also the connection in which Matthew places our Lord's prediction of the time of his suffering and death with the counsel of his enemies, as indicated by the "*then*" in verse 3. "This counsel of men against God, although it had been foreseen from the beginning, and permissively confirmed in the counsel of God, must nevertheless, as man's evil device, be, in some sense, brought to contempt. Before they say, '*Not on the feast-day!*'

the Lord had forewarned that *on the feast-day* it should and it must come to pass; and this serene, sublime assurance, with which the Lord anticipates and meets the well-known design of his enemies can not be too deeply pondered and felt. . . . All proceeds, according to outward appearance, naturally, as if men did to him whatsoever *they* listed; but it is not so, nevertheless. On the part of men there is nothing but sin and injustice, from the highest crime of the betraying disciple down to the most venial acts of the crucifying soldiers. But in all this, and above it all, is the Father's good and gracious will. Therefore, before the Jews take counsel and Judas comes to them, the Lord had already spoken these words. The Son of God, as the Son of man, gives himself up to the counsel of God, in conscious, voluntary obedience. This testimony to his own voluntary self-devotion was included in all the previous announcements of his suffering and death, but here most simply and impressively. He does not say, The Son of man will deliver himself up — although that also was true — but he speaks in a purely-passive manner of his Passion.

"With this section," says Lange, "we enter upon the record of the Savior's *Passion*, the sublimest and holiest history, which reveals unto us the depths of the Godhead, of Divine wisdom, justice, and grace, the depths of the human heart, the contrast of the immaculate Son of man and of the sinful race of Adam, the mystery of the sufferings of the God-man, the depths of the spirit-world, and of Satan. As the Scriptures say of the Redeemer, 'Who shall declare his generation?' — that is, the length of his days — so it may also be asked, Who shall declare the depths of his suffering and death?"

Verses 1-5. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 1, 2; LUKE xxii, 2.)

(1) **AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings,** he said unto his disciples, (2) **Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.** (3) Then assembled together the chief-priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiaphas, (4) and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill *him*. (5) **But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.**

VERSE 1. Whether Jesus finished his sayings concerning his second coming (chap. xxiv, 4, to xxv, 24, 46) on Tuesday evening or on Wednesday morning can not be determined with certainty. In either case the time till Wednesday evening is reckoned as one day, and the time from Wednesday to Thursday evening as the second day.

VERSE. 2. YE KNOW THAT AFTER TWO DAYS IS THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER. The first day of the feast, commencing Thursday evening, the close of the 14th, and ending Friday evening, the close of the 15th of Nisan, is meant here. — AND THE SON OF MAN IS BETRAYED TO BE CRUCIFIED. At first sight it might seem as if our Lord meant to say to his disciples, Ye know that the Son of man is betrayed, as well as ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover. But this is not his meaning. He had never before connected his suffering with the Passover, and they had never understood his repeated predictions. He, therefore, begins with what was *known to every one* and goes on immediately to add the *hidden* purpose of God concerning this Passover, as if he had said: As *ye* know that in two days will be the feast of the Passover, so *I know*, and now tell you, that in this Passover I shall be crucified. He says *is betrayed*, making the fixture *present*, just as he says, After two days *is* the feast. The point of connection between the *time* of the feast and his being betrayed is this, that here, where the Old Testament finds its consummation and end in the New, God's counsel itself preserves the sanctified Old-Testament times and seasons. Moreover, the Lord's trial and judgment was to be conducted publicly in the presence of the multitudes, then assembled in Jerusalem. He was not to fall under popular frenzy, like Stephen, nor be destroyed by arbitrary violence in secret, like the Baptist; but before Jews and Gentiles, the sentence of death is to be pronounced and executed on the Lamb of God that bore the sins of the world. "Jesus mentions here again, as in chapter xvii, 22, as the two prominent points, his betrayal by the Jews and his crucifixion by the Gentiles. The clearness, certainty, and calmness with which he predicted these events, form a strange contrast with the uncertainty about his execution in which his enemies still are. While they have no control over themselves, but are hurried along by the powers of darkness more tempestuously than they themselves desired, he being familiar with the spirit of the Scriptures — the typical meaning of the paschal lamb — and with the will of God, and the machinations of Satan, appoints the day which his enemies wish to avoid for the day of his death." (Lange.)

VERSES 3-5. THEN ASSEMBLED TOGETHER THE CHIEF-PRIESTS, etc. It is not difficult to discover the occasion of this meeting of the Sanhedrim, which was largely attended, as Matthew intimates. Jesus had sorely humbled them in the Temple, and frustrated all their designs to involve him in difficulties with the civil government.—UNTO THE PALACE OF THE HIGH-PRIEST — literally, the open inclosure or court, around which the house itself was built. The regular place of meeting for the Sanhedrim was called Gazith, and joined, according to the Talmud, the south side of the Temple. Their meeting was, therefore, no regular, open session, but must be considered as a secret conference.—WHO WAS CALLED CAIAPHAS. This was his surname; his real name was Joseph. (Jos. Ant., XVIII, ii, 2.) Caiaphas received the high-priestly office from the Procurator Valerius Gratus, and was deposed from it by Vitellius, (26-35; Jos. Ant., XVIII, ii, 2; iv, 3.) He was the son-in-law of Annas.—AND CONSULTED THAT THEY MIGHT TAKE JESUS BY SUBTILITY. We see from this clearly the impression which the signal victories of Jesus over them in the Temple had produced upon the people and themselves.—NOT ON THE FEAST-DAY. They meant thereby, in all probability, the whole time of the feast, which was seven days. They intended to wait with the execution of their design till the many strangers, assembled in the city during the feast, had left again. On such occasions there was sometimes two millions of men, and there was the more reason to apprehend an uproar in favor of Jesus, as he numbered so many followers among the brave and bold Galileans. The conclusion the Sanhedrim had arrived at was, however, shortly afterward changed; not by the first offer of Judas, which had, most probably, been made ere this, and had led them to seek his destruction by stealth or subtlety, but by a subsequent call of Judas, when he came to them by night after the paschal feasts, and acquainted them with the fine opportunity which they had to secure his person in Gethsemane." (Lange.)

§ 65. JESUS IS ANOINTED AT BETHANY.

Veres 6-13. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 3-9; JOHN xii, 1-10.)

(6) **NOW when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,** (7) **there came unto him a woman having an alabaster ^[1] box of very precious ointment, ^[2] and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.** (8) **But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what**

purpose is this waste? (9) For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. (10) When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. (11) For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. (12) For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. (13) Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

[1 Alabaster is a calcareous spar resembling marble, but softer and more easily worked, and therefore very suitable for being wrought into boxes. Pliny represents it as peculiarly adapted to the preservation of ointment. The expression *broke the bow* in Mark xiv, 3, implies only the removal of the seal upon the mouth of the box, by which seal the perfume was prevented from evaporating.]

[2 This aromatic substance is mentioned in Cant. i, 12, where its sweet odor is alluded to, and in iv, 13, 14, Where it is enumerated with various other aromatic substances, imported from Arabia or India and the far East. The aroma of the plant from which the ointment is made is so strong that the air around is perfumed when the roots are crushed or bruised.]

VERSE 6. NOW WHEN JESUS WAS IN BETHANY. This anointing, related also by Mark, (xiv, 3, etc.,) is not identical with the one recorded by Luke, (vii, 36, etc.,) but differs from the latter as to time, place, circumstances, object and historical connection so entirely, that no honest critic will attempt to represent the two transactions as one. It is, however, not related in its chronological order by Matthew and Mark. (Compare the introductory remarks to chapter xxi.) The statement of John, that the anointing took place six days before the Passover, is not contradicted by Matthew and Mark; they do not say, "At the time when the Sanhedrim was in session, Jesus was at Bethany and there came unto him a woman," but merely insert an event here that took place during the last stay of Jesus at Bethany. (See similar retrogressive statements in chap. xiv, 3, and chap. xxvii, 7.) They had probably two reasons for inserting the incident here, one of which is, that it stands in a close relation to the betrayal of Judas, and the other in order to call attention to the fact that Jesus had already foretold the nearness of his death several days before the Sanhedrim formally resolved on his death; another reason may have

been to place this preparation for the burial of his body significantly at the head of the Passion. Wichelhaus, on the contrary, maintains that the anointing really took place two days before the Passover, since, as he thinks, the words "for my burial" have not their full force unless they were spoken shortly before his death, after he had fully declared himself on that subject before his disciples, (v. 2.) As to the date given by John, he thinks that John intended to say by it merely that Jesus had come to Bethany six days before the Passover, after which he related the anointing as having taken place during his last stay at Bethany, without meaning to convey the idea that it took place on the very evening of Jesus' arrival there. This interpretation of John's date is inconsistent with that Evangelist's accuracy when he does give a note of time, and especially with John xii, 9.—**IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE LEPER**; a leper, who, as we may well suppose, had been healed by Jesus. From the fact, that, according to John, Lazarus was one of the guests, while his sister Martha waited on them, we have to infer that this Simon was a friend of the family.—**THERE CAME UNTO HIM A WOMAN**. We learn from John that this woman was Mary, the sister of Martha. Without the least foundation is a tradition of the Church of Rome, that this Mary is the same as the sinner, (Luke vii,) or Mary Magdalene. It is claimed that the anointing to which John (xi, 2) refers must be supposed to be an earlier one, and identical with the one reported by Luke. But, from the very fact that John speaks of this anointing as something so generally known, it may be safely inferred that he means the one of which Jesus had declared, that it should be spoken of all over the world in connection with his Gospel, and which he afterward records fully in chapter xii.

VERSE 7. AND POURED IT ON HIS HEAD. Not only the Jews, but the ancients generally, had the custom to anoint the heads of honored guests as a special distinction. John adds, that she anointed his feet also. As the feet of a guest were generally washed with water, it was a mark of great veneration to anoint the feet as well as the head. So great was her devotion that she could not think of retaining a portion of the precious ointment. This anointing is a type of the never-failing streams of love that shall be poured on Jesus by his redeemed throughout time and eternity.

VERSES 8, 9. BUT WHEN HIS DISCIPLES SAW IT, THEY HAD INDIGNATION. According to John, it was Judas alone who openly expressed his disapproval of Mary's act; according to Mark, several of the disciples did it; Matthew, who is not in the habit of going into details, says, only

in general terms, that the disciples were indignant at the deed. From all this we must infer that, misled by Judas's pretended zeal for the poor, they seconded his remark. The indignation of Judas proceeded from a black heart, devoid of love; it was covetousness cloaking itself in charity, lucre speaking the language of love. Nothing of this kind was in the hearts of the other disciples, but they had not yet large enough views to perceive and appreciate the spirit of this sentimental act. Stier's remarks on this point deserve to be pondered well: "We have here an example of objections, based on the utilitarian principle, to outlays on the outward form of public worship that worthily express the feelings of reverence and love. We are also warned here against those cold judgments on the pious acts of devout hearts, against those frequent criticisms on spontaneous acts of feeling, against that bigotry which has for the conduct of others no other standard than that of one's own sentiments, and against that officiousness that would lay down rules according to which alone good works are to be performed."

VERSE 10. WHY TROUBLE YE THE WOMAN? Why do you wound her feelings? Mark and John add: *Let her alone.* They had no right to interfere in this matter. For the mode of expressing our sentiments of loving and adoring worship we are responsible to no man. Lange describes the scene graphically in his "Leben Jesu:" "We do not know to what extent Mary was affected by the unexpected blame of the disciples. She had brought unto the Lord an offering of love in full confidence and from the very depth of her soul, and now the reverend college of the disciples judged that she had acted foolishly — yea, that she had wronged the poor. While the delicious odor of the ointment filled the house, a painful feeling of discontent stole upon the company, and Mary finds herself the subject of censure in the midst of the guests." To this Stier adds: "She may have been tempted to think, I have acted inconsiderately, and the Lord himself will disapprove of my act." — FOR SHE HAS WROUGHT A GOOD [a fine or noble] WORK UPON ME. "Tender love at the right time, words significantly expressive of the inmost emotion — is this not praiseworthy? See, here, the moral aesthetics in judging human actions, as taught by the Lord! In other cases he praises the faith or love from which a work springs; here, the outward work itself, because it was impugned, though it was a genuine expression of the love of the heart." (Stier.) — UPON ME. "Has this no value in your eyes? Am I not worthy of such honor? Whether they were done or not done unto Jesus, shall, on the day of judgment, determine the

real value of the actions of men! Be, therefore, of good cheer, misjudged soul, the Lord knows thee. And even if his disciples should blame thee, he will vindicate thee, either now or on the day of final reckoning." (Stier.)

VERSE 11. FOR YE HAVE THE POOR ALWAYS WITH YOU; BUT ME YE HAVE NOT ALWAYS. As if he meant to say: Have you forgotten that I shall stay with you only a short time longer? "There is not always an opportunity to give the Lord a token of grateful love, neither in his person nor in his followers. On this occasion the Lord's heart was to be cheered, as he was entering upon his bitter suffering and death. Mary perceived the auspicious moment, and performed a work for which all Christendom will thank her to the end of time. The case of the poor is different. There are always poor, that can and must be taken care of. A total removal of poverty from the midst of organized society is a materialistic illusion, and those that do the least for the poor, are generally the loudest in keeping it up." (Lange.)

VERSE 12. SHE DID IT FOR MY BURIAL. The Greek word, here translated *burial*, means to prepare for burial, by swathing in bandages with spices. (Gen. 1, 2.) The proper translation of this verse is: "For in having poured this ointment on my body, she has done it for the preparing of me for burial." She has treated my body as if it were a corpse already. Interpreters are not agreed as to whether Mary did this knowingly, or whether it is the Lord only, who interprets her act to this effect. Baumgarten says: "While Salome beheld Jesus seated on the throne of his glory, and desired nothing more ardently than to see her two sons seated on his right and his left side, while many looked confidently for the glorious ushering in of the kingdom of God at Jesus' solemn entry into Jerusalem, Mary — though Jesus sits at supper with him, whom he had raised from the dead — thinks only of his burial, and that so vividly as if he was dead already. She is the only one that takes the words of Jesus concerning his impending death to heart. She realizes that she shall not always have Jesus, and her love has done what she could, as the Lord says according to Mark."

VERSE 13. This is the only instance that Jesus mentions the praise of posterity as part of the reward of those that love him, and he does so concerning an act that had not the semblance of a so-called good work, and was even misjudged by his disciples. Who else than Christ has the power to promise to any act, however highly and universally it may be praised for the

time being, exemption from oblivion in the stream of history? What majestic consciousness of true divinity is, therefore, expressed in the words: "Verily I say unto you!" In the very face of death Jesus expresses the firm conviction that his Gospel, the good tidings of peace and grace, whose very center his death will be, shall be preached all over the world. In addition to this, Alford says: "We may notice, 1. That this announcement is a distinct prophetic recognition by our Lord of the existence of *written records*, in which the deed should be related, for in no other conceivable way could the universality of mention be brought about; 2. That we have here — if indeed we needed it — a convincing argument against that view of our first three Gospels which supposes them to have been compiled from an original document; for, if there had been such a document, it must have contained this narrative, and no one using such a Gospel could have failed to insert this narrative, accompanied by such a promise, in his own work, which Luke has failed to do; 3. That the same consideration is equally decisive against Luke having used, or even seen, our present Gospels of Matthew and Mark."

§ 66. COMPACT OF JUDAS WITH THE HIGH-PRIESTS TO BETRAY JESUS.

THE supper at Bethany and the anointing took place, as we have shown, on Saturday evening, before our Lord's entry into Jerusalem; and on that evening Judas made up his mind to betray Jesus. Whether he went that very night to Jerusalem, or on Tuesday evening, when the chief-priests were assembled, (v. 3,) in order to make them the offer described in the following section, we have no certain data to determine. "It is very remarkable," says Lange, "that the thought of betraying Jesus matured in the mind of Judas at two social repasts, the first of making the offer to the Jewish authorities at the supper at Bethany, and the second of carrying out his compact with them, at the Paschal Supper at Jerusalem. This strange phenomenon is to be accounted for by the fact that the human heart, when it comes into contact with Divine grace, is never left unchanged. Man either yields to its workings or he resists them and becomes hardened. Thus Judas hardened himself on those two occasions to the same extraordinary extent to which Divine grace was at work to convict and save him. This was especially the case at the feast in Bethany. Here the heavenly warmth of Mary's pure love in glorifying her Master ought

to have warmed his cold and dreary heart. Yet the effect was the very opposite. Her deed stung him to the quick; the general cheerfulness hightened his gloom; the honor shown to Jesus stirred up his envy, the princely expenditure his avarice, the mild rebuke of his Master a bitter sense of guilt, and the heavenly clearness with which Jesus saw through him finally confounded him so that he abandoned himself to the power of Satan."

On the choice by the Lord of a man to the apostleship whom he knew from the beginning that he would betray him, (John vi, 64,) we have spoken in our introductory remarks to § 20, and in our notes on chap. x, 4. But this is the proper place to examine the means by which Satan succeeded in inciting Judas to the perpetration of his unparalleled crime. Some have deemed Judas's inordinate love of money, on which the Evangelists dwell, and the paltry sum that was offered to him, insufficient to account for the perpetration of so monstrous a deed, and have, therefore, started the strange hypothesis that Judas did not contemplate his Master's death, but only wanted "to force on the hour of the triumph of the Messianic kingdom by placing his Master in a position from which retreat would be impossible, where he would be compelled to throw himself on the people, and be raised by them to the throne of his father David." But such enthusiasm, combined with such subtle policy, is incompatible with the facts which the Gospel records give us of Judas's character. So much, perhaps, may be admitted, that the traitor tried to soothe his conscience with considerations like these: "While I serve the highest ecclesiastical authority in the country, my Master will know how to secure his personal safety by dint of his miraculous powers." The principal motive of the traitor was, undoubtedly, his love of money, and as the love of money is the root of all evil, so it led Judas to that fearful estrangement from his Master. Every sinful inclination which a disciple of Jesus consciously fostered and cherished, in spite of the powerful incentives to holiness which the personal intercourse of Jesus furnished, could not otherwise than terminate in the moral ruin of the whole man. (Chap. vi, 22, 23.) Intercourse with Jesus made a man either good or worse than before. Whoever perseveringly refused to enter into his heavenly mind became necessarily his enemy in the course of time. (Chap. xii, 30.) The love of the world, ambition, and avarice constituted the besetting sin of Judas. When he became a disciple of Jesus, this his favorite sin yielded undoubtedly to the powerful impressions that were made upon him; but the demon cast out temporarily from his soul again took possession of it, and his case became

worse than before. (Chap. xii, 45.) He had confidently looked forward for a temporal kingdom of the Messiah; but when he saw more and more clearly that Jesus had no intention of establishing such a kingdom, when Jesus spoke more and more distinctly of his impending suffering and death, then every better feeling and attachment to his Master gave way. He became now painfully certain that his expectations in following Jesus were doomed to disappointment. Moreover, he saw that his Master had penetrated the inmost recesses of his heart. While he was in this frame of mind the devil suggested to him that the safest course for him would be to address himself to the chief-priests, and to return to *orthodox* Judaism, for which he would be well rewarded. Possibly he may at first simply have intended to make an inquiry; but all at once a contract is made, and he agrees to sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver.

Verses 14-16. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 10, 11; LUKE xxii, 3-6.)

(14) THEN one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief-priests, (15) and said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. (16) And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

VERSE 14. THEN ONE OF THE TWELVE, CALLED JUDAS ISCARIOT, WENT. That Judas made the first offer to the Sanhedrim to deliver Jesus into their hands, not in the same night in which he actually betrayed him, but at an earlier date, is also stated by Luke. It is, moreover, not probable in itself that he should have entered into negotiations with the chief council at so late an hour of the very night in which he betrayed him into their hands. When John speaks (xiii, 2) of "the devil having put it into the heart of Judas to betray him," and again says, (v. 27,) "After the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly," it is most natural to understand thereby the actual carrying out of an engagement which he had made at an earlier period, so that it appears also from John's account that the traitor, having entered into an agreement with the Sanhedrim before, waited only for a favorable moment to carry out his part of the engagement, and determined upon the time at the Paschal meal. — UNTO THE CHIEF-PRIESTS. Luke (xxii, 4) adds, "and captains," which refers not to

Roman military, but to Jewish ecclesiastical officers. It is sufficiently known from the Old Testament that the Temple had its doorkeepers and guards. (1 Chron. xxvii; Ps. cxxxiv, 1.) These guards had, of course, their superiors and officers. Subject to their orders were the "servants," of whom so frequent mention is made. (Acts v, 22-26; Mark xiv, 65; John vii, 32, 45; xviii, 3; xii, 22; xix, 6.) These captains of the Temple belonged, as appears from Josephus, to the families of the high-priests.

VERSE 15. AND SAID UNTO THEM, WHAT WILL YE GIVE ME, AND I WILL DELIVER HIM UNTO YOU? This question shows that Judas was now lost to all sense of shame. — **AND THEY COVENANTED WITH HIM FOR** [literally, weighed out to him] **THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER.** The piece of silver was the Jewish shekel, worth about sixty cents, so that the whole amount paid for Jesus was about eighteen dollars — the price for the life of a slave that was killed by an ox. (Ex. xxi, 32.) The chief-priests offered, in all probability, this low price as a mark of their contempt of Jesus, unconscious that by this very act they fulfilled the prophecy of Zech. xi, 12. This sum has been considered too small to account for the act of Judas from avarice; but Lange disposes of this objection by the following answer: "For such demoniacal avarice and treachery no sum is too high or too little. To betray Jesus presupposes such an insanity of guilt that the most unreasonable equivalent is the most probable. Moreover, being as ambitious as he was avaricious, the favor of the Sanhedrim had some weight with him."

VERSE 16. According to Luke, (xxii, 6,) the absence of the multitude was to furnish this opportunity. Their plan was to secure the person of Jesus clandestinely, to charge him with some crime, and then excite the multitude against him. From the meeting of the Sanhedrim, it appears that thus far no such opportunity had presented itself.

§ 67. THE PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER.

THE Passover was the first of the three great annual festivals of the Israelites, celebrated in the first month of the Jewish year, the month of Abib — which, after the exile, took the name of Nisan — from the 14th to the 21st, at the time of the full moon. As the Jews commenced the month with the first appearance of the new moon, the Passover fell sometimes in March, sometimes

in April, according to our reckoning of time. It was instituted in commemoration of Jehovah's *passing over, sparing* the Hebrews, when he destroyed the first-born of Egypt. (Exod. xii, 1-51.) Of what it enjoined and signified we shall speak in our remarks on the institution of the Lord's Supper, (see. 69.) Here we will only state that it was also called "the feast of unleavened bread," because as long as it lasted only unleavened bread was eaten, emblematical of laying aside all Egyptian uncleanness by the Israelites, at their going out from Egypt — for leaven was an emblem of uncleanness, (comp. Matt. xvi, 6; 1 Cor. v, 8) — for which reason the bread used in the Temple was also unleavened.

Stier remarks: "As a feast of the *passing over, sparing*, the Paschal feast was a *feast of joy*. It exhibited to the eyes of the people of Israel the Divine mercy, through which they had become and still were the people of God; but as a feast of *unleavened bread* it was, at the same time, a remembrance of sorrow, not merely of the affliction in Egypt out of which the Lord had mercifully delivered them, but of another affliction also, which began on the day of their leaving Egypt, and must continue throughout the whole course of their wanderings in the desert. As the very significant appointment of the bitter herbs was not merely intended to remind them that, according to Exod. i, 14, the Egyptians had made their lives bitter, so the very plain *Thou camest forth in haste* does not mean to explain the bread of affliction to be the food eaten in Egypt. There the Israelites had eaten leavened bread; but when, sanctified to God, they were separated and purified from the Egyptian leaven, and by a *hasty flight* betook themselves to the way which led to the promised land, this unleavened bread was their confession that their full salvation demanded, *in the way to the good land*, hardship and self-denial still, with the continuance of affliction. Hence we may say with Meyer, that the accompanying symbols of the Paschal meal pointed to sanctification from sin, swift departure from the land of uncleanness and distress, and the transitoriness of earthly life itself."

Verses 17-19. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 12-16; LUKE xxi, 7-13.)

17) NOW the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? (18) And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will

keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples. (19) And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.

VERSE 17. NOW THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD; that is, the first day of the feast, during which unleavened bread is eaten. Thursday, the 14th of Nisan, is meant, on which the leaven was removed, and which was, therefore, considered as a part of the feast, although the real feast of the Passover did not commence before the close of that day. Mark adds, "When they killed the Passover" — the Paschal lamb — and Luke, "When the Passover must be killed." The Paschal lamb must be slain on the 14th, between the evenings. (Ex. xii, 6; Lev. xxiii, 5; Num. ix, 3.) The expression *between the evenings* was generally understood, by the Jews, of the period from the decline of the sun to its setting; that is, from three to six, P.M., though its precise meaning is somewhat doubtful. — It is here that we meet the difficult question whether our Lord ate the Paschal lamb at the time prescribed by the law, in common with the Jews, or a day sooner, on the evening of the 13th Nisan. If we had nothing to guide us but the first three Gospels, no doubt on this subject could possibly arise. But there are passages in John's Gospel from which, if we had not the positive data of the other Evangelists, we could hardly hesitate to infer that the meal at which our Lord instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist was not the Paschal Supper according to the law, but that it took place a day earlier, on the evening of the 13th Nisan. It appears to be spoken of as occurring before the feast of the Passover. (John xiii, 1, 2.) Some of the disciples are represented as supposing that Christ told Judas, while they were at supper, to buy what they had need of against the feast, (xiii, 29.) In the night which follows the supper, the Jews will not enter the praetorium lest they should be defiled, and so not be able to "eat the Passover," (xviii, 28.) When our Lord is before Pilate, about to be led out to crucifixion, we are told that it was "the preparation of the Passover," (xix, 14.) After the crucifixion the Jews are solicitous, "because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross upon the Sabbath day, for that Sabbath day was a high day," (xix, 31.) We believe that all of these passages admit of an interpretation which fairly removes the apparent contradiction between John and the other Evangelists. To explain them *here* we deem unnecessary. In defense of the most obvious view, which the synoptic Gospels present, let us bear in mind, 1. That if our Lord had eaten the Paschal Supper

a day earlier, the question of the disciples would imply a proposition to deviate from the legal time, or at least a knowledge of his intention to do so, neither of which could be accounted for, and the message would hardly have been intelligible to the friend at whose house the Lord desired to eat the Passover. 2. A real Paschal Supper — such it is distinctly called by our Lord, (Luke xxii, 15, 16) — could not have been celebrated by our Lord, inasmuch as the priests would not slay the sacrifice in the Temple, except at the legal time. 3. It is difficult to believe that the Lord should have set aside the law, to which he had been obedient during his whole life. This supposition becomes the more improbable when we consider that our Lord was to be brought to his death, in the way of obedience to the law. Had it not been the evening prescribed by the law, he would have had no cause to enter the city, where he knew his enemies were lying in wait for him. — **THE DISCIPLES CAME TO JESUS.** The statements of Matthew and Mark agree exactly. Luke says nothing of the question of the disciples, beginning his narrative with the distinct order which the Lord gave to Peter and John. The disciples took it for granted that their Master would eat the Passover on the day prescribed by the law, and were, in all probability, prevented from mentioning the subject sooner, because they were full of anxiety and fear on account of the announcement which the Lord had made to them, (v. 2.) It is also to be borne in mind that, after the first Passover in Egypt, there is no trace of the lamb having been selected before it was wanted. The Lord himself had no need of being in haste, because he knew very well that his enemies must leave him time and opportunity for this holy meal. Even after his final severance from the people and the Temple, he adheres still to the ancient ordinance, not merely for the sake of instituting the sacrament of the New Testament, but because he will be subject to the law to the very last.

VERSE 18. GO INTO THE CITY. This shows that the Lord was out of the precincts of Jerusalem on the morning of the 14th of Nisan; in all probability at Bethany. — **TO SUCH A MAN AND SAY UNTO HIM.** The Lord did not choose to name him. Mark and Luke record the directions by which the man in question was to be found. The two disciples are told, that immediately on entering the city they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water. Him they were to follow into the house into which he would go. That he was a friend of the Lord, most probably one of his concealed disciples, like Nicodemus or Joseph, we may safely infer from the message the disciples bore to him. There

had, however, no previous engagement been made by the Lord for the room; else he would certainly not have given such directions to the two disciples as we find in Mark and Luke, but would have sent them directly to the house. The supernatural feature of the transaction did not consist in this, that a stranger should have been willing to give his room — for the Jews, not resident in Jerusalem, had, at the time of the Passover, the right to look for gratuitous lodgment and hospitality from the dwellers in the city — but it consisted in the foretelling of the circumstances under which the disciples should meet the man whose room was prepared. It does not become us to inquire into the *purpose* of every miracle which our Lord chose to perform. But who can not see that the provision for this last Passover should have the stamp of Divine dignity and authority? Besides, it is very probable that the Lord spoke so mysteriously to his disciples concerning the place where he should eat the Passover, in order to keep the knowledge of it from Judas for the time being. Whether it had this design or not, the result of the arrangement was, that Judas could not carry out his plan before an advanced hour of the night. Finally, it furnished to the disciples a lesson of faith and obedience, from which they should learn to obey the Lord implicitly, and to leave their future temporal support with him, in whose service they should lack nothing. (Luke xxii, 35.) These revelations of the hidden glory of their Lord were to be to them, at the same time, a counterpoise to that depth of humiliation into which they were soon to see him sink.

THE MASTER [ο διδάσκαλος, the teacher] SAITH, MY TIME IS AT HAND. This can not mean any thing else than my time of suffering and death; but such a message would have been meaningless to any but a disciple, who had before heard something of our Lord's predictions concerning his suffering and death.

§ 68. OUR LORD EATS THE PASSOVER AND POINTS OUT HIS BETRAYER.

Verses 20-25. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 17-21; LUKE xxii, 22; JOHN xiii, 21-30.)

(20) NOW when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. (21) And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. (22) And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? (23) And he answered

and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. (24) The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. (25) Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

VERSE 20. NOW WHEN THE EVEN WAS COME. Luke says: "When the hour was come;" that is, the hour prescribed by law; and Mark: "And in the evening he cometh with the twelve." — **HE SAT DOWN WITH THE TWELVE;** that is, he reclined at the table. From Exodus xii, 11, it has been inferred that the meal of the Passover was taken standing. But this is a mistake. The Mishna says that "the meanest Israelite should recline at the Passover, like a king, with the ease becoming a free man. He was to keep in mind, that when his ancestors stood at the feast, in Egypt they took the posture of slaves."

VERSES 21, 22. AND AS THEY DID EAT [before the institution of the Holy Supper] **HE SAID, VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU.** John adds: "He was troubled in spirit, and testified;" on which passage Stier comments as follows: "The being *troubled in spirit* shows the motive of our Lord's utterance as it regards himself, the *testifying* as it regards the disciples; his own grief will not suffer him to restrain it, while he utters a salutary testimony to them as well as to the future Church which they represented. The disciples also were exceedingly sorrowful, but their emotion is far from reaching the depth and strength of his trouble in spirit. The suffering of our Lord is always and essentially a *sorrow of soul*; it is a divine-human sorrow; for his spirit in the unity of the Eternal Spirit knoweth the abomination of sin as it appears in God's sight. His soul *feels* it also, in this clear and full knowledge, even as men feel — or, rather, as no sinful man can feel it. Thus had he from the beginning suffered much through sin; but now, the sin of men confronts him in its direst, severest form, and is most bitter to him, as exhibited in Judas. All the contradiction of frenzy and hatred, of hypocrisy and malice, of ingratitude and every other bad passion, which, distributed among individuals, had fallen upon, or should fall upon him, was condensed and consummated in this one sinner against him, this wretched traitor. This son of perdition *compels* him — even now when he would refresh his soul by naught but love and blessing, when he was about to

establish the seal and pledge of an accomplished redemption and forgiveness of sins — to retain by anticipation the sin of the one awful exception, condemning him eternally. In this utterance of the deepest feeling, there is *primarily* no consideration of the influence which it ought and must exert upon others; it is a *lamentation* of the Troubled One, who pours out his complaint not merely before God, but also before man in a human manner, as he did afterward in Gethsemane. We should know for our own consolation and instruction that so it was with his spirit; and therefore he *bears this witness*. But *then* there is another element which is never wanting in his self-testimony; the wisdom and love, which regulate all his speaking, show themselves here, as always, as seeking our salvation. The disciples are not only to be fortified against the awful event, when it should take place, by the Lord's foreknowledge of it and submission to it, but — and this is of especial importance to us — they, as being of the same sinful nature, are to be humbled into deeper self-knowledge and penitence by seeing how profoundly the sin of *one among them* bows down their Lord. This is the just interpretation and application of the word which the Church has always held fast. It views the Lord as in this word exhorting to contrition before he celebrates his sacrament; moving the disciples' hearts to humiliation before he institutes his Holy Supper. And there is profound truth in the remark, that St. Paul derived from this *one among you* his impressive rule, *But let a man examine himself!* Is this Judas actually isolated and alone in his sin? Is he not rather the type and forerunner of many who are found in the external fellowship of Jesus, as he was then? Hence his warning figure stands at the introduction of every celebration of the sacrament — 'In the night in which the Lord was *betrayed!*' The lesson taught by Judas may well intermingle its wholesome bitterness with all our Passion-devotions. All this is not 'homiletic application,' and 'edifying remark,' learned readers, but actual exposition of the mind and feeling with which the Lord said: *One of you will betray me.*" — LORD, IS IT I? This question implies a positive denial, equivalent to *It is not I, is it?* Each one — except Judas, who did not speak before he was unmasked by the Lord — knew himself innocent, and was anxious to be cleared from all suspicion by the Lord naming the guilty one. The same form of denial we find in 2 Corinthians vi, 14, 15, 16.

VERSE 23. Most commentators are of the opinion that the answer of the Lord here given is the same as that which John records more fully. (Chap. xiii, 26.) Stier, however, controverts this view, maintaining that the words recorded

by John were spoken after the institution of the Supper, at which Judas was present, and that the Lord, unwilling to give a definite answer to the first and general question, merely repeated in general terms: "*He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me,*" meaning simply, it is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish. But this, as Olshausen justly remarks, would have been no answer to the question of the disciples. Where the words of the institution must be inserted in John, how the several remarks of the Lord concerning Judas followed each other, why we have to adopt the view that Judas withdrew from the rest before the institution of the Supper, and how, according to this view, the apparent discrepancies between Matthew and John can be reconciled — all these points the reader will find explained in John xiii, 23-30. For the present we refer the reader to our Synoptical Table, and to note on verse 25.

VERSE 24. On this verse Stier has a very extended and profound comment. Instead of following him in the whole train of his thoughts, we deem it more profitable to give the best points of his discussion in a different order, connecting them with the words to which they specially refer. — THE SON OF MAN GOETH AS IT IS WRITTEN OF HIM. "In these words are wrapped up all those thoughts of peace, and not of evil, which the Most High has thought toward the children of men, to bring the good end which was expected by all who, in the longing of penitence and faith, waited for it. (Jer. xxix, 11.) Hence all the main crises of that wonder of all wonders, of the redeeming passion of Christ, were written down before; and the event signified by this emphatic *as* — the betrayal by one of his chosen ones — was recorded too, as it was ordained. (Comp. Acts ii, 23; iv, 28.) Nothing can break or disturb this predetermined counsel of God; all hell, and its power in humanity, is impotent against it, even as the desperate malice of Judas fails to disturb the repose and confidence of our Lord. He abides sublimely elevated above that man's evil will, for he submits to his permitted deed as obedient to the good-will of God, and goes on his plainly marked-out way. He knows that even this, like all evil, will be turned to good, and that thus will be effected the saving of the world. But though it is right before God that the carrying out of the wicked purpose should be permitted, it is not the less right before God that the wicked purpose should bear its guilt." — BUT WOE. "The transition of thought can not be better expressed than it is in the Hirschberg Bible: 'However patiently I suffer this, however little God will hinder it, however certainly it was foreseen

and fore-announced that I should be betrayed by my own disciple — yet, fearful is the woe which will fall upon him; for it is not the fore-announcement which caused him to commit this damning sin; his own voluntary malignity, foreseen only by the all-knowing God, has driven him to this tremendous crime.' As the Divine counsel, which orders all things beforehand, is not disturbed by the wicked purpose which arises, so also God's justice, which condemns the sinner, is not invaded or neutralized by the permissive appointment. All that which *comes to pass* stands under the will of God. The energies of nature, without will and without organic power of their own, all work, down to the slightest, only according to the will of the Creator, imminent in his own creation. But in the personal creature, invested with free will, in humanity, we must carefully distinguish between *occurrence* and *act*, between *effect* and *will*. Whatever comes to pass, as far as it is event and result, belongs to the Divine direction, in which the Lord *turns* the thoughts of the people to such and such *results* as his own thoughts will. Thus all must serve God; and thus Judas, who least of all understood the Divine purpose of redemption, is an eminent instrument in its accomplishment; a man, *by means* of whom something takes place which was to take place, and as it was to take place. *His purpose*, nevertheless, meant it very differently when he became the betrayer of Jesus; and this his *act*, as such, falls, therefore, as certainly under the Divine *imputation* as the *event* falls under the arrangements of Divine *Providence*. There is no room here for finding an excuse in predestination, based upon prescience. Ten thousand times does this interweaving of Divine foresight and the imputation of guilt, this combination of certainty and freedom, the one not affecting the other, occur in history; indeed, the providential government of the world is the perpetual exhibition of this deep mystery." — **UNTO THAT MAN BY WHOM THE SON OF MAN IS BETRAYED.** "The Lord significantly calls him a *man*; he was *born as man*, sinful, indeed, but susceptible of truth and love, and therefore of salvation — but now he has become incapable of salvation, because impervious to Him who is the truth, and who is love. God in man had been so near and manifest to him in the person of this Son of man, that he can not be regarded as having done evil *only* against the Son of man; that which the Lord says generally concerning the Jews, in John xv, 22-25, applies to him as an apostle in the highest degree. He resisted the truth as a hypocrite, love only hardened him, from a chosen and trusted one he becomes a traitor, and delivers his Lord and Master over to the enemies, who sought his death — for that miserable earnest-money. He can

hear the woe with which redeeming love bewails him, and yet daringly ask: *Is it I?* In the holiness of the Godman there was nothing which could furnish any excuse — as in the case of man's sinning against sinful man; his hatred of Jesus thereby passes over the human limit into the devilish. *Woe to that man* — he was born a man, but he has ceased to be one, and has become a *devil.*" — **IT HAD BEEN GOOD FOR THAT MAN IF HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN.** "This word closes eternally the door of hope; it precludes all thought of an ultimate salvation, or if there were a restoration of his soul in the distant revolutions of ages, it would be good for him to have been born. Mark how even the redeeming power of the blood of Christ finds its limit where the Satanic domain begins and penetrates the human; and that there is an actual abyss, on the edge of which all sinners walk, the end of that which had its beginning in man's fall, and into which all those must sink who give no entrance to redeeming grace. — The Lord does not say, *It would have been better if that man had not been born;* for this would imply — better absolutely, and would border on that forbidden question, which invades the region of unexplained mystery, Why, then, did God permit him to be born? The Lord's word, 'It would be good for that man,' avoids all liability to such application. It would be good to him, *as he will feel and wish it eternally.* This includes a direct refutation of the annihilation of the damned. — But is this judgment of the Lord upon Judas — with all the majestic calmness of the eternal righteousness of God in which it is spoken, and in his humanity, according to the love of God incarnate in him — a cold and rigorous judgment of a condemned enemy, bereft of all sympathy and feeling? Far be it! Rather is it the most affecting and melting *lamentation of love* which feels the woe as much as holiness requires or will admit. As the sin of men is Christ's grief generally, so specifically is here the unlimited sin of the traitor, and his consequent unbounded condemnation. The woe pronounced upon this man becomes the personal grief of his own high-priestly heart, as the Son of man, and 'this man is a sorrow to him, back to his very birth' — as Lange beautifully says. Yes, verily, this is the inmost meaning of the last lamentation, in which we hear the last cry of a love which goes in sympathy with the lost one to the extremest limits of mercy, where he must be abandoned forever."

VERSE 25. THEN JUDAS SAID, MASTER, IS IT I? "The terrific woe had sounded into his deaf ears without making any impression, or producing any terror. He remained cold and immovable, blind, deaf, and feeling less in his

cherished purpose; insensible to the thunders of judgment impending in the *woe*, and to the mercy which shone upon the cloud in the lamenting, '*it had been good for that man.*' Just as if he had not heard the sentence of woe, he adds to the rest, with consummate hypocrisy, *his own delayed, Is it I?* He intended it to be like theirs; but there is a difference which is hardly accidental. The others humbly addressed Jesus, *Lord*, (*Kύριε*;) that word does not pass the traitor's lips, but instead of it he uses the cold and ceremonious *Master*, (*Rabbi.*) The other disciples are still absorbed in thought, pondering the meaning of the word of Jesus just spoken; on that account they do not observe the question which Judas takes that opportunity of pronouncing half aloud." (Stier.) From the disciples not knowing the design of Judas at his going away, (John xiii, 28,) we must infer that the Lord, as well as Judas, spoke in a low tone of voice, which might easily have escaped the ears of the other apostles. — THOU HAST SAID — a form of affirmation similar to that afterward used to Caiaphas; it is equivalent to, Thou knowest it — why dost thou ask? What lofty calmness and silent majesty!

§ 69. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

As there were two sacraments divinely ordained under the old dispensation, so Christ instituted also two for his Church. The sacraments of the New Testament, *Christian baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*, perfectly correspond with those of the Old Testament, *circumcision* and *the Passover*. Though differing in form yet they are designed to express the same fundamental ideas. The relation between the rites of circumcision and Christian baptism we shall set forth in our remarks on chap. xxviii, 16-20. To obtain a right apprehension of the significance and design of the Lord's Supper, which was instituted at the celebration of the Passover, we must understand rightly the significance and design of the latter, which has been most comprehensively set forth by Dr. Ebrard in his work, "Das Dogma vom heiligen Abendmahl." We shall here, by way of preparation, give only the leading points. While, by the previously-ordained rite of circumcision, the Israelites had received a general title to the blessings of the covenant, the Passover, afterward instituted in connection with their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, was evidently designed to point out that upon which the blessings of that covenant depended, the expiation of sin by the shedding of blood. The Paschal lamb was, as Stier

remarks, the first legal sacrifice in that special Divine economy which then had its commencement — the representative of all the sacrificial victims which were afterward slain. A lamb without blemish had to be killed as a propitiatory sacrifice; where the destroying angel saw the blood of the lamb, he did not require the blood of the first-born. But the typical signification of the Passover did not end there. The slaying of the lamb was not sufficient; it was to be eaten; that is, it was to be appropriated by the theocratic people as food; and as the slaying of that sacrificial lamb without blemish was a type of the atoning death of the sinless Lamb of God on Calvary, by which alone guilty man can be spared, so its appropriation and assimilation by eating is a type of the personal and vital union between Christ, the true atoning sacrifice, and the recipient of the atonement. The eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine in the new covenant is, as was the eating of the Lamb in the Old Testament, a Divinely-ordained means, by which the propitiatory sacrifice is to be appropriated. — The first Passover was enjoined upon the Israelites as the condition of deliverance from destruction by the avenging angel, which deliverance is a type of our redemption from the curse of the law. The Israelites, at the first celebration of the Passover, virtually confessed, by slaying the lamb, their death-deserving guilt, and, at the same time, they expressed their confidence that the destroying angel would spare them, on account of the blood of the sacrificial lamb. Furthermore, the Passover was to be annually repeated as a memorial of their gracious deliverance in Egypt. Throughout the whole Old Testament the deliverance of the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt stands forth as the highest exhibition of the covenant-grace of Jehovah. Even when God first entered into a covenant with Abraham, (Gen. xv, 13,) the promise of the deliverance of his descendants from bondage that should last four hundred years, was a type and earnest of the deliverance from the bondage of Satan by the promised Redeemer in the new covenant. To this great deliverance the Lord referred when he gave the law, (Ex. xx, 2,) and subsequently, whenever he reproved his covenant-people as their King, or gave them new commands, or added new promises. Indeed, with the prophets, the hope of the coming Messianic salvation appears ever under the similitude of the exodus from Egypt. (Amos ix, 14; Hos. ix, 10; xi, 1-11; Micah vi, 3, 4; vii, 15; Isa. xi, 11, 15.) Before eating of the Paschal lamb, the significant words were to be said: "This is the Passover — sparing — of the Lord." What else could this mean than, "This is the pledge and condition of the Lord's sparing us." Whoever eats of this lamb will be spared. Thus the Paschal lamb was for

every Israelite not only a memorial of the deliverance of his people from the Egyptian bondage, but also a confession of his own personal need of the grace of the covenant and of his faith in the same, and for this very reason a pledge and seal of his share in the propitiating, sparing, and sin-pardoning grace of the covenant. This was the meaning and force of the Passover, through all centuries up to the time of Christ. Throughout this whole period the eating and assimilating of this propitiatory sacrifice was the type of the personal appropriation of the real propitiation to be made by Jesus Christ, till at length the real Paschal Lamb appeared, and instituted the Supper of the New Testament in his blood, in place of the Old Testament Passover.

A full exposition of the significance of the Lord's Supper the reader will find in the exegetical notes. Here we will only premise some general remarks of Van Oosterzee, by way of introduction. "What adorable wisdom," he says, "does the institution of the Eucharist display! By it the disciples, who, in spite of the repeated, plain declarations of their Master, could not realize the possibility of his death, should now learn to look upon this very death, so offensive to them, in the consoling light of being necessary for the remission of sin; yea, he enjoins upon them a constant memorial of it, by which they are to be most intimately united not only with their Lord, but also among themselves, and with all believers of all times to come. Anticipating with unerring certainty his approaching suffering, he speaks with equal assurance of its saving effects. In his self-forgetting love to his disciples, his wisdom devises a means to strengthen their faith, love, and hope, and to found an institution that has for its object the preservation, union, and development of his Church for all coming times. But that the Lord's Supper, designed as it is to unite all true believers in the bonds of the tenderest affection, should have been made the occasion of the most violent contentions, is certainly one of the saddest phenomena in the history of the Christian Church. How painful is it to see the apple of discord thrown upon the table of love! The only consoling reflection is the truth that the blessings intended by the Supper are not conditioned by the interpretation of the words of its institution. O, that all Christians would agree in this, that, in partaking of this sacrament, they have not only a symbolical representation of Christ's death, but a real communication of Christ himself to them in all the fullness of his redeeming love!"

The chronological order of the incidents connected with the Paschal Supper presents considerable, but not insurmountable, difficulties which have

their origin mainly in this, that John omits the institution of the Lord's Supper, and that Luke, who gives the Passion history not with the same chronological exactness as the other Evangelists, puts the strife of the disciples, as well as what the Lord said about the traitor, inducing him thereby to withdraw, *after* the institution of the Supper, in order, as it would seem, to make the contrast between the words of the Lord and the mood of the disciples the more prominent. The particulars the reader will find in Luke and in our Synoptical Table. Here it may suffice to remark that we believe, 1. That the Paschal Supper was preceded by the feet-washing recorded by John alone, and this again by the dispute of the disciples for pre-eminence, recorded by Luke alone; (in our notes on John xiii, 2, 4, we shall show that this passage, if correctly translated, is not against this view;) 2. That the going away of Judas, recorded by John, (xiii, 30,) took place before the institution of the Eucharist; and, 3. That the discourses of our Lord, recorded by John alone, were spoken in Judas's absence, partly in the hall, partly on the way to Gethsemane.

Verses 26-30. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 22-26; LUKE xxii, 19, 20; 1 COR. xi, 23-26.)

(26) AND as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. (27) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; (28) for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (29) But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. (30) And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

VERSE 26. AND AS THEY WERE EATING. Most commentators give from rabbinical commentaries detailed descriptions of the complicated ceremonies which the Jews observed at the paschal meal, explanatory of this section. But these rabbinical writings do not agree in all details, and we do not know what portions of them were prescribed and observed at the times of our Savior. Besides we have no reason to suppose that the Lord observed those manifold traditions of the elders, which lacked the Divine sanction, and were

mostly very trivial. We shall state, therefore, only the principal portions of the order observed on the occasion in question to which the Evangelists themselves refer in their statements. 1. As an introduction to the meal, the head of the family took a cup of wine — generally red wine, mixed with some water, was used — gave thanks in the words, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine," drank of it first, and then gave it to all that reclined at the meal. Of this first cup Luke (xxii, 17) evidently speaks. 2. Then followed the eating of the bitter herbs, dipped in vinegar or salt water, in remembrance of the hardships which their fathers suffered in Egypt; then the festive viands were served, among which was a highly-spiced sauce, called charoset, into which the bread was dipped. To this we have to refer what Matthew states in verses 21-25, and during this part of the meal the history of the first Passover (Ex. xii, 26, 27) was related and explained. The 113th and 114th Psalms were read, and the second cup was passed round. 3. Now the meal proper commenced. The head of the family took two of the unleavened, thin, flat cakes, broke one of them, laid it on the unbroken, and gave thanks — "Blessed be thou, O Lord, who bringest forth bread out of the earth!" After this the paschal lamb and the other viands were eaten. Then the third cup, called the cup of blessing, was passed, and Psalms cxv-cxviii were sung. Afterward they drank of a fourth cup, which closed the feast, if there was no time left to say the second Hallel, Psalms cxxix-cxxxvii, when the fifth and last cup was drank. The question now arises, whether the Lord observed the whole order up to the third cup inclusive, and broke the bread again after the third cup, in order to institute the New Testament sacrament; or whether he instituted it at the customary breaking of the bread — instead of using the words: "This is the bread of misery, which our fathers ate in Egypt," (words not ordered by God to be spoken) — speaking the words, "This is my body," with reference to the express command, (Ex. xii, 26,) "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover" — for which the strong expression was also used: "This is the body of the Lord's Passover?" If we assign this position to the words of the institution, their significance appears in the clearest light. By saying in this connection, "This is my body," the Savior declares plainly that they should hereafter no more eat the body of the Passover in remembrance of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, but that he substituted for it this bread, emblematical of his body, typified by the paschal lamb, which is now to be given to purchase a spiritual deliverance and eternal salvation for his people. "To us it seems a discordant thought," says Stier, "that the Lord should first complete the shadowy and typical ceremony — the interpretation of which

must have been pressed throughout upon his spirit — and then, quite independently of the preceding solemnity, *once more* break the bread. We confidently believe that here, where the Old and New Testament institutions met in one, they must have passed into each other; consequently, that the Lord uttered his '*This is*' instead of that customary one which would otherwise have been spoken. And in this supposition we are confirmed by the record of St. Luke and St. Paul, according to which the cup was taken *after supper*. Consequently, as we understand it, the word which now elevated the *bread* into the body of the sacrificial meal, belonged still to the paschal eating — not so, however, what followed. With this it is in accordance that the cup, which Jesus now gives them, was in the stead of the customary third cup, the cup of blessing; for this did not follow till the lamb was wholly consumed, and no man might eat any thing after it. *After* the word concerning 'the blood shed' no man drank even any thing more; that which usually took place after the third cup was not observed, and the sublime discourses of our Lord took the place of the usual continuance of their companionship into the night." — JESUS TOOK THE BREAD. Why our Lord did not make the flesh or the body of the paschal lamb, which had typified his propitiatory sacrifice, but bread and wine the symbols of his broken body and of his shed blood, may easily be conceived. We are taught thereby, 1. That in the new covenant all typical sacrifices of animals were to cease. This the Rabbins seem to have anticipated, since they said: "When the Messiah comes, after the order of Melchisedek, all animal sacrifices will cease, and only the offering of bread and wine will remain." 2. That the Holy Supper or Eucharist is neither a repetition of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ once made, nor a carnal eating of his body once offered for us — as the Church of Rome teaches — but an appropriation of the merit of his death, consequently a spiritual union with the living Christ. 3. Bread and wine constituted already a part of the Paschal Supper, and answered fully the purpose of the covenant feast of the New Testament. While the red juice of, the grape represents most vividly the blood of Christ shed for the remission of our sins, bread — this universal and indispensable food for man — is the fittest emblem of the flesh, of which the Lord had said (John vi) that he should give it for the life of the world. For as the natural bread satisfies the wants of the mortal body, and imparts strength to it, so the vicarious sacrifice is the bread which alone can impart life to, and satisfy the longings of the immortal soul after salvation. See more on this subject in the explanation of the words of the institution. — AND BLESSED IT. The word used by Matthew and Mark

(εὐλογεῖν) may also be translated by "giving thanks," as Luther has rendered it. Luke and Paul use a word (εὐχαριστεῖν) which means only to give thanks. But the two meanings fully coincide. Thanksgiving for the bread effects a blessing of the bread. "That our Lord did not adhere *simply* and *fully* to the customary ritual-prayer, although connecting his word and act with it," says Stier, "is plain from the new significance of this bread, the consecration of which required a new and free expression. The old form of prayer and thanksgiving referred merely to the bread of the earth, but the Lord contemplates and consecrates by his prayer himself in this bread, the gift of heaven for the life of the world, as Grotius says: 'At this time and place he poured out his thanksgiving, not for the old creation and its gifts alone, but also for the new creation for the sake of which he came into the world — for the redemption of the world now contemplated as accomplished. He can *give thanks* by anticipation, for he beholds his body already broken like this bread; he gives himself thus to his disciples for their life. All this lays the foundation for the profound sense in which the whole sacrament has from the beginning been called the *Eucharist*.'" — AND BRAKE IT. The breaking of the bread was a symbolical act to represent his violent death, the breaking, that is, the killing of his body. If the breaking of the bread had been nothing else than the mere means of distributing it among the disciples, it is very singular that the three Evangelists and Paul relate this act so minutely. There was no need of stating that the bread had to be broken before it was handed around. But Paul's language puts this question at rest; he says, "This is my body, which is *broken* for you," in place of Luke's "This is my body, which is *given* for you," and describes the sacrament as consisting of "the cup of blessing" and "the bread, which we break." Moreover, in Acts ii, 42, the Lord's Supper is called a "breaking of bread." The objection that this "could not have been a fit emblem of his death, since, according to John xix, 36, no bone of his was broken," is not valid; for in Hebrew, "breaking" meant not only the destruction of this or that member of the body, but it was synonymous with "killing." Equally unfounded is the objection: "If the breaking of the bread had a symbolical meaning, an analogous outpouring of the wine would have been necessary," since this objection loses sight of the fact, that the mere use of the wine along with the bread was a symbol of the blood shed by violence. — AND GAVE IT TO THE DISCIPLES AND SAID. The words of the institution are recorded by three Evangelists, and the apostle Paul. When we collate them, they read as follows: *Take, eat, (Matthew, Mark, Paul;) this is my body,*

(Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul,) *which is given for you*, (Luke,) *which is broken for you*, (Paul;) *this do in remembrance of me*, (Luke and Paul;) *drink ye all of it*, (Matthew; Mark says: He gave it [the cup] to them, and they *all drank of it*;) *this is my blood of the new testament*, (Matthew, Mark;) *this cup is the new testament in my blood*, (Luke and Paul;) *which is shed for many for the remission of sins*, (Matthew; Mark omits, For the remission of sins; Luke has, *Which is shed for you*; Paul omits this clause.) *This do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*, (Paul.)" How are we to explain this verbal discrepancy? It seems to us one of the strongest proofs against the theory of verbal dictation by the Holy Spirit. For, if ever the inspired penmen recorded the exact words, as spoken at the time and verbally dictated to them by the Holy Spirit, this would be the case with the solemn words with which the Lord instituted the sacrament of the new covenant. The advocates of the verbal-inspiration theory suppose that the Lord repeated the words of the institution several times, and now turning to the side of John, now to that of Peter, changed the words by way of explanation. But this supposition seems to us forced and unnecessary. As omissions of events and abbreviations of discourses by one or the other writer, do by no means conflict with the idea of inspiration, it is much more natural to suppose that the Holy Ghost did not dictate to the sacred penmen the exact words, but only recalled to their remembrance their true meaning. The sacred writers do not contradict each other in the manner of quoting the words of Christ. Their differences serve only to bring out their full meaning, which they received through the Holy Spirit.—**TAKE, EAT.** As the bread is the symbol of the body of Christ, in so far as it is given for our redemption, so is also the eating of this bread the symbol of the personal appropriation of this redemption. By saying to his disciples, and through them to all his followers of all times to come, "*take*," he designates the act of receiving and eating as a spiritual act, dependent on the individual's free self-determination and faith. Overlooking this, some have taken this "*take*" for a compulsory imperative, and have deduced from it the doctrine, "That whoever eats with his mouth the bread, and drinks the cup, receives the true body of Christ and eats it; if unworthily and unbelievingly, to his own damnation." — **THIS IS.** The word "*is*," the copula between the subject "*this*" (**τοῦτο**) and the predicate "*my body*," has, strangely enough, given rise to the most violent and protracted theological controversy. Without laying much weight on the fact that in the Hebrew, which our Lord most probably used in the institution of his Supper, there is no copula, and that in Greek, and, in fact,

in nearly all languages, the copula "is" often denotes mere comparison, (see Ex. xi, 12; John xv, 1; Gal. iv, 24; Heb. x, 20,) let us examine the various meanings which the copula "is" can possibly have, according to the fixed laws of language: I. Both the Church of Rome and the Lutheran Church ascribe to the copula "is" the meaning of *real substantiality*; although with regard to the *mode* of this substantiality Luther differs from the Church of Rome as much as those who take the copula in a figurative sense. The Church of Rome teaches: "Christ says plainly and distinctly of that which he hands to his apostles, that it is his body, and this involves the proposition that it is no longer bread." But this proposition is in diametrical opposition to 1 Corinthians x, 16; xi, 26, 27, 28, where "the bread that we break" is still called bread; and it is quite inconceivable that the Lord should have understood by the elements of the bread and wine which he gave to his disciples the material parts of his own living body. A misapprehension of this kind was not only impossible on the part of the disciples, at the institution of this sacrament, but the Lord has also precluded it with reference to any subsequent celebration, by adding, "Which is given or broken for you," and "that is shed for you." Upon this literal, self-contradictory interpretation of the copula, the Church of Rome has built the monstrous dogmas: 1. That her priests have the power to change, by the words of consecration, the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, although the accidents, such as shape, color, taste, etc., remain unchanged; 2. That the body and blood of Christ, under the species of bread and wine, must be constantly offered up again for the remission of sins; 3. That the body of the Lord is indissolubly joined to the once-consecrated wafer, and is, therefore, to be worshiped, even independently of the sacramental act. Against the Popish dogma of the transubstantiation, or change of the elements into the real body of Christ, Luther strongly protested, contending, however, at the same time, that the copula "is" must be understood to express real substantiality, and laying down the following proposition: Christ predicates of the subject of the sentence, the bread, that it is his body; what he handed to his disciples was, therefore, *at the same time*, bread and his body, or, in other words, the body and blood of Christ — in their glorified state, of which more will be said hereafter — are substantially present in the sacrament, and are orally partaken of by all communicants *in, with, and under* the bread and wine. This is called *consubstantiation*. But this interpretation, viewed from a purely-philological stand-point, is untenable, because it involves a direct self-contradiction to predicate of a certain concrete

thing, (bread,) that it is another concrete thing, (the body,) unless we mentally supply the words, "*at the same time*" — the bread is at the same time bread and the body of Christ — which, however, is not said in the text, and by which the strictly-literal sense is relinquished. Let the reader bear in mind, that the question *here* is not whether the proposition that Christ is locally in the bread and wine, is reconcilable with reason, but simply whether we are at liberty, *according to the laws of language*, to attribute this sense to the words of Christ. It is a settled law of language and thinking, that the copula never and nowhere declares two different, existing things to be identical; and this law is recognized by those, also, who maintain that what is given in the Lord's Supper is, at the same time, bread and wine and the flesh and blood of Christ, inasmuch as they assume only the co-existence of the body of Christ and of bread, not the identity of both. It is, therefore, entirely illogical to assert that, because the language is not figurative, the copula must be presumed to identify the subject and the predicate. The antecedent of this inference is not only not proved, but refuted by a settled law of language and thinking. We see, therefore, that, apart from all other reasons, the copula "is," in its grammatical and logical relation, can not be understood in its strictly-literal sense of real substantiality; hence, the question arises: II. *Which other sense can the copula have?* It may have two other meanings. 1. This (bread) signifies my body, is an emblem of my body, given into death, that is, of my vicarious death. This is the Zuinglian view. 2. This (bread) is the pledge of my body, given into death for the remission of sins; that is, he who receives the bread receives with it the blessings flowing from my atoning death. These two views lead to the question: What have we to understand by the predicate, MY BODY? That our Savior could not understand by it his natural body, as the Church of Rome teaches, has been shown already. The Lutheran dogma is, that the Lord speaks here of his body with reference to its glorified state. But this interpretation is inconsistent with the addition, "which is given for you" — according to Luke; or, "that is broken for you" — according to Paul. For, 1. The forgiveness of sins rests upon the vicarious death, not upon the eating of the glorified body of Christ. 2. Christ could not possibly intend to speak of his body as glorified, because his body was as yet not glorified, and his disciples could not have understood him. The idea of a twofold material body of Christ — the one sitting before them while they ate the other — must have been astounding to them; and if the words of their Master had suggested this idea to their minds, they would certainly have expressed their astonishment, and requested an

explanation, as they were wont to do. 3. If the Lord spoke of his glorified body, how are, then, the words to be understood: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins?" What are we to understand by the glorified blood? The glorified blood would be included in the glorified body. Thus we see again that the expression, "this is my body," can not mean the literal body of Christ, whether glorified or natural, and we are forced to take the words in a symbolical sense. — In order to understand the words of the institution of the New Testament sacrament correctly, we have to take up once more the consideration of the Old Testament sacrament. As the paschal lamb was simply a type of the future and only sacrifice for the sins of the world, and the passing by of the destructive angel simply a type of the New Testament redemption from spiritual and eternal death, so Christ, *contrasting himself with the paschal lamb*, declares, *in the first place*, that his death is the real atonement, not a merely-typical atonement, like the Passover. That he would give his life as a ransom for the sins of the world, that he would be violently put to death, and that his death would be a sacrificial death, our Lord had often intimated to his disciples, but they could not comprehend it; and it can not be denied that, during his public ministry, he did not make the doctrine of his propitiatory death as prominent as his disciples did after his death and ascension. But the time had now come, clearly, fully, and solemnly, to disclose to them the fundamental doctrine of the atonement by his death, and to impress it indelibly, not only upon his apostles, but also upon all that, through their word, should believe in him for all future times. He did so at the last Passover, whose significance the disciples well understood, by declaring his death to be the fulfillment of what was typified by the paschal lamb. He speaks of his body as to be given into death. He makes his body the central point of the New Testament Passover, the fountain of atonement. It is, therefore, the atonement by the death of Christ in which we have to seek the nature and design of the Lord's Supper. When the Lord said, "This is my body, which is given for you," it is as much as if he had said, *This bread signifies my body, prefigured by the paschal lamb.* The bread is an emblem of Christ, the heavenly manna, the broken bread a symbol of the crucified body of Christ, the wine an emblem of the shed blood of Christ. The act of eating and drinking is a symbolical act, expressive of the truth *that the participation in an atonement can be obtained only through an essential union with the atoning sacrifice.* This idea was prefigured in the Passover; for the death of the lamb did not suffice; the slain lamb had to be eaten. The individual Israelite had his life spared at the

first Passover in Egypt, and shared at subsequent Passovers all the covenanted mercies of his people only by eating and assimilating to himself the lamb whose blood had been spilt for his atonement. Now, as the death of the paschal lamb was only a type of the death of Christ, so was the eating of the lamb a type of the real life-communion which we must sustain to Christ who has died for us. *The typical lamb entered, as material food, into a merely-bodily union with the Israelite; Christ, the true propitiatory sacrifice, enters into a personal, spiritual, union with the believer.* That the Lord did not understand, by the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine, a partaking of either his natural or glorified body, but of the atonement made by his death, he had plainly declared before in his discourse at Capernaum. (John vi.) But as the Passover was not only an emblem and type of the future redemption through Jesus Christ, but also a *pledge* and *seal* of the blessings of the old covenant, so bread and wine are not only an emblem of the death of Christ, but a *pledge* and *seal* of the New Testament redemption, which consists in a personal life-union with Christ, who is the sacrifice for our sins and the food for our souls. Just as in the words, "This [lamb] is the Passover of the Lord," (Ex. xii, 11.) the typical redemption is figuratively predicated of the lamb so Christ predicates of his body, figuratively represented by bread and wine, the actual deliverance from sin through his death. The lamb was not the *act* of the Lord's passing over, [sparing,] but it was the pledge and seal for the Israelite of being spared. So bread and wine are not the real body and blood of Christ, but a pledge and seal of redemption by his death. This interpretation is confirmed by inspired authority, Paul and Luke interpreting the words, "This is my blood of the new testament," by the words, "This is the new testament in my blood;" that is, the new covenant, made in or by my blood, not by the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices. According to this, the Lord, by saying, "This is my body, which is broken for you," doubtless intended to say, "This is the new covenant, made in or by my broken body, not by the body of the Old Testament sacrifices." When we consider the Lord's Supper and the Passover as covenant acts, we must not overlook that both ordinances were intended for those only that were already in a covenant relation with God, and desired a continual renewal of this covenant. As he only could partake of the paschal lamb who, by the rite of circumcision, had been received into the old covenant, so in the new covenant the communicant ought to have become a member of Christ's body, the Church, not only by the rite of baptism, but also by faith. Even the words, "for you," imply that the proper recipients of this sacrament are such as

trust in the vicarious death of Christ as the only ground of their reconciliation with God. The Lord's Supper can be a pledge and seal of the new covenant only to those who are actually in covenant relation with God. As regards those who were never convicted of their sins, and do not feel their need of salvation, or those who once knew Christ as their Redeemer, but are now apostatized, and yet presume to partake of the Lord's Supper with an impenitent and unbelieving heart, these receive nothing but bread and wine, and the apostle declares (1 Cor. xi, 27-29) that he who does not discern the Lord's body from common food is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; that is, as long as he continues in this state he is adding to all his sins, that can be forgiven only through the death of Christ, the guilt of rejecting the only atoning sacrifice, and thus "eats and drinks damnation unto himself," just as he that rejects the Gospel converts that which is in itself a savor of life unto life into a savor of death unto death. — Thus we have seen that the Lord's Supper is not only a symbolic rite commemorative of the vicarious death of Christ, but also a covenant act *by which we are to appropriate to ourselves all the benefits of the atonement, and perpetuate our personal, vital union with Christ*, which union is symbolically represented by partaking of the elements. We are in the Lord's Supper not merely to call Christ to our remembrance, *as if he were absent*; for then it would only be a means of strengthening the Christian's faith in the vicarious death of Christ, and of inciting him to greater love of the Savior, and there would be no essential difference between it and the preaching of the Gospel, or any other means of grace. According to this view it is not Christ that comes to meet the believer, imparting himself to him, but it is the believer, ascending, as it were, to heaven, and bringing Christ down; but thus the ordinance loses the nature and design of a *sacrament*. This is the defective side of the Zuinglian view, to which Luther objected. But he went to the other more erroneous extreme, by affirming that the sacramental union with Christ takes place independently of the co-operation of the communicant solely by means of the consecrating words first uttered by Christ and repeated in the consecration of the elements by the officiating minister. This view ascribes to the consecrated elements the power of imparting to the communicant Christ's body and blood, the moment he receives the bread and wine, whether he be a believer or not, while the saving or damning effect of the reception of Christ's body and blood is said to depend upon the character of the communicant. There is, however, a truth both on the side of Zwingle and on that of Luther. Exegetically Zwingle was in the right against Luther in this, that the elements

undergo no change in their nature by the words of consecration, but remain in themselves, afterward as before, bread and wine; but Luther was right against Zwingle in insisting upon it that the Lord's Supper is more than a *mere memorial*. The Lord imparts himself in the sacrament to the communicant, not, indeed, as Luther maintained, by mysteriously uniting his glorified body with the bread and wine, but so that the whole God-man reveals and communicates himself to the believer in all his life-giving and saving power. It is true that this self-communication of Christ is not confined to the Lord's Supper, but commences as soon as we enter into a personal, vital union with Christ through regeneration, and is continued as long as we do not drive Christ out of the heart by willful apostasy. But the specific difference between other manifestations of Christ's presence in the heart, and that which takes place through the sacrament, is this, that in the latter the Lord guarantees to the believing communicant a new communication of his full salvation so positively *that no room is left for any doubt*. As the Israelite received a new assurance of his share in the blessings of the covenant as often as he, by eating the paschal lamb, appropriated to himself the typical sacrifice, so the personal, vital union into which true believers have entered with Christ by appropriating to themselves the benefits of his propitiatory death, is renewed, sealed and strengthened as often as they partake of the emblems of his broken body and shed blood. This very idea the apostle expresses when he says: "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x, 16.) As there can be no other appropriation of the merits of Christ's death than through a personal, vital union with Christ, so there can be no other vital union with the living Christ, than that which is founded upon the appropriation of his atonement made through his death. *The having a part in the death of Christ and the personal, vital union with Christ condition each other. This cardinal truth* is the central idea of the doctrine on the Lord's Supper. In the solemn moments of the last meal which he partook with his disciples, and which he introduced by some remarks concerning his impending bodily separation from them, the Lord designed to seal sacramentally, that is, by a visible sign, the personal, vital union with him, into which the believer enters through faith in his atoning death. This significance and design of the sacrament has not been sufficiently appreciated, and this remark applies, indeed, to all those passages of the New Testament which speak of the real, though spiritual, self-communication of Christ to the believer. Christ calls himself the vine and his followers the

branches; he says that he will come with the Father to those that love him, and dwell with them, that he will be in them as the Father is in him; again he says, he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him. The apostle speaks of the same personal, vital union of the believer with the Son of God when he says, (Eph. v, 30-32,) "We are of his flesh, and of his bones," and when he applies the Scriptural declaration, that husband and wife shall be one flesh, to the relation existing between Christ and his Church; when he says, (1 Cor. vi, 15, 17,) "Your bodies are the members of Christ," and, "He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit;" or when he says of himself, that he no longer lives, but that Christ lives in him, and again, that Christ changes his followers into his own image from glory to glory, and that the believer's life is hid with Christ in God. This inmost, real, and personal union between Christ and the believer is sealed, renewed, and strengthened whenever he partakes worthily of the Lord's Supper. This is beautifully expressed by the Catechism of the Palatinate in the following words: "What is it to eat the broken body of Christ, and to drink his shed blood? It is not only to appropriate to ourselves, with believing hearts, the suffering and death of Christ, and obtain thereby forgiveness of sin and eternal life, but also to give thanks *through the Holy Ghost*, that dwelleth both in Christ and in us, and by him to become more and more united with his blessed body; so that, although he is in heaven and we upon earth, we are nevertheless flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones, receiving life from, and being governed by, *one* spirit, as the members of one body are by the soul." — THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. These words, recorded only by Paul and Luke, contain the command to celebrate henceforth the Lord's Supper in the place of the Passover, and they indicate plainly that whatever objective influence may be ascribed to the sacrament — that is, whatever Christ does in the sacrament for the believer — it is nevertheless conditioned by the subjective act of the communicant. Those who speak so harshly and contemptuously of the view that the Supper is only a *commemorative* rite of Christ's death, ought to bear in mind that, according to the inspired testimony of Paul and Luke, Christ himself expressly and prominently makes the *commemoration* of his death a design of the sacrament; hence their severe censures fall back upon its founder. On the other hand, it midst not be overlooked that even in the Old Testament it has a deep meaning of reality, when God speaks of recording his name in a place, when he says of that place, (Ex. xx, 24:) "I will come unto thee and bless thee." Thus, if we remember him truly, he will surely remember us by coming to us to bless us.

The same idea is expressed by the declaration of the apostle Paul: "*Ye do show the Lord's death*" — or imperatively taken, "*shew the Lord's death*," since **καταγγέλλετε** can be both indicative and imperative. The communicants at the Lord's table testify to each other and to the world, that they have part in the atonement, and, therefore, in the life of Christ; and through them the testimony and confession of the Church are continued "until he come."

VERSE 27. AND HE TOOK THE CUP. Although the definite article is wanting before "cup" in Matthew, according to some good manuscripts, yet its use by Paul and Luke, *in loco*, is beyond any doubt; and the cup spoken of is undoubtedly the third cup, which was also called "the cup of blessing or thanksgiving." (1 Cor. x, 16.) Paul says: "After the same manner also (he took) the cup;" that is, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it, as he had done with the bread, which signifies the indivisibility of the sacrament, which is one under its two kinds. — **DRINK YE ALL OF IT.** It is significant that it is not said, Eat ye all. But after they had eaten, the Lord says, Drink ye all. The Lord spoke this prophetically, with reference to the daring withholding of the cup from the laity by the Roman Catholic Church, teaching us most positively that we must not separate the two parts of the Supper, as if the bread should suffice without the cup.

VERSE 28. THIS IS MY BLOOD. As "*my body*" constitutes the antitype and fulfillment of the body of the typical Paschal lamb, so the emphatic "*my blood*" takes the place of *all* atonement by bloody sacrifices which the *old covenant* exhibited. Several German commentators, however, do not deem this sufficient to account for our Lord's extending the New Testament sacrament of our redemption beyond the limits of the Old Testament type. Stier finds the contrast between the *body* and *blood* in this: "Where blood is, there is also the life or the soul; and what will this circumstance — that *we* now drink the blood of an offering — say but that we partake not now of a dead sacrifice, such as the Israelite ate, but of a *living*, the life and immortal communication of which was not attained to in the old covenant? As if it had been said, Behold, I *die* for you — and *live* nevertheless — I thus give, bequeath myself to you; *in this ye have me*, so that you may live in me, because I live in you." Ebrard thinks that by the elements of the Supper, the bread and the wine, the two fundamental ideas of the covenant are expressed, namely, the believer's life-union with Christ and the atonement by Christ: "When Christ speaks of his body, the idea of the life union between the believer and himself is more

prominent — the Christian, by having a part in the covenant made by the broken body of Christ, becomes one body with Christ, as the apostle teaches, (1 Cor. x, 17.) When Christ speaks of his shed blood, the idea of the atonement made by his death, and to be appropriated by the believer through faith, is more prominent — the Christian shares in the atonement, when he has been received into a life-union with the God-man." But all these comments appear to us too mystical and far-fetched. The reason why the Lord instituted the sacrament under a twofold form seems to be this: As hunger and thirst embrace all the necessities and all the desires of the body, so the Lord, in correspondence with the twofold bodily need of man, food and drink, provides in the sacrament a twofold nourishment and refreshment of the inner man, making bread and wine the representatives of the fullness of the spiritual blessings to be conveyed to the communicant. — OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. The word **διαθήκη** ought to have been translated *covenant*, not *testament*, for in the LXX the Hebrew *berith*, which means covenant, is uniformly translated by **διαθήκη**, and in the New Testament writings it has the same meaning, with the exception of a single passage, (Heb. ix, 15,) where **διαθήκη** is used in its original and classical sense of *testament*, meaning that particular *disposition* or *arrangement* which is called *a man's will and testament*. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, God's covenant with his people is viewed in the light of a legacy left by the testator, and coming into the possession of an heir by the testator's death. The relation of the covenant of grace to such a testament, and why **διαθήκη**, not **συνθήκη**, the classical Greek term for compact or covenant, was chosen by the sacred writers as the fittest term for expressing the Hebrew *berith*, Dr. Fairbairn has set forth in very clear light, in Part II, Sec. 7, of his Hermeneutical Manual, closing his dissertation with the following remarks: "When salvation is exhibited in connection with a covenant, it is always (with the exception just noticed in Hebrews ix, 15-17) covenant in the ordinary sense, involving the idea of mutual engagements — individual parts to be fulfilled, and corresponding relations to be maintained — though the place occupied by God is pre-eminently that of a bountiful and gracious benefactor. And to keep attention alive to the strictly-covenant aspect of redemption, it had, doubtless, been better to have retained in the authorized version the rendering of *covenant* for **διαθήκη** in all but the one passage of Hebrews, and to have designated the Bible, the Scriptures of the Old and New Covenants, rather than of the Old and New Testaments. In particular, it had been better, in the words connected with the

celebration of the Lord's Supper, to have retained the common rendering, and read, 'This is the new covenant in my blood;' since all should thus have readily perceived that the Lord pointed to the Divine covenant, in its new and better form, as contradistinguished from that which had been brought in by Moses, and which had now reached the end of its appointment. Yet the covenant, as established in his blood, bears the epithet *new* merely from respect to the order of exhibition, while, if viewed with respect to the mind and purpose of God, it is the first as well as the last — the covenant which was planned in the counsels of eternity to retrieve the ruin of the fall, and out of the depths of perdition to raise up a spiritual and blessed offspring for God." — WHICH IS SHED FOR MANY FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, By *many* must be understood (as in Romans v, 15, 18, 19) all the descendants of Adam; the many to be redeemed forming a contrast to the one Redeemer. That the blood of Christ has been shed for the remission of the sins of all, is the uniform doctrine of Scripture. — Luke says, in the place of "many," "for you," the apostles being the first among the recipients. Moreover, it implies the truth, that the blood shed for all is efficacious only in the believers, represented by the apostles. The present tense, "is shed," has the force here of the future, "will forthwith be shed," as is the case in so many other passages. By the words, "*for the remission of sins,*" the principal blessing is expressed, which has been purchased by the blood of Christ. Where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation. The Old Testament saints also had free access to the Throne of Grace, and faith in the promised Messiah justified them. But a perfect certainty of this justification was not possible till all the prophecies of the Old Testament, especially those on the death and resurrection of the Messiah, were fulfilled. The cause of the remission of sins, the price paid for it, is the blood of Christ shed on the cross. It is, therefore, entirely erroneous to make the remission of sins depend on the partaking of the Lord's Supper. For it is not said that we shall drink of the cup for the remission of our sins, but *that Christ has shed his blood for the remission of sins.* The Lord's Supper is only to assure us the more fully of the forgiveness of our sins, which we have obtained by faith. According to Paul the Lord added a second: "This do in remembrance of me," emphasized by "as often as ye drink it," (1 Cor. ii, 25,) that is, as often as ye drink of this cup. The "as often" implies that the Christian shall often come to the Lord's table, considering it not as a grievous burden, but as the highest privilege that can be extended to mortals. The wording, however, is in perfect keeping with evangelical liberty; we are not told how often or at what times we

are to commune. We can not bring our remarks on the Lord's Supper to a close without making the following extract from R. Watson's Exposition: "Christ calls his blood the blood of the new covenant, in allusion to that solemn transaction in which Moses, having taken the book of the covenant 'and read in the presence of the people,' 'took also the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you.' (Ex. xxiv, 7, 8.) This 'book' contained the covenant made between God and the Church and nation of the Israelites. It was the record of the promises made on the part of God, and the engagements of obedience to his revealed will on the part of the people of Israel; thus it was a covenant or solemn engagement between both; and as covenants were anciently ratified by sacrifices, so here the blood of the victims was sprinkled upon the book to denote at once that its covenanted blessings were procured by that blood of the true sacrifice, of which the ancient sacrifices were the type, and as confirming the continued performance of the whole to the people upon their continued observance of the conditions. We see, then, the import of our Lord's words in this allusion. He calls the dispensation of his religion the new covenant, in opposition to this old covenant, which was in its nature introductory and temporary; and in reference also to the prediction in Jeremiah xxxi, 31: 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord that I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.' This dispensation has the nature of a covenant, because it contains the great and precious promises on the part of God, the forgiveness of sins, the renewal of the heart in holiness, and the all-comprehensive engagement, 'And I will be their God, and they shall be my people,' an engagement, which includes not only all blessings which 'pertain to life and godliness,' but, as we learn from our Lord's discourse with the Sadducees, (comp. xxii, 32,) the resurrection of the body, and the felicity of an endless future life. All this is promised by God; and on the part of man are required 'repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' by the merit of whose death alone we can claim these blessings, and in sole respect to which, as a satisfaction to Divine justice, God places himself in the bond of this covenant to bestow them. This covenant the blood of Christ, that is, the pouring forth of his blood as a sacrificial victim, at once procured and ratified; so that it stands firm to all truly-penitent and contrite spirits who believe in him; and of this great truth the Lord's Supper was the instituted sign and seal; and he who in faith drinks of the cup, having reference to its signification, that blood of Christ which confirms to true believers the whole covenant of grace, is

assured thereby of its faithfulness and permanency, and derives to himself the fullness of its blessings. Such, then, is the nature and import of this great institution. It is *Commemorative*; 'this do,' is added by St. Luke and by St. Paul, 'in remembrance of me,' and as a commemorative institution, observed from the time of its appointment by all Christians, it is an irrefragable demonstration of the grand historical fact of our Lord's death and passion. It is *Emblematical*, setting forth the sacrificial nature of the death of Christ; the benefits which accrue from it; and the means by which those benefits are received. It is *Federal*. In its first institution the perfected covenant of grace with true believers was proposed, accepted, and ratified; and in every succeeding celebration, as there is a renewed assurance of God's love to us in Christ, so there is a renewed acceptance of the covenant on the part of all spiritual recipients, with its blessings on the one hand, and its obligations to love and obedience on the other. And finally, it is a public *Confession* of our faith in Christ, in all those views and relations in which he is represented to us in his own doctrine; and of our *Communion* with him and with his universal *Church*. As to the names by which it is distinguished, they have all their significance. Though not properly a supper, because separate and distinct from the Paschal Supper, which was a sacred meal or feast, and because it was instituted after the 'supper was ended,' it is called the *Lord's Supper*, because it was manifestly appointed by our Lord to supersede the supper of the Passover, and enjoined as a commemoration of a greater redemption than that of the Israelites from Egypt, upon Christians to the end of time: 'For as often as ye eat of this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come,' (1 Cor. xi, 26.) — It is called the *Eucharist*, because of the joyful thanksgivings to God with which its celebration by the followers of Christ has always been accompanied. By the Greek fathers it is often called a *Mystery*, from its emblematical character, and the truths which lay hidden under its visible elements. In the Western Church it is more usually described as the *Sacrament* of the Lord's Supper, from *sacramentum*, which signifies a sacred ceremony, and particularly the Roman military oath, which was considered a very solemn, religious act; this term being adopted to indicate that pledging of ourselves to fidelity to Christ which enters into the due celebration of this ordinance. Occasionally it is called the *Communion*, from that fellowship of the saints with each other which this participation of mystic food, at the same common table of the Lord, so beautifully exhibits." — I WILL NOT DRINK HENCEFORTH OF THIS FRUIT OF THE VINE. The various

interpretations of these words may be divided into two classes, one of which we can call the English, the other the German, which, however, does not imply that all English interpreters are on the same side, as Alford, *e.g.*, adopts what we call the German view. The English view is best set forth by R. Watson, who says: "St. Luke gives these as words of Christ, spoken during the Paschal Supper, after he had taken one of the cups of wine, probably the first or second cup which was used during that ceremony, and *previously*, therefore, to his instituting the Eucharist; and there are two reasons which make it probable that St. Luke has, in this instance, more closely followed the order of time than St. Matthew. The first is, that the wine of which our Lord had been partaking must have been that of the Paschal Supper, and not of the Eucharist, because of the latter he could not be a participant. This was to be done in *remembrance* of him, and therefore done by others, not by himself; or, if considered as a *federal* rite, he was not a *party* to the covenant, but the *Mediator* coming in between the parties; and could not perform every act which was proper either to the stipulating or to the assenting party. These considerations appear conclusive against our Lord either eating of the bread or drinking of the wine of the Eucharist. The second reason in favor of St. Luke's order is, that that Evangelist has stated this part of the conversation of our Lord with greater particularity than St. Matthew; and as his attention was more fully directed to it, it is the more probable that he has assigned it its proper place in the narrative. His words are: 'And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.' These words appear to be the same as those recorded by St. Matthew, though with the addition, *until that day when I shall drink it new with you*, and with the variation of, '*in my Father's kingdom*', for, '*until the kingdom of God shall come*'; the sense of which is the same, and not otherwise varied than as translations into Greek by two different persons from the language in which our Savior spoke, which was the common language of the country. But if a similar observation was not made twice during the transactions of the evening, then the words in question are clearly, by St. Luke, referred to the celebration of the Passover itself, and not to the Eucharist. In this case, the meaning of our Lord's words is sufficiently obvious. The Passover

commemorates the redemption from Egypt; but that was a type of the Christian redemption, the completion of which is in the heavenly state. Our Lord therefore declared that he would no more eat of the Passover, 'until it was fulfilled,' accomplished, 'in the kingdom of God;' that is, the type should no more be celebrated; but he and his disciples would meet in a state of future felicity, and they with him would celebrate the full and perfected redemption of the Church glorified. In like manner we are to understand his remark as to the wine: he would not drink of the fruit of the vine until 'the kingdom of God should come;' or, as it is expressed by St. Matthew, until he drank it *new with them in the kingdom of his Father*. This is a mode of expression not uncommon among the Jews, who spoke figuratively of 'the wine of the world to come,' as also of 'sitting down at a feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,' making use of the festivals of the earth to represent the felicities of heaven. It is thus that our Lord makes use of earthly things to prefigure heavenly, and raises the thoughts of his disciples to the joy of meeting him in the world to come. In this view the words of St. Matthew have also an easy interpretation: *Until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom*, where *new wine* is to be taken in the same sense as 'new heavens,' 'new earth,' 'new man,' etc., to denote wine of a different nature, spiritual refreshment, and spiritual joy, in which both the Savior, who will then 'see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied,' and the disciples were to participate forever." Totally different from the above exposition is that of most of the German expositors, who refer the words of our Lord to what shall take place on the new earth in the glorified state of the saints. This view is thus set forth by Stier: "No satire will shake our conviction that this word of our Lord, which the first two Evangelists not merely record *at the close* of the Supper, but connect immediately with the words of the institution, was really spoken *twice* by him. To us it is not imaginable that both the Evangelists — led by the 'mention of the cup,' as is irreverently said — should introduce afterward and insert what had been really *said before*. As they have not mentioned the *paschal cup*, so they can not be supposed to intend that this supplemental word should be understood as having accompanied another and a former cup. But it is not hard to suppose that our Lord, as at the opening of the meal, so also now at its solemn close, spoke of the final and full realization of it in the kingdom of God. For till then even the Sacrament remains but a type, and it was quite appropriate that this should be once more certified *after* its institution; this testimony may, indeed, be said to have been a necessary supplement, and to have been as significant now as it

was before in connection with the prophetically longing desire to eat the Passover. The drinking here promised will take place when Luke xxii, 29, 30 — which must be connected with verse 18 of that chapter — is fulfilled. That eating and drinking are not incompatible with the condition of the risen body, is evidenced by the *eating* of the risen Lord; and he himself here testifies that the partaking of the fruits of the earth — not for preservation of life, but as a *cultus of joy* to the *honor of God*, to which all *nature* will then be ministrant in his saints — is not inconceivable in relation to the blessed in the Father's kingdom upon the earth, where all things will be heavenly and new. He who *will* not separate between this authentic, profound, and sublime word of Christ, and the chiliast dreams and expectations of earlier and later times, must bear the consequences of his own willfulness, which seals his understanding against this truth. We entirely agree with the following beautiful remarks of Thiersch: 'The holy Supper points not only back to the past but also to the future. It has not only a memorial, but also a prophetic significance. We not only show forth the death of our Lord in it, *until he come*; but we have also *to think of the time when he will come*, to celebrate anew and in another manner his sacred meal with his own, in the kingdom of glory. Every celebration of the Sacrament is a type and prophetic anticipation of the great marriage supper which is prepared for the Church at the reappearing of Christ. This signification of the Sacrament is set forth in the Lord's words — *I will not drink henceforth*, etc. These words should never be omitted in the sacramental liturgy.' Yes, truly, for this '*until that day*' includes (as 1 Cor. xi, 26) that terminus in which *the interval of separation* will cease, and the eating and drinking appointed for the present time will be done away, or pass over into another. It is as if the Lord had said, Do this *in the mean time* until I am again with you! The Sacrament is, looking back, a commemorative feast; in the present it is a receiving and partaking of the Lord, the true possession of himself; nevertheless, in prospect of the end it is itself something preliminary and transitory, an essential type and effectual pledge of that feast which, in the great and permanent morning of the renewed world, *in that day* which is ever the one great day, Christ will provide for his own. When we, become as he is, then will he be again as we are; he will eat and drink with us the new fruits of the new world in the fellowship of an eternal enjoyment of the renovated creation of the Father."

VERSE 30. AND WHEN THEY HAD SUNG A HYMN [the second part of Hallel (Ps. cxv-cxviii)] THEY WENT OUT INTO THE MOUNT OF

OLIVES. There was a Jewish tradition, that this night must be spent in the environs of Jerusalem, and it is worthy of note, that our Lord did not go to Bethany as before.

§ 70. CHRIST FORETELLS THE DISPERSION OF THE DISCIPLES AND THE FALL OF PETER.

Verses 31 — 35. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 27-31; LUKE xxii, 31-38;
JOHN xiii, 36-38.)

(31) **THEN saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.** (32) **But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.** (33) Peter answered and said unto him, **Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.** (34) **Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.** (35) **Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.** Likewise also said all the disciples.

VERSE 31. THEN; that is, when they were going out or were about to go out. According to Luke (xxii, 31-34) the Lord tells Peter, before the close of the meal, that he would deny him. Stier and others suppose, therefore, that the Lord foretold this denial of Peter twice, once before the close of the meal, (recorded by Luke and John,) and the other time on their way to Gethsemane, (recorded by Matthew and Mark.) The consideration of this point belongs to the passage in Luke. — ALL YE SHALL BE OFFENDED BECAUSE OF ME THIS NIGHT. By *all ye*, are to be understood the eleven, after Judas had left. The Lord was betrayed by once denied by one, forsaken by all of his disciples. The *denial* and *forsaking* are in principle so nearly allied to each other, that the Lord includes the former in the latter. The taking offense is the antithesis of an unwavering faith, the denial that of the avowal of this faith. — FOR IT IS WRITTEN, I WILL SMITE THE SHEPHERD. With his prediction the Lord connects a word of prophecy; he no where quotes passages of the Scriptures, as fulfilled, so often as in his sufferings, to teach his disciples that the Jewish notions of a non-suffering Messiah were formed in

contradiction to the sacred writings of the Old Testament. "The notion," says Stier, "that our Lord occasionally derived a figure, or a proverb, or a striking saying from the Scriptures, without reference to the real connection in which it originally stood, is altogether unworthy every-where, but especially inappropriate to the holy solemnity of the season of the Passion." The passage is quoted from Zechariah, (xiii, 7,) where it reads: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts; smite the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." The citation is verbatim after the Alexandrine MS. of the LXX, except that the imperative *strike*, is changed into the future tense, *I will strike*; instead of God commanding to strike, he is represented as striking himself. The whole prophecy is profoundly expounded by Stier. In the seventh verse the prophet speaks, 1. Of the wonderful decree of God concerning the death of his Shepherd, whom he calls "the man that is my fellow;" he is *a man* pre-eminently — how else could he suffer the death which is here recorded? *My fellow* can not mean any thing else than *my equal*. The equality of the Messiah with God is testified in many other passages of the Old Testament. Isaiah speaks of a child born which bears the high names of God; Micah of him who was to be born in Bethlehem, but whose goings forth were from everlasting; Jeremiah gives the name of Jehovah to the Messiah; Ezekiel says, that the Lord himself will come as the promised Shepherd, (xxxiv, 11-16, 23, 30;) and in Zechariah xii, 10, Jehovah says, "*Me* whom they have pierced." Christ designedly left out in his citation the high title given to the Shepherd by the prophet, because here he desired to speak only of his humiliation unto death and its effects upon the *sheep*. Instead of the protecting legions which the Lord of Hosts might have provided for his *fellow*, he calls for the sword against him, that is, a judicial infliction of death upon him. 2. The immediate result of striking the Shepherd is the scattering of the flock, which mistakes and forsakes him. The ignominy of the death to which the Shepherd is condemned, is a stumbling-block to the whole flock, it turns away from its Shepherd, not being able to discern him in such a condition. But who are meant by this flock? Not merely Israel, but mankind, (Ezek. xxxiv, 31.) The offense is a general one; not only do the unbelieving turn away from the smitten One, (Isa. liii, 1-3; 1 Cor. i, 23,) but even the disciples take *at first* offense and flee, and the flock would be utterly lost without the return of the Shepherd. Therefore, 3. It is added: "And I will turn mine hands upon the little ones." Let it be observed, first, that they do not return of their own accord, but the hand and power of God in the

risen Shepherd turns upon them and gathers them. This is what Christ says in the sequel of his remarks without quoting literally. Again, not all the dispersed flock is gathered; the difference in the offense, which existed from the beginning, is now made manifest. The whole of Israel is at first fully scattered, and in their flight from the Cross they are perpetually followed by the unbelieving part of the other nations of the earth. But *the little ones*, plainly distinguished from the whole flock, the humble and poor in spirit, shall be brought back.

This bringing back is represented by the prophet in verses 8, 9, as a progressive one. The prophecy does not speak *merely* of "this night" and of "these disciples," but the specific fulfillment in this one historical event is here, as it is often, itself an embodied prophecy, a type of the universal fulfillment, as Bengel says: "The disciples were like unto the whole flock to be afterward collected by them."

VERSE 32. BUT AFTER I AM RISEN AGAIN, etc. After his resurrection the Lord enters upon his pastoral office again, (John xxi,) as appears from the words: "I will go before you." He tells his disciples, as it were: "Although ye will forsake me, yet I shall not forsake you; I shall gather you around me again." The object of this prophecy was, consequently, more to comfort than to censure. By making Galilee the place of meeting with his disciples, the Lord does not say that he would not appear unto them in Jerusalem first; it rather confirms it: *Before ye return from the feast to Galilee, I shall have risen and shall lead you in the way thither.* (Matt. xxviii, 7, 10, 16; John xxi, 1; 1 Cor. xv, 6.)

VERSE 33. THOUGH ALL MEN SHOULD BE OFFENDED, Peter pretends to be stronger than all his fellow-disciples, having no idea that a mere question of a servant-maid would completely disconcert him. Having trusted in his own strength, so much as even to exalt himself above his fellow-disciples, he is left to himself, and falls.

VERSE 34. BEFORE THE COCK CROW. Mark says. "Before the cock crow twice." He includes the crowing that generally takes place at midnight, and is heard by only a few. For the cock crows once at midnight, then again and regularly at dawn. "It is as if he had said, *The Watcher in the night* will finally awaken thee, yet (as in the case of most who sleep and hear not) not till the second crowing in this night; the first cry will be in vain, and the

second find thee already a triple sinner! All Christians should learn to be sober and watchful while God is making his cock crow in our ears. But the question has been asked, Were there cocks in Jerusalem? The Mishna records that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were forbidden to possess them, because they scraped up unclean worms. Suppose this was the case, why should not a cock (we do not find the definite article, as might have been expected, in any of the four Gospels) crow in the Roman precincts, and we might say, with Bengel, because cocks were unusual among the Jews — though the Romans could not of course be prevented from having them — *so much the more wonderful* was the prediction of our Lord. But we prefer to seek the wonderful or the more wonderful not so much in these externalities, as in the natural significance of cock-crowing, connected here with the precise appointment, which showed that in the Divine counsel all was arranged for the awakening of Peter at the hour." (Stier.)

§ 71. CHRIST'S AGONY IN GETHSEMANE.

CHRIST'S agony in Gethsemane, recorded by the first three Evangelists, forms the holy of holies in his suffering, and is as mysterious as his temptation in the wilderness. The divine elevation and clearness of spirit, the heavenly calmness and confidence which we behold in the institution of the Eucharist and in the valedictory discourses recorded by John, especially in the intercessory prayer, wherein his spirit soars victoriously above all dread of what was in store for him — all this is unexpectedly followed by an ineffable anguish of soul, which depresses his body so much that he, though the Lord of angels, needs to be strengthened by a heavenly servant. The contrast is so great that we can follow him only at a great distance. Who can ascend with him on those heights, or descend into the lowest depths of death? He had, indeed, on several previous occasions, expressed his dread of the impending baptism of death, (Luke xii, 50; John xii, 27;) but now death in its full reality rushes upon him. As our high-priest he had in *spirit*, long before, laid himself on the altar of sacrifice; but now he is to realize in his soul, in his psychical life, that he is himself the victim; and the victim recoils from the horrors of death.

Dr. Van Osterzee remarks: "The suffering awaiting the Lord was, on the one hand, the most revolting revelation of the power of sin — on the other, the only means of expiating sin. Jews and Gentiles, friends and enemies, Judas and

Peter, the whole power of the world, with its prince, all unite against him. At the same time he must feel the whole curse of sin; as the representative of sinful humanity he must appear before the tribunal of God; he that knew no sin is to be made the sin-offering. Must not this prospect fill the holy soul of Jesus with unutterable dread and horror? He was the Word that was with God, and was God, but this Word had been made flesh, like unto his brethren in all things, sin alone excepted, and for this very reason we can have no adequate conception of what such a suffering and such a death must have been for the God-man. For man, though he is conscious of being born to die, the thought of death is horrible; but for him who had life in himself death was altogether unnatural. For us death is the end of a life that can justly be said to be a daily dying; but, in the case of the sinless and spotless Savior, the destruction of his bodily organism was inconsistent with his very being. His keenly-sensitive humanity shudders at death; his holy humanity at the power of darkness; his loving humanity at the hatred that is now to be developed to its fullest extent. Luther says well in his sermon on the cup of Christ's suffering: 'We men, conceived and born in sin, have impure, hard flesh, that is almost destitute of feeling. The healthier a man is, the more keenly he feels pain. Now, as Christ's body was pure and sinless, but ours is impure, we scarcely feel in two degrees the horrors of death which Christ felt in ten, since he, as the greatest martyr, had to realize all the horrors of death in the highest degree.' Add to this, that the Lord's full prescience of what was to befall him (John xviii, 4) could not but increase his suffering, and that the kingdom of darkness was putting forth its utmost efforts. (John xiv, 30.) As in the wilderness, so the Lord is here tempted from without — of course, also without sin. [The shuddering of Christ's humanity at his impending death was not a lack of obedience, his prayer, that the cup might pass, no lack of faith; but, as Luther well remarks, 'Christ loved his Father with all his powers; but his agonies, going beyond his powers, so oppressed his guiltless, infirm human nature, that it was constrained to sigh, to shudder, and to cry; just as, when a beam is tested beyond its strength, it gives way, not through any defect of its own, but because the weight is too heavy.'] If it had been a stain of sin to pray as Jesus did in Gethsemane, it would have stained the Son of God to become very man; for, as very man, and as a sinless man, he could not otherwise than shudder at the prospect of suffering death. The *importance* of Christ's agony in Gethsemane can not be sufficiently estimated, shedding, as it does, the clearest light both on the person and the work of the Redeemer. As regards himself, he stands before us as a real and deeply-feeling man, who was

to learn obedience through suffering, and thus to be made perfect, (Heb. ii, 10; v, 7-9,) which in no way conflicts with *his spotless holiness and undisturbed unity with the Father*. Of the weight of his sufferings we can no where form a more adequate idea than here; in Gethsemane we learn to understand Golgotha; inasmuch as we learn there that the *divine* dignity of his person, instead of lessening the weight of his suffering, only heightened it most fearfully. The indispensable *necessity* of his suffering becomes manifest, if we bear in mind that, even after such a prayer, the Father does not remove the cup from his beloved Son. The *sufficiency* and *perfection* of the redemption wrought out by him may be measured by the height to which his obedience and love rose. And the *crown* which the Captain of our salvation won there is the more precious to us, because by this suffering he has become the merciful High-Priest that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. (Heb. ii, 16-18; iv, 15.)" So much by way of introduction to the comments upon the text, for the greater part of which the reader is indebted to Stier's profound exposition — sometimes, even, where we could not quote him, finding it necessary to condense or modify his remarks.

The silence of John concerning this agony of the Savior at Gethsemane is easily accounted for by the scope of his Gospel. Instead of impairing the trustworthiness of the other Evangelists in recording the mysterious conflict in Gethsemane, we are furnished with another evidence that the Gospel narratives can not possibly have resulted, as the mythical theory assumes, from a desire to throw a halo of glory around Jesus. Moreover, to show that there is no contradiction between the first three Evangelists and St. John, "it only requires," as Stier remarks, "to be observed that the latter gives, in chapter xii, 27, the oft-repeated beginning and prelude of the agony; and, in chapters xiv, 30, and xvi, 21, he records the plain prediction of what was impending; while the Synoptists sufficiently indicate the glory which should follow the passion. Suffice that there is so much deep reason for the historical truth of the soul-conflict in Gethsemane — at least to every believer — that we may leave all discussion about it to the unbelievers. Whoever understands any thing of the life of Jesus, as recorded by the Evangelists up to this moment, is prepared to expect that, *when* the hour of suffering comes, an internal conflict, manifesting the perfect obedience of the spirit in the flesh, would precede the assault from without."

The words which Christ uttered in prayer were given to the primitive Church by the ear-witnesses, as far as they heard them, before they were

overcome by sleep. The slight variations of expression only show that the Holy Spirit enabled the Evangelists to give a graphic and truthful description of the mysterious event. How Matthew and Mark complete each other, we shall see as we proceed; Luke gives us the Lord's words more summarily, irrespectively of time and order, preserving, however, the three essential points: the prayer, which passed from a supplication to be spared into an act of entire resignation; the exhortation, addressed to his disciples, to pray, and the final, "Rise, let us be going." He, moreover, adds some important items; namely, that the Lord withdrew about a stone's cast, that an angel from heaven strengthened him, that his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood. "John, in describing the locality," says Stier, "gives significant prominence to the brook Cedron, which they passed over — the dark brook in the deep valley, over which David went in deep humiliation on account of his sin, and where, in old time, the abominations of idolatry had been thrown, (1 Kings xv, 13; 2 Kings xxiii, 4, 6, 12,) as in later times, according to Jewish accounts, it had carried away the blood of the sacrifices and the refuse of the Temple. From Gethsemane to Siloam stretched the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the place of graves and of judgment. Surrounded by such memorials and typical allusions, the Lord descends into the dust of humiliation and anguish."

Verses 36-46. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 32-42; LUKE xxii, 40-46; JOHN xviii, 1.)

(36) THEN cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane,
[1] and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.
(37) And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. (38) Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. (39) And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*. (40) And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? (41) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (42) He went away again the second time, and prayed, swing, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

(43) And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. (44) And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. (45) Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (46) Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

[1 Gethsemane is a Hebrew word, meaning an oil-press, or a place of oil-presses. There was, evidently, a garden or orchard attached to it. Of its locality we know nothing with certainty, except that it lay across the brook Cedron, at the foot of Mount Olivet. Tradition points out a modern garden, in which are eight very venerable olive-trees and a grotto. Dr. Thomson says, concerning it: "The position is too near the city, and so close to what must have always been the great thoroughfare eastward, that our Lord would scarcely have selected it for *retirement* on that dangerous and dismal night. I am inclined to place the Garden in the secluded vale, several hundred yards to the north-east of the present Gethsemane, and hidden, as I hope, forever from the idolatrous intrusion of all sects and denominations." Much less reason is there to believe that those old olive-trees were the identical ones under whose shades the Son of God walked, even on the supposition of the reproduction which is ascribed to the olive-tree. Josephus informs us that Titus, during the siege of Jerusalem, had all trees cut down within a circle of one hundred stadii around Jerusalem. Besides, the 10th Legion, arriving from Jericho, were posted about the Mount of Olives, and in the course of the siege a wall was carried along the valley of the Cedron to the Fountain of Siloam.]

VERSE 36. THEN COMETH JESUS WITH THEM UNTO A PLACE.

He came there not by chance. He knew that there his sufferings were to commence. The spot was already consecrated by previous visits, as Luke intimates by saying, "Jesus went *as he was wont.*" — SIT YE HERE. They are eight in number; as the three familiar disciples, who accompanied their Master, besides Judas, are to be deducted from the twelve. — WHILE I GO AND PRAY YONDER. The Lord calls prayer what he is now to pass through. Every struggle of a holy soul is a prayer, a continued wrestling with God. Like Abraham, who said, when his faith was so sorely tried, (Gen. xxii, 5,) "I and the lad will go yonder and worship," the Lord calls his agony a prayer; he is not tied, as Isaac was, but lays himself of his own free will and accord as the victim upon the altar, thus uniting in himself both the faith of

Abraham and the resignation of Isaac. "As Jesus had prepared himself by secret prayer in the wilderness for the opening of his public ministry, in like manner he prepares himself now for its conclusion. As he there passed in spirit through the conflict with the powers of darkness before he appeared on the public arena, so also here. As he had then achieved the victory in spirit before he opened his victorious career in the world, so this, his last triumph in suffering, was also preceded by a previous inward victory." (Neander.)

VERSE 37. AND HE TOOK WITH HIM PETER AND THE TWO SONS OF ZEBEDEE. Peter, who can not be brought to believe in the possibility of his fall in the hour of temptation, and the two favored brothers, to whom he had offered a share in the cup of his sufferings instead of the posts of honor for which they had asked; with these three favored disciples, who had been witnesses of his transfiguration, he advances further into the Garden presentient of his agony. He took these witnesses with him not only in order that they might be ear-witnesses of the holy transaction before the Church of the New Testament, but also, as Stier says, because he did not wish to be left alone in the hour of distress, as we may infer from his words, Watch *with* me — could ye not watch *with* me? It belonged to his humiliation in our likeness that he should take with him sympathizing companions. — **AND BEGAN.** This expression indicates a sudden, clearly-discriminable change in his frame of mind. — **TO BE SORROWFUL AND VERY HEAVY.** Mark says, "to be sore amazed and very heavy." The sorrowfulness manifested itself in an amazement, as if in the presence of something unexpected, a shuddering and recoil. This was, no doubt, an entirely new phenomenon to his disciples, of which only three, and they the most familiar ones, were to be witnesses. The Greek word for "to be sorrowful" is **λυπεῖσθαι**, the passive of **λυπεῖν**, which means to grieve, to distress, thus indicating that the cause of Christ's sorrow came from without. Lange calls it "the experience of a positive opposing influence, which restrains and oppresses the soul in its living energies, as if it would take away the spiritual breath. The first result of this is grief; the last, *anguish* — fearful, amazing, vehement wrestling of the soul with evil." The Greek for "to be very heavy" is **ἀδημονεῖν**, derived by some from **δῆμος**, people, and the alpha privativum; hence, to feel lonesome, solitary. Stier, however, derives it from **ἀδεῖν**, to have no want, to loathe.

VERSE 38. MY SOUL IS EXCEEDING SORROWFUL. "The Lord had been accessible to sorrow for sin and death from the beginning; that which

Mark (iii, 5) records of his grief over the hardness of their hearts, and John (xi, 33-35) of his anguish over the power of death, are only isolated examples which give us a glimpse into the inmost recesses of his soul. Nevertheless, all this was but the slight preparation for the fullness and strength of that suffering of which he now testifies. Only in John xii, 27, and here, does the Lord say concerning himself, *my soul*. He thereby avows himself to be a true human person in the likeness of ourselves, just as he afterward speaks of his *spirit* and of his *flesh*, according to the Scriptural trichotomy of human nature. We, therefore, are justified in speaking of a soul-conflict, and of soul-sufferings at Gethsemane. Assuredly, in a certain sense, every suffering is soul-suffering, inasmuch as bodily pain affects the soul, and is experienced only through the soul; and, further, the most spiritual anguish passes over to the, as it were, bodily feeling of the soul, which mediates between spirit and body, and constitutes the personal consciousness. Nevertheless, we rightly distinguish, as to its pre-eminent seat and origin, *the sufferings of the soul* both from bodily pain and anxiety of spirit; and all that follows shows that such a distinction must here be maintained." (Stier.) — EVEN UNTO DEATH. These words are, in the mouth of Jesus, no proverbial expression of utter despondency, but they are literally true; for he *really tasted the bitterness of death* to such a degree, as no other man could taste it: 1. The very thought of death was a perfect contradiction of his life, as has been stated in the introductory remarks to this chapter. "Having laid aside in the incarnation his eternal mode of existence with the Father, and having entered into the finite form of existence," says Baumgarten, (Geschichte Jesu,) "every moment of his earthly existence is to the incarnate Son of God the only medium of his communion with God. To die is, therefore, for him as the Son of man, to have his communion with God dissolved, to be separated from God. Separation from God is, according to the Scriptures, the very nature and substance of death; and there is, consequently, no death that makes not more or less the impression of being separated from God; but death can be fully realized only there, where life is nothing else than a self-conscious communion with God, and because such a life was no where else than in Jesus, no one ever felt and realized death in its full reality as Jesus did." Add to this, 2. That Jesus tasted death *as the penalty of the sin of the whole world*. This must not be understood as if the holy and beloved Son had tasted for us at Gethsemane the measure of the wrath of God that the damned in hell must feel. The sin of the world did not lay upon the Lamb of God in *this* sense, but in another and much more real sense, in the only possible sense. In

his purity he felt more keenly, than any damned soul in hell can feel, the righteous wrath of God, not against himself, but against the sin of the world. His horror in the presence of death, as the wages of sin, was the purest, deepest awe and reverence before God, the righteous Judge and Father. As the Holy One, he felt the righteous judgment of God upon the sin of the world more deeply and painfully than sinful man can feel it. *As a holy being, he shudders at death, the penalty of sin, falling upon him, the Sinless One;* but because he has become the Son of man to save us, he is obedient to his Father unto death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. ii, 8; Heb. ii, 17, 18; iv, 15; v, 7-10.) — TARRY YE [near me, but follow me no further] AND WATCH WITH ME. He does not say, "Pray *with me*," for there could be no real fellowship and equality between him and sinful men in relation to his prayer generally, and especially in regard to his prayer in Gethsemane; no one could share with him in his mediatorial wrestling; yet he desired to enjoy the presence, of his disciples as the first-fruits of his redemption, though their apathy did not sweeten his bitter cup.

VERSE 39. AND HE WENT A LITTLE FURTHER. Luke's description is more graphic; he says: "and he was withdrawn from them," and defines also the distance, "about a stone's cast," that is, as far as a stone can be thrown with the hand, certainly near enough to enable the disciples to hear the words of their praying Master. "As no one was allowed to be in the tabernacle, when the high-priest went into the holy place, (Lev. xvi, 17,) so the true High-Priest withdrew on this occasion from all men, at first from the eight disciples and then also from the three chosen ones, indicating thereby that all men were now impure in the Divine judgment, and that none was able and worthy to come unto God, or to be present at this most sacred transaction, much less to contribute something toward it." (Rieger.) — AND FELL ON HIS FACE [Mark says: "on the ground"] AND PRAYED. "This was, indeed, a different prayer from the one which he had uttered before, and which John has recorded. Yet it breathed the same spirit, was uttered by the same Son of God and Redeemer of mankind. The incarnate Son, who had already prayed himself up to the Father and into heaven, must now feel it more fully than ever before, that he is still in the world, that its prince is coming against him, and that the righteous Father has appointed his Son to offer and sanctify himself for the propitiation of the sin of the world. With what other incense could this sacrifice have been offered so acceptably as with such a prayer? If it had not been

recorded, a proper understanding of the Redeemer's person and work would lead us to assume such an internal conflict in the sanctuary of his soul. But it is revealed to us, and we have only to read and mark it, that we may follow our Forerunner." — O, MY FATHER! "There is here no fear of a punitive justice as in our stead, nothing of his Father's *wrath* against the person of his beloved Son. He had, indeed, a full feeling of what sin is in all its consequences before God, but this feeling was not inconsistent with his consciousness — *I am and remain thy Son*. Awful, therefore, as his anguish of soul was in Gethsemane, he did not suffer there in our stead the pain of the damned in hell." (Stier.) — IF IT BE POSSIBLE, LET THIS CUP PASS FROM ME. The first question here is, what have we to understand by this cup? "Would our Lord, at this crisis," says Stier, "be delivered, if it were possible, from suffering and dying for the world? *Or* does he pray only for the taking away of the present overpowering burden of his soul's anguish? Thus must the question stand at first, till its right answer corrects the question itself, and makes it intelligible." To the first supposition it is objected, that the Lord, who had repeatedly spoken of his death as indispensably necessary for the salvation of the world, and as foretold by the prophets, could not possibly expect his death to be dispensed with now; it is therefore maintained that he only supplicated for an alleviation and shortening of his internal anguish in the *present hour*, of that terror and fear which he then felt. Hess goes even so far as to say, that the Lord prays for the removal of this anguish *in order that he might be able to suffer*. But this view labors under even greater difficulties, than to understand by the cup the suffering of death itself, of which he has now a foretaste. We are no where told in the Scriptures, that the Lord felt himself in Gethsemane forsaken of his Heavenly Father as on the cross; and that in addition to the suffering of death, he had to go there through another and greater suffering, in order to accomplish the salvation of mankind. Moreover, Christ calls (John xviii, 11) his death expressly the cup, given unto him by his Father to drink, (comp. also Matthew xx, 22.) But, it is further objected, if the Lord prayed in Gethsemane to be saved from death, how can the apostle (Heb. v, 7) say that he was heard? This question is answered by Stier satisfactorily, and in such a way that the distinction between the suffering of death *itself* and the *present hour* falls away. In the present anguish of his commencing passion and death the *entire cup* is, as it were, presented to the Lord. The cup *must*, indeed, be drank, but it is first to be *internally tasted* and to be *voluntarily accepted*. This takes place now. Tasting it, he cries out, as it were, *Is this the suffering that must come upon*

me? And in his humanity he appeals to *Him that is able to save from death*, as the apostle expresses it, but at the same time he unconditionally subjects his human will to the Divine, and his prayer is assuredly heard and answered, inasmuch as the Father — accepting and fulfilling his cry of resignation, *As thou wilt* — strengthens him and takes away this anguish. Thus we see that the two apparently-diverging views as to the nature of the cup coalesce, and we are now prepared to apprehend correctly the meaning of the words, *"if it be possible."* According to Mark, the Lord makes use of a still stronger expression: *"Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me."* But that the Lord speaks only of a possibility, consistent with the Divine counsel or will, is evident from the addition: *"nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."* Luke, therefore, states the prayer at once thus: *"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me."* Thus we learn from Luke, that the Lord speaks of no other possibility than one consistent with the will and decree of God, and that the following word of entire resignation was already included in the first utterance of the petition. If it be possible *in thy will*, let this cup pass away, for my will is not other than thine, even though I would fain be delivered from what now befalls me. The Lord's thought, in these words of shrinking, does not border on the idea that humanity was not to be redeemed; this great decree, this *will* of the Father and of the Son alike, is rather *presupposed* in *if it be possible, if thou wilt*. The petition *asks* only with urgency — Is the accomplishment of thy counsel, O Father, is the redemption of mankind not otherwise possible than by thus suffering, by my drinking this cup? Such a question and such a petition are, indeed, inseparable from our Lord's *true humanity*, and from the *reality* of his suffering. It would have been an unnatural apathy, unworthy of the Son of man, if he had entered the dark valley of death without his holy soul shuddering at it; (Gerlach suggests, that Jesus' prayer to be saved from death may also have proceeded from the wish to prevent the greatest crime that was ever committed by the human race.) The shudder of life at death is in itself something natural and innocent, and was necessary in Jesus, because he would otherwise not have died as a real man. His true humanity required, likewise, that God's counsel should not be so clear to his soul during his trial, as it would otherwise not have been a trial, and the apostle could not have said of him, "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." But only the more clearly bursts forth from his inmost spirit his imperturbable unity with the Father. God's incarnate Son desired nothing else than that which his Father desired. He

was obedient. It was not possible to save mankind in any other way than by the suffering of the incarnate Son of God: this is testified by Gethsemane. Nor has the Son in his unity with the Father desired any other method of its salvation, for even here his human will varies from the Divine will only for the purpose of submitting to it again: this we learn from the second clause of the prayer. In full accordance with Stier's view, which we have given in a free and condensed manner: Olshausen says: "No compulsory will of the Father forced death upon the Son, the will of the Son being always identical with that of the Father: but the voluntary entering on the part of Jesus into the Divine necessity, which was impossible without a severe reaction of human sensibility, we find to have taken place in this most solemn, decisive moment. With the victory in Gethsemane every thing was in reality accomplished, the Father's will was fully entered into by the human soul of Jesus; and as in a human struggle the mind becomes perfectly calm, as soon as an unutterable resolution is taken, so we find also the Savior perfectly serene again after the hour of this severe struggle had passed."

VERSE 40. AND HE COMETH TO HIS DISCIPLES AND FINDETH THEM ASLEEP. The fervent John, the firm James, and the impetuous Peter — they sleep, although they had seen their Master withdraw in the sorest distress. The disciples, who had worked during many a night at their nets, are overcome by sleep in the night of the Lord's agony. It was, however, no sound sleep, since they heard and understood the thrice-repeated prayer of Christ, which he offered up with strong crying. (Heb. v, 7.) — **AND SAITH UNTO PETER.** He addresses him, who but a short time before had exhibited so much self-reliance, but his words are intended for all.

VERSE 41. WATCH AND PRAY. "These words were, in the first place, addressed to the disciples to put them on their guard against the near temptation; but it is, of course, at the same time an exhortation to all believers to the end of time. Prayer without watchfulness — what is it but self-deception and a vain thing, improperly so called? An imaginary watchfulness without prayer — what is it but a delusion and a dream? Thus we may say — prayer to God is itself the true and perfect wakefulness of man in the spirit. (Ps. Ixiii, 2; Isa. xxvi, 9.) The two are in their reciprocation one; for the preventient watchfulness sees the danger, and remembers the weakness, and the prayer which follows brings the grace and strength necessary for full and constant watchfulness." (Stier.) — **THAT YE ENTER NOT INTO TEMPTATION.** The meaning is not: that ye be spared temptation, that ye be not tempted at all,

but that ye do not so fall into it, as not to come out of it. (Comp. note on chapter vi, 13.) Temptation that comes from without — from Satan and the world — or from our own flesh and blood can then only make us fall when our free will enters into and sustains it; in order to prevent this we must be mindful of our weakness and pray to God for strength. (2 Cor. xii, 9, 10.) — THE SPIRIT, INDEED, IS WILLING, BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK. Of all interpreters Stier alone seems to us to have correctly apprehended the true meaning of these often-misunderstood and much-abused words; his exposition, which we give in a condensed form, is as follows. By "flesh," the natural, corrupt state of man is generally understood here, as in other passages. But how could it be said of man in his natural, carnal state, that his spirit is willing? The *being willing* of which the apostle speaks (Rom. vii, 18) is not the willing spirit, but something entirely impotent for good. If we understand by the *flesh* the carnal mind, the flesh is not weak, but mighty in its opposition to the spirit, so that Jude speaks of *carnal* men as *having not the spirit* at all. For these reasons Stier maintains that the term *flesh* here is to be taken in its original sense as a *constituent part of human nature*, which in itself is not sinful, but has a weakness or a weakening influence which the soul, standing between the spirit and the flesh, must overcome by deriving strength from the spirit through watching and praying. In this sense the words of the Savior express his own experience with regard to the sharp conflict he was passing through. He presents himself in his humanity to the disciples, as the pattern which they are to imitate in overcoming temptation, but which they can imitate only in so far as they become partakers of His spirit that does not, as is the case with us, yield to the weakness of the flesh, but is always and perfectly willing to do the will of God. (Ps. xl, 9.) Accordingly the passage may be paraphrased thus: "Watch and pray as ye see me do. Even I have just experienced the weakness of the flesh, though my willing spirit remained unaffected by it. The spirit which ye shall receive from me is willing; but the flesh which I also have assumed is weak, and if your spirit is not willing your flesh will cause you to fall." This interpretation is based on the unquestionable truth that while in Christ's humanity, of which Gethsemane especially testifies, the willingness of the spirit was not in the least impaired by the weakness of the flesh, (comp. 2 Cor. xiii, 4) — with us the spirit, itself the basis of personality, is carnal, and in our flesh there is, therefore, no mere weakness, but a positive proneness to sin. The practical importance of Stier's interpretation of this passage will clearly appear from his closing remarks: "If we through the grace of regeneration are so far

awakened from the sleep of sin that to the willing spirit in us — this was the case with Christ — *the temptation to sin* is no other than a *suffering* and a *burden*, then we may take the consolations of Christ's word, that the weakness which feels the suffering, and which is exposed to the temptation, is no sin, any more than it was in him. No more is, then, demanded of us than to watch and pray, but both with the utmost earnestness — *to watch* against the enemy, on account of the weak flesh exposed to his assault; *to pray* with a willing spirit for the strength of God which maintains and strengthens that willingness. But nothing is more lamentable and more perilous than the perversion of this equally-rousing and comfortable passage, which, in common with many similar passages, Satan skillfully tempts men to misuse. He rends the latter clause from the former, separates it from the *watch and pray*, and makes that which was designed as an encouragement to watchfulness and prayer — a pillow for self-deception. He persuades the sinner to regard it as enough that his poor, imaginary willingness of spirit his '*good heart*,' '*right intention*,' etc. — is enough of itself; and to excuse his entering into temptation and committing sin by the *weakness of the flesh!* Just as in Phil. ii, the thirteenth verse is wrenched from the twelfth, and in Rom. iii, the twenty-third verse from the twenty-first. We trust that all such perversion has been thoroughly guarded against throughout this exposition."

VERSE 42. HE WENT AWAY AGAIN THE SECOND TIME, etc.
The Berlenburg Bible remarks on these words: "Among other things we may here learn that in times of sore conflict we should not continue in one uninterrupted strain of prayer, lest our devotion become feeble; we should rather pause and let the spirit, as it were, take breath, in order that our petition may be urged with all the more earnestness." — O MY FATHER, IF THIS CUP MAY NOT PASS AWAY, etc. In this second prayer the spirit of perfect submission is prominent. Christ knew that the Father heard him always, (John xi, 42;) for this reason he takes the continuance of his anguish as the answer to his last words: as thou wilt! — as the confirmation of the Divine will, that he should drink the cup.

VERSE 43. AND HE CAME AND FOUND THEM ASLEEP AGAIN.
"Their eyes were heavy, that is, weighed down with sleep. According to Luke, he found them sleeping for *sorrow*. Although their drowsiness may be humanly explained by their exhaustion in the deep night after such a day, by the reaction following so much excitement, and most decisively by the stunning power of a

sorrow which was too great for them; yet was there something more than all this — as the Lord himself had intimated — the *temptation* of the power of darkness, the satanic sifting, *without* which their sympathy with the sufferings of Jesus would have held their eyes waking." (Stier.)

VERSE 44. AND HE LEFT THEM. Knowing their impotence, he beheld them with compassion and continued to watch and pray, till, having victoriously passed through the darkness of this hour, he was ready with perfect serenity to deliver himself up to the betrayer and the hands of sinners. — **AND WENT AWAY AGAIN, AND PRAYED THE THIRD TIME.** It is worthy of note, that as we see Jesus here wrestle three times in prayer, he had also to repel three attacks from the tempter in the wilderness. Luke has omitted to record, that this struggle was thrice repeated; yet hints at it by his description of its increasing violence, recording the bloody sweat and the strengthening angel. Lange remarks on the third repetition of the prayer: "He prayed again, as the preceding time, he sacrificed his will, he yielded himself up to his Father, yea, he drank the cup. For at this stage described by Luke, the struggle reached its acme. These fearful assaults he met with prayer so agonizing that his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground; and his soul gained for the third time the wonted serenity and tranquillity. The work was accomplished." — **SAYING THE SAME WORDS.** The repetition of the same words, if they are brief and simple, often indicates the deepest earnestness. (Comp. 2 Cor. xii, 8. See note on chaps, vi, vii.)

VERSE 45. SLEEP ON NOW AND TAKE YOUR REST. The meaning is: you may now rest and sleep, as far as I am concerned, I need your watching no longer and shall not exhort you to it any more; but your sleep will soon be disturbed by other means, for behold, etc. The first "*behold*" must not be understood literally of Judas and his band; it merely announces the approach of the hour of which the Lord had so often spoken.

VERSE 46. RISE, LET US BE GOING. Jesus is now perfectly calm, composed, and ready to meet suffering and death; he that had wrestled with death could soon make the soldiers feel its terrors. A pious writer says: "The creative word of Jehovah, 'let us make man,' has not cost as much as this 'let us be going,' of the Son of God."

§ 72. JESUS ARRESTED IN GETHSEMANE.

Verses 47-56. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 43-52; LUKE xxii, 47-53; JOHN xviii, 2-12.)

(47) AND while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief-priests and elders of the people. (48) Now he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast. (49) And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him. (50) And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. (51) And behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high-priest, and smote off his ear. (52) Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. (53) Thinkest thou that I can not now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? (54) But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? (55) In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the Temple, and ye laid no hold on me. (56) But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

VERSE 47. AND WHILE HE YET SPAKE. Some place the kiss of Judas after what is recorded by John. But to us it appears more probable that it took place before. (See note on verse 49.) — "The increasing divergence of the Evangelists, says Stier, "as they go deeper into the history of the Passion, is quite natural on the human ground of their observation and remembrance, and makes the perfect unity of their testimony all the more wonderful. That which, in the confusion and excitement attendant upon its occurrence, was viewed from various stand-points, was not by any means left as the material which human tradition might variously weave; but the Holy Spirit, without effacing the stamp of human credibility which is impressed upon their artless differences, has defended them from all incorrectness, and set upon the whole the seal of his own sure testimony." John, omitting what had been recorded by

the other Evangelists, is mainly concerned to point out how Christ was glorified in his Passion. Mark and Luke relate the Lord's apprehension very briefly, while Matthew and John complete each other's account of it. — LO, JUDAS CAME. The traitor knew the place as a spot to which Jesus used to resort with his disciples. (Luke xxii, 39; John xviii, 2.) While Jesus finished the meal with his disciples, delivered his farewell discourses, and agonized in Gethsemane, Judas arranged the dark work of treason under the cover of the night. He had hastened to the members of the Sanhedrim to inform them that the desired moment had now come, and to induce them, at the same time, to change their purpose "not to apprehend him on the feast-day." Forthwith the guard of the Temple was assembled, and the Roman Governor's permission obtained to make the contemplated arrest, with a sufficient military escort. Judas's calculation was, that by the time this was done Jesus must be in Gethsemane. According to John, Judas was attended by the Roman cohort — *σπεῖρα* — consisting of five hundred men, though in all probability only a detachment of it is meant. It was, however, in the interest of the Sanhedrim to make upon Pilate the impression that a very dangerous person was to be arrested, and, therefore, to ask for a large military force. Luke (xxii, 52) tells us that the Jewish guard of the Temple and fanatical priests and elders were also in the crowd. According to Mark, Judas was very particular in urging upon the arresting officers to secure Jesus well, lest he might get away from them. According to John, the band had lantern and torches, though it was a bright, full-moon night, as if, forsooth, he might hide himself in one of the caves with which the rocky valley of Cedron is said to have abounded!

VERSE 49. AND FORTHWITH HE CAME TO JESUS. That Judas wanted to give to the band by his kiss the preconcerted sign, is by no means inconsistent with the statement of John (John xviii, 4-8) that Jesus himself went forth and told the band that it was he whom they sought. The two statements are easily reconciled, if we suppose that Judas went a few steps in advance of his attendants, and gave them the sign; while he did so Jesus answers him, and hastens forward to remove the impression, as if it needed Judas's diabolical farce to apprehend him, and, at the same time, to prevent the arrest of his disciples. Stier, however, maintains, with the older commentators, that the kiss was given after the band had fallen to the ground, and represents the scene as follows: "Judas stood undecided and hesitating to give the kiss — Jesus, perceiving this, hastens to prevent the execution of the meanest of acts, as well

as all unnecessary measures, by stepping forward and announcing himself as him whom they sought. According to the clear words of John, (xviii, 5, 6,) Judas fell to the ground with the rest, but quite in keeping with his diabolical character he was also one of the first, if not the first, that rose again. The preconcerted sign was, indeed, now superfluous; nevertheless, Judas, with unparalleled insolence, gives it, in order to keep his word as a real devil and to shake off as soon as possible his chagrin on account of their falling to the ground. The eyes of the whole band are fixed upon him, their guide, and he must accordingly revive their failing courage by showing them that Jesus can be approached with impunity. — AND KISSED HIM. What a kiss! The history of the world has nothing so detestable and vile. It is inconceivable that this incident, if it had no historical reality, would ever have found its way into mythical tradition. It was a masterpiece of the devil, who in derision of Jesus, as it were, said to him in this kiss: Behold my work, this I have accomplished in one who stands so near thy person that he may kiss thee! — "There is a sinless wrath of holy indignation which our Lord at other times felt and expressed; and if this pure, human feeling in the Holy One was ever excited, it might have been supposed that it would be now. But the Lord turns not away his face; he suffers, he receives the kiss — this is transcendently more than he requires of his disciples in Matthew v, 39." (Stier.)

VERSE 50. FRIEND, [though the word *friend* has here, of course, not its common signification, yet it implies, on the part of Jesus, a recognition of their former relation to each other,] WHEREFORE ART THOU COME? The interrogative form is not required by the original; it is better to take the expression as an ellipsis and to supply *οἶδα*, so that the meaning is: I know very well wherefore thou art come. According to Luke, the Lord said: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" The meaning of the two expressions is the same, yet there is no reason to doubt that the Lord made use of both.

VERSE 51. AND BEHOLD, ONE OF THEM, etc. From John we learn that it was Simon Peter. According to Luke, this rash act of Peter was preceded by the question: Lord, shall we smite with the sword? Without waiting for an answer, Peter used the sword. In the garden, during his Master's agony, he neglected to wield the weapon of the Spirit against himself by watching and praying, and now his spirit breaks out in false and blind zeal. He unsheathes the sword to smite at random and deal murderous blows. This rash

act of Peter forms a grievous contrast to the sacred dignity of the Lord's patience, but he repairs immediately the unhappy deed of his disciple, by healing the injured man, as we learn from Luke. Thus he shows his Divine power even now when he renounces for himself all help and defense. The miraculous cure of the servant of the high-priest, which we would expect of Jesus, is passed over by the three other Evangelists, because the word to Peter has in them a prominence. Rambach remarks on this passage: "Peter says in his first Epistle, (iv, 15,) 'let none of you suffer as a murderer.' He probably thought, while penning these words, of this act of his. If the blow he had aimed had proved fatal, he would have been arraigned for murder." An old German commentator applies the incident thus: "Young, violent preachers are very apt to use the sword of Peter, to smite at random and blindly whomsoever they may hit, before they have learned to handle the sword of the Spirit. But such smiting in carnal zeal is, as it were, cutting off the ear that is to hear the Word of God."

VERSE 52. PUT UP AGAIN THY SWORD INTO HIS [its] PLACE. John says, "into the sheath." From this it appears that Peter was still standing there with his sword unsheathed and ready to strike again. The sword has, indeed, its place also, where it is to be used, for which reason Jesus did not absolutely forbid his disciples to carry swords, (Luke xxii, 36.) It is in its place, when used by the magistrate for the punishment of evil-doers, (Gen. ix, 6,) and in personal as well as national self-defense; but it is out of its place in all matters, appertaining to the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is founded upon his sufferings and spread through his truth, (John xviii, 36, and Zech. iv, 6.) — **FOR ALL THEY THAT TAKE THE SWORD SHALL PERISH WITH THE SWORD.** These words contain a general principle, which Peter, however, was reminded to apply to himself. The sword unlawfully taken is met by the avenging sword of the magistrate, the sword abused in the service of religion — by the sword equally abused against religion. In both points of view Peter was wrong. If they had killed him, while he was about to kill, his death would not have been that of a martyr, but a merited punishment; of this the Savior reminds him, while he graciously averts it by healing the inflicted wound. But he had not only exposed himself to unjustifiable danger, but thrown also suspicion on the holy cause of his Master. For this reason Jesus disclaims the act so solemnly. R. Watson remarks on these words of our Lord: "Our Lord manifestly designed to teach that injuries for the sake of *religion* are not to be

repelled by retaliative violence, but submitted to with patience; and that his cause was not to be maintained or promoted by the strifes of an earthly warfare, or by civil coercion: 'if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight;' words which show that such as is the nature of the kingdom, are the means by which it is appropriately upheld and maintained. In both these views the lesson was most important: 1. To the disciples so long as Christianity should be under persecution. In no instance were they to resist or return evil for evil, but contrariwise, blessing; after the example of him who healed the wound of Malchus, although one of those who had 'come out against him.' By the opposite conduct they would take their cause out of the hand of God, and yet would not escape danger; there was a sword still to which they would be exposed; after the sword of man, certainly the sword of God. 'He that saveth his life' by such or any other unlawful means, 'shall lose it.' 2. The lesson was equally important to the Church, and no doubt looked onward to the time when Christianity should become powerful and triumphant. He who foresaw all things knew that the time would come when his servants would fight for his kingdom as though it were a civil, not a spiritual institution, and when persecution and compulsion would be the instruments to which they would resort under pretense of repelling Christ's enemies, or increasing the number of his adherents. The doom of persecuting Churches and persecutors is here, therefore, fore-written by Him who, from the first, disclaimed such officious disciples, even when so far sincere as to believe they were 'doing God service.' 'They that take the sword shall perish by the sword;' by the awakened vengeance, often of injured communities debarred of the rights of conscience, or the slower but still certain vengeance of Him who especially abhors all zeal which is not animated by the mild flame of charity."

VERSE 53. THINKEST THOU THAT I CAN NOT, etc. "According to John, the Lord, after he had reproved Peter, adds: 'The cup which my Father has given me shall I not drink it?' This refers evidently to the Gethsemane prayer, which John had not recorded but presupposes, and may be paraphrased thus: Didst thou not hear and understand my thrice-uttered prayer, or hast thou so soon forgotten it? Wilt thou with thy sword strike out of my hands the cup which I have accepted at my Father's hand in order to drink it? He then continues to lay bare the folly of Peter's thought that he was in need of human protection and strength. 'Canst thou suppose that, in this my suffering, I can suffer otherwise than with a *voluntary* renunciation of all *that*

power of God which otherwise is always at my command?" Great and sublime word of perfect consciousness of *what* he continues to be even in his self-renouncing sacrifice! Throughout his passion there is no proper *I can not*, so far as respects *power* simply in itself; his not being able is a sacred not *being willing*, as with the Almighty Father; *for* the Father's almighty, with all its hosts, is ever at the service of the Son. He speaks of the *angels*, as the host and army of Divine Omnipotence, and of *legions*, because the Roman soldiers are before him, with whom the conflict would be; he mentions *twelve*, including the eleven disciples with himself. He says, *more than twelve legions*, reminding us of their countless number. Yet, in harmony with his humanity, which has its claims upon the Father's omnipotence only through prayer, he does not say that he could at once command their presence, but that he could ask the Father who would place them at his disposal. Finally, we must bear in mind, that this reference to the angel-power sprang solely out of the contrast with Peter's sword, as a humbling condescension to his thought that foreign help was needed. For the Lord might have said, Hast thou not seen that I need only *speak to* and *look at* my enemies, and they fall! Moreover, as Lange observes, 'for the bringing forth this conflict into victory, the pure angels in heaven availed him nothing, for this his sacred cross alone was sufficient.' It is not by hosts or by power, even that of angels, but by my spirit, my spirit willing for the suffering victory over the flesh. The angels must look on in adoring reverence, instead of drawing their flaming swords." (Stier.)

VERSE 54. BUT HOW THEN SHALL THE SCRIPTURES BE FULFILLED? that is, the Scriptures, according to which Christ must suffer these things and thus enter into his glory. (Ps. xxii; Isa. liii; Dan. ix, 26; Zech. xiii, 7; Luke xxiv, 26, 46.) In this *must* the incarnate Son rests, without restraint, with the assent of his full will.

VERSE 55. IN THAT SAME HOUR. The following words were undoubtedly spoken after his hands had been tied. If they had been spoken earlier, it might have appeared as though he intended to resist his apprehension. Stier says beautifully: "As his hand had done good to the last, so his mouth continues to speak, even after his hands were bound. Maintaining his majesty and tranquillity, his love induces him to speak yet one word more. They had listened in involuntary amazement to his words concerning the sword on earth and the angels in heaven, concerning his Father and the Scriptures. But since he had again renounced all defense they finally proceed to bind and lead him

away. What he says now to the multitudes he is constrained to say: for the Father's honor that he may be honored in the Son, even when men are pouring contempt upon the Son; as a testimony to the truth that they might not think that they took him with their swords, any more than Peter should have supposed that with his sword he could have defended him; finally, in the love with which he, perseveringly teaching them, shows them their sin." — SAID JESUS TO THE MULTITUDES. That these words were addressed to Jews is clear; Luke says that they were addressed "to the chief-priests, and captains of the Temple, and the elders, which were come to him." They probably had followed the band in the rear, and were now emerging from the crowd. At first he exposes their malice and cowardice, evidencing their wicked cause and guilty conscience; then he establishes clearly and irrefutably his own innocence. He had met them in daylight in the Temple as the prophet of God; they meet him under the cover of night, in a solitary place, as the agents of the prince of darkness. In majestic submission he declares: I am no malefactor, yet I suffer myself to be treated as such. — I SAT DAILY WITH YOU, etc. This is a vivid reference to his frequent presence on all occasions at the feasts since his first coming to the Temple; but especially during the past week. (Luke xix, 47.) — TEACHING. He speaks now only of his teaching; not of his miracles, the last of which he had performed but a short time before. — IN THE TEMPLE. In the most public place, where the ecclesiastical police should long ago have done their duty, if there had been any thing dangerous in him. — AND YE LAID NO HOLD ON ME. They had, indeed, often desired to secure his person, but had not dared to have him arrested, so that this night attack appears the more plainly as the work of their guilty conscience and malice.

VERSE 56. BUT ALL THIS WAS DONE, etc. — literally, has come to pass. These words are no addition by the Evangelist, but the Lord's own words continued. Instead of this reference to the Scripture Luke adds another word of the same meaning: "*But this is your hour and the power of darkness.*" The full meaning of "your hour" and of "the power of darkness" will be pointed out in the comment on this passage in Luke. Here we have to consider only its relation to the words recorded by Matthew, on which Lange remarks: "This is *their* hour; they have now power over him, and it is the hour of darkness; Satan has power over them, but he has it only because it is given unto him of God, who, according to the Scriptures, had foreordained that Christ should be numbered with the transgressors. This power of God it is to which he submits

of his own free will and accord, while their power lasts but an hour." — THEN ALL THE DISCIPLES FORSOOK HIM AND FLED. "The last words of Jesus [recorded by Luke] convinced the disciples that their Master was resolved to offer no resistance whatever, and with this certainty the last ray of their expectation of a temporal Messianic kingdom disappeared. They felt deeply how this, their last hope, forsook them, and the power of darkness, of which Jesus had just spoken, showed itself at once in their conduct. Although the word of Jesus, recorded by John, (xviii, 8,) had provided for their safety, they were overcome by a panic, as if they were to be arrested themselves. *They dispersed — they fled.* Yet it appears from the conduct of Peter and John, (John xviii, 15,) that they fled only partially, following the Lord still from a distance. It is worthy of note that in this hour of peril, when the apostles dispersed and forsook their Master, other disciples took a bolder and more decided stand; believing women and some members of the council — Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. We have here an illustration of the indestructibility of Christ's Church in the fact that new disciples are constantly appearing on the stage, even when the older ones disappear or seem to disappear. The first prelude of this fact is given by that youth, of whom Mark says, that he followed Jesus, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, in which the Orientals used to sleep. It seems to us highly probable that he was a disciple of Jesus, slept near by the spot where Jesus was apprehended, was awokened by the noise, and made up his mind, as soon as he learned that Jesus was led away a prisoner, to follow him into the city." (Lange.)

§ 73. JESUS BEFORE THE HIGH-PRIEST.

FROM John (xviii, 13) we learn that Jesus was not at once taken before the high-priest of the year, Caiaphas, but to his father-in-law, Annas, who had been high-priest, but was deposed under Tiberius. This sending to Annas is passed over by the Synoptists, as it had no important bearing on the trial itself, which was held immediately afterward before Caiaphas, as John also expressly stated in verse 24, where, according to the Greek, it should read *sent*, not *had sent*. We may suppose that Annas and Caiaphas lived in one palace, or transacted their official business in one and the same place. Various reasons have been assigned why Jesus was first brought to Annas; it may have been to find a place of temporary security till the council could be brought together, or

from respect to Annas, whom the Jews still considered their lawful high-priest, and who stood in so near relation to Caiaphas, or to extract from him beforehand some expressions which might be used in the formal trial. The last-mentioned design appears from that which is recorded in John xviii, 14-23.

Stier introduces this section in the following graphic and sublime manner: "As the history of the Passion proceeds, its amazing contrasts become more intensely affecting. Christ is now judged before the most sacred judicature then existing, but condemned by the most fearful perversion of justice and abuse of its forms. The Deliverer of mankind is in bonds; the Judge of all is attainted; the Prince of Glory is treated with the foulest scorn; the Holy One is condemned as a delinquent, the Son of God as a blasphemer, and He who is the resurrection and the life is doomed to die! The type here rises in rebellion against its antitype, the shadow against its substance, and the eternal High-Priest is condemned by the so-called high-priest of this year. The law is perverted and turned against the grace for which it should only prepare the way; and it becomes the triumph of grace thus to deliver from the curse of the law. Lying bears witness against truth, and long-suffering truth thus wins its empire and rights. The subject rises against his Lord as a lord, the creature in the name of God against its God — and what do we hear? One sole testimony; I am He! One sole sentence: He is worthy of death! This verily holds good in the counsels of God; but not in the sense of our earthly jurists, who, like Caiaphas, would offer up one literally instead of all."

Verses 57-68. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 53-65; LUKE xxii, 54, 63-65;
JOHN xviii, 13, 24.)

(57) AND they that had laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high-priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. (58) But Peter followed him afar off unto the high-priest's palace, ^[1] and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end. (59) Now the chief-priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; (60) but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, (61) and said, *This fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. (62) And the high-priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against

thee? (63) But Jesus held his peace. And the high-priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. (64) Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (65) Then the high-priest rent ^[2] his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. (66) What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. (67) Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands, (68) saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

[1 The Greek word, ἀντίλη, translated *palace*, means the courtyard inclosed by the building. An Oriental house is usually built around a quadrangular, interior court, into which there is a passage — sometimes arched — through the front part of the house, closed next the street by a heavy folding-gate; with a smaller wicket for single persons, kept by a porter. It is this interior court, open to the sky, where the attendants made a fire. The place where Jesus stood before the high-priest was an audience-room, open to the court — as we must infer from verse 69, where Peter is spoken of as sitting "without in the palace" — and a little elevated above the court, though on the ground-floor; on which account Mark (xiv, 66) speaks of Peter as "beneath in the palace," that is, in the court below. Such audience-rooms on the ground-floor had, generally, facing the court, a railing and some pillars. The passage from the street is the προαύλιον, or πύλων, both translated *porch*.]

[2 According to Leviticus xxi, 10, the high-priest was forbidden to rend his clothes; but this ordinance had, in all probability, only reference to his official robe when worn in the Temple, or to mourning for the dead. (Lev. x, 6.) It was customary for the Jews to rend their clothes when they heard a blasphemy. (2 Kings xviii, 37.) Instances of that kind are mentioned. (1 Mac. ii, 14; Josephus, Bell. Jud. II, xv, 4.)]

VERSES 59-61. NOW THE CHIEF-PRIESTS, AND ELDERS, AND ALL THE COUNCIL. The word "elders" is wanting in some manuscripts. By "all the council" we have to understand all those members that were the enemies of Jesus. Those few that were his friends — Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea — had, no doubt, for some time ceased to assemble with them.

When Nicodemus, at a much earlier time, (John vii, 50, etc.,) spoke a few words in favor of Jesus, he was threatened with excommunication. According to John ix, 22, "the Jews had already agreed, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." Joseph of Arimathea had probably also entered his protest on a former occasion. (Luke xxiii, 51.) Other members may likewise have been kept away through fear of being excommunicated. — SOUGHT FALSE WITNESS AGAINST JESUS, TO PUT HIM TO DEATH; BUT FOUND NONE. There is every-where testimony *for* him without seeking — but *against* him? They found none. Though many false witnesses came forward to their order, their testimonies would not accord or would not answer the purpose. Many might offer to bear witness to his desecration of the Sabbath — but this will not pass, for they can not touch the miracle by which he had desecrated it. To charge him with having denounced them, the leaders of the people, as hypocrites, fools, and blind, was still more questionable: who knew what he might have to say to them, even now! Or his breaking of the traditions and ordinances of the Pharisees — but this might have secured protection from the Sadducees, and divided the council. Absolute lies would not gain their end with the people; there must be some truth mingled with them." (Stier.) — AT THE LAST CAME TWO FALSE WITNESSES. "Only just as many as were absolutely necessary, and they bring up a word heard two years before! It is now falsified and perverted into blasphemy against the Temple of God, although Jesus at the time — and, recently again — had shown his zeal for the honor of the Temple." (Stier.)

VERSE 63. BUT JESUS HELD HIS PEACE. The charge — being of such a nature that the judges themselves had to give it up as futile (Mark xiv, 58, 59) — was not worthy of an answer from our Lord. To explain *to them* what he had said about the Temple being destroyed, and his being able to raise it up again, was evidently uncalled for. Moreover, the slightest word of reply would have given the whole matter another turn, not in harmony either with his dignity or with his Divinely-appointed course. — AND THE HIGH-PRIEST ANSWERED; that is, replied to his silence — wrathful that he can not fasten upon Jesus any single circumstance — anxious lest the power of his dignified silence might move some hearts, even in the council; but more than this, he feels himself something overawing in the silence of him who is thus accused, and he becomes conscious that the only point to be tested is the Messiahship of Jesus. — I ADJURE THEE BY THE LIVING GOD. This was the usual formula of

adjuration among the Jews, and the answer returned to it had the validity of an oath. "And if this man, Jesus of Nazareth, is the Christ, the Son of God — what then? Will the high-priest cast himself at his feet, and supplicate with adoring penitence the forgiveness of all past opposition? O no, then and for that very reason he is to be rejected, condemned, and put to death! Caiaphas would only say — tell us whether *thou claimest thyself to be such*; but the living God, in whose name he dares to put the question, lays a spell upon his tongue, so that he must speak more truly than he meant to speak; he is constrained while preparing for the last and consummate denial of the truth, to confess it." (Stier.) — THAT THOU TELL US, WHETHER THOU BE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD. Although the Jews did not connect with their idea of the Messiah that of Divinity proper, it is evident that Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim ascribed to the term *Son of God* its true sense, which was so offensive to them, (John v, 18; x, 33.) Caiaphas does, indeed, in the question, not deny the identity of the two terms, *Christ* and the *Son of God*. The emphasis lies on the word *thou* — such a one as thou.

VERSE 64. JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, THOU HAST SAID, or, I am, as Mark (xiv, 62) has it. Thou hast thyself confessed and testified it, thou knowest it well without my telling thee so. This also shows that Caiaphas used the words, "Christ" and "Son of God," in their Scriptural sense, since Christ's affirmative answer took the words evidently in the same sense in which the questioner had used them. "That which he had formerly forbidden his disciples to proclaim, in order to obviate misunderstanding and offense, he now himself testifies with the utmost plainness, *now* when the consequence will be his *death!* He looks through the meaning of the questioner, contemplates all the consequences of his affirmation; but on that very account he keeps silence no longer. As an obedient Israelite, he must respond to the adjuration of the ruling power — under the law to the last, even when it is perverted against him. But he knew the counsel of his Father, also, as to this hour which had now come; and, therefore, he gives himself up the more readily by his — *I am he!* This "*I am he*" is self-sacrificing as it was before in the garden. But in this same word the sum, as well as the goal and end, of his prophetic office is involved. Accepting this judicial adjuration, Jesus testifies not only that he is the Messiah of Israelitish prophecy, but that therewith and therein he is the true Son of God, in the same 'metaphysical' sense as he had elsewhere asserted it, in conformity with Scripture. As he there stands bound before the Sanhedrim, as he

afterward hangs upon the cross, the declaration, *This Jesus is the Christ, this Son of man the Son of God!* is folly to the carnal reason, a contradiction to all the Jewish expectation concerning the Messiah, the stumbling-block to all deistical notions of Gentile wisdom and natural knowledge of God. But it is not contrary to the prophetic word, nor is it contrary to man's inmost convictions in reason and conscience, which do not find 'the living God' again but through *Jesus Christ*. History, finally, since his crucifixion, is the progressive demonstration of the power and glory of him who was thus humbled." (Stier.) Lange remarks: "For this word — 'I am the Messiah,' the Jews had been waiting for centuries as the watchword of their redemption. This word they had tried throughout his ministry to extort from him, at first undoubtedly with a view to do homage unto him, provided he would be a Messiah after their own notions. And now, when he utters it, it becomes for them a savor of death unto death. They construe it into a crime worthy of death. Jesus sees that his judges have waited for this his declaration in their hardened unbelief. He feels it, how little they are prepared to recognize his glory and dignity in his present abject position. For this reason he announces to them, that he would establish his claims by the judicial manifestation of his glory." — NEVERTHELESS, [according to the Greek, *moreover*,] I SAY UNTO YOU. "In that which he says we have the authentic interpretation of the name, *Son of man*, which he had given to himself from the beginning; he points to Daniel vii, 13, 14, and Psalm cx, in their combination, taking his words for these scribes out of the Scriptures. In connection with the oath put to him he refers to the oath of God in that Psalm. 'Ye shall see me sitting, as I now stand before you while ye sit in judgment upon me, *at the right hand of power*,' that is, of Almighty Power. What a contrast with his present weakness! He sits, as it were, already in judgment upon the throne of the glory of God. But he who sitteth will also *come*. By this coming we have 'to understand not only his future personal coming again, but also his spiritual, historical, self-manifestation in the government of the world,' as Neander remarks. In the same sense St. John speaks (Rev. i, 7) of the kingdom, power, and dominion given unto him, as ever increasing in the course of the world's history. Even those to whom this *ye shall see* was first spoken, *did* see it, as all that reject him do down to this day: it began with the signs on Golgotha, it has continued from Pentecost downward, in an already-visible coming of the Son of man in his kingdom. His prophecy has been and is still in the progress of fulfillment. But we must not overlook that all this preliminary coming of Him who is sitting at the right hand

of power, is but the typical prophecy and the preparatory pledge of his last visible coming. The two mutually illustrate and confirm each other: only by the faith which waits for the promise of the final return can we understand the coming of the Lord in history; only by the acknowledgment of this his coming in history — manifest as it is to the eyes of even his enemies — can we maintain our expectation and waiting for the Son of God from heaven." (Stier.)

VERSE 65. THEN THE HIGH-PRIEST RENT HIS CLOTHES, etc.
What should now take place if he were truly judged according to the law? The question that should have followed his confession was: How provest thou this? But he had proved it to them to such an extent that they dare not ask another sign of him. Nor did this judicial assembly appoint for the accused, as the law required, a counsel or advocate. By a sudden dramatic stroke the high-priest urges the assembly to their vote, without investigation or examination of evidence, and thus he drowns at the same time the clamor of his own conscience.

VERSE 66. THEY ANSWERED AND SAID, HE IS GUILTY OF DEATH, according to the law, (Lev. xxiv, 16; comp. Deut. xviii, 20,) as they imagined. The verdict was given; nevertheless there were yet some formalities to be complied with, which could not be done before another session convened in the morning (chap. xxvii, 1.) 1. It was against the Jewish law for the Sanhedrim to sit by night in judgment on capital crimes; nor was a judgment that was pronounced before daylight valid, according to the Roman law. 2. As the Roman governor had to approve the sentence of death, before it could be exacted, (Jos. Ant., XX, ix, 1,) the Sanhedrim had to put their sentence in the shape of an accusation, that was likely to take with Pilate.

VERSES 67, 68. THEN DID THEY SPIT IN HIS FACE, etc. This was done in all probability immediately after his condemnation. To spit in one's face was the expression of the highest contempt, (Deut. xxv, 9; Num. xii, 14.) Of this unheard of maltreatment even members of the Sanhedrim seem to have been guilty, since they that did so are distinguished by Mark from the *servants*, who struck him with the palms of their hands. With regard to the indignities heaped upon the Savior, Matthew and Mark agree with Luke in placing them *before the morning session of the Sanhedrim*. But it is very difficult to harmonize the account of Luke (xxii, 66-71) with the account given by Matthew and Mark of the trial before Caiaphas, preceding those indignities.

The similarity of the things said is so great, that their *repetition* appears to most commentators improbable; but if we assume Luke's report of the trial to be identical with that of Matthew and Mark, it follows, that he is chronologically incorrect in saying, the trial took place "*as soon as it was day.*" It is true, that the assumption of such a chronological inaccuracy would not impair the inspired character of Luke's Gospel, and much less its historic credibility, as we have shown in our General Introduction. But before we assume an inaccuracy in this case, we must also consider that it is difficult to weave that which Luke reports of the trial into the account of the trial before Caiaphas, given by Matthew and Mark. We shall present the various solutions that have been offered, in the comments upon that passage in Luke.

§ 74. PETER'S DENIAL AND REPENTANCE.

THE denial of the Lord by the first of his disciples, as delineated by the four Evangelists, has an abiding importance for the Church. They state the humiliating fact, with all its aggravating circumstances, without allowing themselves any reflection whatever on the strange phenomenon that this resolute and energetic disciple, who, moreover, had been so distinctly and minutely forewarned, denied his Master three times, when an open and unhesitating confession would have involved him in little or no danger. Where do we find so truthful historians as the Evangelists?

The fall of Peter was in perfect keeping with his character. It was not a premeditated act; on the contrary, he was so sure of his ardent and constant love of his Master, that he would not heed his warnings. He did not know himself, and "*the power of darkness.*" Thinking himself stronger than all the other disciples, he rushed into the temptation, instead of praying not to be led into it, and preparing himself by watching and praying, as the Lord had exhorted him and set him the example in Gethsemane. His restoration teaches us that true repentance, after the most grievous offense, fails not of pardon and grace.

Verses 69-75. (COMPARE MARK xiv, 66-72; LUKE xxii, 56-62; JOHN xviii, 15-18, 25-27.)

(69) NOW Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. (70) But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. (71) And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth. (72) And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. (73) And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. (74) Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. (75) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

VERSE 69. The denial of Peter took place during our Lord's trial before the high-priest, and is interwoven with it by the other Evangelists, but Matthew relates it by itself. — NOW PETER SAT WITHOUT IN THE PALACE; that is, in the open court. (See footnote to verse 58.) In verse 58 it is said: *He went in* — to the high-priest's palace — because he came from the street. Here it is called "*without*" with reference to the open room in which Jesus was examined. From the other Evangelists we learn that Peter was warming himself at a fire which had been kindled. "How soon after he had entered he was addressed by the damsel who kept the door, does not appear. It is probable that, as her attention had been specially drawn to him when he was admitted, she watched him as he stood by the fire, and that something in his appearance or conduct may have excited her suspicions." (Andrews.)

VERSES 71, 72. AND WHEN HE WAS GONE OUT INTO THE PORCH, etc. After his first denial Peter feels uneasy, and retreats from the open court to the porch or entrance-way in order to secure his flight. There, however, he is questioned again by the *same* maid according to Mark, by *another* maid according to Matthew, by *another man* according to Luke, while John uses the indefinite form, *they said*. "The matter may very naturally be thus arranged: the damsel who first accused him, silenced for the time, but not satisfied with his denial, speaks to another maid-servant, and points out

Peter to her as one whom she believed to be a disciple. Seeing him soon after in the porch, she renews the charge, and the other maid repeats it. Others, hearing the girls, also join with them, perhaps dimly remembering his person, or now noting something peculiar in his manner. During the confusion of this questioning, Peter returns again to the fire, where most were standing, and there repeats his denial with an oath." (Andrews.)

VERSE 73. AND AFTER A WHILE CAME UNTO HIM THEY THAT STOOD BY. The third denial, according to Luke, took place "about the space of one hour after." Here Matthew and Mark speak of several interrogators, Luke has still "another," and John specifies "one of the servants of the high-priest, a kinsman of him, whose ear Peter had cut off." It seems that Peter, in order to allay suspicion, had joined in conversation with those by whom he was surrounded, and was recognized as a Galilean by his manner of speech; for the provincial dialect of the Galileans was broad and unpolished.

VERSE 74. THEN BEGAN HE TO CURSE AND TO SWEAR. He had sworn before, but now he commences to invoke curses upon himself if what he said was not true. — **AND IMMEDIATELY THE COCK CREW.** The first crowing, which Mark mentions, Peter seems not to have heard. The cock often crows irregularly about midnight or not long after, but again and regularly at three o'clock, A.M. This last crowing is meant here. Luke adds: "*And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.*" It is supposed that this took place when Jesus was led from Annas to Caiaphas, or from the apartment in which he had been tried to another where he was kept till the morning session. But Mr. Andrews says: "It is not necessary to suppose any change of place on the part of the Lord. If the Sanhedrim assembled in a room open to the court in front all that was said in the one could, with more or less distinctness, be heard in the other. There is, then, no difficulty in believing that Jesus had heard all the denials of Peter, and that now, as he denied him for the third time, and the cock crew, he turned himself to the court and looked upon the conscience-stricken apostle."

VERSE 75. AND PETER REMEMBERED THE WORD OF JESUS, etc. "Peter went out. He felt that a mere retraction could not better his case. He knew of only one satisfaction, which could turn the curse of his guilt, and this had been offered to him in the look that Jesus had cast at him. He knew of only one way to obtain pardon; namely, the way of the deepest humiliation before

God, which involved that he willingly bore the shame of being called a denier by men, while he penitently confessed his guilt before the court of heaven. He went out into the darkness of the night, but not the night of despair as Judas did. Weeping bitterly, he went to meet the breaking day. The angel of grace attended him on his hard way into the judgment of the spirit that was to inflict death upon his old life, especially his old pride. And thus he was enabled to die with Christ in a manner not anticipated by him. His contrition of heart must first be complete, he must first hear from the lips of his Master, that he is pardoned and reinstated, before he can make satisfaction unto men for his great guilt by an open confession. While Judas pursued the opposite course, seeking first to make satisfaction to the enemies of Christ, who had sinned with him, for his unnatural crime without seeking forgiveness of God, and thus despaired; Peter, by his course, not only obtained pardon, but has also become the first shining type of the true order of salvation." (Lange.)

CHAPTER XXVII.

§ 75. JESUS IS LED AWAY TO PILATE, — REMORSE AND SUICIDE OF JUDAS.

HAVING, in their night meeting in the palace of the high-priest, passed sentence of death, the Sanhedrim held at the break of day a regular meeting in the Temple, in order formally to sanction it, but especially to devise the best means for obtaining the confirmation of their verdict by the Roman Governor. Inasmuch as the power to inflict capital punishment had been taken away from the supreme judicatory of the Jews, the Sanhedrim had to frame a charge against Jesus that would justify the sentence of death, not only from a Jewish, but also from a Roman point of view. A charge of heresy, of blasphemy, of being a false prophet, etc., was not sufficient to secure his condemnation by the Roman Governor. They resolved, therefore, to charge him with sedition or rebellion against the Emperor, (v. 11; Mark xv, 2; especially Luke xxiii, 2; John xviii, 29, etc.; John gives the most detailed statement of what transpired before Pilate,) and thus to secure his condemnation to death. Their plan, however, was overruled, inasmuch as it became manifest before Pilate, that they sought his death only because he had claimed to be the Son of God. (John xix, 7-11.)

The despair and tragical end of Judas is not mentioned by the other Evangelists, but confirmed in the Acts. When Jesus was led away to Pilate, Judas, it would seem, looked upon his death as certain, and now remorse seized upon him. It was of the utmost importance that the spotless innocence of Jesus — made so prominent by the apostles in their preaching, (Acts ii, 22, 23; iii, 13-15; vii, 52; xiii, 26-28) — should be placed beyond all doubt. This was done, on the one hand, by Pilate, his judge, (v. 24;) on the other, by Judas.

Verses 1-10.

(1) WHEN the morning was come, all the chief-priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: (2) And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.^[1] (3) Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief-priests and elders, (4) saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is *that* to us? see thou *to that*. (5) And he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. (6) And the chief-priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. (7) And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. (8) Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. (9) Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; (10) and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

[1] Pontius Pilate is called by Matthew, and also by Josephus, (Ant., XVIII, 3, § 1,) *governor*, (*τύγενών*.) His proper title was *procurator*, as Tacitus calls him, when he says, (Ann., XV, 44:) "Christ was crucified by the procurator Pontius Pilate; under the reign of Tiberius." A *procurator* was generally a Roman knight, appointed to act under the governor of a province as collector of the revenue, and judge in causes connected with it. But sometimes, in a small territory, especially in one contiguous to a larger province, and dependent upon it, the procurator was head of the administration, and had full military and judicial authority, although he was

responsible to the governor of the neighboring province. Thus Judea was attached to Syria upon the deposition of Archelaus — A.D. 6 — and a procurator appointed to govern it, with Cesarea for its capital. Already, during the temporary absence of Archelaus, it had been in charge of the procurator Sabinus; then, after the ethnarch's banishment, came Coponius; the third procurator was M. Ambivius; the fourth Annius Rufus; the fifth Valerius Gratus; and the sixth Pontius Pilate, (Jos., Antiq., XVIII, 2, § 2,) who was appointed A.D. 25-6, in the twelfth year of Tiberius. One of his first acts was to remove the head-quarters of the army from Cesarea to Jerusalem. The soldiers of course took with them their standards, bearing the image of the emperor, into the Holy City. No previous governor had ventured on such an outrage. Pilate had been obliged to send them in by night, and there were no bounds to the rage of the people on discovering what had thus been done. They poured down in crowds to Cesarea, where the procurator was then residing, and besought him to remove the images. After five days of discussion, he gave the signal to some concealed soldiers to surround the petitioners, and put them to death unless they ceased to trouble him; but this only strengthened their determination, and they declared themselves ready rather to submit to death than forego their resistance to an idolatrous innovation. Pilate then yielded, and the standards were by his orders brought down to Cesarea, (Jos., Ant., XVIII, 3, § 1, 2; Bell. Jud., II, 9, § 2-4.) On two other occasions he nearly drove the Jews to insurrection; the first when, in spite of this warning about the images, he hung up in his palace at Jerusalem some gilt shields inscribed with the names of deities, which were only removed by an order from Tiberius, (Philo, ad Caïum, § 38, ii, 589;) the second when he appropriated the revenue arising from the redemption of vows, (Corban; comp. Mark vii, 11,) to the construction of an aqueduct. This order led to a riot, which he suppressed by sending among the crowd soldiers with concealed daggers, who massacred a great number, not only of rioters, but of casual spectators. (Jos., Bell. Jud., II, 9, § 4.) To these specimens of his administration, which rest on the testimony of profane authors, we must add the slaughter of certain Galileans. (Luke xiii, 1.) It must have occurred at some feast at Jerusalem, in the outer court of the Temple, since the blood of the worshipers was *mingled with their sacrifices*; but the silence of Josephus about it seems to show that riots and massacres on such occasions were so frequent that it was needless to recount them all. — It was the custom for the procurators to reside at Jerusalem during the great feasts, to preserve order, and accordingly, at the time of our Lord's last Passover, Pilate was occupying his official residence in Herod's palace. — We learn from Josephus, (Ant., XVIII, 4, § 1,) that his anxiety to avoid giving offense to Caesar did not save him from political disaster. The Samaritans were unquiet and rebellious. A leader of their own race had promised to disclose to them the sacred treasures which Moses was reported to have concealed in Mount Gerizim. Pilate led his troops against them, and defeated them easily enough. The Samaritans complained to Vitellius, now president of Syria, and he sent Pilate to Rome to answer their accusations before the emperor. (Ibid., § 2.) When he reached it,

he found Tiberius dead and Caligula on the throne, A.D. 36. Eusebius adds, (H. E., ii, 7,) that soon afterward, "wearied with misfortunes," he killed himself. As to the scene of his death there are various traditions. One is, that he was banished to Vienna Allobrogum, (Vienne on the Rhone,) where a singular monument, a pyramid on a quadrangular base, fifty-two feet high, is called Pontius Pilate's Tomb. Another is, that he sought to hide his sorrows on the mountain by the Lake of Lucerne, now called Mount Pilatus; and there, after spending years in its recesses, in remorse and despair rather than penitence, plunged into the dismal lake which occupies its summit. — We learn from Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius, and others, that Pilate made an official report to Tiberius of our Lord's trial and condemnation. That he made such a report is highly probable; but the *Acta Pilati* now extant in Greek, and two Latin epistles from him to the emperor, are certainly spurious. (Condensed from Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.)]

VERSE 1. WHEN THE MORNING WAS COME. The night in which he had been betrayed to, and tried by, the hierarchy, was passed; the day on which he was to be delivered unto the Gentiles had come. — **TO PUT HIM TO DEATH.** They had already condemned him to death; their object, now, was to devise the best means for obtaining a verdict from Pilate; at what conclusions they arrived is not reported, but from the sequel we learn that they proceeded in the following manner: 1. They demanded of Pilate to sanction their sentence at once, without examining into the charges, (John xviii, 30.) 2. Pilate refusing to accede to this demand, they charged Jesus with sedition, that is, with claiming to be the King of the Jews, or the Messiah in a political sense. 3. But when Jesus convinced Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world, they were compelled to prefer the charge that he was guilty of blasphemy, having pretended to be the Son of God; 4. Failing to succeed with this accusation, they fell back upon the political charge, threatening Pilate to accuse him of high treason if he should acquit Jesus. This had the desired effect; the governor was intimidated, and the death-warrant signed.

VERSE 2. AND WHEN THEY HAD BOUND HIM, etc. It appears from this, that the bonds with which he was tied at his apprehension, (chap. xxvi, 50; comp. John xviii, 12,) and which he wore when he was taken from Annas to Caiaphas, (John xviii, 24,) had been in part, or altogether removed during his examination. "They set out now in mass in order to hand the condemned prisoner over to the Roman governor, (Luke xxiii, 1.) They calculated, not without good reason, that a call of the whole august assembly

on the governor, especially at so early an hour on the first morning of the feast, would create the impression that an enormous crime had been committed. The bonds which Jesus wore were to deepen this impression. Moreover, this early and pompous procession was intended to overawe the people and prevent popular commotions in favor of Jesus." (Lange.)

VERSE 3. THEN JUDAS REPENTED HIMSELF, etc. The repentance of Judas was like that of Cain, Saul, and a thousand others, merely remorse, produced by the consequences of his deed, fear of the punitive justice of God, the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. True, evangelical repentance, repentance to salvation not to be repented of, is expressed in Greek by *μετάνοια* — change of heart; while the word used for the repentance of Judas is *μεταμέλεισθαι* — to feel sorrow or remorse on account of the consequences of the evil deed, not on account of the deed itself. (See note on chap. iii, 3.) Lange, in his *Leben Jesu*, delineates the repentance of Judas thus: "Some have attempted to account for the repentance of Judas in connection with the notion, that he designed to compel Jesus by his betrayal to establish his temporal kingdom; but if his sorrow had sprung from seeing himself disappointed in such an expectation, he would, most probably, have expressed it, and his end would scarcely have been so tragical. Moreover, if he had betrayed Jesus for this purpose, it is not likely that he would have given up all hope at this stage of the proceedings against Jesus. If he ever indulged a superstitious expectation that Jesus would manifest his miraculous power for the establishment of his kingdom, he might have cherished that expectation up to the very moment of his expiring on the cross. That, however, his repentance sprang from a feeling of bitter disappointment, is more than probable. He, no doubt, had expected to receive more than thirty pieces of silver as the reward for his infamous deed. He must have looked confidently for high personal distinctions from the Sanhedrim; and when he is made to feel that the rulers care nothing for him, he is stung to the quick and wakes up to a full consciousness of what he has done. The whole life of Jesus looms up again before his soul, his last words resound in his ears; and now, as he is handed over to the Romans by the high-priests, he realizes that the curse and the infamy of this atrocious crime of Israel will fall principally upon his own guilty head. And as a compensation for all this he has but thirty pieces of silver in his hands. The love of money, be it ever so great, must give way before the chagrin of so bitterly-disappointed ambition and before the tormenting pangs of conscience.

Thus sets in that horrible state of despair, that makes life too intolerable a burden." For the character of Judas, his choice as an apostle, and the motives of his betrayal, see notes on chapters x, 4; xxvi, 14-16. — AND BROUGHT AGAIN THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER. Dr. Robinson is of the opinion that this incident is mentioned by the Evangelist here, in order to proceed with the Passion history without further interruption, and that it did not take place before Pilate had given the death-warrant, and the priests had returned to the Temple. But we may as well suppose that he first sought the priests, while Jesus was taken before Pilate, and when they turned away from him with contempt, he went to the Temple alone, where some of the priests were always to be found.

VERSE 4. I HAVE SINNED, etc. "Blood" signifies a violent death, and "to betray innocent blood" means to cause the violent death of an innocent person. This confession is a strong testimony for the innocence of Jesus in the mouth of man, who would fain have calmed his roused conscience by any charge, however gratuitous, against Jesus, if he could have found one, but it is no proof of genuine repentance. His confession was extorted by remorse alone. There was not connected with it any humiliation before God, any prayer for pardon or desire to return to Christ. A leading feature of false repentance, in distinction from genuine penitence, is the effort to make satisfaction for the wrong done without first imploring Divine forgiveness. — AND THEY SAID, WHAT IS THAT TO US? Without the least emotion these hypocrites turn their backs upon the wretch, suffering him to sink under the load of his crime. Whosoever makes the world his partner in committing a crime, must not expect any help or comfort when the consciousness of his guilt commences to torment him.

VERSE 5. AND HE CAST DOWN THE PIECES OF SILVER IN THE TEMPLE. By the Temple we have to understand the inner court, which the priests alone were permitted to enter. He either, as Lange thinks, paid, in his despair, no respect to any Temple regulations, or he threw the money inside over the railing, which separated the court of the priests from that of Israel. — AND DEPARTED AND WENT. We are not told how long a time intervened between his departure from the Temple and his suicide. He may have, at first, expected some relief from giving up that blood-money, but finding none, he went probably, as Lange thinks, into the dreary, rocky valley of Hinnom. — AND HANGED HIMSELF. Of Judas's tragical end and the acquisition of the

potter's field Peter says, (Acts i, 18:) "Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." There is no irreconcilable difference between the two statements. There is nothing improbable in supposing that the bursting asunder of Judas happened after he had hung himself, by the breaking of a bough, on which he was suspended, and his falling on rocks. Hacket found in the valley of Hinnom precipices from twenty-five to forty feet in height, with olive-trees growing near the edges, and a rocky pavement at the bottom, so that if Judas hanged himself in that locality, and fell down, "he may have burst asunder." While Matthew records what Judas did himself, Peter states in what state the wretched man was found. As to the purchased field, Peter may be understood to speak of the field as bought by Judas, because it was bought with his money, and the potter's field which the priests had purchased seems to have been the same as that in which the traitor met his terrible death. That the actual purchase of the field was made afterward is self-evident. They had, just then, to attend to more important matters.

VERSES 7, 8. THE POTTER'S FIELD; that is, the well-known potter's field, so called either because it had belonged to a potter, or because potter's clay was found there.— TO BURY STRANGERS IN, either foreign Jews who came to Jerusalem at the great feasts, or proselytes.— WHEREFORE THAT FIELD WAS CALLED THE FIELD OF BLOOD, Aceldama, (Acts i, 19.) Thus they fulfilled the words of Jeremiah without knowing or intending it.— UNTO THIS DAY; that is, the time when Matthew wrote. While they strove to cover their crime they established an abiding memorial of it among the people by the purchase of this field.

VERSES 9, 10. THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN. The words, as quoted here, are not found in Jeremiah. English commentators are, therefore, of the opinion that "*Jeremiah*" came into the text through a mistake of the transcribers, and that the Evangelist refers to Zech. xi, 13, 14. In the Syriac and Persian versions, and some Minuscules, the word "*Jeremiah*" is wanting, and Codex 22 and others have Zechariah in place of it. Most of the modern German commentators, however, contend that as the reading in the received text — Jeremiah — was known to Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine, it must be looked upon as genuine. Gerlach comments on the passage in question, as follows: "Matthew quotes here the principal portion of a prophecy of Zechariah (chap. xi, 12, 13) which refers in turn to a

prophecy of Jeremiah. Jeremiah by breaking an earthen bottle in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, had threatened the destruction of Jerusalem, because the people had forsaken Jehovah, (xix, 1, etc.) The name of the gate leading to Ben-Hinnom — *potter's gate*, though rendered in the English version *east gate* — indicates that clay or potter's earth was found, and possibly also worked into ware in this valley. Zechariah carries it out further, and states this Divine judgment thus: The Lord takes upon himself once more the office of the shepherd of the flock in order to make the last trial with it; but on account of the opposition of the people he finds himself compelled to lay down his office and demands accordingly his wages; thirty pieces of silver, the annual wages of a common servant, are offered to him as a mark of the utmost contempt; but the Lord throws this amount in the Temple to be taken to the potter, that is, to the unclean valley of Ben-Hinnom. The last efforts of the Lord, as a faithful shepherd, having been frustrated by the obstinate refusal of the Jewish people, their vile ingratitude showed itself in the betrayal of Judas, and in the contemptuous sum offered to him by the priests. This small amount, as it were the wages of the Lord for his love, Judas, by a special providence, casts in the Temple before the priests, so that the people become acquainted in the very sanctuary with the abominable transaction of the priests. But Jehovah does not accept the small sum; it is not laid into the treasury: by a mysterious providence he causes the priests, who are anxious to convey the unclean money to an unclean spot, to select for this end the same spot on which Jeremiah had threatened the people with destruction; in this way the name of the spot, ever fresh in the memory of the people, reminded them constantly of the greatest of all crimes and the impending judgment. Matthew names Jeremiah as the older of the prophets, whose prophecy Zechariah merely amplifies; desiring, at the same time, to refer to the threatening of Jeremiah."

§ 76. JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

IN the description of the condemnation of Christ, the Evangelists complete each other. Matthew and Mark give only short sketches of Christ's hearing before Pilate, yet the former records the interesting dream of Pilate's wife. Luke gives the transactions before Herod, (chap. xxiii, 4-12.) John gives the fullest description of the hearing before Pilate, by recording Christ's conversations with the Roman statesman, of which he had been an ear-witness. In order to

understand the history of our Lord's passion properly, it will be necessary, in our introductory remarks to this and the following sections, to put together and arrange the accounts of the four Evangelists, in doing which we shall chiefly draw from the "*Life of Christ*," as delineated by Lange and Baumgarten.

Jesus is brought early in the morning to the Praetorium, translated *common hall*, (see foot-note on v. 27,) the *official* residence of the Roman procurator, which was most probably Herod's palace, into which, however, the priests and elders did not venture to enter, lest they should be defiled on the great Paschal festival. Pilate had, no doubt, been notified beforehand in connection with the military detachment which had been asked for the arrest of Jesus; and as he was sufficiently acquainted with the Jewish character to know, that in cases of an outbreak of Jewish fanaticism the most resolute and firm conduct on the part of the Roman authorities was necessary, we find him already at his post. Having, however, exasperated the Jews by former acts of his administration, (see foot-note on v. 2,) and being aware, that they had grounds of accusation against him, he evidently acted very cautiously on this occasion. His own safety required that he should do nothing which they might use as a weapon against him. Accommodating himself to their religious scruples, according to the Roman maxim, he stepped out to the front of the Praetorium. The scene opened with the question of Pilate: "What accusation bring ye against this man?" (John xviii, 29.) From the answer of the accusers, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee," we have to infer, that they indulged the hope Pilate would not at all examine into the nature of the case, but, satisfied with their recognition of the Roman sovereignty, lend them his power to execute their judgment. To this he replied: "Take ye him and judge him according to your law," which may mean, that he did not consider the case as involving capital punishment, but that he had no objection to their proceeding against him according to their ecclesiastical law, so far as it did not involve capital punishment. Or, Pilate, to resent the demand of the priests, that he should, without examination, ratify their sentence, may have meant to say ironically: If you judge, you can also execute; but if I execute, I shall also judge. So much is clear, that from the very first the sharp-sighted Roman perceived that it was a matter of religious hate, and that the Sanhedrim would not prosecute one who had a desire to free them from Roman authority; but with a Roman's instinctive respect for the recognized forms of justice, he had demanded the nature of the charge brought against the

meek prisoner who stood before him. They now tell him, they have a capital case, and are forced to confess: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." (John xviii, 31.) The Evangelist adds: "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke, signifying what death he should die." If the Jews could have executed him according to the law on the charge of blasphemy, they would have stoned him to death — as they did afterward Stephen by mob-law. Divine Providence prevented this mode of death. Being compelled to deliver him up unto the Romans, they brought about the manner of death, which the Lord had himself repeatedly told.

Why Pilate begins the examination of Jesus with the question: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" is explained to us by Luke, (xxiii, 2.) It is in reply to their saying: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king." They accused our Lord of that of which they knew him innocent, for they hated and persecuted him for the very reason that he would not become a Messiah in the sense of a temporal king of the Jews, and he had told them a few days before with regard to the tribute money: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." By thus maliciously perverting the truth, the rulers of the Jews were as guilty of the most heinous treachery as Judas himself. "The Messianic kingdom, this completion of all gracious gifts of Jehovah, this highest consolation of all true Israelites, this heavenly ideal, whose very name and shadow suffice to fill the Jews of all times with enthusiasm," says Baumgarten, "is represented by these high-priests and rulers as a rebellion against the majesty of the Roman emperor, as a breach of the peace of the world, and this charge they make before the tribunal of the imperial governor at Jerusalem. Never has treason assumed so dark and colossal a shape as here."

With regard to the judicial procedure let us bear in mind that the Roman judge stands in front of the Praetorium when he discusses with the Jews the nature of the charge; and when he proceeds to the official examination, he withdraws with the accused, and in all probability with such of the accusers as had made up their mind to forego the celebration of the whole Passover, reserving to themselves that of the so-called little Passah, and other witnesses into the Praetorium. But when he pronounced the sentence he ascends the judgment-seat — an elevated, portable seat on the *pavement*, that is, in an open, paved space in front of the Praetorium. The first question of Pilate: "Art

thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus answers, according to John, (xviii, 33, 34,) with a counter-question — omitted by the other Evangelists: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell thee of me?" Baumgarten finds in this question an indirect reproach, similar to the one administered unto Annas: as the high-priest could not but know what Jesus had taught in the Temple, so Pilate ought to have known whether Jesus had at any time been engaged in a political transaction that would come under his — the governor's — cognizance. But this is not probable; Neander and Lange call attention to the fact that Jesus could give neither an unqualifiedly-affirmative, nor an unqualifiedly-negative answer to this question. If he had answered with an unqualified "yes," he would have at once pleaded guilty of the crime laid to his charge, in the sense in which the governor asked him. By an unqualifiedly-negative answer he would have denied his Messiahship. It was, therefore, proper to inquire in which sense the governor's question was to be taken, whether in a religious or in a political sense, and for this reason the Lord asks the governor whether he said the thing of himself; that is, whether he said it in the Roman, political sense, or whether he was merely repeating a religious charge of the Jewish hierarchy. Pilate seems to admit that the question might have a religious sense, which he did not understand, and at the same time shows his Roman pride, not without some irritation, by saying: "Am I a Jew? [What have I to do with the religious questions of the Jews?] Thine own nation and the chief-priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" (what crime hast thou committed?) (Chap. xviii, 35.) Lange observes correctly: "In this question, put by the representative of the heathen world to the Messiah, there is a theocratic and world-historical significance. Jesus could not unqualifiedly say that he had done nothing, without placing the whole in a false light. The Roman must know, not only that Jesus was innocent in the sense of the Roman law, but also that he is a king in the sense of the Jewish religion. He is to learn that there is still another world than the Roman, namely, the kingdom of truth, and that Jesus is king in this kingdom. He is also told that Jesus has fallen into his hands only in consequence of the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world, in which he succumbs outwardly, but only in order to conquer spiritually. In this sense Jesus answers: 'My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.'" Jesus speaking of his kingdom, Pilate asks again: "Art thou a king then? and Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a king." (John xviii, 37.) The other Evangelists, omitting the preceding portions

of this conversation, emphasize this answer, as the confession of Christ that he was really the king of the Jews in the higher sense of the Scriptures. For the purpose of explaining his words and of removing any suspicion from the mind of his judge — for we must not lose sight of the fact, as Baumgarten remarks, that Jesus defends his innocence before Pilate in good faith, so that he can not be charged with having *himself* brought about his death by indifference or otherwise — Jesus adds: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." The worldly-minded politician, perceiving no connection between *truth* and a *kingdom*, and considering Jesus to be a harmless enthusiast, asks in a half-pitying spirit, as if truth was an empty name, "What is truth?" and, without waiting for an answer, hurries out of the Praetorium in order to declare to the Jews outside: "I find in him no fault at all." Here must be inserted what Luke says, (xxiii, 5,) that the Jews protested vehemently against this declaration of Pilate, adding: "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." Pilate, to whom this prosecution had become irksome already, eagerly took hold of this information that Jesus had appeared first in Galilee, and that he was by birth a subject of Herod Antipas, and sent Jesus and his accusers at once to that Prince, who happened to be in Jerusalem during the feast. How the Savior was treated by Herod is related by Luke. Without passing any sentence Herod sent him back to Pilate, in a manner which showed the latter that Jesus was regarded by Herod also as a religious enthusiast, but not guilty of any civil crime. By this Pilate was confirmed in his conviction of the innocence of Jesus. He, therefore, calls together the chief-priests, and the rulers, and the people, and seats himself upon his judgment-seat, with the design to pronounce him innocent, and to end the trial, saying unto them: "Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him: I will, therefore, chastise him and release him." (Luke xxiii, 14-16.) The scourging was to appease the rage of the priests, and the releasing was to take place under the provisions of a custom that at this feast a prisoner chosen by the people should be released from punishment. He presents, therefore, to the people Jesus and Barabbas, between whom they were to choose. At this time he receives the warning message from his wife. But he had scarcely made the proposition that Jesus should be set free, when

the crowd, stirred up by the high-priests, commenced at once to cry, (Matt. xxvii, 20; Mark xv, 11:) "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Pilate, however, was not willing to accede to the clamors of the Jews, but resolved to carry out his design. For this purpose he commanded the Lord to be led away in order to be scourged. This scourging was followed, according to the account of John, (xix, 1-5,) by the cruel derision of his Israelitic royalty. According to Matthew, (verses 27-31,) and Mark, (xv, 17-20,) these cruelties of a ruthless soldiery took place *after* the sentence had been pronounced. Most commentators are, therefore, of opinion that he was scourged twice. But according to Lange and others, the account of these two Evangelists can be reconciled with that of John in the following manner. There were two kinds of scourging in use among the Romans; the one was inflicted as a torture, the other was preparatory to the execution. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Pilate let the first scourging, by which he intended to move the infuriated populace to pity, pass for the second, after the sentence of death had been pronounced. The Evangelists may have looked upon this act from different points of view. John states it with reference to the end which Pilate had in view in ordering it; so does Luke; but Matthew and Mark state it in its world-historical significance, as the beginning of Christ's sufferings on the cross, and place it, therefore, at the close of his trial before Pilate; and thus the apparent chronological discrepancy between John (xix, 14) and Mark (xv, 25) is also satisfactorily accounted for.

The scourging over, Pilate makes, according to John, a new effort to save Christ's life. While bringing him before the people with the marks of his mock royalty, he says: "Behold, I bring him forth to you that ye may know that I find no fault in him; behold the man!" But instead of moving their pity, the rage of the high-priests and the crowd rises only the higher, and they cry out: "Crucify him, crucify him!" With bitter sarcasm Pilate rejoins: "Take ye him, and crucify him; for I find no fault in him!" Upon this they reply: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Seeing thus that they could not prevail with their political charge, they fall back upon their Jewish-theocratic charge of blasphemy, and consequently upon their first demand, that Pilate should merely sanction the sentence of death pronounced by themselves. This skeptical politician in the mean time had felt some mysterious influences; the dream of his wife had disturbed him, the sacred majesty of this mysterious king had shaken his inmost soul, and the fear of harming Jesus, which he had shown at the opening of the hearing, increases

when he hears this new charge. (John xix, 8.) He withdrew, therefore, again into the hall to renew the examination. "Whence art thou?" he asks Jesus, not in a political sense, but with regard to his reputed higher origin. This question Jesus did not answer, (verse 14; compare John xix, 9; Mark xv, 5,) inasmuch as a judicial inquiry into this point did not come within the province of the heathen. Pilate, rather offended at his silence, said unto him: "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" To this Jesus answered: "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore, he that delivered me unto thee has the greater sin." And John, who reports this conversation, adds: "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him." By this the Evangelist evidently means to say, that he was now, *more than ever*, determined to release him. But the Jews also had now recourse to the last expedient. They said, assuming a threatening attitude: "If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend." This temptation proved too strong for Pilate. He was guilty of heavy offenses in his administration, and had, therefore, reason to fear the Jews, if they, irritated by the release of Jesus, should repair to Rome and accuse him to the emperor. Add to this that the then Roman emperor, Tiberius, is known to have eagerly listened to every rumor about politically-suspected persons, and if it should be proven against his procurator that he had treated a charge of this kind lightly, the latter had to look for the worst. This fear determined the governor's course. His purpose to defend the innocent was not strong enough to overcome the fear of the emperor's frown and the loss of place and power. When he heard the threat of the Jews, says John, he brought Jesus forth and sat down on the judgment-seat, in the open, paved space before the palace. The first time he had ascended it for the purpose of acquitting Jesus, now he ascends it for the purpose of condemning him. "Behold here your king!" he said to the people, pointing to Jesus. It would seem that with this bitter mockery he resented the reproach of the Jews, that he was not the friend of the emperor. But the Jews cried out, "Away with him! crucify him!" And to his sarcastic question, "Shall I crucify your king?" the priests replied, "We have no king but the emperor." By this avowal they shamefully renounced all hope of the Messiah, delivering the theocratic people into the hands of the Gentiles.

Pilate now reluctantly yielded. The manner in which he did so is more fully stated by Matthew. When the clamors of the Jews waxed louder, and an

insurrection seemed imminent, he took water, and washed his hands before the people, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." But this act, by which he wished to transfer the guilt of innocent blood to the infuriated throng around him, though no doubt fully understood, was contemptuously disregarded. Then answered all the people, and said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." As futile as this expiatory ceremony was to Pilate, so efficient were the imprecations of the Jews upon themselves; and eighteen centuries have taught in what fearful manner they have been fulfilled. In addition to Lange's sketch, Dr. Van Oosterzee remarks: "By the delivery of Jesus into the hands of Pilate, the heathen world became, in common with the Jewish Church, guilty of the greatest crime that was ever committed by mankind. But it was one of the most adorable dispensations of Providence, that, at the very time in which Jesus was to die, a man was at the head of affairs in Judea who was every way qualified to be, in his ignorance, the minister of God's purposes for the redemption of the world. While he was, on the one hand, sensible enough to distinguish between truth and falsehood; courageous enough to declare his convictions openly, and to proclaim repeatedly the Lord's innocence; conscientious enough to make every attempt to save the Lord's life: he was, on the other hand, so weak that he preferred the honor of men to the approbation of his conscience, and so selfish that he was more concerned for his own worldly interests than for the rights of the innocent. One can not but feel that exactly such a man had to be the judge under whom the Savior of the world was to suffer death."

Verses 11-30. (COMPARE MARK xv, 2-20; LUKE xxiii, 1-25; JOHN xviii, 29-xix, 16.)

(11) AND Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. (12) And when he was accused of the chief-priests and elders, he answered nothing. (13) Then said Pilate unto him, **Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?** (14) And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly. (15) Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would, (16) And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. (17) Therefore when they were

gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? (18) For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. (19) When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.. (20) But the chief-priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. (21) The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. (22) Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified. (23) And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. (24) When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*. (25) Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children. (26) Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged ^[1] Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. (27) Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, ^[2] and gathered unto him the whole band ^[3] of soldiers. (28) And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. (29) And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! (30) And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

[1] The Roman way of scourging was a far more grievous punishment than that of the Jews. The latter laid bare merely the upper part of the body, while the Romans stripped the whole body. The Jews counted the stripes — thirty-nine, (2 Cor. xi, 24) — while the Romans dealt them out without number and measure. The Roman scourge was also a far more horrible instrument — *horribile flagellum* — than that of the Jews. Only slaves were subject to this punishment, (Acts xxii, 25.) But, as the lives of slaves were counted of no value, still less regard was paid to their feelings. Scourging was generally inflicted by the lictors. But, as Pilate had no lictors at his command, he had the scourging done by soldiers. This was probably the reason why Jesus was not beaten or scourged with rods, but with the scourge made of leathern thongs. Those on whom this terrible punishment was inflicted were tied to a pillar,

generally a very low one, so that the bent back was exposed to the hard stripes. There were, as remarked before, two kinds of scourging in vogue among the Romans. One kind was inflicted on those that were condemned to the cross, preparatory to the final execution; the other on delinquents, in order to extort a confession of guilt from them, or to punish them for some crime. The latter kind, not inferior to the first in severity, was inflicted on Jesus.]

[2 The Greek word is *πραιτόριον*, from the Latin *praetorium*. It meant, in the first place, the general's tent in the Roman camp; then, also, the residence of provincial governors, where they administered justice. It served, at the same time, as the guard-house and prison of State. (Acts xxiii, 35.) For all these purposes the Romans used any existing large palaces in the principal towns of the provinces; and from Josephus, (Bell. Jud., II, 14, § 8,) we learn that the procurator of Judea resided during the feasts at Jerusalem, and used the palace of Herod as his *praetorium*.]

[3 The whole band; that is, the cohort, or tenth part of a legion, consisting, in the times of Augustus, of about six hundred men, which garrisoned Jerusalem. The term "whole band" must not be taken literally here.]

VERSE 11. AND THE GOVERNOR ASKED. In the introductory remarks to this section, we have already shown in what relation the synoptic accounts of the hearing before Pilate stand to that of John. Stier, however, advocates the view, that the first question and answer recorded by the Synoptists took place unconnected with the other proceedings, and publicly, in the presence of all. He argues: "It is hardly conceivable that Pilate should have at once taken Jesus by himself, without asking him any question in public beforehand; but we may very readily conceive how the strange answer, which he received in reply to his question, may have induced the governor to ask the same question once more in private. The first affirmative answer, "*thou sayest it,*" is ambiguous, implying that he was, in some sense, the King of the Jews, but not as a rebel against the emperor; not in such a manner that he had to fear an examination. For a person that is guilty does not at once admit the main point of the charge, except in defiance, and there is nothing defiant in the answer of Jesus. On the contrary, Pilate observes here *passion* and *calmness*, in strange and impressive contrast, so that he can not but presume that there is hid here, under the enigmatical "*yes*" of the accused, an enigma and mystery of an extraordinary nature. For this reason it resounds in his inmost soul: into this subject I must inquire in private with him. Leaving, therefore, the accusers, standing outside, to their deepest chagrin, he withdraws to the Praetorium with

the accused alone. The account of John does not lead us to suppose that Jews were present at this inside hearing. Romans may have been present, but we can account for John's knowledge of what was said, even without this supposition." Stier overlooks that judicial examinations were never held by the Romans without some of the accusing witnesses.

VERSES 12-14. At what time this silence took place, John tells us minutely, (xix, 9. See introductory remarks.) Jesus answers, where it is his duty to answer, with conscious dignity; but with the same dignity he observes, also, a deep silence, when silence is in its place.

VERSES 15, 16. NOW AT THE FEAST; that is, the Passover, which was emphatically *the* feast of the Jews. It is not known when this custom arose. Some find in it a reference to the first-born of Israel, that were spared by the avenging angel. Grotius thinks that the Romans introduced it, in order to gain the good-will of the Jews. — THEY HAD A PRISONER, CALLED BARABBAS. Fritche and Tischendorf adopt the reading, "Jesus Barabbas," which is found in several Minuscules, in the Syriac, and other translations, and in Origen. "Barabbas" is only a surname, and means, "the Father's son." A remarkable coincidence, as Jesus was, in a particular sense, the Son of the Father! According to Mark and Luke, Barabbas was guilty of sedition and murder. It is very probable that he was a Messianic impostor. Thus, Divine Providence arranged it so that the people had to choose between the true and a false Messiah. Meyer thinks that the name "Jesus" was dropped from the manuscript, because the Church, or the transcribers, hesitated to connect the holy name "Jesus" with "Barabbas."

VERSE 19. HIS WIFE SENT UNTO HIM. This incident is peculiar to Matthew. Beautifully says Lange: "As, according to Matthew, the spirit of truth bears testimony for the newly-born Savior, by dreams of the night, to which the self-conscious testimony of the Magi corresponds; so the solemn political testimony of Pilate for the suffering Jesus is completed by the testimony of his wife, based on a dream. Thus each Evangelist selects from the storehouse of real facts that which best corresponds with his scope. Under the reign of Augustus it became customary for Roman magistrates to take their wives with them into their provinces; but, during the reign of Tiberius, this custom began to be censured, (Tac. Ann., III, 33.) The name of this lady was, according to tradition, (Niceph. Hist. Eccl., I, 30,) Claudia Procula or Procla. She was,

according to the Gospel of Nicodemus, a proselyte of the gate, and, possibly, a believer in Jesus."

VERSE 19. HAVE THOU NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT JUST MAN. "A remarkable word from the lips of a Roman lady! How shall we account for it, that the wife of a heathen, holding the highest political position in Jerusalem, is occupied in her dreams with a Jewish Rabbi? How strange that she is the only one to take up his cause; that she calls him a just man, at the very moment when the rulers of his nation and the whole populace clamor for his death? She must have been one of the then numerous class of Roman and Greek ladies, who, unsatisfied with paganism, turned their attention to the religion and worship of the Jews. If this supposition is correct, if her frame of mind was of the class described, we may take it for granted, that during the few past days, when all Jerusalem was in commotion, on account of Jesus' triumphal entry into the city, and the transactions in the Temple, she sought and found means to obtain such information concerning him, as deeply impressed her mind. The appellation, 'that just man' or, 'that just one,' which she gave to Jesus, reminds us of the highest moral ideal to which Grecian philosophy arose. Plato uttered the memorable words, 'that a god must restore again the beginning and prototype of righteousness.' Still more significant and prophetic is another saying of the same philosopher: 'The common exhibition of righteousness and unrighteousness is altogether deficient. Unrighteousness will not be represented fully, till it wraps itself wholly in the garb of righteousness, and he is the truly and perfectly just one, that has nothing else than an inward righteousness, while he is, at the same time, mocked, persecuted, maltreated, and killed.' Similar to this is the saying of Aristotle: 'The perfectly just man stands so far above the political order and constitution, as it exists, that he must break it, wherever he appears.' These sayings of the Greek philosophers were prophecies concerning Him who has restored, in the midst of a sinful and perverted world, the beginning and prototype of Divine righteousness, who perfected his obedience while he was reckoned with the transgressors, on whose silent and suffering innocence the Jewish Commonwealth and the Roman polity have been wrecked as on a rock. When, therefore, the wife of Pilate, in the fullest assurance, calls Jesus 'that just one,' at the moment when the whole world disavowed him, warning her husband so impressively, we hear the voice of the Grecian conscience; and when the Roman governor tells the Jews, again and again, that he finds no fault in him, we hear the voice of Roman law and

justice. That the warning of his wife made some impression upon Pilate, appears from the last word he spoke: 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person,' (v. 24.)" (Baumgarten.)

VERSE 20. BUT THE CHIEF-PRIESTS AND ELDERS PERSUADED THE MULTITUDE, etc. While Pilate listens to and meditates upon the warning of his wife, the chief-priests and elders are busily engaged in stirring up the people still more, making them, no doubt, believe that Jesus was a false prophet, a blasphemer, and Barabbas a champion of liberty.

VERSE 21. THEY SAID, BARABBAS. Although the choice of Barabbas was effected through satanic influences, yet Jesus was honored by it. For to have been released as a condemned criminal simply through the pity of the people, would have obscured the purity and dignity of Jesus. The popular hatred was also honorable for Jesus, as an evidence that he had never connived at their wickedness and perverseness. Moreover, the injustice done to him is to console us, when in this world of wrongs the innocent is so often placed on an equal footing with the guilty, yea, punished in his place. At the same time, the preference given to Barabbas brought a swift and fearful punishment on the Jewish nation. The spirit of Barabbas, the spirit of rebellion, possessed the people like a demon, goading them to increasing fury against the Romans, till they were utterly destroyed by them.

VERSE 22. WHAT SHALL I DO THEN WITH JESUS? Significant, strange question! How many do not know what to do with Jesus! — **THEY ALL SAY UNTO HIM, LET HIM BE CRUCIFIED!** This is the voice of the people. The people insisted on the crucifixion of Jesus from hatred and blindness; God had decreed to let it come to pass from compassion toward a lost world. "It was one of the most remarkable counsels of God, that Jesus was to die on the cross. The sign of the heaviest curse was to be changed, by his death, into the sign of the greatest blessing. The pain, the shame, the slowness, the uninterrupted self-consciousness, the publicity, connected with this kind of capital punishment, made it, emphatically, the penalty of death. No sign could be so significant as that of the cross. By the grace of God, the cursed tree was to become the emblem of the tree of life, and the ignominious stake, on which arms of malefactors were wont to be expanded, was henceforth to be the banner of salvation, wrought out by the expanded arms of Jesus." (Lange.)

VERSE 24. HE TOOK WATER. He washed his hands, to signify thereby that he had no part in the execution clamored for. This was a symbolical act, common among the Jews and Gentiles. That Pilate endeavors to lay his guilt upon others, shows that his conscience was not at ease.

VERSE 25. HIS BLOOD BE ON US; that is, the punishment for his death, if he is innocent, be upon us, (comp. chap. xxiii, 35.) What a daring imprecation! and how fearfully was it fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, when, according to the testimony of Josephus, so many Jews were crucified, that there was no more room for crosses. Judge Jones remarks on this passage: "Pilate had intimated to them his belief that they should some day suffer for their cruel and unjust conduct, and the meaning of this response may be thus expressed: 'Your fear does not affect us; we have no fear that the blood of this man, whom you call just, will be demanded of us or our posterity. We willingly consent to bear all the vengeance which the Divine Justice shall see proper to inflict. We consent to be responsible for whatever injustice there may be, and to bear the punishment of it.' There was, however, a meaning in these words which the blinded multitude did not intend, and which, nevertheless, has been fulfilled in respect to many of that race, and will yet be fulfilled in respect to the entire nation. 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. It speaketh better things than that of Abel,' (Heb. xii, 24:) and this imprecation, uttered in the spirit of hate, at that time, will hereafter be uttered in the spirit of mourning and bitterness, and be answered with the greatest blessing. (Zech. xii, 10.)"

VERSE 26. THEN RELEASED HE BARABBAS UNTO THEM. It is easy to comprehend what a painful sting this his timid yielding left in his conscience, and why he afterward committed suicide. For a judge to abandon the innocent instead of defending him to the last, has been universally felt and admitted to be one of the heaviest crimes. — **AND WHEN HE HAD SCOURGED JESUS.** The account of John, that Pilate made after the scourging another attempt to release Jesus, corrects the unchronological statement of Matthew and Mark. Luke also speaks of this scourging as a measure taken by Pilate, in order to appease, to some extent, the hatred of the Jews, and to move them to compassion. But Matthew looked on the scourging, as its object was not accomplished, as the actual transition to the crucifixion, as the beginning of the crucifixion itself. — **He DELIVERED HIM.** By this act the Roman magistrate left the post assigned to him by God, and became a tool of the Jewish hierarchy. And, alas! for how many centuries have secular

governments been the tool in the hands of the Romish hierarchy for the bloody persecutions of heretics! To this very day scarcely any Roman Catholic government protects its citizens against the persecutions of the Church; and would to God, the same could not be said even of some Protestant countries!

VERSES 28-30. AND THEY STRIPPED HIM. As before the ecclesiastical tribunal Christ's dignity as high-priest was mocked, so before the secular tribunal his dignity as King was made an object of cruel mockery. After they had stripped him of his own raiment, which, according to verse 31, they afterward put on him again, they arrayed him in a scarlet robe — a soldier's cloak, called *sagum* — which was to represent the royal purple robe; for even kings and generals wore this sagum, only larger and made of finer texture. According to the term used by Matthew, the cloak or robe was a coccus-dyed, round pallium. Mark and John call it a *purple* robe; this is easily accounted for, not only because purple and crimson — coccus-dyed — were often interchanged on account of their great similarity, but also because the Evangelists had the purpose in view, for which it was put on him. — **AND WHEN THEY HAD PLATTED A CROWN OF THORNS.** The exact species of the thorn used can not be determined. The object of the crowning seems to have been *mockery*, not the infliction of pain. The soldiers, most probably, took what first came to hand, to represent the laurel-wreath, which victorious generals wore, as the reed was in place of the scepter. — Rambach makes the following pious reflections on the crown of thorns: "1. While Christ declined worldly crowns, he accepted the crown of thorns. 2. This crown of thorns is more precious than all worldly crowns full of gold and pearls, being the sign of dying love, the sign of a king, who sheds his blood for his subjects, while temporal kings demand the blood of their subjects. 3. We ought to look upon this crown of thorns whenever we are tempted to indulge in sinful pleasures, or when the old Adam is about to raise his proud head. It is also to console us when the thorns of our sins, or grief, or envy wound us; and when in the hour of death cold sweat covers our face, may we then be refreshed by the blood which flowed from the head of Christ!" — **AND THEY BOWED THE KNEE BEFORE HIM.** Having attired him as a king, they paid him mock homage — genuflexions and salutations, as they were customary before crowned potentates: "Hail, king of the Jews." — **AND THEY SPIT UPON HIM.** While the Jews expressed by spitting their abhorrence and hatred against

a supposed blasphemer, the heathen soldiers heaped this indignity upon him to express their contempt of the pretended king.

§ 77. JESUS ON THE CROSS.

WE arrange again, as in the preceding section, the accounts of the four Evangelists in their successive order, with a few general remarks on those portions of the Passion which are recorded by the other Evangelists, and which will be fully commented upon in the other Gospels. As soon as Pilate had pronounced the sentence of death upon Jesus, he was at once led out toward Golgotha; for the Jews desired greatly that the crucifixion might take place, if possible, before noon on account of the feast, so that his corpse could be disposed of before sundown. In their statement of the time of the crucifixion there is a discrepancy between John and Mark. Mark says: "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him;" but John: "It was the sixth hour" when Pilate pronounced the sentence of death. Whoever is not blinded by prejudices will readily admit, that if the two statements involved necessarily a contradiction on a point so well and so universally known, the ancient Church would have tried to reconcile the discrepancy. Unless the apparent contradiction has arisen from a confounding of the Greek signs for *three* and *six* (γ and ξ) by a transcriber, the solution proposed by Lange is the most natural one. Mark's "It was the third hour," can mean that it was past nine o'clock, that is — between nine and twelve o'clock — when the crucifixion began; and this the more so as this Evangelist looks upon the scourging as the beginning of the execution. John, on the other hand, says it was about the sixth hour, that is, it was going toward midday, when the scourging was over and Pilate spoke the last word, after which Jesus was led at once toward Golgotha. John mentions the later hour indefinitely, probably because he wanted to express the idea that the Jews were anxious to bring the affair to an end, on account of the second, rather Sabbatical, half of the preparation-day which commenced with midday.

It was both a Roman and Jewish custom to execute malefactors without the city. At the same time executions, to answer their full purpose, must take place in frequented places. Such a place was the locality where Christ was crucified, according to tradition, a somewhat elevated place lying south-west of the Temple Hill, at that time without the city walls, but subsequently built over and surrounded by Agrippa with a new wall as part of the city. Jesus bore

his cross at first himself, as John expressly says. From the account of the Synoptists, that the attendants compelled Simon of Cyrene to bear the cross of Jesus, we must infer that our Lord had sunk under his burden, worn down and exhausted — not in spirit, but in body and soul — by all that had befallen him since the evening before, the agony in Gethsemane, the trial before the high-priest and before Pilate, the many insults, and finally the scourging, which alone has often proved fatal. Yet this state of exhaustion does not prevent the Son of man from addressing words of compassion and of needed exhortation to certain women that loudly lament and bewail his case. By these women "we have not to understand," as Stier remarks, "the women disciples from Galilee, but women from the city, who without properly perceiving his innocence and the guilt of his enemies, expressed their sympathy according to the stronger sensibility of the sex to such scenes of suffering." This touchingly-sublime scene is stated by Luke alone. Beholding, in spirit, the awful judgment that was to burst upon Jerusalem, he expressed special compassion toward the poor mothers whose awful sufferings Josephus has recorded, for whom it would have been an alleviation had they been crushed by falling mountains.

Whether it was owing to a special order of Pilate that two malefactors were led out at the same time with Jesus to be crucified with him, or whether this was an arrangement of the Jewish priesthood, in order to represent Jesus by crucifying him between two malefactors as the greatest of criminals, and thus heap the utmost ignominy upon him, can not be determined with certainty. Yet, as these multiplied executions greatly disturbed the progress of the feast, it is more probable that it was Pilate's object to mortify the Jews by crucifying their king between two malefactors. At all events, the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the servant of Jehovah, "that he was reckoned with the transgressors," was thereby literally fulfilled.

Having arrived at Golgotha, they offered him a stupefying drink. But recognizing at once the nature of the beverage, he refused to drink. His holy soul shuddered infinitely more at the state of stupefaction that would have been produced by it, than at the effects of the anguish and pain that was prepared for him by his tormentors. On death by crucifixion, see note on verse 35.

Having nailed him to the cross, his *first* word was, as Luke records: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." "This first word from the cross discloses to us three things. *First*, the *perfect love* of the holy Son

of man, maintained and proved unto death; for the cry, which went up to God, has for its *presupposition* that he, as man, retains nothing but forgiveness and love. His whole life was an expression of such love; his death sets upon it the last seal. So meekly and humbly does he die in the hands of his tormentors that it seems to him needless to speak of forgiveness on his own part. *Secondly*, it exhibits the ground of forgiveness for the sins of the world. This ground is, and must ever be, the intercession of the Son, who, in the appearance of like condemnation, can yet say '*Father*.' While his blood is being poured out, the testimony, thus given beforehand, declares — for you, for the forgiveness of sins. Thus we have here in the beginning of the proper sufferings of death a testimony concerning their cause, their design, and their fruit. To this end I suffer what they do! But, *Thirdly*, how far does this atoning word extend, which then and now restrains deserved wrath against evil-doers? Who are the evil-doers for whom it was spoken and avails? Our Lord says, with designed indefiniteness, no more than '*them*,' in order to make room for every one who *will* and who *can* include himself. It applies *primarily* to the executioners *who crucify him*, as the connection in Luke clearly teaches, but it includes, at the same time, all who are guilty by participation in what was done to him, *in proportion as* they in fact did not know what they did. This appealing intercession, with its gracious excuse, extends its arms over all sinners, and all sins in which error may be alleged and consequently repentance be hoped for. The sin of *man*, deceived by the serpent, may, as such, be called that of ignorance, and finds a sacrifice; hence the expression in Hebrews ix, 7. The sin of the *devil* knows well what its aim is and what it does. There is a sin unto death for which no prayer is to be offered; this was committed by Judas at least, probably by Caiaphas and others." (Condensed from Stier.)

Having crucified him and parted his garments, the Roman soldiers sit down near the cross as a guard, in order to prevent that any one should take down the condemned prematurely or unlawfully; and the Jews, instead of being struck with horror at seeing the blood stream which they had invoked upon themselves and their children, glut their hatred by the sight, pitilessly reviling and mocking him. They wanted to put it now beyond all doubt, in spite of the superscription, that they had nothing to do with the one hanging on the cross. Even a dying murderer is seldom insulted, but the Just One must drink this cup also. Again we hear the people reiterate the old charge of their priests and scribes, that he had said he would destroy the Temple and build it up again in three days, that

he was moreover a blasphemer, having made himself the Son of God. But the most fiendish malignity is manifested by the chief-priests and rulers, when they said, "He saved others; himself he can not save," with a tone, as Stier remarks, as if throwing doubt upon all his miracles; this, at least, was the design, but in the confusion of their tongues it runs as an enforced acknowledgment of his unselfish charity to man. The second word with which they mock him, is a bitter critique on the superscription: "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." In these words the Jews gave, once more, vent to their sore disappointment and deep-seated hatred of Jesus because he refused to be a Messiah according to their carnal conceptions. Their third blasphemy is directed not only against Christ, but even against God. "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God." They must acknowledge that Jesus trusted in God; regarding that trust in God as put to confusion, they really blaspheme God himself in Christ.

As the passing Jews, and even their rulers, indulged in such acts of inhuman malignity toward their suffering and bleeding countryman, the heathen soldiers commenced also to mock him. (Luke xxiii, 36.) They went to him, offered him their sour wine, (vinegar,) and said, tauntingly, "Save thyself, if thou be the king of the Jews." As Luke mentions, at this stage, the superscription on the cross, it would almost seem as if they were repeating it to insult not only Jesus but the Jews. While these streams of inhuman taunts were pouring upon the devoted head of the sufferer, the two malefactors also commenced to revile him, according to the accounts of Matthew and Mark, (*ἀνείδιζον*.) But Luke expressly records that only one blasphemed, (*ἐβλασφήμει*.) The difference of meaning in these two Greek verbs leads us, as Lange thinks, to a solution of the discrepancy. But it seems more natural to leave the discrepancy as it is, and to hold fast Luke's express statement, than to assume that the penitent malefactor joined at first in reviling Christ *in any sense*. This will be considered in Luke. In order, however, to draw a full picture of what transpired on Golgotha, it is necessary to make here a few general remarks on the penitent malefactor, and the promise given unto him by the Savior — the *second* word spoken by Christ on the cross. While the Lamb of God is offering himself as a sacrifice for the whole human race, that race — as represented by those who stand around the cross — look upon him either with dumb amazement and despairing grief, or with hearts full of hellish hatred. "It is a consoling thought,

that among them one is found who, at the very time Christ is shedding his atoning blood, is imploring him for pardoning mercy. While his own disciples are dumb, and the whole world, by word and deed, is heaping shame and reproach upon Christ, this man is the only one that protests against the conduct of the whole world, and defends his spotless innocence. And the royal majesty with which Jesus accepted his faith in his future glory, with which he made the notorious malefactor — that had been forced upon him as the outward companion of his present sufferings — a partaker of his approaching glory, without any stipulation or condition, was the first manifestation of that boundless glory of grace that has begun to reign with his death on the cross. Since Christ has pardoned upon Golgotha the dying criminal, while he, the faithful High-Priest, was himself hanging as a condemned criminal on the accursed tree, with his hands and feet pierced, heroic faith sees even Golgotha changed into the antechamber of the throne of Eternal Grace, into the sanctuary of atonement, and boldly dares to preach the Gospel to the worst of sinners in the hour of death, in prison, and under the gallows — while, to warn us against all abuse of this abounding grace, the other malefactor, with death in his bones, blasphemes and, at the side of the Savior, rushes to hell, because there is in him no fear of the judgment of God." (Lange.)

His *third* word Jesus addresses to his mother and the beloved disciple who stood by her. (John xix, 25-27.) His friends had, at first, followed him only from a distance. (Luke xxiii, 49.) They were so completely paralyzed by the awful catastrophe, that their hearts, as it were, ceased to beat, and speech forsook them. By and by, however, they venture nearer the cross. John mentions four; namely, the mother of Jesus, her sister, [Salome, see introductory remarks to § 28,] Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus saw his mother and, standing by her, the disciple whom he loved. Her — from whom he derived his earthly existence, who must have felt bereft, lonely, and forsaken, in a degree no other mother ever realized — he refers to the disciple of his special love, and the beloved disciple to his mother. "But why does he not," says Stier, "*now* call her mother? It has been said, to spare her; that this word might not still further excite her grief. It has also been said, in order not to publish the fact of her being his mother, and thus expose her to hostile observation and treatment. There may be something true in both these suppositions; but the chief reason is this, that her relation of mother is now finally abolished and given back; her person retreats; she is for the last time

regarded as mother, in order to be so no longer. This is involved in the words which follow: 'Behold thy son!' (I am thy son no longer.) What a plain and irrefutable testimony against the office which the Church of Rome assigns to Mary!" Stier thinks, with Bengel, that John led Mary away immediately after the word of Jesus, and that he returned again to the cross alone. (John xix, 27, 35.)

From the sixth to the ninth hour — that is, from noon till three, P.M. — a miraculous darkness spread over the whole land; and, just before it disappeared, Christ cried with a loud voice, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" On this *fourth* word, and the corresponding darkness out of which it was spoken, see the exegesis of verses 45, 46.

While this word was strangely misunderstood, or blasphemously perverted by some of those that stood under the cross, they heard another exclamation, the *fifth* word of Jesus on the cross, "*I thirst.*" John says, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst," (xix, 28.) We learn from these words of the Evangelist that Jesus had, with his "My God, my God," finished his redeeming work on the cross. He, therefore, did not hesitate to express a natural want. It would have been easy for him to overcome this thirst; but instead of closing his life in proud independence and Stoic indifference, unbecoming the archetype of humanity, we hear him, free from all self-sufficiency, resentment, or mistrust, express his last temporal want to the world — for whose redemption he had struggled unto death — hoping that he would be gratified in this, his last modest wish. Yet there was connected with this avowal of a *physical* need a *spiritual* meaning, which the Church never failed to attach to the fifth word of the Savior from the cross. He thirsted, not so much for a refreshing drink, as "for the refreshment of human love, for a final human greeting, for a human blessing," as Lange remarks; and Stier adds, "for the requital of his infinite love, for the souls of men."

Having received the last meager favor from man, he spoke the *sixth* word on the cross — the great farewell to mankind, which John has preserved to the Church — "*It is finished.*" "To whom," says Stier, "does he speak this word? The first utterance on the cross was spoken *to God*, but *for men*; the second *to a man*, to comfort him with the salvation of God; the third *to mortals*, who in the love of God and his love are commended to each other. The fourth is the

first which he speaks *for himself* alone with his God; and yet most impressively for us all. In the fifth, though still almost alone with his own need, he yet indirectly turned to *men*, and the sixth he speaks *for himself, for the world, and for the Father*. He proclaims it for himself, in contrast with the cry of agony, as a cry of victory and joy, yet in the sublimest *repose* which has scarcely emerged from the conflict. He proclaims his victory at the same time to the world, declaring to his brethren the great salvation he had wrought out for the great congregation. (Ps. xxii, 22.) Finally, he speaks this word out of the depth of his praying, thankful heart to the Father, as the ground and reason of what follows, 'Into thine hands I commend [now, because all is fulfilled] my spirit!' All is fulfilled, O Father, which thou didst appoint, and which thou seest now accomplished."

Having finished his work, and having himself declared this, nothing more was left for him than to close his life. As it had been his will to enter into the human form of existence in the womb of his virgin mother by the operation of the Holy Ghost, so it is also the free and independent act of his will to bring his earthly life to a close. With a *loud* voice he utters his *seventh* and last word on the cross: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." When he spoke these words, there was no more anguish or weakness; when he gave up his spirit, he had already overcome all bitterness of death.

Verses 31-50. (COMPARE MARK xv, 20-37; LUKE xxiii, 26-46; JOHN xix, 17-30.)

(31) AND after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. (32) And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. (33) And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, (34) they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink. (35) And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments, among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. (36) And sitting down they watched him there; (37) and set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. (38) Then were there two thieves

crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left. (39) And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, (40) and saying, Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. (41) Likewise also the chief-priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, (42) He saved others; himself he can not save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. (43) He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. (44) The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. (45) Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. (46) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (47) Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias. (48) And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. (49) The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. (50) Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

VERSE 32. THEY FOUND A MAN, etc. Cyrene was a city on the northern coast of Africa, where many Jews resided. Mark calls Simon the father of Alexander and Rufus, two men who must have been well known to the Christians of his day, probably as believers. He may have come to the feast to Jerusalem, (Acts ii, 10;) but it is more probable that he had been residing there for some time; for Mark and Luke say he was coming *out of the country*, literally *from a field*, which seems to imply that he had been laboring there, and was returning before the hour when the servile work on that day was to cease. We are not told why he was selected from the crowd, but it is not probable that he would have been the subject of military impressment if he had not been a poor, laboring man. Rambach thinks that he showed some compassion, and was, therefore, compelled to bear the Savior's cross. From Mark's naming his sons, we may infer that this Simon became subsequently a follower of Jesus.

VERSE 33. GOLGOTHA — in Chaldee, Gulgoltha; in Hebrew, Gulgolet, a skull. According to Jerome and others, this name designates a common place of execution, *full of skulls*. But its name should then be the place of *skulls*, κρανίων τόπος, not the place of *a skull*, as Mark has it, or simply κράνιον — *a skull* — as Luke has it. "Besides, it is doubtful," as Andrews remarks, "that the Jews had any one place set apart as a place of execution; and, if so, would a rich man like Joseph have had a garden there?" It is, therefore, more probable that the place received its name from its shape; that it was a rounded, low, bare hill. It would lead us too far, and has too little practical interest, to state all the arguments for and against the position that the spot preserved to this day has been correctly pointed out by tradition. The most complete summary of views on this subject is given in Andrews's Life of our Lord.

VERSE 34. THEY GAVE HIM VINEGAR TO DRINK, MINGLED WITH GALL. The custom prevailed among the ancients to give criminals that were led to execution a drink that intoxicated and stupefied, (Mark xv, 23.) The Rabbins justified it as an act of humanity, and upon the ground of Prov. xxxi, 6. For this purpose wine of an inferior quality, mixed with narcotic herbs, was used. This wine was called ὅξος, sharpwine, vinegar, (Matthew,) also οἶνος, wine, (Mark.) It was mixed, according to Mark, with "myrrh;" according to Matthew, with "gall," by which we have not to understand the secretion from the liver, but bitter and stupefying herbs, such as wormwood, poppy, myrrh, and the like. The word used by Matthew is the one used by the LXX in Ps. Ixix, 22. Jesus refused this beverage, because it would have prevented him, more or less, from suffering and dying with his consciousness clear and unobscured. Afterward, when he thirsted, and his work was accomplished, he drank of the pure ὅξος, vinegar, that was offered to him.

VERSE 35. AND THEY CRUCIFIED HIM. This capital punishment was in use among various ancient nations. It does not appear that it was practiced by the Jews; for the hanging a man on a tree, (Deut. xxi, 22, 23,) took place after he had already been put to death. The Mosaic capital punishments were by the sword, (Ex. xxi,) strangling and fire, (Lev. xx,) and stoning, (Deut. xxi.) It was judged by the Romans to be the most ignominious, as well as the most painful mode of execution, to which only slaves and the vilest criminals were condemned; and to a Jew it was of additional horror, on account of the curse pronounced upon one that hangeth on a tree. Arrived at

the place of execution, the sufferer was stripped naked, his clothes being the perquisite of the soldiers; yet we have no reason to reject the ancient belief, that a linen cloth was bound round the sacred loins of the Savior, as the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, (chap. x.) mentions this cursorily in its narrative of the crucifixion. The cross consisted of two pieces of wood, variously joined together, either in the shape of X, or of T, or of †. The latter was the Latin cross, on which our Lord suffered, as early painters have represented it. The upright post or beam was driven into the ground, so that the feet of the condemned were a foot or two above the earth; and he was lifted upon it, or else stretched upon it on the ground, and then lifted with it. Midway on the post was a projecting board, on which the body of the sufferer rested, to prevent the weight of the body from tearing away the hands. For the same purpose the arms also were generally tied with cords. It has been questioned whether four nails, one for each hand, and one for each foot, or three, allowing one nail for both feet, were used; the former is more probable. It is also doubtful whether there was a support for the feet by a projecting board. Before the nailing or binding took place, a medicated cup was given, to deaden the pain. Dr. Chr. Gottlieb Richter, a German physician, describes the physical suffering endured by crucifixion thus: "1. The position of the body being immovable and unnatural, the arms being violently extended backward, the least motion caused the most painful sensation all over the body, but especially on the lacerated back and the pierced members. 2. The nails, being driven through the hands and feet, at those places where many nerves and tendons meet, which were, accordingly, either wounded or violently pressed, caused constantly-increasing pain. 3. Inflammation set in at the pierced hands and feet, and, in fact, everywhere, where the circulation of the blood was obstructed by the violent tension of the body. The pain, caused thereby, and the insufferable thirst increased every moment. 4. The blood, which found no place in the wounded and distended extremities, rushed to the head, extended the arteries unnaturally, and thus caused the most violent headache. 5. In consequence of the general obstruction of circulation, the blood in the lungs accumulated, pressing the heart more and more, swelling all the veins, and thus causing nameless anguish. Loss of blood, through the open wounds, would have shortened the pain, but the blood clotted, and ceased flowing. Death generally set in slowly, the muscles, veins, and nerves gradually growing stiff; this process commencing with the extremities, and extending thence to the inner, nobler parts of the system. Notwithstanding the loss of blood by the scourge and on the cross, the victim

hung often twelve hours, yea, sometimes till the following evening, between life and death, in fever and inexpressible anguish and pain, before fully expiring." Obvious reasons can be assigned why the Redeemer of a lost world should die by crucifixion. It was not only the most painful, the most ignominious, and the most public death, but also best adapted to reveal the ethical glory of the God-man; his hanging between heaven and earth was emblematical of his being the Mediator between God and men, and corresponded to various types of the Old Testament — the transfixing of the paschal lamb, and the elevation of the brazen serpent. Finally, it is said, that, as the serpent on a tree had overcome the first man, so he was to be conquered on a tree by the Second Adam. — **AND PARTED HIS GARMENTS.** This was a fulfillment of Psalm xxii, 18. (Compare what is said on this Psalm in the note on v. 46.) — **AND UPON MY VESTURE DID THEY CAST LOTS**, because it was the seamless coat worn by priests. (See more on this subject in John xix, 23.)

VERSE 37. AND SET UP OVER HIS HEAD HIS ACCUSATION, etc. This was done after his garments had been parted. The white tablet on which the charge or the sentence was written was called titulus. It was hung around the neck of the criminal on his way to the place of execution, or carried before him. In their hurry and excitement the Jews seem not to have noticed it, till it was affixed to the cross. John mentions particularly, that this superscription was written in the three principal languages of the civilized world at that time; namely, in Latin, the language of the ruling nation in those days; in Greek, the language of the Hellenistic Jews, that had come to Jerusalem on the feast; and in Aramaic, the language still spoken in Palestine. The object of Pilate was, undoubtedly, to insult the Jews, and revenge himself for their threatenings at the trial. It was an official publication to the whole world of a great political fact; namely, of the rejection of their king by the Jews, and of the solemn, public declaration by priests and people that they had no other king but Caesar. Thus the true dignity of Christ was acknowledged in his very ignominy, and the honor of their rejected Messiah became their national disgrace.

VERSE 38. THEN WERE THERE TWO THIEVES CRUCIFIED WITH HIM. After the Lord had been nailed to the cross, the two malefactors were crucified by another set of soldiers, since those that crucified the Lord sat down and watched him. They were, in all probability, not robbers, in the common acceptation of the word, but political criminals, fanatical rebels against

the authority of the Romans, similar to those that brought on the Jewish war a few decades later. (See more about them in Luke.)

VERSE 39. AND THEY THAT PASSED BY, etc. Lange calls attention to the fact, that it was a feast-day, on which the inhabitants of Jerusalem walked beyond the city gates.

VERSES 40-43. See introductory remarks. When they reiterated the charge concerning the Temple, it did not enter their minds that he would in three days again raise the temple of his body which they were destroying. In like blindness they reviled him with the words of the enemies of the Messiah, from Psalm xxii, 9, that were obscurely present before their minds, and thus fulfilled the prophecy to the letter. They know not what they say; they know not that he had ascended the cross, in order to save *others*. But that even the high-priests and scribes mock his admitted "trust in God," as now put to confusion, betrays the inmost wickedness of their hearts, for thus they really blaspheme God himself in Christ.

VERSE 44. THE THIEVES ALSO, etc. On the difference between Matthew and Luke, see the introductory remarks and Luke xxiii, 39.

VERSE 45. NOW THERE WAS DARKNESS, etc. "Could all these scenes of agony and woe," says Ellicott, "thus fearfully succeed each other, and nature remain impassive and unmoved? Was there no outward sign, no visible token that earth and heaven were sympathizing in the agonies of Him by whose hands they had been made and fashioned? No, verily, it could not be. If one Evangelist, as we have already observed, tells us that on the night of the Lord's birth a heavenly brightness and glory shone forth amid the gloom, three inspired witnesses now tell us that a pall of darkness was spread over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour. But while they thus specially notice the interval, it may be observed that they maintain the most solemn reserve as to the incidents by which it was marked." Even so, and for that reason we can not say any thing concerning the impression this miraculous phenomenon made upon the enemies of Christ, and how it was interpreted by them, nor whether the darkness came instantaneously, as Stier thinks, or by slow degrees. But it is worthy of note, that with special reference to Amos viii, 9, even the Jewish Rabbins had declared, "that in the days of the Messiah the sun would be darkened at noonday." The silence of Josephus about this darkness can easily be accounted for; as a Jew he was, certainly, not well disposed to relate a

phenomenon so favorable to the cause of Christianity; he may easily have brought himself to believe that it had been a mere dark cloud or a dense fog, magnified into a miracle by the followers of Christ. A natural eclipse of the sun it can not have been, because the Passover was kept at the time of the full moon. It was, evidently, a miracle in the proper sense of the word; as the language of God, it admits of more than one meaning. We may see in it a fit symbol of the judicial blindness that had commenced to befall Israel. God withdrew now from the Jewish nation the light of his grace, and was about to give them over to blindness and hardness of heart. Or it may have been designed, as Stier says, "to exhibit the amazement of nature, and of the God of nature, at the wickedness of the crucifixion: the sun will no longer shine upon the scene. It may be put as in the apocryphal account of Dionysius Areopagita, who said in Egypt concerning this darkness, *Either the Divinity himself is suffering, or sympathizes with one who suffers!* Or, as Draeseke expresses himself: 'Men strip themselves of all feeling, and sympathy passes into inanimate nature, when the Son of God dies.' We may say, further, that when created nature — the inanimate image of a hidden, spiritual world — hides itself in mourning, there is, as it were, a *vail* of sorrow thrown over the scene which now first, from this hour of noon, was going on to its full consummation; the silent sign cries aloud that here is exhibited *a dark mystery* of the Divine counsel. Hitherto they have *seen* the Crucified — some with malicious joy, some with profound grief, all with astonishment; none with indifference; but now none shall *see* what remains for him to suffer, what no mind can conceive. All these thoughts have their truth; but they lead us finally to the only real and true signification of the supernatural darkness. It is the sympathizing *symbol and image*, silent, but speaking, concealing and yet revealing, of the *internal darkening of the soul* which the Lord of nature now undergoes." — OVER ALL THE LAND, (*ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν*;) that is, over the whole earth.. According to the Hebrew idiom the word "*earth*" often means only the land of Judea. If it is to be understood literally, it must, at least, be confined to the eastern hemisphere of the earth, on which the sun was then shining. In deciding the question whether the phrase "*whole earth*" is to be understood literally, we ought to have testimonies of profane writers, and these testimonies must make it clear that the eclipse, which they record, took place at the same time at which the darkness recorded by the Evangelists occurred. As this darkness occurred during the full moon, when no ordinary eclipse can take place, we have a right to expect that, if noticed by other writers, it would be described as

an extraordinary one, occurring during a full moon. Now the Church Fathers of the first centuries appeal to several testimonies of profane writers. Phlegon, a freedman of Hadrian, mentions, according to Eusebius, a great eclipse of the sun, that occurred in the fourth year of the twenty-second Olympiad, and that at the same time a great earthquake in Bithynia destroyed a large part of Nice. Eusebius refers also to a story told by Plutarch, as well authenticated; it runs thus: "Epithersis was sailing to Italy on board a ship laden with many passengers and merchandise. On a certain evening the ship came near the island of Paxae. Most of the passengers were still awake. Then of a sudden a voice was heard coming from the island, which called the pilot Thamus, an Egyptian, distinctly by name. To the first two calls he made no reply; to the third he replied. Then the voice said much louder: 'When thou comest to the *paludes*, state that the great Pan has died.' Epithersis said that all were frightened by this strange voice. They were at a loss what to do, whether they should comply with the injunction or not. At length Thamus resolved to go on, if there should be a favorable wind; but to deliver the message, if there should be a calm. Now there was a calm at the *paludes*; wherefore Thamus delivered the message from the prow of his ship, and scarcely had he spoken the words, when a great noise of lamentations and wailings followed. The affair became known also at Rome. The emperor, Tiberius, sent for Thamus and had it investigated, who this great Pan was." Tertullian appeals to the public records of the city of Rome, to prove that such a darkening of the sun took place; and Suidas assures us that Dionysius, the Areopagite, then a heathen, saw the eclipse in Egypt, and exclaimed: "Either God himself is suffering, or sympathizes with one who suffers." In modern times the Chinese annals have also been appealed to. But if the Gospel records are at all authentic, an event like this which the Evangelists have recorded before so many of their contemporaries, who could well remember the event, or could prove the falsehood of the statement, had this been the case, need I no such vouchers for its credibility; and these testimonies, if impartially examined, are by no means reliable. For, 1. They are to be found only in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. The writings to which they appeal are no longer extant, and the quotations can, consequently, not be verified. It is well known, how very uncritically these otherwise highly-deserving men went to work, when they heard any thing that they might oppose to heathenism. We know, also, how ill they were qualified to judge about astronomical phenomena. But, 2. Even supposing that the testimonies in question are authentic, they do not prove any thing about the eclipse in

question. For they speak, indeed, of an eclipse so great, "that the stars became visible at noonday" — which was also the case in Europe in 1706 — but they do not say that the eclipse in question happened at the time of the full moon, which they would certainly have mentioned as the most extraordinary about the whole. 3. The account of Phlegon does not agree with the most probable year of our Lord's death, which is also the case with the passage quoted from the Chinese annals, and the other testimonies do not state the time when the reported eclipse took place. We, therefore, prefer to believe that the darkness extended only over the land of Judea, in which case the account of the Evangelists needs no confirmation by profane writers. This supposition, moreover, appears to us to be more in harmony with Divine wisdom, which uniformly makes use of the simplest means for the accomplishment of its purposes. This sign from heaven could have significance only for the Jewish people. Is it not then, more probable, that God, to accomplish this purpose, should create a body in the firmament standing low enough to withhold the light of the sun from the horizon of Palestine, than that he should change the course and order of the whole universe, remove the moon to another point of its orbit, and make all the planets stand still for three hours, *without letting the other inhabitants of the globe know* why he suspended the motion of the heavenly bodies against his established order?

VERSE 46. AND ABOUT THE NINTH HOUR JESUS CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME? This is the only word of Christ on the cross recorded by Matthew and Luke. It was spoken in Aramaic, which accounts for the misunderstanding of some of the bystanders mentioned in verse 47. Our Lord expresses his feelings in the first words of the twenty-second Psalm. There is an unfathomable depth in this mysterious utterance of the Savior. It was an ejaculation wrung from him by the intensest sufferings of the moment. It was the cry of dissolving nature. It is said of Luther, when he pondered on this enigmatical utterance, that he continued for a long time without food, sat wide-awake in his chair, and as motionless as a corpse; and when at last he rose from the depths of his cogitations, as from the shaft of a mysterious mine, he broke into the exclamation, "God forsaken of God, who can understand it?" And yet there has been shed a great light upon it from the stand-point from which the German evangelical theologians of our day view the union of the Divine and the human in the person of the God-man, as the reader will see from

their comments. Let us commence with Stier. He considers it necessary for a proper understanding, first of all to examine the twenty-second Psalm. Admitting that this Psalm does not belong to the so-called, directly Messianic Psalms — in which, as in Psalm cx, according to the decision of Jesus and his apostles, the prophet consciously speaks of, or introduces as speaking, the future Messiah as a subject distinguished from himself — but to the *typical* Psalms — in which David, proceeding from his own personal experience, is led by the Holy Spirit, whose language was on his lips, further onward to a delineation that, on the whole, as also in many particulars, found its complete fulfillment only in Christ — he says: "Our Lord took the beginning of the Psalm as his cry of lamentation. Verse 8 was most literally fulfilled in the mouths of the mockers; so was verse 18. The whole delineation from verse 12-18 is so wonderfully reproduced in the scene of Golgotha, that it seems as if we were reading a history of it written beforehand. Verse 22 is not only realized in its striking expression, Brethren, in John xx, 17, but it is quoted by apostolical authority in Heb. ii, 11, 12, as a direct prediction. These are the salient points which are illustrated and explained in the New Testament, but the whole as such, apart from individual quotations, leads us directly to the Messiah. A Holy One of God is described in conflict and victory, in the deepest anguish and ignominy first, then in the highest honor. In David's life there are many things similar, on which the Holy Spirit might base the prophecy; but we seek in vain for any single situation in his life which would entirely correspond. For we see a righteous man who, in verse 1, as in verses 10, 11, can, without any trace of personal sin or guilt, appeal to God as *his* God from his *birth*; who, nevertheless, forsaken by this God as to his feeling and experience, is and remains miserable, finding less acceptance for his prayer than any other mortal praying in faith, (vs. 3-5;) a reproach of men, and despised of the people, not only threatened by raging enemies, but internally broken and poured out like water, brought by the dark counsel of God *into the dust of death* — that is, abandoned to certain death beholding himself already as dying, and his enemies already dividing his garments. Where and when did *all this* befall David? As to him it was hyperbole, to which the Spirit impelled him, because it became the simplest truth on Calvary. And so, also, in the second part, where the victory is as glorious as the conflict was gloomy and dark. The anguish of death is followed — and it is the *answer* to the *why* — by a declaration and glorifying of the name of God, a salvation for all the miserable, far and wide, to the ends of the world, and among all the kindreds of the nations, by means of which the

hearts of the comforted live forever, others lying in the dust of death are lifted up, and the people that shall be born are made partakers of his righteousness — and all this through the full accomplishment of salvation by this One Sufferer, who has 'done this!' What deliverance of David ever had, or ever could have, such results? Are we not involuntarily compelled to think of Isaiah liii? Could David have conceived and uttered all this without an elevation beyond himself, even while lesser analogies in his own history might make him susceptible, and prepare him for such contemplations? Thus all, as it is here predicted, has indeed its root in the experience of Old Testament saints, especially David, who was also an anointed one of God, passing through shame and suffering; nevertheless, it has its full and perfect truth only in Christ. So especially and most properly with regard to the *cry of anguish* in the beginning, which Christ makes his own, and thereby teaches us that he fully discerned himself in this Psalm. 'Not to strengthen himself,' as some expositors strangely represent it, 'did Christ commence to recite this Psalm, as we use hymns and Scripture in our sorrows, without being able in his exhaustion to go beyond the commencement of it!' The Lord thinks indeed of that Psalm which he had often contemplated before as a prophecy of himself; but the Spirit brings to his thought the word with which it commences at the crisis to which that word belonged. It presents to him at the proper moment the expression at once of dismay and trust, as both were struggling together in him; and he seizes it as a rod and staff, for to such an end was it written for him. At the same time, we must bear in mind, that the Lord could not thus mourn over abandonment of God, out of feeling originally his own, as using a word, *self-originated in his own consciousness*; it is rather a word *strange* to him *personally* — a word which grew out of the sufferings he undertook for humanity — a word of prophecy prepared for him as a witness that he now, as the Son of man, the afflicted Righteous One in the midst of the unrighteous, suffers and laments. But though the Son of God in the flesh does not now first form for himself this cry of profoundest anguish as his own personal word, he did nevertheless perfectly *appropriate* the word of the Psalm; rather, it has such a truth in his heart and upon his lips as it never had before and never will have again; it perfectly expressed his meaning and his condition. Had it not been so, there would have been no prophecy fulfilled; yea, then *he would not have said it*. He utters it openly; for Divine Wisdom ordered it that all the world should know what was passing in the depth of his soul, and that not otherwise than as it was foretold. The Psalm itself shows us that he who felt himself forsaken was by no means

actually forsaken; and this is proved by the very first word of the prayer, for *he who can speak to God must have God with him*. From this, therefore, we proceed in our whole exposition. First of all, we hold fast that Christ, as the *Son of God*, could never be forsaken by his Father; and this is expressly testified in John xvi, 32. Only those who forsake God are forsaken of him. He who laments in this 'forsaken *me*,' who feels himself thus forsaken, is the same Son of man who said in Gethsemane, '*Not as I will.*' The conflict of Gethsemane is here heightened and completed. There it was the conflict of the human *will*, but still in the clear consciousness of the Spirit triumphing over the flesh; here appears even a struggle of the human *consciousness*, an actual obscuration of the light of the Spirit in the laboring soul. But, as in Gethsemane the natural repugnance to death, truly human but sinless, was merged into a perfect obedience of the Divine will, so here his faith holds out and overcomes even when his human consciousness is partly obscured. Feeling himself forsaken of God, he nevertheless leaves not God, and thus becomes our Immanuel, God with us. For a moment Jesus *felt*, indeed, not the nearness of his God, and therefore calls upon him in the deepest lamentation. 'This was, on the one hand,' as Ebrard expresses it, 'a voluntary giving up by the Son of the sense of his Father's love, for the purpose of making that love the never-failing fountain of salvation for man; but, on the other hand, it was at the same time the demonstration and perfect work of the same love which is willing, because it is necessary for man's salvation, to sink entirely into oneness with humanity, even unto death, the wages of sin.' In Gethsemane the cup of death was presented to him; and the scent, as it were, of its first drops produced in him the recoil from the full drinking which he then tasted in spirit; here he is fully drinking it, he is now actually as God-man in his humanity experiencing death; he is seized by it, though he could not be holden of it. (Acts ii, 24.) There he spoke with composure and resignation to his Almighty *Father*; here he cries, as if sinking, for help to his God. The corporeal suffering which Psalm xxii, 14, 15, describes — the pouring out of all his strength, the drying up of the sap of life, the fever of wounds, thirst, possibly even recurring variations of fainting, threatening to swallow up all consciousness — all this was only the material substratum of his passion in the unity and mutual interpenetration of body and soul which was perfect in him; but all this is suffered by his sacred soul, internally full of the energy of life, and conscious of experiencing death for the sake of sin. This was now his real *dying*, not merely the pang of bodily dissolution, but the feeling of the dying soul. Still less was it any thing like a

declining to die — as if he at the close might have hoped that this would be removed, as he had prayed in Gethsemane — but *death* and sin, on account of which death comes, presented themselves to his consciousness and feeling as inseparable concomitants. What a feeling must this have been to this Holy One, in whom the *consciousness of God* and the *consciousness of life* were one, as is the case of no other! In dying he feels himself forsaken of God, as no child of God ever was, because he had lived, in and with God as none else had ever lived." Before we proceed further with the comment of Stier, we will here insert what Baumgarten, whom we quoted on the agony of Christ in Gethsemane, says on the nature of the death which the incarnate Son of God suffered. It does not essentially differ from Stier's exposition, but it is expressed with more philosophical precision, and may serve to make this deep subject still clearer. He says: "Jesus declares it as a fact, that he is forsaken of God. This means: he realizes the process of dying, through which he is now passing, as that death that was originally threatened to man by God. The creation and preservation of human life is the basis of all communion of God with man; if, therefore, life is taken away by God, man's communion with his God ceases, he is forsaken of God. But because man in his present state of alienation from God, brought on by the fall, no longer recognizes his life as the condition of his communion with God, the abyss of death is covered, as it were, with a vail from his view. Jesus alone, who realizes every moment of his life as a moment of his undisturbed communion with God, realizes also the approach of death as an approaching rupture of this communion, as a being forsaken of God. Thus Jesus suffers the death that had been threatened to sinful man. He has become the representative of sinful man in the fullest sense of the word, and through his having partaken of our flesh and blood alone could fallen man be reunited with God. Because man had forsaken God by his sin, God has put a stop to his communion with man by death, and death has passed on all men, because all men have sinned. As our representative, Christ had to suffer death as the wages of sin, but he deprived death thereby of its sting and power. For he clings to God, while God forsakes him. He does not forsake God even for a moment, but, by the power of the Eternal Spirit that is in him, (Heb. ix, 14,) he overcomes his sense of being forsaken of God. Here, at the close of the life of Jesus, shines the inmost mystery of this life as bright as at its beginning. As he enters into the earthly or finite form of existence by the power of the Spirit of God, or, what is the same, as he who is with God, and is God from all eternity, becomes man by his own self-determination, so it appears in his death that he

is united with God by God's eternal Spirit, and by this Spirit overcomes his state of being forsaken of God, as the only-begotten and eternal Son of God. Thereby the bond of union with God, that had been broken by man, has in reality been restored again by and for man. But why did Christ express his state of being forsaken of God, and his victory over this state, in the form of an unanswered question? He did it to make us understand that he had to pass through the agony of death to give us life; and whoever wishes to have part in Christ's victory, must have a realizing sense of this, his death-struggle." Let us now return to Stier's exposition: "A threefold oppression he had to endure — the *wickedness* of human nature *from without*, its *weakness* in *himself*, and the *assaults* of *Satan*, the prince of death, who, we may suppose, spoke to him lyingly of wrath, showing to him all the kingdoms of hell and their horrors. He sees nothing around and before him but sufferings and sins (Ps. xl, 12) inseparably interwoven; for in his sympathy, as the head and center of humanity, he assuredly feels the sins of the world, *as if* they were his own. Finally, his own heart forsook him; that is, *God himself*, who is the life of his heart, *has withdrawn himself*. Thus he, who had just comforted the malefactor with the promise of paradise, now hangs comfortless. And now let it be carefully observed that Christ, *at the end* of the three anxious hours, first sends up to heaven, in its full and uttered strength, the cry of anguish which had been three hours restrained. Although it is the most oppressive moment of supreme abandonment which urges the cry, it is at the same time removed by that cry. What he suffered during the three hours of deepening oppression must forever be to our understanding an impenetrable mystery, *because we have in us no Divine-human experience of sin and death in their connection*. But this is certain, he suffered what he suffered '*not* as a punishment of *himself* in his consciousness, *not* as a judgment upon *his own heart*.' The theology which goes so far as to assert this, has always most unwarrantably overlooked the *My God, my God*, which belongs to and precedes the *forsaken me* — that unmoved and immovable *My God!* He trusted in God — this ceases not now, but reaches its perfection. For God was his God from his mother's womb, (Ps. xxii, 9, 10;) which Psalm-word, as it respects Christ, has its deepest meaning in his miraculous and sacred birth. Verily, he did not take his farewell of God when he died; but in death he fulfilled his course and kept the faith! While he thus *calls upon* his God, he *finds* his God again. And it *now* becomes manifest that the 'forsaking' had not been an objective, indeed not an altogether subjective, abandonment. It is true, he says with the Psalmist only *God* — not

Father. *Never elsewhere* had Christ spoken thus of 'his God,' (comp. John viii, 54; xx, 17.) He says only *God*, for now the *man* in him speaketh — nevertheless, *My God*, with a propriety and fullness of meaning which no other could arrogate before or after him; for the Holy One of God speaketh, who experienced this abandonment for the sake of sinners. Assuredly there is a profound reason here why he does not this time dare to utter the Father-name; yet God is not before him in such fearful wrath as to take from his lips the '*My God.*' Consequently, Christ does not speak in the person and in the place of condemned sinners in any such sense as the theology of satisfaction teaches. A sinner that is abandoned of God dare not and can not cry *my God*, nor does he ask *why*, for he knows well wherefore, and has no remaining prayer, because no God. The *why*, as it regards Christ, is grounded upon the *my*, and such a *why* Christ alone can ask. When in Gethsemane he was clearly conscious of the other will of his I; he says concerning it, 'Not as I will!' When he upon Calvary cries out the question, *why*, he also gives the answer. His cry rent the vail of the darkness of his anguish. At once *it is light* without and within; and the returning light is the victorious sign of life out of death." (Greatly condensed from Stier.) We close the exposition of this passage with the following beautiful extract from Lange: "The asking '*why*,' is the pious question addressed by the holy, suffering Son to his eternal Father. This question of Christ looks back to the guilt of mankind, that had to be expiated; it looks up to the Father's countenance, wherein stern justice is being transformed into pardoning mercy; it looks forward to the blessed results of this his suffering. Because mankind had forsaken God, it seemed as if God was about to forsake also its holy Head; but as he forsook neither God nor man, he had to realize in his own soul the terrors felt by man in being forsaken of God, in order to find in these very terrors God again with the full glory of his grace for the pardoned race. We must not weaken the force of this lamentation, but endeavor to realize its significance in its full strength and depth. And the more we succeed herein, the more we find the full solution of the apparent contradiction in connecting a state of being forsaken of God with that of nearness to him, judgment with reconciliation, the horrors of death with the victory over death. If the question is raised, how his bodily pain on the cross could once more lead him into this deep distress, after he had conquered the world — in his spirit (John xiii, 32) and in his soul in Gethsemane — it must be borne in mind, that in Christ the Word was made flesh, and that for this very reason the eternal Word had to suffer also in the flesh. By his death on the cross he realized the death-pangs of

mankind to such an extent as he could not do in his Spirit alone. Upon Golgotha he experienced death itself in the unity of his being, his spirit, soul, and body taking part in the work. This we learn from his confession that in experiencing death he feels forsaken of God, though inwardly assured that, at the same time, he remains in indissoluble union with him; that he acknowledges in this his forsaken state an inscrutable judgment of God, while at the same time cleaving in this judgment to God, as his God, in a manner possible to him alone. Jesus tasted death as only a holy and pure life can taste it. He felt in his death the death of mankind, and in this death of mankind the wages of sin. This sensation he received into his self-consciousness and sanctified it in the loud lament: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' It was the struggle with death, and at the same time a victory over death a transformation of death into life by taking away the sting of death, the completion of the work of redemption. Thus this word of Christ is his greatest deed. But with the deed of Christ corresponds the deed of God. That moment, in which he cries as the lion of Judah to his Heavenly Father against the terrors of death and cleaves to his Father's heart in the midst of the terrors of death and the judgment of the world, is the moment in which the Father draws him up to his heart as his well-tried and tested Son, as the faithful priest-king of humanity. The cry of Christ, 'My God! my God!' expresses a presentiment that, at that very moment, God is stepping forth from his dark hiding-place, the sun of grace breaking through the clouds of judgment. And so it is. The answer of God to his well-beloved Son's question is expressed by the assurance with which he says, 'It is finished.'"

VERSES 47-49. SOME OF THEM THAT STOOD THERE, etc. These words were not spoken by the Roman soldiers, who knew nothing about Elias, but by some of the Jewish spectators. Most commentators take this remark for a wanton, mocking perversion, not for a misunderstanding of the words of Christ. But Olshausen and Lange are of the opinion that the time of scoffing had now passed, and that the supernatural darkness and the piercing cry of Jesus had filled the minds of all with awe and horror. These ruthless scoffers might now apprehend that the crucified Jesus was, after all, the Messiah, and tremble at the idea that Elias, the expected forerunner of the Messiah, the executor of the Divine judgments, might come and avenge their bloody deed. — AND STRAIGHTWAY ONE OF THEM RUN, etc. From what John says, (xix, 28,) we may infer that immediately after the "Eli, Eli," Jesus said "I thirst," which seems to have been spoken in so low a tone that some of the bystanders did

not hear it. But one of them, prompted by sympathy, ran and filled, from a vessel standing there, a sponge, with soldier's wine, put it on a stalk of the hyssop-plant, generally one foot and a half long, and offered it to the Lord. According to John, this was the work of several. According to Matthew, the others say to the man with the sponge: LET BE LET US SEE WHETHER ELIAS WILL COME TO SAVE HIM. According to Mark, the man himself says: "Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down." We can understand these words in his mouth only by supposing that he spoke them after he had given him the drink. Lange sees in the different accounts a faithful picture of the intense bewilderment into which the soldiers and Jews had been thrown in consequence of Christ's cry of agony and the appalling darkness, and supposes that some of them tried to conceal their fears under the garb of mockery, "like men who, striving to rid themselves of fear, call out the names of the beings they dread, as if in mockery." Stier rejects Lange's view entirely, and says: "It may be so in ordinary cases; but this scene at Golgotha, alone in its kind, is raised far beyond all such analogies. If there had been *horror* here, it would have been too profound to admit of any mockery whatever. During the darkness they might have felt amazement, and expected some marvelous Divine intervention; but when nothing resulted but this cry, and the return of light, all their anxiety vanished, and the mockery remained. And just so do the first two Evangelists, in historical and psychological truth, exhibit its immediate influence. Some of the guard round the cross, and probably others with them, began at first to steel themselves against *pity* — not *fright* — by mockingly saying, This poor, wretched Messiah, calls in vain for Elias! But there is one who thinks that the refreshment which his lips crave should not be denied to him, and hastens — probably with the help of another or more — to make preparation to give it. The *others* then speak, as it were, mocking *him* for doing what seemed to be a needless thing — *Let be*; wait, let us see whether Elias will come and save him! So St. Matthew; and with this is quite consistent the characteristically more exact account in St. Mark, according to which he who gave the drink also said, Yea, verily, wait and let us see whether Elias will come and take him down! While the others said, Thou needest not to give him any refreshment, he who gave the drink, without being interrupted, says: Let me, nevertheless, support him, while we wait for Elias."

VERSE 50. JESUS, WHEN HE HAD CRIED AGAIN WITH A LOUD VOICE, YIELDED UP THE GHOST. The last words of the dying Savior

have been preserved to us, not by John, but by Luke, (xxiii, 46.) The hypothesis of an apparent death, which the rationalists adopt, because they deny the resurrection of Christ, needs no refutation *here*. What is necessary on this point the reader will find in § 79, where the evidences of Christ's resurrection are discussed, and in John xix, 32-35.

§ 78. THE SIGNS AND INCIDENTS FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF CHRIST — HIS BURIAL.

IN arranging and sketching the incidents recorded by the Evangelists in immediate connection with the death of Christ, we follow again Baumgarten and Lange in the main. The death of him who lived and died, as no other man ever lived and died, is attended with and followed by significant signs, which happen in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; in the three realms of grace, of nature, and of death. The darkness, which covered the land of Judea during the last hours of Jesus' life, had lasted to the ninth hour, when Jesus expired. With the death of Jesus the luminary of heaven receives its light again. This is the fit emblem of the new day, which was to succeed the night of darkness in which the world was shrouded, and which could not usher in before Christ had completed his redeeming work on the cross. In the same moment when Jesus commended his spirit with a loud voice into the hands of his Heavenly Father, the earth was shaken so that the rocks rent, and the vail of the Temple, which veiled the holy of holies, the place of the Divine presence, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Jesus has entered through the vail of his flesh, which he has offered through the power of the eternal Spirit, into the holy of holies (Heb. x, 20) as the High-Priest of Israel and of the Gentiles, and has opened thereby, once for all, free access to the throne of Divine grace in heaven for all that are purifying and sprinkling their hearts with his holy blood by faith. (Heb. x, 22, 23.) Matthew mentions another still more mysterious event. "The graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose." But, as he adds, "and came out of the graves *after the resurrection*," and as St. Paul teaches us expressly, "that Christ was the first-fruits of those that slept," we must infer that the actual leaving of their graves by the saints did not take place till after the resurrection of the Lord.

But the effects of Christ's death upon *the living* become also visible at once. The Roman centurion, who stood under the cross superintending the

crucifixion, having witnessed every thing that had transpired during the last hours of Christ's suffering, lifts up his voice — the voice which afterward burst forth more loudly from the heathen world against Israel's denial — and confesses: This man was that which Pilate declared him, a *righteous man*, and that for claiming which the Jews condemned him to death, *the Son of God*. In this testimony the soldiers joined, being affected in the same manner, and full of awe. (Verse 54.) The Jews also commenced to tremble. (Luke xxiii, 48.) Many a conscience was no doubt awakened, and a feeling of fearful suspense pervaded the multitude. In crowds, cursing and triumphant, they had come to Golgotha to crucify the Lord; in silence and confounded they went away. Thus the enemies of Christ left, at last, the field to his friends. The acquaintances of the Lord, who had stood afar off, without, however, losing sight of him for a moment, and especially the pious women who had followed him from Galilee to minister unto him, now ventured near, and claimed his dead body. Moreover, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, two rich and highly-respected men, both members of the Sanhedrim, who during Jesus' lifetime had been his disciples in secret, now shake off their timidity, and profess themselves boldly his disciples, ready to live and suffer for him. It was decreed in the counsels of the Father that an honorable burial should be prepared to his Son, and God brought it to pass that the enemies as well as the friends of Jesus took measures to bring about this Divine purpose. The Jews were very anxious that the crucified bodies might be taken down and be buried before the setting in of the Sabbath — six o'clock, Friday evening. It was against the law (Deut. xxi, 22, 23) to let a criminal hang on the tree over night; add to this that the following day was not only a common Sabbath, but the great first Sabbath of the Jewish year, which commenced with the Passover. For this reason they asked Pilate, according to John, before they knew that Christ was dead, to have the bones of the three crucified individuals broken, and their bodies buried. Pilate granted their request. The soldiers that were commissioned for this purpose broke the legs of the two malefactors. But when they came to Jesus they found that he had already expired, whence we have to infer that Pilate had sent fresh soldiers to do this work. As Jesus was evidently dead, they did not break his bones, but, in order officially to verify his death, one of the soldiers pierced the Lord's side with his spear. Thus a type and a prophecy were remarkably fulfilled: "A bone of him shall not be broken," (Ex. xii, 46,) and "They shall look on him whom they pierced." (Zech. xii, 10.) But while this was done on Golgotha, and before a report of it had reached Pilate,

the highly-respected and wealthy counselor, Joseph of Arimathea, applied to Pilate for the dead body of Jesus, and the governor readily granted the request after he had learned from the centurion that Jesus was already dead. The sacred corpse was accordingly taken down from the cross. Joseph procured new, clean linen in which the body of Jesus was to be wrapped, according to the Jewish manner of burying, while Nicodemus brought a princely offering of myrrh and aloes, with which the linen was filled, and thus made an aromatic couch. A most honorable place of burial had also been provided, for Joseph owned a garden close by Golgotha, in which he had hewn for himself a new sepulcher wherein never man was yet laid. Thus another passage of Scripture was fulfilled: "He was with the rich in his death." (Isa. liii, 9.) The faithful women were likewise present at the burial. True to the instinct of their sex, they took a close view of the grave, and watched how Jesus was buried. (Mark xv, 47; Luke xxiii, 55.) They insisted on contributing their share toward an honorable burial. While some of them, unwilling to leave the grave, remained sitting there, (Matt. xxvii, 61,) the others hastened home in order to prepare what they wished to add to the embalmment. During the Sabbath their preparations were suspended, but the enemies of Jesus did not keep quiet. The dead Jesus gave them still greater uneasiness than the living had done. As early as the first night after their consummated murder, remembering that Jesus had predicted he would rise on the third day, they became so uneasy and fearful that they held a meeting on the morning of their great Passover Sabbath, in which they resolved to ask Pilate to have the sepulcher sealed and guarded. On the great Sabbath of the year the Sanhedrim is in the greatest perplexity as to the means whereby they might prevent that Jesus might not be preached to the people as having risen from the dead. Pilate acceded at once to their demand. They impressed the seal upon the stone in the presence of the guard, and then left the sepulcher in their special care, while the friends of Jesus, it seems, confined themselves so closely at home during the Sabbath that they did not even learn that a guard had been placed over the sepulcher. The women, at least, that went early on Sunday morning to the grave, knew nothing of this guard.

Verses 51-66. (COMPARE MARK xv, 38-47; LUKE xxiii, 47-56; JOHN xix, 31-42.)

(51) AND, behold, the **vail of the Temple** was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; (52) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, (53) and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. (54) Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. (55) And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: (56) Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children. (57) When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: (58) He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. (59) And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, (60) and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed. (61) And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulcher. (62) Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief-priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, (63) saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. (64) Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. (65) Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can. (66) So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

VERSE 51. AND BEHOLD THE VAIL OF THE TEMPLE WAS RENT. There were two vails in the second Temple: one separating the holy of holies from the sanctuary, the other that of the outer sanctuary. Here the vail of the inner sanctuary is undoubtedly meant, (Exod. xxvi, 31, etc.,) within which

the high-priest alone entered, and that only once a year, to make expiation for the sins of the people, (Heb. ix, 7.) The veil was rent at the ninth hour, at the time when the evening sacrifice was burned. Thus the people learned the event; for we may well suppose that the priests were so frightened by it that they rushed out and stated the fact. Lange thinks that the rending of the veil was caused by the earthquake. To this it is objected, that an earthquake could not rend from top to bottom a veil, which, according to Josephus, was heavy, thick, and richly embroidered. Jerome says, that, according to the gospel of the Hebrews, a very thick beam of the Temple fell down. If this beam fell across the veil, the rent is easily accounted for. Whether, however, God made use of natural means or not in this event, it was certainly a work of special providence. Jewish tradition speaks, also, of several wonderful events, said to have happened about forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem: *e.g.*, that the light of the golden candlestick was extinguished; that the gate of the Temple flew open, by night, of its own accord, etc., which the Jews considered as signs of impending, heavy judgments. We see herein, undoubtedly, the reflex of the facts recorded by the Evangelists. — The significance of this great fact is explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (chaps. ix, 11, 12; x, 19, 20.) The veil rent in two proclaimed, in the most unmistakable language, 1. That the atonement for sin, typified by the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, had been accomplished by the death of Jesus Christ, and that now the way into the holy of holies, access to God through the true high-priest, was open to all; 2. That for this very reason the typical sacrifices and the typical priesthood were at an end. God did not burst the shell till the kernel was ripe. Christ had not come to destroy, but to fulfill the law. Such a fulfillment had just taken place. As soon as the real atonement had been made, the typical was: necessarily at an end.

VERSES 52, 53. AND THE GRAVES WERE OPENED. The reader will bear in mind that the sepulchers of the Jews were altogether unlike ours, being, artificial or natural excavations in rocks. The entrance, that was sometimes perpendicular, (Luke xi, 44,) and often furnished with steps, sometimes horizontal, was closed either by a door or a large stone. — AFTER HIS RESURRECTION. These words must be referred to "*arose*," as well as to "*came out of the graves*." The graves were opened when the earth quaked and the rocks rent; there was a quickening power felt by the bodies of the saints, but they did not come to full life till Christ was risen. They were most

probably saints that had been personally known to the men then living; such as Simon, Hannah, Zacharias, John the Baptist, Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus, etc. Whoever they were, they were not raised to a natural life, terminating again in death, but to eternal life, and must, therefore, be supposed to have ascended with the Savior to heaven.

VERSE 54. NOW WHEN THEY SAW THE EARTHQUAKE, not only the effects which this powerful convulsion had on the rocky region of Golgotha, but, also, and especially, the manner in which Jesus expired, (according to Mark and Luke.) — TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD. The centurion had, undoubtedly, heard that the Jews insisted upon his being put to death because he had said, "I am the Son of God." He saw in the supernatural phenomena the Divine seal upon the claims of Jesus, and called him "the Son of God," because Jesus had called himself so. Although we can not suppose that he had a clear idea of what this term implied, yet he certainly did not use it in the sense of heathen superstition. His meaning was: Jesus was no blasphemer, but was in reality what he claimed to be. This agrees with Luke's account, that he called him "a righteous man."

VERSES 57, 58. WHEN THE EVEN WAS COME, that is, before the close of the Jewish day, as before that time the corpses had to be removed, (Deut. xxi, 23.) — THERE CAME — first to Golgotha, in order to go thence to Pilate into the judgment-hall. Lange thinks that he joined the small number of the followers of Jesus on Golgotha, to profess himself for the first time publicly as a disciple of Christ. It is a very consoling thought, that under the cross of Christ the number of the old followers was enlarged by new ones. This is so to this day. — A RICH MAN OF ARIMATHEA. Arimathea is most probably the Greek name for Ramathaim Zophim, the birthplace of Samuel, (1 Sam., i, 19.) This town lay, indeed, originally in the territory of the Samaritans, but was afterward added to Judea, and could, therefore, justly be termed "a city of the Jews," (Luke xxiii, 51.) A Joseph is the foster-father of Christ, and another Joseph attends to his burial. John says that he was a disciple, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. Luke calls him a counselor — a member of the Sanhedrim — a good and just man, "who had not consented to the counsel and deed of them, but waited for the kingdom of God." So Mark; Matthew adds, that he was a rich man. (Compare Isa. liii, 9.) — HE WENT TO PILATE, AND BEGGED THE BODY OF JESUS. Joseph was evidently in haste,

perhaps apprehensive that the body of Jesus might be dishonored by the Jews; for what John relates (xxix, 31-37) took place before.

VERSES 59, 60. HE WRAPPED IT IN A CLEAN LINEN CLOTH. Further particulars are given by John. This was only a preparatory embalming, to preserve the body. After the Sabbath was over, the women intended properly to finish the work, and to adorn the body. — AND LAID IT IN HIS OWN NEW TOMB. Not only by the Jews, but by all the civilized nations of antiquity, it was considered a great disgrace and misfortune not to receive a decent burial. It was a distinguished honor to be laid in a tomb new and untouched.

VERSE 61. SITTING OVER AGAINST THE SEPULCHER. This touching feature is recorded by Matthew alone. Mark says that they beheld, that is, closely examined the sepulcher. The "*other Mary*" was the mother of James and Joses and the wife of Cleophas, (v. 56.) "The women, who, with the attachment of loving sisters, and the courage of heroes, sit in the dusk, in a lonesome garden, over against the sepulcher of Jesus, in silence, and sunk in deep meditation, form the brightest contrast to the crowds of women, who in the Orient often assemble in bright daylight about the graves, lamenting the dead with unbecoming noise. With Christ they had died to the world; motionless they sat there till late in the evening, and thus lost the time to procure spices with the others, before the Sabbath, for the embalmment. But as soon as the Sabbath was over — six o'clock, Saturday evening — they made a purchase by themselves, assisted by Salome. Thus the apparent discrepancy between Mark xvi, 1, and Luke xxiii, 56, with regard to the time when the spices were bought, disappears." (Lange.) We may add, that, if ἤγόρασαν, Mark xvi, 1, is translated "*bought*," as it ought to be, instead of "*had bought*," as in the English version, there is not even an apparent discrepancy.

VERSES 62-64. NOW THE NEXT DAY THAT FOLLOWED THE DAY OF PREPARATION. The day of preparation was the day preceding the Sabbath; that is, Friday. In this year the day of preparation was at the same time the first day of the feast, which could also be called a Sabbath. This seems to be the reason why Matthew did not use the more simple term, "which is the Sabbath." — SIR, WE REMEMBER THAT THAT DECEIVER SAID. The predictions of Jesus concerning his resurrection were more distinctly remembered by his enemies than by his own disciples, for very obvious

reasons; the disciples wished that the death of Jesus might not take place, and, accordingly, misunderstood his prophetic words about his death and resurrection, (see ch. xvi, 21.) But his enemies wished his death, and desired, *at the same time*, to prevent his resurrection, of which, moreover, they may have been reminded by the traitor. By confessing in advance their fear of his resurrection, they belie also their charge against Jesus about the destruction of the Temple; showing, now, that they had understood his words correctly.

VERSE 66. SEALING THE STONE. The sealing was done by means of a cord drawn across the stone at the mouth of the sepulcher, and fastened at either end to the rock by sealing-clay, upon which was stamped the official seal of Pilate. The stone, therefore, could not be removed by any of the guard without cutting the cord or breaking the seal; and the guard was to prevent the disciples from attempting it. "How contemptible," says Lange, "are the means by which the modern Pharisees and scribes attempt, like those of old, to shut up the life and spirit of Christ in the grave! Antiquated seals of office and guards of soldiers obtained by begging! Mental blindness goes hand in hand with the malice of the heart." Lisco remarks: "What a great resemblance do the enemies of Christ in our days bear to those Jewish priests! 1. They pretend to be fully satisfied of the worthlessness and insignificance of the Spirit indwelling in the Church. 2. Nevertheless, they are in constant dread that it will break out again, even when they look upon it as suppressed. 3. All their measures to prevent the spread of the Gospel prove as ineffectual as did the sealing of the grave of Jesus. What did the murderers of Jesus gain by stationing a heathen guard and sealing the tomb of Jesus? They only became the instruments in the hands of Divine Providence, to place the resurrection of Christ beyond all reasonable doubt. Thus must all assaults on the cause of Christ at last serve the furtherance of the Gospel."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

§ 79. CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD.

THE Scriptures testify, that Christ had actually died and arose from the grave in his identical body to die henceforth no more. This resurrection is described in most passages of the New Testament as a being raised by the Father, (Acts ii, 24, 32; iii, 15; xiii, 30; Rom. iv, 24; vi, 4; 1 Cor. vi, 14,) in so

far as it was a declaration on the part of God the Father, that the Son did not die for any sin of his own but for the sin of the world, and that his death was an accepted and all-sufficient propitiation. But in other passages the resurrection is represented as Christ's own act, (Acts i, 3; Rom. i, 4.) He himself had declared that he would lay down his life of himself and that he had power to take it again, (John x, 17, 18; comp. ii, 19.) These two representations are perfectly consistent with each other. For the principle of the Son's never-failing life is the Father, who has given to the Son to have life in himself, (John v, 26.) It is the Father's glory and omnipotence which brought about this result. But this power does not affect the Son from without, but is in the Son, as the Father and the Son are one, (John x, 30; xiv, 10,) and the Son is in his personality as the God-man, the self-revealing power of the Father himself. If Christ's resurrection is viewed as his own act, it is the necessary development of the God-man. And it is from this point of view that the resurrection of Christ is chiefly contemplated by the modern divines of Germany. Lange says: "To redeem man from the power of death, it was necessary that Christ himself should suffer death, the wages of sin, and this he did voluntarily. But as soon as he was dead, the power of the resurrection was to be realized in his holy organism in that form of transformation in which Adam in Paradise was destined to pass from the first into the second life, and which the saints living at the end of the world will realize. This transformation had its roots in his Divine-human life, and the fruit of that life was his resurrection on the third day. By it he was not to return into the first life, as Lazarus, to die again. He was to belong neither to this nor to the other world exclusively, but to comprehend the two spheres of life in the power of perfect life. He had to realize in his own person the death of the body, both in the form of being divested of the body, and in the form of transformation, in order to reign as the Prince of Life over the whole domain of death. His holy organism could not be touched with corruption, because the spirit of eternal life had already breathed upon it." The same idea is expressed by Baumgarten somewhat differently: "Christ could not be held of death. The death which Jesus died was, indeed, death in the fullest sense of the word. But dying he had conquered death, by holding fast his God while he felt himself forsaken by him. Death being conquered by his faith, life must be its result. To Jesus, therefore, death was only a sleep, and his awaking from that sleep is not a passive, but a highly-active state. It is the power of indestructible life which reigns in Jesus and triumphs even over death, by virtue of which he rises from the grave, and for this reason the apostles not only write

that he was raised from the dead by the power of the Father, but state also that he rose from the dead by his own power."

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead implies two things: 1. The restoration of his bodily life, which had come to an end in his death, by reuniting soul and body again, or, in other words, the continuation of his former life, which involves the consciousness of his identity. On this point there can be no doubt, since the sepulcher was found empty, and the risen Savior showed to his disciples the marks of his wounds, (Luke xxiv, 3, 39; John xx, 5, 12, 20, 27.) 2. The glorification of his former form of existence, so that he is no longer subject to the laws of human existence, hunger, thirst, the laws of gravitation, etc., without, however, changing his personal identity. This, his new resurrection body, suddenly appeared and disappeared again, stood in the midst of the disciples while the doors were shut, etc. (Luke xxiv, 31; John xx, 26.) In our present state of existence it is impossible for us to form a clear and adequate idea of the form of existence in a glorified body.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead can appear incredible only to those who pronounce every fact that is not in accordance with the known laws of nature, however well attested, an impossibility. (See § 22 in the General Introduction.) On the other hand, whoever takes Jesus for what he is, according to his own word and that of his disciples, must look upon his resurrection, not only as in the highest degree credible, but as an absolute necessity. His resurrection from the dead, and his ascension, as well as his miraculous conception, can be doubted by him only that denies the historical facts of his life, his character, his words, and works. As it is inconceivable that *the Son of man* should have come into this world in the same way as other men do, so his whole historical life would be a self-contradiction, if his earthly connection with the world had ceased as that of other men. Because his historical and inexplicable personality is the greatest of all miracles, the miraculous is, in his case, natural and necessary. Death is the result of sin. If he had been held of death, he could not have possessed the sinlessness which can be irrefutably proved, (see § 29 in the General Introduction;) and he could not have been sinless if he had not possessed Divinity, which implies the independent and inalienable possession of life in itself. Death, therefore, could affect Christ only temporarily, and with the inevitable result of being conquered by the temporary and voluntary submission under its power by the incarnate Son of God. On the other hand, the work of redemption, the object of Christ's

incarnation, and of every thing connected therewith, demanded, imperatively, that the Redeemer, who had suffered death, the wages of sin, should be divinely justified from all appearance of having himself sinned, and demonstrated to be the well-beloved Son of God by his restoration to imperishable life. This alone could inspire the fallen race with full confidence in the salvation he wrought out for them, filling the heart of the believer with an assurance of having obtained peace with God through him, and imparting the power of a new, divine life. Without the resurrection of Christ from the dead, Christian faith would have no solid basis whatever; all preaching would be vain, (1 Cor. xv, 14,) as well as the believer's hope of the completion of his salvation — the resurrection of his own body.

If there is any fact in history well attested, it is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. His personality as the God-man is, as we have just shown, the *first* voucher for the truth and reality of his resurrection. The *second* we have in the incontrovertible credibility of the Evangelists, based upon the authenticity of their records. (See General Introduction, § 24-26.) They saw and communed with their risen Master. Self-deception on their part was impossible; instead of being ready to take any strange phenomenon for their risen Master, they refused to believe in the reports of his resurrection, although he had repeatedly foretold it, till they had an ocular demonstration of it. "Had they been disposed to call up visions by overworking their powers of imagination, and to see in these visions their risen Master, they would scarcely have looked upon the reports of the women as idle tales. Mary might have seen in a gardener her risen Master, but not, *vice versa*, in her risen Master a gardener; the two disciples, on their way to Emmaus, might have taken a stranger for their risen Master, but not their risen Master for a stranger; and, finally, the assembled disciples would not have taken their Master, who suddenly appeared in their midst, for a ghost, but would have rushed to him in ecstasy. And why should it have been necessary, in the case assumed, for the Lord to allay the fears of his disciples, and to convince them of his identity by eating with them and by showing them the marks of his wounds?" (Lange.) If Jesus had not actually risen from the dead, and if his disciples had not had the most incontrovertible proofs of the fact, what possible motives could they have had for preaching Christ and the resurrection? They realized certainly no temporal advantages from it. The Sanhedrim would have rewarded them most liberally, if they had been willing to say, "Our Master is not risen from the dead, as he had foretold;

he has deceived us." In place of this, their preaching Christ and the resurrection brought them nothing but persecution unto death. Or, can we believe that those men who preached to the world that all liars shall have their portion in the lake of unquenchable fire, would have looked for a reward in the world to come for preaching the resurrection, while they knew that he was not risen? Add to the unimpeachable testimony of the Evangelists that of Paul, whose conversion to Christianity can not be rationally accounted for in any other way but by the reality of his having seen the risen Savior, and whose Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians are admitted to be authentic even by the critics who have assailed the authenticity of almost every other book of the New Testament. (See General Introduction, § 18.) The *third* voucher for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the founding of the Christian Church. From out of the small number of the timid and trembling disciples there arises, all at once, a Church, or congregation, filled with the most heroic faith and the most burning love, founded upon the confession of the one great fact, "*Jesus, whom ye have crucified, God has raised from the dead;*" and from this Church has proceeded the greatest, most abiding, and most blessed change in the history of mankind. Can there be a greater folly than to assume that the system of faith which has imparted new life to the world originated with a few poor, unlearned, and uninfluential Jews, who, after their hopes had failed by the death of their Master, ventured to revive them again by more or less purposely-fabricated tales and false interpretations of Scripture, and are said, in this way, to have become the authors of a religion from which the most civilized nations have drawn their wisdom for eighteen centuries? Whoever can believe something of this kind, believes — we will not say a more stupendous miracle than any of those recorded in the Scriptures — but he believes simply an absurdity. The *fourth* voucher is the witness which God bore to his risen Son by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the power to work miracles given to the apostles. Skeptics have asked the question, why the risen Christ appeared only to his disciples, not to his enemies and the people? It would constitute a sufficient answer to this question to say, "They had Moses and the prophets; if they did not believe them, they would not have believed if the risen Savior had appeared unto them." Such an appearance would have been for them only a frightful specter, because, owing to their hardness of heart, they lacked all susceptibility for such a revelation. Besides, the enemies of Christ had the strongest possible testimony of his resurrection from the Roman soldiers whom they had placed as a watch at his sepulcher.

And to the Jewish nation God himself testified the resurrection of his Son in a much more solemn and efficacious manner than could have been done by a public, visible appearance of Jesus Christ, by bestowing upon the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, the gift to proclaim to the Jews and proselytes, gathered from the different countries of the earth at Jerusalem, the wonderful works of God; that is, the great facts of our redemption in such a manner that — various as were the dialects and languages which they severally spoke — they all understood the preaching, and were convinced that God spoke through the apostles. This was a miracle which admitted of no illusion, and without which we can not rationally account for the success of the apostles in founding the Christian Church, and spreading the Gospel within their lifetime over the whole Roman Empire. The reality of those miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were necessary for the founding of the Christian Church, is, moreover, proven by the ordinary operations of the same Spirit upon the hearts of men to this day. This sending the Spirit, which the Savior had promised to his disciples, is the *fifth* voucher for his resurrection, *all-sufficient for itself*. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; the power of God, which convicts of sin, sets free from its guilt and dominion, and fills the heart with a peace which this world can neither give nor take away.

Against the resurrection of Christ, better attested than any other fact in history, the three following assertions are all that skepticism has, up to this time, been able to urge: 1. It is said that Christ was only apparently dead; that Joseph of Arimathea discovered signs of life in him, and restored him to life again by careful treatment in the cool sepulcher, and the liberal application of spices; that Jesus lived afterward in secret among the Essenes, and really died, sooner or later! All this is too absurd to deserve a serious refutation. The certainty of Christ's death before his burial is beyond any reasonable doubt, (see note on John xix, 34, 35,) and superabundantly confirmed by the manner of his burial. 2. The old Jewish lie, that the disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept, we shall consider in the next section. 3. It is asserted that the accounts which the Evangelists give of what took place on the resurrection morning, at the grave, present irreconcilable discrepancies; and this has been made the ground of objection to the verity of the fact itself. Now suppose, even, that we are not able to remove the discrepancies with regard to every minor point, this would certainly not justify us in rejecting the truth of the fact itself. (Compare § 21 in the General Introduction.) We have no right to expect that each of the four

Evangelists should have recorded in detail, and in consecutive order, all the wonderful incidents that took place on the resurrection morn. If they had done so, they would be charged with collusion. Their evident independence of each other in their records, and their showing no misgivings whatever concerning the incontrovertible certainty of what they record, ought to impress even the greatest skeptic favorably. Alford says, on this point: "The independence and distinctness of the four narratives in this part have never been questioned; and, indeed, herein lie its principal difficulties. With regard to them I refer to what I have said in the Prolegomena, that, *supposing us to be acquainted with every thing said and done, in its order and exactness, we should, doubtless, be able to reconcile, or account for, the present forms of the narratives*; but, not having this key to the harmonizing of them, all attempts to do so in minute particulars must be full of arbitrary assumptions, and carry no certainty with them. And I may remark, that, *of all harmonies*, those of *the incidents of these chapters* are to me the *most unsatisfactory*. Giving their compilers all credit for the best intentions, I confess they seem to me to *weaken* instead of strengthening the evidence, which now rests — speaking merely *objectively* — *on the unexceptional testimony of three independent narrators, and one who, besides, was an eye-witness of much that happened*. If we are to compare the four, and ask which is to be taken as most nearly reporting the *exact* words and incidents, there can, I think, be no doubt on this. On internal as well as external ground, *that of John* takes the *highest place*, but not, of course, to the exclusion of those parts of the narrative which *he does not touch*. The *improbability* that the Evangelists had seen one another's accounts, becomes, in *this part* of their Gospels, an *impossibility*. Here and there we discern traces of a common narration as the ground of their reports; but they are very few." We agree with Alford in most of the above remarks; but we can not go so far as to consider "all the harmonies of this part of the Gospel history unsatisfactory," and shall, therefore, not "abandon," as he does, "all idea of harmonizing."

In arranging the various events that transpired at the grave, as recorded by the four Evangelists, in their consecutive order, we will make Matthew our basis, for the very reason that what he records of the resurrection morn presents the chief difficulties. At the early dawn of the first day of the week, our Sunday, a number of women started, according to the four Evangelists, for the sepulcher of the Lord. Matthew names Mary Magdalene and the other Mary

— that is, Mary the mother of James and Joses — the same women that had been sitting on Friday evening over against the Lord's sepulcher, (xxvii, 61.) According to Mark (xvi, 1) Salome was with them, who had joined them already on Saturday evening, after the Sabbath was over, in order to make with them the last purchases for the final embalmment of the Lord. Luke, in speaking of the return of the women from the grave, mentions, with Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, a certain Joanna, the wife of Chusa. As Mary Magdalene may have arrived somewhat earlier at the grave than the other Mary and Salome, so the other women, mentioned by Luke, may have arrived a little later. John does not say that Mary Magdalene went to the grave in company with other women, yet indicates indirectly that she was not alone, by representing her as saying, "We know not where they have laid him." To John Mary Magdalene was the principal person among the women that went to the grave, because she brought to him and Peter the first news that the sepulcher was empty, and afterward that the Lord had appeared unto her.

Mark says that the women intended to embalm the Lord, adding, that they remembered on their way that a heavy stone had been rolled before the sepulcher, for which reason they were distressed, and asked: "Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?" But as soon as they came near the grave they saw that the stone was rolled away, (Mark xvi, 3. 4.) That the stone was rolled away, is stated by all the Evangelists, but Matthew alone mentions how this was done. An earthquake had taken place; an angel had come down from heaven, had rolled the stone away from the door, and sat upon it. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. The keepers of the sepulcher did shake for fear, and became as dead men." The question has been asked: How and by whom did the Evangelist learn these facts? That they had transpired before the arrival of the women is clear; for if they had been witnesses of the resurrection, it would not have been necessary for the angel to acquaint them with it. But even supposing that the Evangelist did not learn them by a direct revelation, it was natural for him to connect the earthquake with the resurrection; and that an angel had come from heaven at the time of the earthquake, was to be inferred from the fact, that the women saw the angel afterward in the sepulcher. It is also quite likely that some of the keepers were found by the women in their state of fright and agitation near the sepulcher. But whence did the Evangelist know that the angel sat on the stone? A sufficient answer to such a questioner would be to remind him that the

Evangelist wrote by inspiration, and God, who taught Moses the wonders of creation, could reveal to Matthew where the angel sat. Lange says: "On this stone was the official seal which the soldiers had to guard; it is, therefore, more than probable, that they kept this stone especially in view, and that all that was done with it made a deep impression upon them; and how easy was it for the centurion, who had been converted under the cross, to learn all these facts from the guard, and afterward to communicate them to the apostles!"

It is worthy of note, that the quickening of the body of the Lord and the act of his leaving the sepulcher are not described. No human eye witnessed these transactions, and none could have beheld their surpassing splendor. And if any human being had been deemed worthy to behold them, the Roman soldiers would certainly not have been chosen for it. It is characteristic of Divine wisdom, and in analogy with the order of salvation, that the apostles and believers of succeeding ages should learn the great fact, on which the Christian religion is based, first through credible witnesses. The women heard it from the angels; the apostles through the women, and the world is to believe it on the testimony of the apostles. But as that which credible witnesses had told the disciples was afterward confirmed to them by the demonstration of their own senses, by seeing, hearing, and handling their risen Master, so there is offered to human reason irrefutable evidence of the credibility of the apostles, and the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As to what happened to the several women when they saw the stone rolled away, the accounts of the Evangelists differ. Matthew, whose uniform practice it is to omit details and record only the leading points of events, states *as one fact*, what happened to Mary Magdalene and to the other women — and the same things virtually happened to the two parties: they both saw and conversed with the angels, and both saw and conversed with the Lord — while John records only, but in detail, what had happened to himself, to Peter, and to Mary Magdalene. "And," remarks Lange, "how well do the accounts themselves correspond with the character of the Evangelists! Mark and Luke, disciples of the apostles, state, quite in keeping with the whole tenor of their Gospels, the events on the authority of the women, from whom they had probably learned them. But the two apostles, Matthew and John, state them according to the impression they made upon them, when they first heard them, each in his peculiar way. Matthew, whose main object is to describe the royal majesty of the Lord in a few bold strokes, merges the individual in the general,

while John, in his characteristic way, gives us the general in the most important individual traits." Thus the whole apparent contradiction between John and the other Evangelists disappears at once; while John confines himself to what happened to Mary Magdalene, the other Evangelists state what happened to the whole body of the women, mentioning Mary Magdalene, however, as one of the party.

Mary Magdalene may, as we have said already, have come a few minutes before the other women to the grave; John says, "It was yet dark," and Mark, "The women came to the grave early in the morning at the rising of the sun." There is, however, no contradiction between the two accounts, even if we suppose that they all arrived at the same time at the grave, for we may understand by Mark's "*at the rising of the sun*," its first rays; and it must be borne in mind that the nearer the equator a country is, the shorter are its twilights. Mary Magdalene, no matter whether she arrived at the grave a few minutes before the rest or at the same time with them, was more powerfully affected by the sight of the empty sepulcher than her companions. She comes at once to the conclusion that the body must have been stolen, and runs, therefore, in all haste back to the city, in order to inform Peter and John of what she had seen. While she was hastening to the city the other women turned toward the empty sepulcher. In the description of the angelic appearances which these women had, the Synoptists differ as to some minor points. According to Matthew, it would seem that the angel sitting on the stone addressed the women; according to Mark and Luke, they enter into the empty grave; according to Mark, they saw "a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long, white garment;" while according to Luke, "two men stood by them in shining garments;" according to John, Mary Magdalene also saw alone "two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." The difference between the two angels of Luke and the one of Matthew and Mark, may be accounted for by supposing that the two latter Evangelists mention only the angel that addressed the women. Lange thinks, that as the Synoptists state what happened to Mary Magdalene and the other women as one event, Luke speaks of two angels as having appeared unto the latter party, while according to Matthew and Mark only one angel appeared, also, to Mary Magdalene. That, however, the efforts at harmonizing every little detail of such wonderful proceedings are uncalled for, is pertinently conceded even by that acute skeptic, Lessing.

According to Matthew and Mark, the words spoken by the angel were the same, with the exception that, according to Mark, the women are told to go their way and tell his disciples *and Peter*, that the Lord would go before them into Galilee. But the words spoken by the angels, according to Luke, differ so much from those recorded by the two other Synoptists, that some commentators have assumed that Luke speaks of another angelic appearance to another party of women, not distinguished by the Evangelist from the first party. The women could not fully comprehend the joyous news at once. With fear and great joy they hasten away from the sepulcher. Matthew says, "They did run to bring his disciples word;" but Mark, "They trembled and were amazed; neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid." The obvious meaning is, that they said nothing to the strangers whom they met by the way, but hastened to find those for whom their message was intended. Matthew then relates that Jesus himself met these women on the way. This appearance of the Lord is not mentioned by any other Evangelist. According to the first clause of the ninth verse in the received text, it took place on their way back from the sepulcher to the city, and if this is the case, we are almost compelled to suppose that the Lord appeared to these women before he appeared to Mary Magdalene, because a considerable length of time was consumed by what Mary Magdalene did before the Lord appeared unto her; we have, then, to assume that Mark calls the appearance of the Lord to Mary Magdalene *the first*, not absolutely, but with reference to the two other appearances recorded by himself, just as the one called by him *the last* (xvi, 14) was likewise not the last of all our Lord's visible appearances. But we have no need to suppose that the Lord appeared to the women *on their way from the sepulcher to the city*. The first clause of the ninth verse in chapter twenty-eight of Matthew, "*As they went to tell his disciples*," is wanting in Codd. B, D, in twenty Minuscules, and in all the ancient versions. It is, therefore, ejected from the received text by Lachman and Tischendorf, and its ejection, approved by the best critics, gives us liberty to assume that, after the delivery of the first tidings to the apostles, the women directed their steps back again to the sepulcher, and that it was *on their way there* when the Lord vouchsafed to appear to them. This supposition rises almost to a certainty, when we consider that the apostles refused to believe their report, according to Luke xxiv, 9-11, which would be very difficult to be accounted for, if they had reported to them that *they themselves had seen the Lord*. Their testimony of this could scarcely have appeared to them as "idle tales," while we can very

easily account for their doubts, so long as the women spoke only of the appearance of angels. The only difficulty in the passage of Luke, if thus understood, would be that he mentions Mary Magdalene as one of those women who had returned from the sepulcher, and whose report the disciples did not believe. But this difficulty is a slight one, inasmuch as Luke, not relating what happened to Mary Magdalene, may have included her, with reference to what she had reported when she first returned from the grave, and because she had gone out with the other women.

The details of Mary Magdalene's hasty return to the city and thence to the sepulcher in company of Peter and John, do not claim our attention here. Only one remark with regard to Peter may be expected. From Luke (xxiv, 12) it would seem that Peter did not go to the sepulcher till after the return of the women. But this difficulty disappears if we take into consideration that Luke, who, throughout his account, represents Mary Magdalene as in company with the other women, found no occasion to particularize about the news that induced Peter to hasten to the grave. John is not mentioned with Peter, but neither is he excluded; for in verse 24 it is expressly stated, that "certain of them, that were with us, went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said."

There are, in all, ten appearances of the Lord recorded in the New Testament: 1. The one vouchsafed to Mary Magdalene, (Mark xvi, 9.) 2. Then he appeared to the other women on their return, possibly from, but more probably to, the grave, (Matt. xxviii, 9, 10.) 3. To Peter before the evening of the resurrection day, (Luke xxiv, 34.) 4. To the two disciples, who went to Emmaus in the afternoon of that day, (Luke xxiv, 31.) 5. To the assembled disciples, Thomas alone being absent, on that night, (Luke xxiv, 36.) 6. Eight days later the Lord appeared to his assembled disciples again, Thomas being present, (John xx, 26.) The Passover had lasted to the preceding Friday. On Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, the disciples did not travel, and staid, also, the second Sunday at Jerusalem — a proof that this day had already become to them the Sabbath of the New Testament. In all probability they returned on the following Monday to Galilee. 7. The first appearance in *Galilee* took place at the Sea of Tiberias, (John xxi.) 8. Then the Lord appeared to all his assembled disciples on the mount in Galilee, (Matt. xxviii, 16; Mark xvi, 15-18; 1 Cor. xv, 6.) 9. Then unto James. 10. The last meeting with the eleven took place on the

way from Jerusalem to the top of the Mountain of Olives, whence the Lord ascended up to heaven, (Mark xvi, 19; Luke xxiv, 50; Acts i, 4-9.)

Verses 1-10. (COMPARE MARK xvi, 1-11; LUKE xxiv, 1-12; JOHN xx, 1-18.)

(1) IN the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. (2) And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (3) His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: (4) And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. (5) And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. (6) He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (7) And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. (8) And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. (9) And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshiped him. (10) Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

VERSE 1. IN THE END OF THE SABBATH, [the Greek expression would justify the translation *after the Sabbath*, as Mark says,] AS IT BEGAN TO DAWN TOWARD THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. The first day of the week had already begun the preceding evening; now *day*, as opposed to *night*, began to dawn. Lange thinks that the Evangelist used this rather strange designation of time designedly, to indicate that the Jewish Sabbath was now being superseded by the Christian Sunday, or Lord's day, (as Judaism was by Christianity.) "The Lord's day is [as the completion of the Redeemer's work] a new creation, the Sabbath of the New Testament dispensation, indicated as such not only because Jesus arose on that day from the dead, but also because he appeared on it to his disciples. That the Lord's day was kept by the

apostles, as the Sabbath, may be inferred from the following passages: Acts xx, 7; 1 Cor. xvi, 1, 2; Rev. i, 10." — CAME MARY MAGDALENE — according to Mark and Luke, in order to anoint the body of the Lord. Mark names in addition to these two also Salome. Matthew omits the latter, confining his remarks to the two women whom he had mentioned before. They knew nothing of the Roman watch.

VERSES 2-4. AND BEHOLD THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE. This shaking of the earth was probably confined to the region near the sepulcher. — FOR THE ANGEL OF THE LORD DESCENDED. We see here again, as at the birth of Christ, the intimate connection of the kingdom of Christ with the world of spirits. The presence of angels is likewise typical of their offices at the final judgment. The angel is not used as an instrument to assist the Savior in breaking the barriers of the grave, but to impress upon the Roman guard — whose attention was aroused by the earthquake, but who were not proper subjects to behold the rising of the Savior — that his resurrection was the work of God. When we consider that even the women had to be prepared by the message of angels, before the Savior appeared to them, we can not doubt that the keepers had fallen to the ground "as dead men," before the Lord came forth from the sepulcher. Some of the older commentators say that the Lord may have arisen before the stone was removed by the angel, as his glorified body passed through closed doors, and appeared and disappeared at will; and that the opening of the sepulcher by the angel served only to expose it to inspection, and to give an ocular demonstration of the resurrection.

VERSE 5. If we had the account of Matthew alone, we might be led to think that the earthquake, the descent of the angel, and the falling down of the keepers took place in the presence of the women. But this is evidently not the case. Matthew's object is simply to state the fact of the resurrection, the message of the angel, and the words of the Savior, not the manner in which the women became cognizant of the facts. — FEAR NOT YE. There is an emphasis on the *ye*. Be not terrified like the guard, and his enemies. I have good tidings for *you* who SEEK JESUS, WHICH WAS CRUCIFIED. The Crucified! The name of reproach and death is now glorified into a title of honor. It is the first high name of the risen Lord, given by the mouth of an angel; thus will the lowly One be ever named, both in heaven and on earth. Ye seek him,

even in disgrace and death; you are still the same who were with Jesus of Nazareth. Ye seek him in the wrong place, but ye shall, nevertheless, find him.

VERSE 6. HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID. When the Lord had foretold the disciples his resurrection, he pointed back to the Old Testament Scriptures. The angels now point back to *his* words; for every testimony to truth which ever fell from his lips is confirmed by his resurrection; the first-born from the dead is the faithful Witness, (Rev. i, 5.) There seems to be also a gentle reproof in reminding them of the words of the Lord.

VERSE 7. HE GOES BEFORE YOU INTO GALILEE, etc. Jesus had promised them before his death that he would appear unto them in Galilee, (see chap. xxvi, 32.) Although the Lord appeared to several women, to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and to the apostles at Jerusalem, yet his meeting the whole body of disciples was to take place in Galilee.

VERSE 8. WITH FEAR AND GREAT JOY. Fear contends in their hearts with their great joy, as is so often experienced by us all. Mark says: "And they said nothing to any man;" that is, they said nothing in the way, before they came to the disciples. They have rightly understood the direction of the angel to tell it only to the disciples.

VERSE 9. AND AS THEY WENT TO TELL HIS DISCIPLES. These words are not considered genuine. We refer the reader to what we said in our introductory remarks to this section. — **AND HELD HIM BY THE FEET, AND WORSHIPED HIM.** This was a kind of touching him, different from that which he forbade to Mary Magdalene. When he said to her "*Touch me not,*" **μή μου ἄπτον**, literally, take not hold of me, in the sense of keeping hold — for the Greek tense expresses action continued — our Lord had reference to her peculiar frame of mind, the full exposition of which belongs to the passage in John. Here we will mention only so much as is necessary to distinguish it from the act of the women recorded by Matthew. In the immediate outpouring of her love, Mary seemed to want to hold him fast, lest the wonderful appearance should vanish again, and in doing so she betrayed that she did not at the time realize the higher relation in which her risen Lord now stood to her. She wanted to enjoy his communion in a human manner, as she had been wont during his earthly life. From this tone of mind Christ leads her away, by giving her to understand that she must no longer reckon upon any such intercourse with him as she had hitherto enjoyed, that his tarrying on earth was only transitory, and

that the time of exalted and divine relationships had come. The act of the women which Matthew records is entirely different. "They at once recognize him," as Ellicott remarks, "with holy awe, not merely as their teacher, [Mary Magdalene addressed him Rabboni,] but as their risen Lord, and instinctively pay him an adoration, which, as Bengel rightly observed, was but rarely evinced toward our Lord by his immediate followers previous to his Passion."

VERSE 10. GO TELL MY BRETHREN. We have to understand by the term "my brethren," not the apostles exclusively, but the whole body of his disciples that had followed him from Galilee to the feast. — **THAT THEY GO INTO GALILEE, AND THERE SHALL THEY SEE ME.** One of the most serious contradictions in the Gospel records Strauss pretends to find in this, that Jesus commanded his disciples, according to Matthew and Mark, to go to Galilee, in order to see him there, while, according to Luke, he tells them to tarry in Jerusalem till they should be endowed with power from on high! Any Sunday school child could have told the learned critic that the command recorded by Luke was spoken by our Lord after the apostles had returned again from Galilee to Jerusalem, and had reference to the time between the ascension and Pentecost. As to the command of the Lord, recorded by Matthew and Mark, it had reference to the whole body of disciples, and meant no more than this, that they should, without fear or dismay, in the joyful assurance of his resurrection, *after the feast* return to Galilee, where he would reveal himself to them all at once. Our Lord saw fit to appear to the apostles, as the leaders of the flock, before that time, and it was evidently a surprise to them. But all the disciples were not yet prepared to see him, at least not in Jerusalem. It would have exposed the infant Church to danger. We can also easily understand why the apostles needed a special direction to return to Galilee in order to meet the Lord there. They would naturally be inclined to stay where he had died and risen again. They tarried, not only to the close of the Passover, the Friday succeeding the day of the resurrection, but also over Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, and over the second Lord's day, on which the Lord visited them again and appeared unto Thomas, from which we may infer that they regarded the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath. On the succeeding Monday we may suppose them to have left for Galilee. After the interview at the lake of Galilee, and the meeting with the whole body of disciples on the mountain, the appearance of the Lord to James (1 Cor. xv, 7) may be supposed to have taken place, and through him the apostles may have

been directed to go to Jerusalem earlier than they would otherwise have gone to attend the feast of Pentecost.

§ 80. THE SANHEDRIM'S FRAUDULENT SUPPRESSION OF THE SOLDIERS' TESTIMONY.

IT is a strange and sad phenomenon that there are doctors of theology in Germany, who have summoned all their critical ingenuity to raise every conceivable objection to the credibility of Matthew's account of the Sanhedrim's fraudulent transaction. Their cavils, however, have been fully met by the evangelical school of German critics. Though not edifying, it may be profitable in some quarters to give the objections with their refutation. They are as follows:

It is said, 1, "Whence did the high-priests and Pharisees know that Jesus had said that he would rise again in three days, since he had spoken of his resurrection before his enemies only in figurative language, and his disciples had not understood what he had told them plainly?" We answer this question with another question: Is it any where written that Jesus had forbidden his disciples to say to others what he had said to them about his crucifixion and resurrection? Is it, on the contrary, not probable in the highest degree, that this often-repeated declaration had through the disciples found its way into larger circles? When Jesus was crucified, is it not more than likely that many a one said, "He is said to have foretold this;" and should this not have called to remembrance what he had said about his resurrection? But *that* and *why* the enemies of Jesus were differently affected by these his words from his friends has been shown in chap. xxvii, 63. 2. "How could the women expect to embalm the dead body on the morning of the resurrection day, the sepulcher being guarded and sealed?" There is no evidence that the women knew any thing about the seal and guard, as the Sabbath intervened. The setting of the watch and affixing of the seal did, in all probability, not take place before Saturday evening. 3. "It is in the highest degree improbable that the Sanhedrim should have left the dead body in the hands of his disciples instead of keeping it in their own possession." After Joseph of Arimathea had received the body from Pilate, it was, of course, out of the hands of the high-priests. It was, moreover, in their interest to affect indifference. 4. "It is altogether improbable that the Sanhedrim should have believed the words of the soldiers; but if they

did, it is unaccountable why they have made the attempt to suppress their report." They had no cause whatever to doubt the report of the frightened soldiers about the earthquake, the rolling away of the stone, the empty sepulcher; Jesus himself the soldiers had not seen, but the most natural inference was, that the resurrection foretold by Jesus had really taken place. That, however, those who had charged Jesus with casting out devils by Beelzebub, endeavored to suppress this inference against their own conscience and better knowledge, is certainly in perfect keeping with the whole tenor of their conduct. 5. "It is improbable that the soldiers should have consented to spread this lie." Why? The corruption of the Romans, both higher officers and common soldiers, is notorious. Possibly the priests accused them also of having been afraid of specters, and threatened to bring charges against them before Pilate. If, on the other hand, the Sanhedrim did not bring any charges against them, the soldiers had no reason to fear that Pilate would inquire into the affair. 6. "It is not likely that the Sanhedrim in their official character should have agreed to sanction a lie." But why not? The same Sanhedrim had officially agreed upon the most atrocious judicial murder! Well does Ebrard say: "What pious and conscientious men do the Sanhedrists all at once become under the magic hands of Mr. Dr. Strauss! All the scattered Christians, these humble and quiet men, must, without any cause whatever, have devised and believed a palpable lie; but the murderers of Jesus were altogether too good to devise for the Roman soldiers a falsehood that had become for them a necessity!" Moreover, the Evangelist does not speak of a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim. It was, on the contrary, according to verse 12, a private conference of the deadly enemies of Jesus, in which the high-priests were probably advised to induce the soldiers, by any means whatsoever, to keep silent about what they had witnessed at the sepulcher. This accounts for Gamaliel's ignorance of the affair. (Compare Acts v, 39.) 7. "But why do the apostles not appeal, in their Epistles, to what the soldiers had reported to the Sanhedrim as the most conclusive proof of the resurrection?" Because they stood in no need whatever of such a proof. The apostles very naturally appealed to what they had seen themselves, not to what the Jewish Sanhedrim had heard from some Roman soldiers. 8. "Why do they not appeal to this report of the soldiers, at least before the Sanhedrim?" This they might, and probably would have done, if the Sanhedrim had dared to contradict their testimony about the resurrection of their Master. (Acts iv, 10.) But the Sanhedrim did not dare to do this, (verse 14;) and so we find also in Acts (ii and v) that no one dared to contradict the

fact of the resurrection. And because the Sanhedrim did not dare to contradict the fact of the resurrection, the account of Matthew must be true. 9. "If this had really happened, the other Evangelists would not have passed by so important a testimony." This last objection is as futile as all the others. According to this reasoning every fact recorded by only one Evangelist must be rejected. That Matthew recorded this fact was quite in keeping with the whole scope and character of his Gospel. For it was of especial importance for the Jewish Christians, for whom Matthew wrote his Gospel, and in full accordance with his purpose, to delineate fully the wicked opposition of the Jewish hierarchy.

Verses 11-15.

(11) NOW when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief-priests all the things that were done. (12) And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, (13) saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. (14) And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. (15) So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

VERSE 11. SOME OF THE WATCH . . . SHEWED UNTO THE CHIEF-PRIESTS ALL THE THINGS THAT WERE DONE. "The ecclesiastical authorities who had put Christ to death were to receive official information of his resurrection in a manner chosen by themselves. But these authorities suppressed this information by setting on foot and permitting an immense fraud, and God left to this work of infamy its free course, because the message of the resurrection was to spread, not in the form of human but Divine certainty." (Lange.)

VERSES 12-15. "What a contrast does this narrative form with the one going before! *There* truth, *here* falsehood; *there* the hero appearing in the glory of his superabundantly-proven innocence, *here* the priesthood frightened and convicted of their crime; *there* the joy of victory in the disciples, *here* confusion and perplexity; *there* free ministers of truth, *here* bribed servants of falsehood; *there* heroic women, *here* fleeing soldiers. The apparent defeat of the Lord is

converted into the most glorious triumph, and the apparent triumph of his enemies into the most disgraceful defeat. In order to destroy the incontrovertible testimony of the most glorious miracle, the enemies of Christ resort to the most absurd lie, which, like all opposition to truth, is refuted by its own self-contradiction." — The absurdity and self-contradiction of the expedient upon which the Sanhedrim hit, in their perplexity, is generally supposed to consist in this, that the soldiers at the grave recognized the disciples in their sleep, and yet suffered the theft to take place. But this is not the worst of it, as the assertion of the theft might possibly be predicated on this or that circumstance. The evident absurdity of the charge lies in a number of other points; namely, that the whole Roman guard should have committed the crime, punishable with death, of falling asleep at their posts; that they should not have been awakened, even by the rolling away of the huge stone, in time to secure the robbers of the dead body; that the disheartened disciples, who had given up all hope that their crucified Master would redeem Israel, should have ventured upon this hazardous undertaking in bright moonlight — for during the Passover the moon was always full — add to this that the disciples could have no possible motive to say that their Master had risen from the dead, if they were persuaded that he was still in the embrace of death. No wonder that the priests did not dare to bring a charge against the soldiers for having slept at their post, or against the disciples for having stolen the body! No wonder that in all the hearings which the apostles had before the Sanhedrim, on account of proclaiming the resurrection of Christ, no more is said of this foolish lie! Without daring to contradict the testimony of the infant Church boldly and publicly, the Jewish hierarchy had this absurd charge clandestinely spread among the Jews, as Justin and Tertullian have proved, and this base lie was, as it were, the germ of the Talmud, which, by its absurd fables, has kept the cheated Jews unto this day from embracing their Messiah.

§ 81. APPEARANCE OF THE LORD ON A MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE. — THE GREAT COMMISSION.

THAT which Matthew records of the resurrection of the Lord forms a well-arranged and finished whole, and perfectly corresponds with the whole character of his Gospel. He describes the royal power of the risen Savior, "how the storms of earth and the angels of heaven minister unto him, (vs. 1-10;) how

neither the seal of the Jews nor the arms of the Romans hinder him, (vs. 11-15;) how he thus foils by his resurrection the defiance of his enemies, and rekindles the hope of his desponding friends; how his power is unlimited in heaven and upon earth, and how he sends his apostles, in the name of the Triune God, with the message of salvation into all the world, certain in advance of the homage of all the world, and promising to his disciples, notwithstanding his impending departure, his everlasting, protecting, and consoling presence, (vs. 16-20.)" (Lange.)

The appearance of the Lord on the mountain of Galilee is undoubtedly identical with the same of which Paul says, (1 Cor. xv, 6,) that there were five hundred brethren present, most of whom were still living when the apostle wrote his Epistle. That there were others present than the eleven, Matthew himself indicates clearly enough, partly by the remark of verse 17, "*but some doubted,*" which we can not possibly understand of the apostles, to all of whom the Lord had already appeared in Jerusalem; partly in verses 7 and 10, where the promise is given that the Lord would appear unto all the brethren and women in Galilee; and Matthew did certainly not intend to make the impression that this promise was fulfilled only as far as the eleven were concerned. But why he mentions the apostles alone is not difficult to explain. They are the leaders of the whole body of the disciples that were summoned to Galilee. As it is the main object of Matthew to show how Jesus, after he had been rejected by Israel after the flesh, exhibited himself after his resurrection as the founder of a spiritual kingdom that embraces all nations, he emphatically mentioned only the eleven, through whose apostolic mission this kingdom was to be established. Whatever is not necessarily connected with this, his main theme, he omits. The appearance vouchsafed to the women he mentions, as it seems, only for the purpose of giving to his readers a summary account of the first announcement of the Lord's resurrection, and to explain to them how the disciples came to Galilee. At the same time he gives us to understand that there were other appearances besides those recorded by him. For he says, in verse 16, that the eleven met *on the mountain, where Jesus had appointed them;* but, in verses 7 and 9, he had spoken only of a general order not to stay in Jerusalem, but to return to Galilee. It is self-evident that the disciples, scattered all over Galilee, without any previous revelation and order, could not, of their own accord, have met at a certain time and at a certain place, in order to wait there for another appearance of Christ. Thus it appears, from Matthew himself,

that the Lord must have appeared unto the apostles after their return to Galilee, in order to give them the direction mentioned in verse 16. This meeting is described by John, (chap. xxi,) on which occasion the Lord may have commissioned one of the apostles to assemble the disciples on a certain mountain. — The relation which this section bears to Mark xvi, 15, 16, we shall examine when we come to the latter place.

Verses 16-20.

(16) **THEN the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.** (17) And when they saw him, they worshiped him: but some doubted. (18) And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even unto the end of the world.* Amen.

VERSE 16. INTO A MOUNTAIN, WHERE. The Evangelist tells us that Jesus had designated some mountain to the disciples, without naming either the *locality* or *time*. It is needless to inquire what mountain it was. We know nothing about it. The appointment was most probably made at the meeting of Jesus with the seven disciples at the lake of Tiberias.

VERSE 17. AND WHEN THEY SAW HIM, THEY WORSHIPED HIM. "The faith in the Divinity of Christ that existed during the time of his sojourn on earth, as it were only as a spark in the breast of his disciples, was kindled into a blazing flame by the sight of the risen Savior." (Gerlach.) — BUT SOME DOUBTED. "We can not believe that any of the eleven apostles should have doubted, especially after all that had taken place according to Luke and John. Matthew gives us in this circumstance an intimation that many others were present with the eleven. But *what* did they doubt? We say with Ebrard, 'not whether Christ was risen, but whether the person they saw was Christ.' For although they had followed the summons to the mountain, and had been in the company of the apostles and brethren who had already seen the Lord, they might when they themselves saw him at first, especially if standing at a distance,

distrust their eyes in astonishment, or fail to believe at once, simply through wonder and joy." (Stier.) But Lange refers their doubts to the propriety of extending Divine adoration to him, such as was implied in the disciples' prostration before him, and finds in these doubts the germ of Ebionitism, as we see it subsequently developed among the Jewish Christians.

VERSE 18. AND JESUS CAME, etc.; that is, he came nearer to them and conversed with them. This and his powerful words were sufficient to dispel all doubts, of whatever kind they might be. — ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. In these words the God-man, as he stood before his disciples, claims supreme power over the whole universe! *Heaven* is mentioned first, as the origin, ground, and seat of his dominion. *From heaven*, whither he will shortly go, he will send down his Spirit in holy influence and government. But he has also power *in heaven* (comp. Eph. i, 20-22; Col. ii, 10; 1 Pet. iii, 22.) All the angels worship him, even as man upon earth. "*In or on earth*" refers back to Dan. vii, 13, 14, and means his government over all nations on earth. Yet in his humanity, though that humanity was now glorified, he says "*is given unto me*." In a certain sense it was, indeed, given to the Son from all eternity, (Matt. xi, 27,) but by his incarnation he had emptied himself, (Phil. ii, 7,) so far as was necessary for his human nature. This state of humiliation is now at an end; by his resurrection he has entered upon the state of exaltation. (Eph. i, 20-22; Phil. ii, 9-11.) His supreme Divinity he declares in his commission to baptize, representing himself as one Being with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

VERSES 19, 20. THEREFORE. This particle is wanting in most manuscripts, but is required by the context, because the Divine majesty of Christ is the ground of both his sending his apostles, and of their entering upon their mission. The Lord's deduction, however, from his absolute and supreme power, must be especially considered. He does not say, because all power is given unto me, therefore go and reduce by force of arms the whole world to a state of subjection unto me. He exercises his power only in accordance with the free will of man in the kingdom of grace. — TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM. It is much to be regretted that these important words are not translated more faithfully in our authorized version. In the original nothing is more plain than that the "*teaching*" of verse 19 is not identical with that of verse 20, as there are different words used with different meaning. A literal rendering would be: "*Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.*" That

"make disciples of" is a correct translation of **μαθητεύσατε** is admitted also by those who quote this text against infant baptism. But they argue thus: "As an adult can not be made a disciple by baptism without previous instruction, so a child can not. As, according to Mark xvi, 16, faith must precede baptism, so the making of disciples without previous instruction is out of the question in this place; the conditions of baptism are repentance and faith. Infants are unable either to repent or to believe, and therefore they can not be made disciples of Christ." To the objection urged against this reasoning, that infants would thereby be also excluded from heaven, faith and repentance being likewise the condition of salvation, the Baptists reply, that the Lord here does not speak of salvation, but of the mode of receiving men into his Church upon earth. They say, therefore, that the question is not as to whether infants can be saved, but whether infants can become members of the visible Church. We admit this, but, in order to answer this question, another question must be asked and answered; namely, Was there no Church of God on earth previous to the command of Christ given to his apostles to teach and baptize all nations? If this were the case, then, indeed, an express command of Christ would be necessary to baptize children. On this point the whole question of infant baptism turns, and it will be fully considered in the Dissertation on Baptism, which follows our comment on this section. Here we deem it sufficient to say that we consider the Church of the New Testament to be a continuation of the Church of God in the Old Testament, on the following grounds: 1. On account of the many promises concerning the Church of God in the Old Testament, (Deut. xviii, 15; Isa. ii, 2; lx, 1-5.) 2. On account of what the apostles say of the Church of Christ, (Eph. ii, 18-20; iii, 6; Gal. iii, 29.) 3. On account of the nature and the design of the Church, (1 Pet. i, 12; ii, 5, 6; John i, 45; viii, 56; 1 Cor. x, 4; Matt. xxii, 36-40.) In the light of these Scripture passages we maintain that Christ, in commanding his apostles to make disciples of all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, extended the limits of the Church of God; it is no longer to be confined to the Jewish nation, (Acts xv, 14; comp. also the prior instruction given to the disciples, Matt. x, 5, 6,) but is to receive all nations into its bosom. The heathen are, as Paul expresses it, to be grafted in and to partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, (Rom. xi, 17.) Again, Christ institutes a new rite for receiving members into his Church, baptism in place of circumcision. Now, if the Church of the New Testament was to differ from the Old Testament Church with regard to the incorporation of children, would the Lord not have called the

attention of his disciples — who had been received into the Church of God as infants themselves — to this important and radical change, and thus have guarded them and the believers of all subsequent ages against error and misunderstanding? And this the more, as the Jews of those days were accustomed to receive into their Church even the children of such heathens as joined the Jewish Church; so firmly was the principle rooted, that the children of believing parents must be incorporated into the family of the covenant people of God. "Is it a thing in itself probable," says Stier, "nay, is it a thing conceivable, that at the time when our Lord is contemplating the ground, procedure, and economy of his whole Church *down to the end of the world*, and giving *for that purpose* his final and decisive commissions and promises, he should not think of the difficult question, What is to be done with the children of the converted nations? — that children, whom he had blessed, should now be so entirely left out of sight as to be neither excluded from nor included in the arrangements of that great benediction which he is now establishing?" To the objection, that if Christ had instituted baptism in the place of circumcision, the apostles could not have been in doubt as to whether heathens were also to be circumcised or not, Lange remarks very correctly: "The question as to how heathens were to be received into the Church, was not then answered; yet the unconditional reception of believers is implied in the command, that the nations are to be converted to Christianity as nations, not first to be made Jews, and then Christians by baptism — on which account there was no need of making any mention of circumcision. The fuller light upon this point the Lord left to the future guidance of the Spirit." But to return to the main question, How is the discipling of nations to be effected? The beginning must, of course, be made with individual adults, to whom the Gospel must be *preached*, previously to baptism, as we learn from the commission, recorded by Mark. But, as in Matthew x, 12, 13, the Lord had already *multitudes* and *families* in his eye, and not merely individuals, so he now, in a great *prophetic* contemplation of the history of the world and of the Church, looks upon and embraces the *nations* of the earth as *extended families*. Household and family bonds should not continue to be rent as at the beginning, but the people should be won and brought into the state of discipleship, as an extended family. Christianity was not designed to be a thing limited to individuals; the consecration of a nation proceeds from the families, as the consecration of families does from individuals. In the family rests the root of the natural life, which the Church must reach and work upon; and as certainly as Christ's object was not to pluck up

these roots of human development, so certainly he must have designed infant baptism. — Against those who refuse to perceive in the command our Lord gave to his disciples any binding ordinance for future times, Stier says: "If the general commandment in Matthew were not sufficient to establish the permanent obligation of baptism by water, indubitable testimony is borne by Mark (xvi, 16.) God had from the times of the Gentile and Jewish washings prepared the way gradually for the expressive symbol; . . . and the baptism of John did not belong to *the transitory ordinances of the Old Testament*; but it was a *type* and *commencement* of the New Testament ordinance. . . . Let it be observed that the Supper and baptism are the *only* two commandments and ordinances connected with an external thing, which he leaves behind to his Church! As those who already belong to him, being his disciples, remember him and partake of him in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; so was it necessary that the young *discipleship* should have an external mark of their acceptance into it, although this baptism must, of course, according to the power and reality of the New Testament, bring much more than a mere sign of profession." On the *mode*, the *subjects*, and the *significance* of baptism the reader is referred to the Dissertation at the close of this chapter. — ALL NATIONS. "By this term, certainly all the Gentiles are first meant; so that the limitation of chapter x, 5, 6, is now expressly withdrawn. It implies that all nations were essentially ripe for the Gospel when the Lord uttered his commission to the apostles, and the Church ever since has had no authority to deny the Gospel to any people on earth. The great commission compels us, on the contrary, to perpetual, new endeavors; it commands us to announce a manifested and present salvation in places and among people where the abominations of fetish superstition have assumed developments removed to the very utmost from the spirit of the Gospel. Our lofty confidence that nations may, by our preaching, make the one leap from the lowest to the highest, may appear in the eyes of speculative reason sheer folly; but our faith knows that the Lord of heaven and earth has gifts and graces which can outrun all natural processes of development. From 'all nations' Israel is not to be excluded. According to Luke, (xxiv, 47,) the preaching among all nations was to *begin* at Jerusalem; according to Acts i, 8, they were to be his witnesses to Jerusalem, and throughout Judea and Samaria, and thence to the ends of the earth. But it is significant that in this wide glance Israel, unclothed of his prerogative, is no longer specifically named, but merged in the new and universal people or 'nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,' (chap. xxi, 43; Acts

xv, 14.)—As it respects the *Jewish Mission*, the great apostle to the Gentiles has most expressly witnessed, by word and deed, that it must go on parallel with that of the Gentiles *to the end of the age*, inasmuch as God has not rejected his people, (Rom. xi, 13, 14.)" (Stier.) — IN THE NAME, *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*, that is, into the name. The Baptists appeal to this preposition as a proof that *βαπτίζειν* must here have the meaning of immersing. But *εἰς* has not always the meaning of "into;" it also denotes an end or object, as in Matthew iii, 11, *εἰς μετάνοιαν*, *unto* repentance, and in Acts ii, 38, *εἰς ἀφεσιν*, *for* the remission. The person baptized is handed over and consecrated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in order to realize in his person the saving and sanctifying influences of the three persons of the adorable Trinity. Meyer says: "By being baptized in the name of the Triune God, man assumes the obligation to make the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost the object of his faith and confession. Thus the Corinthians were not baptized in the name of Paul, (1 Cor. i, 13,) because the object of their faith and confession was not to be Paul, but Jesus Christ." — OF THE FATHER, OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. "This is the only passage in the Gospels in which the Lord himself named the three persons together. He had, indeed, in many passages spoken of both the Son and the Holy Ghost, as Divine personalities; but here they are placed side by side of each other, and the three together are represented as the God whom the believer obligates himself to serve by his baptism. The term 'person,' used by the Church, labors under some inconvenience, and can easily mislead. There is, however, no term in human language by which the co-existence of identity in being or substance with individual self-consciousness in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost could be more appropriately set forth, and no fault must, therefore, be found with the Fathers of the Church for making use of this term, but rather with the insufficiency of human language to express adequately by precise terms the absolutely-highest relations which sanctified reason alone can approach by intuition. The error to which the term 'person' easily misleads, but against which all the Fathers of deeper penetration have scrupulously labored to guard, is to conceive of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as being locally distinguished from each other and acting separately each for himself, while they must be conceived of as constantly interpenetrating each other." (Olshausen.) The proper place for a full discussion on the doctrine of the adorable Trinity is not here, but John i, 1. We confine ourselves, therefore, to a few remarks: 1. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost must be, linguistically, taken as distinct subjects because the term

"name," followed by a genitive, is always used of persons. 2. They must be equal, consequently Divine persons, because they are coordinated, and supreme adoration is vindicated to each of them. Even Julian the Apostate understood the passage in this sense, and hence charged the Christians with polytheism. 3. The unity or oneness of the three persons is emphatically taught by the singular of "name," it being said "in the name," not "in the names." As at the baptism of Christ the three persons of the Trinity revealed themselves for the first time fully as the Triune God, so baptism is to be administered — but not before the day of Pentecost — in the name of the Father, who has revealed himself in sending his Son — of the Son, declared to be such with power by his resurrection from the dead — and of the Holy Ghost, who was soon to be imparted. On the ground that, in Acts ii, 38, baptism in the name of Jesus is mentioned, it has been called in question whether the Lord intended here to give us the words with which baptism is to be administered. But there is no reason to doubt this; the expression in the Acts is simply a brief designation of Christian baptism in distinction from the various Jewish baptisms — the name of Christ presupposing that of the Father and of the Holy Ghost. — TEACHING THEM. All that are baptized, adults as well as infants, stand in need of *this* teaching, which is to be distinguished from the preaching of the Gospel, that necessarily precedes the baptism of adults. The first "them" in the text takes the individuals, both adults and infants, from out of the mass of the people for baptism; while the second "them" refers to those who had *become disciples* and were *baptized*. Thus we have, in this "teaching them," the institution of the office of teaching or preaching for the baptized, whether adults or infants. With the commission given to the apostles, the Lord, at the same time, instituted the Christian ministry, with its twofold work of making disciples and of building up the disciples in the faith. The one is the missionary, the other the pastoral work of the Church. But the two are mutually so blended with each other, that they can not be separated — the end again and again becoming the beginning — and the interpenetration of the two is to continue in the Church till its final consummation, till the *disciples* actually keep and fulfill all the commandments delivered to their obedience. (Thoughts of Stier condensed and modified.) — To OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED you. "That which the *Lord himself* commanded and committed to his *disciples*, is to be taught and *handed down*, that men may hold it fast and act according to it — *nothing more*, and *nothing different!* He, therefore, refuses his sanction and promise to all ordinances of men which

depart from his precepts, while all that is needful for the instruction and edification of the Church will be pointed out by his Spirit and drawn from his words. Again, all that was committed to the first disciples applies at the same time to all disciples. Whoever in all nations *will* be, let him be my disciple, *like yourselves!* Every commission from my Father to you is also for them; ye shall not keep back from them any one of my sayings and blessings. Give them to keep, to *understand*, to *believe*, to *do* all that I have given to you! Finally, it was obviously intended that they should also impose the commission which they had *just now* received, as binding; they were to say to all who followed, and those again to succeeding ones, *in his name* — Go ye forth, convert the nations, baptize, and teach! Every man must in his degree enter into the great work, when and as far as he feels his own interest in it; and this explains to us how the Lord could say to those he first addressed, 'I am with you unto the end of the world!' (Stier.) — AND LO, I AM WITH YOU. "His *power* preceded as the ground and authority of all, the promised aid of his mighty presence closes the whole. Would he send them forth into all the world, and not himself be with and in all his messengers in all places? As before *Omnipotence*, so now *Omnipresence* is imputed to the Lord by himself. He is with his disciples — for their strength, their defense, their assistance, their light, and their life — in various ways, and by the medium of various instrumentalities; yet in all these, and every-where, as the personal *I*. This holds good to a certain extent of every believer in his own individual person; more particularly of every little company united in his name, (chap. xviii, 20;) and most fully of his whole Church, of his entire people among the nations, as essentially fulfilling the Old Testament promise. (See Levit. xxvi, 11, 12; comp. 2 Cor. vi, 16.) In this sense he makes the collective body of his true disciples, and even every individual among them, as far as he is such, infallible. The perversion of this truth is the Romish doctrine, that 'the bishops assembled under their head, [the Pope — instead of the Church gathered in the name of Christ,] are infallible, whether assembled in one place or dispersed over all the earth.' The Almighty and All-present needs no representative or deputy on earth. Only those among whom and with whom he is in truth, convert and teach others again, that they may become disciples. When he said, 'Behold, I am with you alway,' he had not been visibly present with them during *all* the forty days; and yet it was plain in his visits that he had been virtually always with them. After his ascension, and before his second coming, they were not to look again for his visible appearance, neither on a mountain, nor any where else, but wherever those who go forth to fulfill

his commission are found in all the earth, there he is. This word, consequently, announces and includes the *ascension*; hence St. Matthew closes with this word, instead of giving the external narrative of the ascension, which from this declaration must have been self-evident to all." (Condensed and transposed from Stier.) — **ALWAY** — literally all days. "By this term are not only all the years to the end of time characterized as years of salvation, but also all the days, even the darkest, appear as days of salvation." (Lange.) — **EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD**; that is, "unto the completion of this soon, which takes place with the second advent of Christ, and involves, at the same time, the end of the world. These words contain also the promise, that the Lord goes with his servants, who preach the Gospel, to the extreme limits of the world." (Lange.) As certainly as the Lord speaks of historical days, just so certainly does he testify, that a historically-impending end, a last day, will come.

A DISSERTATION ON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

RELUCTANT as we may feel to enter upon the discussion of controverted points — on which the profoundest scholars, most acute thinkers, and Christians of unquestioned piety and sincerity have taken opposite sides, and on which volumes after volumes have been written without effecting, in general, a radical change of previous conviction on the subject — nevertheless, the doctrinal character of this Commentary imperatively demands an answer to two questions: 1. Is infant baptism Scriptural? 2. Does the Greek word **βαπτίζειν** mean exclusively *to immerse*, or is the administration of baptism by other modes of applying the water in this ordinance consistent with the legitimate meaning of this Greek verb? We will endeavor to answer these questions as impartially as one can who does not hold a neutral position, but has conscientiously arrived at conclusions that appear to his own mind satisfactory — candidly stating the opposite arguments and eschewing all unauthorized deductions and imputations too frequently made in this controversy on both sides; such, for instance, as the charge of the pedobaptists against the Baptists, that to deny baptism to their children is to withhold from them Christian nurture and education, or the charge of the Baptists against the pedobaptist Churches that the purity of the Church is inconsistent with the practice of infant baptism.

ON INFANT BAPTISM.

Impartial men on both sides will concede that there are no passages in the New Testament from which we can draw any direct and positive proof either for or against the practice of infant baptism by the apostles. While Baptists rely on the silence of the New Testament concerning the baptism of infants, pedobaptists appeal to the mention of whole households as implying it, urging, moreover, that the very silence of the New Testament is a proof for infant baptism, because infants had been incorporated into the Jewish Church by circumcision, and a change of their relation to the New Testament Church would have required a positive declaration on the part of Christ and his apostles. But all arguments for or against infant baptism having been practiced by the apostles are more or less conjectural, and can only be used as collateral

evidence. The question itself turns upon what the New Testament teaches *as to the nature of baptism itself*. According to the conception formed of the nature of baptism will be the interpretations of the passages on the ground of which it is both asserted and denied that infant baptism was practiced in the apostolic Church. We have, therefore, first of all to examine the various views which have been drawn from the New Testament concerning *the nature of baptism*. The limits of our present investigation do not permit a specific exposition of every passage that has a bearing upon the subject, and whether the results at which we shall arrive are consistent with *all* the passages of the New Testament that treat of baptism will, of course, be left to the reader to decide.

Let us, then, consider each of the several views, *as to the nature of Christian baptism*, on which the Christian world bases the bestowing or withholding of this rite from infants.

I. It is not only the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, but also that of some Protestant denominations, that baptism is the necessary means of regeneration. For a refutation of this doctrine, we need not examine here those passages that are generally appealed to. (John iii, 5; Eph. v, 26; Tit. iii, 5.) That these passages do not make regeneration depend upon baptism, is apparent from the following considerations. 1. If regeneration depended upon baptism it is hard to see why the Lord should not have designated the unbaptized as well as the unbelievers as those that "shall be damned." (Mark xvi, 16.) 2. If the apostle Paul had considered baptism as a necessary means of salvation, he would not have thanked God for having baptized at Corinth no one except Crispus and Gaius. (1 Cor. i, 14.) 3. The assertion that baptism and regeneration are inseparably connected, is refuted by examples of conversion and regeneration preceding baptism recorded in Acts, as well as by the case of Simon the sorcerer, who was baptized without having ever been regenerated in heart. 4. The notion of a being transferred from the bondage of sin into the liberty of the children of God by baptism, or of the application of water being necessary for the remission of sins, is contrary to the whole tenor and spirit of the Gospel, by which we are taught that as the blood of Christ is the only meritorious cause of the remission of sins, so faith is the only condition of our justification. — Now, it is clear, that, if regeneration is to depend on baptism, as is held by the largest portion of the Christian Church, infant baptism can not be maintained for a moment. "Regeneration in an unconscious state," says Dr.

Ebrard, "is impossible; Christ enters into the hearts of men only in the light of his grace, and experience teaches that the baptized child is as well an heir to sin as the unbaptized, being even subject to special vicious tempers inherited from parents or grandparents, and that it can be set free from the bondage of sinful propensities only by a self-conscious repentance and conversion." Still stronger is the language used by Dr. Schenkel in his "Dogmatik:" "If any proposition is beyond dispute, it is this, that the personal, self-conscious spirit of God savingly operates only on the personal, self-conscious spirit of man. For this reason we feel constrained to concede to the opponents of infant baptism without any reservation, that upon the newly-born, unconscious infant no effect whatever is produced through baptism, neither by means of the water, nor by that of the Word, nor by the Holy Ghost; and this is confirmed by the fact that no child has a personal recollection of his baptism and, much less, of having been regenerated through baptism. The idea, that by means of baptism a spiritual germ is implanted into the soul of the child, or that an unconscious faith is produced there which is afterward developed into consciousness is equally untenable, and ought to be carefully guarded against.

II. In diametrical opposition to the old Church-doctrine, that regeneration is *the necessary effect* of the act of baptism, the Baptists insist upon regeneration, or faith connected with genuine repentance and wrought by the Holy Ghost, as *the necessary condition* of Christian baptism. According to this view baptism is the external sign and seal of an inward work of grace, and the Divinely-appointed act by which believers alone can be received as members of the visible Church. It is obvious that, according to this view, the baptism of infant children, that are not only incapable of believing, but have no consciousness at all of what is done with them in baptism, is both meaningless and unscriptural. Baptists appeal mainly to the words of Christ, (Mark xvi, 15, 16:) "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that *believeth* and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that *believeth not*, shall be damned." Here the Lord makes preaching the necessary condition of faith, and *faith the necessary condition of baptism*. It can not be denied that we find in the recorded practice of the apostles faith uniformly preceding baptism. When the Jews, on the day of Pentecost, were pricked in their hearts by the preaching of Peter, and asked the apostles what they must do in order to be saved, Peter answered unto them, that they must be converted and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of their sins; and they were not

baptized before they had received the Word in faith. Those, also, that heard Philip preach at Samaria, believed first and were then baptized. In like manner, the Ethiopian eunuch did not receive baptism before he had made confession of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; so Saul of Tarsus and Cornelius. That the apostles baptized no *adults* without previous faith, is not called into question. But does the fact that adults were not baptized without faith in Jesus Christ, warrant the conclusion that the visible Church of the New Testament did not receive infants by baptism into her bosom, as well as the Church of God in the Old Testament had received them through circumcision? In proof that the apostles uniformly represented in their teachings baptism as connected with saving faith, those passages in the apostolic Epistles are appealed to, in which the apostles represent believers "as cleansed with the washing of water by the Word," (Eph. v, 26,) as "saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," (Tit. iii, 5;) those that were baptized as "having put on Christ," (Gal. iii, 27,) "as baptized into his death," (Rom. vi, 3,) as "buried with him in baptism," (Col. ii, 12,) and baptism itself as "the answer of a good conscience toward God," (1 Pet. iii, 21.) It is not necessary to enter here upon an examination of these passages for the purpose of showing that the state of grace described therein in connection with baptism is on this account not inseparably connected with the *act* of baptism. We are not disposed to call into question that, for the most part, those that were baptized by the apostles really put on Christ and realized the renewing of the Holy Ghost. But does this warrant the conclusion of the Baptists, that only converted and regenerate persons may be received into the Church by baptism? Which human tribunal is competent to decide whether the applicant for baptism is really converted and regenerated? Had regeneration been the condition of baptism laid down by the apostles, Philip — whom we must suppose to have possessed the gift of discerning the Spirit — would never have baptized Simon the sorcerer. The error of the Baptists appears to us to lie in this, that they confound the visible and the invisible Church, making the first to consist of regenerate persons exclusively.

III. A middle ground between baptismal regeneration and the fundamental principle upon which the Baptists base their views, has been sought by maintaining that baptism, according to its true and original design, is the sign and seal of regeneration, but that regeneration is realized only in the adult believer, while in the infant it is simply incipient. This view is thus represented

by Dr. Ebrard (Christliche Dogmatik, p. 621:) "Baptism has *originally* the design that *the adult* that has become a believer in the Gospel and has thereby been brought to repentance, *be regenerated in baptism*. The infant, however, is not regenerated in baptism, *but only implanted into the body of Christ* — the Church — and brought under the mediate and immediate influences of preventing and preserving grace. This implanting of the infant into the Church we may consider as the preventient act of the regenerating grace flowing from the Head of the Church, and compare it to a gardener's planting a little tree, too young to be grafted, in the nursery, where, by good soil and the very best attention, it is prepared for grafting, which act of the gardener may be called the beginning of the grafting process itself. Infant baptism is, therefore, a modification of baptism, not contrary to its original design." But we ask, where is the Scriptural warrant for thus modifying the original design of a Divine institution, and to ascribe to baptism two different designs; namely, that of regeneration in *adults*, and that of simply implanting into the nursery of the Church *with regard to infants*? On such a ground, infant baptism can not be justified. We have no right to administer baptism to any other subjects than to those in whom its true and original idea can be realized. Dr. Ebrard himself, as we have seen above, considers "*regeneration impossible in an unconscious state.*" We can, therefore, consistently, do only one of two things: we must either maintain the connection of baptism with regeneration on the Baptist ground and restrict baptism to adults only; or we must disconnect the idea of regeneration from baptism altogether, in the adult as well as in the infant. This leads us to that view of the nature and design of baptism which appears to us the most tenable. Baptism can not be the efficient cause or condition of regeneration, nor, on the other hand, the Divinely-appointed seal of a previously-wrought regeneration, for the Divine seal of regeneration is the testimony of the Spirit, not baptism.

IV. What, then, is baptism? However widely the views of the nature of baptism differ, yet all Christians — the Quakers alone excepted, who reject baptism as an outward rite altogether — concede that baptism — whatever other ideas they may connect with it — is the *initiatory rite of the Christian Church*. and that *it is the sign and seal of the covenant of grace*. This definition of baptism, which we have stated for the sake of clearness in two propositions, although they are strictly speaking identical, we propose now

examining in detail, hoping that we may succeed in developing from it the true, Scriptural idea of baptism:

1. *Baptism is the rite by which we are to be incorporated into the Church.* But what have we to understand, in this connection, by the term *Church*? At this point of our investigation, the question concerning the *nature of baptism* is changed into a question concerning the *nature of the Church*. If we understand by it the *mystic body of which Christ is the Head, and in whose members the Holy Spirit dwells*, the communion of saints in the strict sense of the word, we can enter it only by an *inward act*, faith wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Baptism, as an *outward act*, can introduce us only into the *outward communion* of those that profess Christ; that is, the visible Church of Jesus Christ. The visible Church, consisting of the different Christian denominations, with their confessions of faith, forms of worship, and Church discipline, differs from the so-called invisible Church in this, that not all of her members are also members of the latter, which is the body of Jesus Christ. The real purpose which the different branches of the Christian Church subserve, is to win and educate men for the invisible Church, *which consists of the regenerate exclusively*. One of the functions of the visible Church is, besides the preaching of the Word, to administer baptism. By baptism men are to be transplanted from out of the world into the Church, and admitted to all privileges of membership on the solemn promise to cherish a disposition and to lead a life conformable to the spirit of the Gospel. *In itself* the act of baptism is a *merely-outward act*; an *internal effect* attaches to it only by virtue of attending circumstances, whether they be preceding or succeeding. That the Church is not justified to baptize an adult on any other condition than that of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, is self-evident. But on what ground is the Church justified in receiving infants by baptism as members into its pale? In order to answer this question, we have to consider baptism,

2. *As the sign and seal of the covenant of grace*, into which God has entered through his Son with the whole human race since the fall, and which he has fully revealed through the Gospel and commanded to be offered unto all nations. This universal covenant of grace was typified by the covenant which God made with Abraham. The promise given to Abraham was, that in his seed, that is, in Christ, (Gal. iii, 16,) all the nations of the earth should be blessed. As the seal of his faith in this promise, Abraham received the sign of circumcision and the command that all his male descendants should receive, eight days after

their birth, the same sign, because it pleased God — passing by, for the present, the other nations — to make the descendants of Abraham his people; that is, to make them partakers of the typical blessings of his covenant. But as soon as the promised Christ had come, and fulfilled all things that were written of him, and the blessings of the covenant of grace were to be offered unto all nations, circumcision, the sign of faith in the Messiah to come, had necessarily to cease, and in its place came the command, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Before we proceed further, let us consider the objections made to maintaining that baptism took the place of circumcision as the sign of the covenant of grace. They are, (1.) "The Jewish Church, for which circumcision was instituted, was a mere national institution, and offered only temporal blessings." But how does this accord with what Paul teaches, (Rom. xi, 16-26,) that Israel, that is, the Jewish Church, those only excepted that were broken off because of unbelief, was the olive-tree, into which the converted Gentiles were grafted, and so became partakers of the root and fatness of the olive-tree? How could the apostle have made use of this language, if the Jewish Church was merely a national institution, offering only temporal blessings? (2.) "If baptism had taken the place of circumcision, the apostle Paul would not have circumcised Timothy." The reply to this objection is, that in the days of the apostles circumcision was, indeed, not only a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, but was also looked upon as the national mark of a Jew. Now, as the apostle in his Epistles has warned the Churches repeatedly and most forcibly against the use of circumcision as the Old Testament sacrament, we must infer that he had Timothy circumcised in the latter sense, in order not to wound the national feelings of the Jews. He made Timothy a proselyte, that he might win the Jews to Christ. (3.) "Admitting that the covenant with Abraham was a type of the New Testament, the seal of this new covenant must not be a merely emblematical and ceremonial purification, like circumcision, but a real inward purification, corresponding to the outward sign of the water and requiring faith and repentance, and can, therefore, not be administered unto infants, as was circumcision." It is obvious at once, that this objection entirely loses sight of the corresponding points of comparison. Circumcision was the *condition* of admission to the enjoyment of all the privileges that God's covenant with

Abraham secured to the Israelites, and, at the same time, the abiding sign and seal of membership in the covenant of promise. The same may be said with regard to baptism; that the privileges and obligations of the members of the New Testament Church are greater than those in the Old Testament, does not alter the case. Infant children, made by Divine appointment members of the Old Testament Church, were no more prepared to fulfill in their infancy the obligations of the covenant to which they belong, than infant children are in the Christian Church. St. Paul says that *every one circumcised is bound to keep the whole law*. Can an infant be thus bound? Can an infant thus keep or break the law? Can infants make a covenant? No more than they can repent and believe. If infants are not to be baptized because they can not repent and believe, neither ought they to have been circumcised. The objection last named, however, leads us to a more thorough examination into the *relation which infants bear to the covenant of grace of which baptism is the sign and seal*. If circumcision and baptism are called signs and seals of a covenant, it must be borne in mind, that the covenant is not one that man makes with God, but one whose sole author is God; and this implies, that what God requires of man is based upon the preceding promise of God. We see this in Abraham, the father of the faithful. The covenant which God made with him (Gen. xii, 1-3) preceded his faith. It was after the Lord had spoken to him that he manifested his faith by obeying the Divine command, and the covenant on the part of God had been in force twenty and four years before God required of him to be circumcised himself and to have all his descendants circumcised, as the token of the covenant which God had made with him and his seed. From this we see that God is willing to enter into a covenant with man before man has fulfilled the conditions which the covenant imposes upon him — a truth which every believer knows from personal experience. Without the prevenient grace of God — preceding every thing that man does and can do — no man could exercise saving faith. It is in accordance with this truth, that God required all Israelitish male children to be circumcised on the eighth day, and thereby to be received into the Old Testament Church, guaranteeing unto them all the privileges and blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, and imposing upon them all the obligations arising from the covenant. Why, then, should infants be unworthy to be received into the New Testament Church by baptism with the promise of forgiveness of sins and regeneration on condition of subsequent repentance and faith? If such was not the will of Christ, is there not good reason to suppose that he would have expressly forbidden infant baptism, or, at least, prevented

it? The absence of such an express prohibition would necessarily have misled believing Jews and converted Gentiles. For the heathens that became converts to Judaism had to submit to the rite of circumcision *with* their children, and the Jews, whose children had always part in the covenant with God through circumcision, could not but expect that the new and perfect covenant would secure to their children the same privileges. Rev. J. C. F. Frey, a converted Israelite, says: "Of one thing I am certain: when, at some future day, my beloved brethren of the house of Judah and of Israel shall be converted to the Messiah and brought back into the bosom of his Church, they will never consent that their children should be deprived of their membership and be excluded from the visible Church! Since the days of Abraham their children have been members of the Church and participants of the seal of the covenant. What! would they exclaim, is the Church of the Messiah and his glorious dispensation less than our old Mosaic Church? No, this can not be." If the relation of infants to the Christian Church was to be a different one from that which children bore to the patriarchal and the Mosaic Church, would the apostles not have deemed it necessary to explain and justify this change, and to remove the prejudices arising hence against the Christian Church? Instead of this the apostle Peter says on the day of Pentecost: "The promise is unto you and to your children" — words which — though they admit of a different interpretation — were very well calculated to confirm the Jews in their belief, that their children were members of the covenant. That the command of the Lord to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them means more than "make in all nations disciples of those that repent and believe by baptizing them," will scarcely be called in question by an unbiased interpreter. (See note on Matt. xxviii, 19.) The right, yea, the solemn duty, of incorporating children by baptism into the membership of the visible Church rests, moreover, as we have seen in Matt. xix, 14, on our Lord's declaration: "*Of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" If an infant incapable of believing can have part in Christ, the head, it can also have part in his body, the Church. A child of believing parents, a child that sees the light of the world in the Church, is entitled by his very birth to baptism, has an inalienable claim upon the Church and the Church upon the child. The baptism of a child is the sacramental recognition of its share in the universal redemption through Jesus Christ, a sign and seal, that by virtue of this redemption it is accepted of God during the period of infancy and irresponsible childhood, and an heir of eternal life; and — in so far as baptism constitutes the very beginning of salvation, the entrance into the visible kingdom of God, and

as the sacrament of promise points to sanctification as yet to be completed; in so far, therefore, as baptism is the expression of *preventient grace* — Lutheran divines have said, very correctly, that the object of baptism is more fully realized in the baptism of an infant than in that of an adult. But the object of infant baptism is not as they would have it, "to implant the germ of regeneration into the unconscious child, to produce in it an unconscious faith, that is to be developed into consciousness," but to incorporate the child by baptism into the membership of the visible Church, and thus to bring it within the enlightening, renewing, and sanctifying influence of the means of grace, and to protect it thereby against the corrupting influence of the world, which lies in wickedness. In this sense Peter represents baptism as the antitype of the ark of the Deluge, and Paul calls the passage of Israel through the Red Sea a baptism, because the Israelites were thereby separated from Egypt and saved from the power of Pharaoh. In the same sense the children of believers are called "holy," because they are separated from the world and its contaminating influences. In all these respects baptism exerts its full efficacy upon children. The Church obligates herself to communicate to the baptized infant from its earliest development the means of grace intrusted to her, by the use of which it is to become a child of God. The child is not to grow up as a heathen, in order to become a Christian afterward, but its life is to be developed from the very start in the discipleship of Christ. To this whole argumentation, however, Baptists make the following objections:

1. "The Church is not authorized to receive any one as a member into her bosom that is as yet unable, of his own free will, to realize his Church membership by his faith and practice." To this objection we reply, why did the All-Wise God command that the male children of the Israelites should be made members of his Church in the Old Testament by circumcision, before they could either enjoy the full personal privileges of their membership or fulfill its obligations?

2. "The unbaptized child of Christian parents can enjoy the influence of the means of grace and Christian education just as well as the baptized." Whether this is the case in the same degree, and whether it would be the case at all, if no infants were baptized, is very questionable, but granted that this may be — we ask: To whom does the unbaptized child owe the influence of the means of grace and its Christian education? Is it not the Christian Church that dispenses these blessings to the child? Is it, therefore, not as much the duty of Christian

parents, by giving their children the divinely-appointed seal of the covenant, to incorporate them into his Church, as this was the solemn duty of parents in the Church of the Old Testament? With the same right that it is said of children that they can enjoy all the privileges and blessings of the Church, unbaptized as well as baptized, these children could say, when they have grown up and have become converted, we do not need external baptism, we can enjoy the blessings of salvation and be saved without it. But how could the visible Church exist without a visible bond — without the sacrament of baptism, the sign and seal of a visible union with each other and with God? And what would the visible Church be this day, if infant baptism had never been practiced?

3. Of more weight is the objection that "infant baptism, in the sense of an incorporation into the Church, is nugatory, unless the believing parents and the Church fulfill their obligations to give to the baptized child a Christian education in the fullest sense of the word, and that the baptism of the child gives no guarantee for this." We frankly acknowledge the truth in the first part of the objection; and, fully as we are convinced that little children have a right and ought to be incorporated into the Church, we nevertheless can not defend the *indiscriminate* administration of infant baptism. Where there is no ground whatever to expect that the baptized child will grow up within reach of Christian nurture and control, infant baptism appears to us unauthorized, because void of meaning and aim. It is true that all children sustain the same relation to the general atonement, and all will be benefited by it; but the benefit will come to them through different modes and instrumentalities. If a child is to grow up under the saving influences of Christian nurture, and of the means of grace and instruction dispensed by the Church, into which it is incorporated by baptism, how can she conscientiously impress the sign and seal of her training, guidance, and protection upon the forehead of a child over whom and whose parents she has no control whatever? This principle of responsibility is clearly recognized in the covenant which the Lord made with Abraham, when he says: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Would an apostle have baptized the child of an Olympian wrestler, or of a priestess of Bacchus, if its parents, without becoming Christians themselves, had applied for its baptism merely as an outward ceremony? It can not be denied that the head of the Church has circumscribed the seal of the covenant within certain limits; and if the Church transcends these limits, she deprives the ordinance of baptism

of its significance and force. There is, indeed, a sad inconsistency in many portions of the pedobaptist Church with regard to the treatment of the baptized children within her pale. They treat them, virtually, not as being incorporated into the Church by baptism, no more than the Baptist Churches do their unbaptized children. The most consistent of the pedobaptist Churches, in this respect, it must be confessed, are those that hold to baptismal regeneration; and other pedobaptist Churches, which recognize in baptism only an initiatory rite, ought to imitate them in their practice, while keeping aloof from their doctrinal error. But, admitting that infant baptism has its Scriptural authority and significance only then, when the parent and the Church obligate themselves to train up the child, from its earliest development, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord — we maintain, also, that the misuse of infant baptism does not destroy its Scriptural authority. Is not the baptism of adults subject to misuse as much as infant baptism? How many adults have been baptized on the confession of repentance and faith, who were as unworthy of this ordinance as Simon Magus was? And is the holy ordinance not more desecrated in their case than in the case of innocent children, of whom Christ has declared that the kingdom of heaven is theirs? Is not the sacrament of the Lord's Supper also abused, as, in fact, every means of grace and every gift of God? As to the grave charge brought against infant baptism, "that by it the Church is filled with unconverted members and robbed of its spirituality," it can be easily shown that when pedobaptist Churches lost their spiritual life, it was not the effect of infant baptism, but of putting baptism by water in the place of regeneration by the Spirit, or of forcing baptism upon an unwilling people by the secular government. And what candid Baptist will deny that there are Churches and congregations which practice infant baptism without losing thereby spiritual life and apostolical discipline?

4. "If infant baptism had been designed by the Lord, we would have an express command or some apostolical precedent." On this point we have remarked above, that infant baptism, in order to be practiced, did not require an express command; we would, on the contrary, have more right to expect a positive prohibition, if it was not to be practiced. Apostolical precedents can, indeed, not be proven, but may be inferred from those passages that speak of the baptism of whole families, (Acts xvi, 15, 33; 1 Cor. i, 16.)

5. Finally, it is said that "there is no instance of infant baptism recorded in the writings of the Fathers of the second century; that it arose at a later period

from ascribing to the water of baptism the magical power of washing away sins and of regeneration." This is a question of Church history, and it is not the province of exegesis to discuss it thoroughly, *yet in so far as the New Testament contains neither an express command nor a prohibition of infant baptism*, it deserves our attention here. Baptists admit that infant baptism was universally practiced in the fifth century. In the great controversy with Pelagius, his opponents charged him with undermining and supplanting infant baptism, because he taught that infants were without original sin. But he denied this charge most positively, saying that he had not even heard of an impious heretic who favored this view. In the confession of faith (*Libellus Fidei*) which he and Celestius sent to the bishop of Rome in 417, he says: "We hold to a baptism, which is to be administered unto infants with the same sacramental words as unto adults." And again: "We admit that infants must be baptized for the remission of sins, [by which Pelagius, however, understood sins not yet committed,] according to the practice of the universal Church and the sense of the Gospel." Augustin, previous to his controversy with Pelagius, had asserted in his work on baptism, (*De Baptismo*, lib. IV,) that infant baptism had not been introduced by councils, but had always been practiced by the universal Church, as having been handed down by apostolical authority." If this had not been the case, is it likely that Pelagius and his party should have adhered so firmly to this practice, when Augustin deduced from this very practice one of his strongest arguments in favor of his doctrine of the natural depravity of children? It is not necessary to quote here any of the many undisputed testimonies of fathers and councils between the times of Augustin and the third century, which make plain and unequivocal mention of infant baptism and compare it with circumcision. It may suffice to state, that we meet during the whole fourth century with no opposition to infant baptism, and that all the various sects, without any exception, recognized and practiced infant baptism as early as the beginning of the fourth century. The council of Eliberis (A.D. 305) decreed, that those that had been baptized in their infancy by heretical sects should be received into the Church without any term of probation. Equally direct is the testimony that the Donatists — who withdrew A.D. 311 from the Church, and wanted to rebaptize those that had been baptized by Bishop Cecilianus — practiced infant baptism. Toward the middle of the third century the question of Bishop Fidus was proposed to a council in Africa, attended by sixty-six clergymen and presided over by Cyprian: "Whether it was not better to put off the baptism of infants to the eighth day

after their birth, than to baptize them on the second or third day?" As a reason against this latter custom, it was said that *circumcision* had been administered at the eighth day, and that it was unbecoming to give to a newly-born babe the holy kiss, that was customary in those days. The unanimous decision of the council was, that baptism was not to be denied to an infant before the eighth day. From this decision it appears that one hundred and fifty years after the death of John no doubt existed about the apostolical authority of infant baptism. Was it, then, introduced between the middle of the second and the middle of the third century? That it was in vogue in the times of Tertullian, about A.D. 200, appears from the opposition which he raised against it. His reasons against it are: (1.) The importance of baptism, which ought not to be confided to infants, just as their property is not intrusted to their care; (2.) The heavy responsibility of sponsors; (3.) The innocence of infants; (4.) The necessity to be previously instructed in the faith; (5.) The heavy responsibility of the individual baptized, since sins committed after baptism are so hard to wash away. For the last reason he advises even adults — single persons, widowers, widows, etc. — to put off their baptism till they are either married or have fully made up their minds to lead a life of celibacy. Yet he is not in favor of putting off baptism, neither in the case of children nor of adults, "*when their lives are in danger.*" For it must be borne in mind that he was for putting off baptism, simply because he ascribed to the water of baptism the magical power of washing away sins and of regeneration. From this it appears that it was not *infant baptism*, but *the first objection against it "which arose from ascribing to the water of baptism the magical power of washing away sins and of regeneration."* That such unscriptural notions are, indeed, met with in the earliest Fathers, can not be denied; but they had certainly nothing to do with infant baptism, being applied to the baptism of adults as well as that of children; they arose from Oriental theosophy and the philosophical speculations of the Fathers, to which was subsequently added the Judaizing, hierarchical spirit. It must, moreover, be borne in mind that Tertullian does not oppose infant baptism, as an innovation of recent date and opposed to apostolical order. If this had been the case, he would not have failed to lay great stress upon it. And how easily could he have proved it, as he was born only about forty years after the death of John! Thus we see that Tertullian's objections against infant baptism prove its existence and apostolical authority toward the close of the second century, provided that Tertullian, in the passage referred to, speaks of infants, and not, as the Baptists claim, of children from seven to ten years old.

A younger cotemporary of Tertullian, Origen, says, in his annotations on the Epistle to the Romans, "The Church has received authority from the apostles to baptize infants." We have now gone up to the second century. Is it probable that infant baptism was introduced in this century, which immediately succeeded the times of the apostles? The Fathers of this century say but little of baptism. They were mainly engaged in refuting the many errors that arose in so many places. Yet *we meet with two passages that are worth noticing.* Irenaeus, born about A.D. 97, and well acquainted with Polycarp, the friend and disciple of the apostle John, writes, (Adv. Haeret., Lib. II, chap. xviii:) "Christ has come to save all through himself, that is, all that are born again unto God, infants, (*infantes*,) little ones, (*parvules*,) boys, youths, and older persons. For this object he has passed through every period of life; to infants he has become an infant, sanctifying infants; to the little ones he has become a little one, sanctifying those that are of this age, and giving them, at the same time, an example of piety, righteousness, and obedience; to the young men he has become a young man, having set them an example of imitation, and sanctifying them unto God; so likewise to older persons," etc. It is difficult to understand by the "being born again unto God," as applied to infants, any thing else than being baptized. It was first with reference to Jewish proselytes, that baptism was called a new birth, that is, a being born into a new state or condition; and this designation of baptism became more and more general, on account of John iii, 5, and Tit. iii, 5. Even Neander, who, in general, sides with the Baptists, admits that this passage refers to infant baptism, especially, on account of the distinction made between "infants" and "little ones." Now, if Irenaeus speaks here of infant baptism, we have a testimony which decides the question in a Church-historical point of view. But the fact, in itself, that Irenaeus, who lived to the close of the second century, has left no testimony against infant baptism, proves that it was not introduced during his time; for this Father has written a book for the very purpose of mentioning and refuting all errors and innovations, that had come into use since the days of the apostles. If, thus, infant baptism had crept into use during his life, he would certainly have exposed the innovation. The other passage is in Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the death of John; it reads: "There are many persons among us of both sexes, sixty and seventy years old, who were made disciples of Christ [ἐμαθητεύθησαν τῷ Χρίστῳ] from childhood, and have remained unspotted." The Baptists maintain, indeed, that the "being made disciples of Christ," has no reference at all to baptism, but only means, to receive Christian

instruction or education. But it ought to be borne in mind that Justin speaks of members of the Church, and uses the same term that Christ used in connection with the command to baptize. But, supposing that these two passages are no decisive authority for infant baptism, must it not be admitted that infant baptism, if it was not practiced by the apostles, must have come into use in the times of Polycarp and Irenaeus? and how improbable is this supposition! The apostle John wrote his Epistles and the Apocalypse toward the close of his life. One of the main objects of his Epistles was to warn against the heresies that had then already sprung up; but he makes no allusion to infant baptism. In the Letters addressed to the seven Churches the bishops are blamed on account of many things that had crept into use, but infant baptism is none of these censurable innovations, and no fault is found with the angel — bishop — of the Church at Smyrna, who was Polycarp, as we are informed by Church history. Now, is it probable that Polycarp, the intimate friend of John, who survived him by sixty-five years, who had been instructed by the apostle himself, and was so highly esteemed on account of his firm adherence to apostolical doctrines and practices, and who, in old age, sealed his faith by a martyr's death, should have suffered infant baptism to come into use, without protesting against it, if it was not apostolical? Or is it likely that Irenaeus should have kept silent — the disciple and friend of Polycarp, who lived almost to the close of the second century? Or if they had protested against it, is it credible that Origen, who was born twelve years after the death of Irenaeus, should have written: "The Church has received the command from the apostles to baptize children?"

ON THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

The Baptists maintain that the Greek word **βαπτίζειν** — to baptize — derived from **βάπτειν**, has no other meaning than to *dip, immerse*; and in support of this their position, they appeal to the classical literature of Greece, in which they say this was the uniform meaning of **βαπτίζειν**. It can not be denied that this was the primary, though not exclusive meaning of the term, but it does not follow from this that the word must have the same meaning in the New Testament. The Greek classical writers flourished centuries before Christ, and it is well known that there are words in every language which have not only modified their original meaning, but actually reversed it. We will give but one example. The word "**ἄγγελος**" means in the classics always a "messenger,"

never an angel; but must we infer from this, that when the New Testament speaks of "angels" we have to understand thereby not beings of a higher order, but only "messengers?" The writers of the New Testament made use of the Greek language as they found it, but they had necessarily to attach new meanings to many words of that language. As the word **βάπτειν** means originally to dip, but received in the course of time the meaning of "dyeing," because a cloth that is dyed is dipped into the fluid, so it is not difficult to see how the word **βαπτίζειν**, that originally meant "to immerse," "to sink," received the meaning of "*purifying*," when it was used of a religious act that was emblematical of purification, such as the *initiatory rite of the Church of God*, in the Old Testament as well as in the New, was in the nature of the case. How frequently is it the case, that the *effect* of an action is expressed by the same word, that meant originally the action itself! While the Baptists maintain that there is no passage in the New Testament in which the word **βαπτίζειν** can be translated by any other word than "immerse," or "dip;" the pedobaptists maintain that this word, whenever it is used of a religious act, signifies *to purify* by means of the application of water, whether by sprinkling, pouring, or immersing, and that it is also used in this sense when referring to the real inward purification by the Holy Ghost, of which water baptism is the outward symbol. This view has been best set forth by Dr. E. Beecher, who argues as follows: 1. In John iii, 25, it is said: "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying." The connection shows plainly that the question was about baptism, and that, therefore, the term *purifying* is used here as synonymous with baptizing. The answer given by John to his disciples admits of no other interpretation.

2. If the word **βαπτίζειν** had no other meaning than to *immerse*, we could not understand the question which the Jews, that had come from Jerusalem, put to John: "Why baptizest thou then, if thou art not that Christ?" nor the answer which John returned to it. It had not been predicted that the Messiah would immerse, but that he would purify — sprinkle, (Isa. lii, 15; Ezek. xxxvi, 25; Mal. iii, 2, 3.) It was, therefore, natural that the Jewish authorities asked John — when he purified the people emblematically with water at the Jordan, and, at the same time, confessed that he was not Christ — "Why baptizest [purifiest] thou then?" And the Baptist's answer is in perfect keeping with the import of the question, as if he had said: "Do not imagine that I am the great Purifier promised by the prophets; I baptize [purify] only with

water, but He shall baptize [purify] with the Holy Ghost." Now, inasmuch as the element of water is intended to represent emblematically the purifying power of the Holy Ghost, have we not a right to expect that the manner in which the Holy Ghost is communicated to the recipient will correspond to the manner in which the person baptized is brought into contact with the element of water, that the latter is to represent the former; in short, that the human agent baptizes in the same manner with water, in which God baptizes with the Holy Ghost? The simple question, therefore, is, whether the baptism of the Holy Ghost is represented in the Scriptures as an immersion of the recipient into the Holy Ghost, or as a descending, sending down, falling, shedding, pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon the recipient? The reader will please examine for himself the following passages: Acts ii, 16-18, 33; x, 44-46; xi, 15, 16; Tit. iii, 6.

3. In Hebrews ix, 10, the Old Testament service is described as consisting in "meats and drinks, and divers washings [βαπτίσμοις] and carnal ordinances." These "divers washings or baptisms" were purifications of various kinds, consisting in sprinklings, washings, and batheings, of which the apostle instances several in the following verses. On examining the passages which prescribe these ceremonies, (Num. xix, 17-20; Lev. xvi, 3-15; Num. viii, 7; Ex. xxx, 18, 20,) we find that these washings, which the apostle calls *baptisms*, were never performed by immersion, but by sprinkling, and the word baptism can, therefore, in Hebrews ix, 10, not mean immersion. Had it been the will of God that the purifying, emblematically represented by baptism, should be performed in only one way, namely, by immersion, this one way would certainly have been set forth as distinctly as similar ordinances are described in the Old Testament; nor would the *inspired* writers have been led to use the term baptism in any other sense than that of immersion.

4. This will appear still more fully from a close examination of Mark vii, 3, and Luke xi, 38. Mark vii, 3, 4, reads: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash [baptize themselves] they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing [baptizing] of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables." By Luke xi, 38, the washing of hands is called baptizing, where it is said: "The Pharisees marveled, that he [Jesus] had not first washed [baptized himself] before dinner." Are we to suppose that the Jews were in the habit of immersing

themselves before every meal, and that they immersed also their furniture and even their tables, or — as the Greek term properly means — their benches, on which three to four could recline, and which were often fastened to the wall? This is the more incredible, since the personal washings prescribed by the law were performed, as we have seen, only by *sprinkling*. Moreover, Josephus mentions bathing before meals as a custom peculiar to the Essenes. Add to this, that in Judea, where water was at certain seasons of the year so rare an article, private baths can scarcely have been in general use, and that on pictures which represent Greek baths the persons bathing stand or sit by the basin while the water is poured upon them. We must here also call attention to the great difficulties with which we meet in the report of the baptism of three thousand persons on the day of Pentecost, of that of the jailer at Philippi, and of Paul at Damascus, if we suppose that baptism was invariably performed by immersion.

5. As a further proof that the word **βαπτίζειν** has, in the writings of the New Testament, not the meaning of immersing, but of purifying, it is to be taken into consideration, that it is used in the latter sense in the Apocrypha of the Old Testament. Their authors were Jews, who were well acquainted with the personal washings prescribed in the ceremonial law, and who used the same dialect in which the New Testament is written. In Judith xii, 7, and Sirach xxxiv, 25, the word **βαπτίζειν** means nothing but washing. It is also of great weight, that the Latin and Greek Fathers, to whom Baptists have appealed as high authorities, use the word **βαπτίζειν** not in the sense of immersing, but in that of cleansing, purifying. Dr. Beecher quotes a number of passages; we shall content ourselves with giving only one. Proclus paraphrases the words of John to Christ in this way: "How dare I baptize thee? When is fire purified by chaff? When does a sod wash the fountain? How shall I, a criminal, purify my Judge? How shall I baptize thee, O Lord? I see no fault in thee." What meaning would there be in a translation like this: 6, How shall I, a criminal, immerse my Judge?" But if we understand by **βαπτίζειν** purifying, the meaning is perfectly plain and clear: "How shall I, a criminal, purify, that is, absolve or acquit my Judge?"

Against the position, that **βαπτίζειν** means in the New Testament to "purify" in general, not to "immerse," the following objections are urged:

1. "*It can not have this meaning in Matt. xx, 22, and Luke xii, 50.*" We readily admit that it has in these passages its original signification. But the meaning of "purifying," as was remarked above, is claimed for **βαπτίζειν**

only, when it is used with reference to a religious act, that symbolizes the cleansing from sin, and this is not the case in the passages in question.

2. *"The circumstances attending the baptism of John justify the inference, that it was performed by immersion alone."* The reader is referred to the notes on chapter iii, 6, 16. Why John baptized at the Jordan may be accounted for without assuming that he baptized by immersion. As he baptized so many thousands, it is not surprising that he chose a place where water was plenty, and still more so, that he made the people come to the river, instead of carrying the water from the river in order to baptize them. Great stress is also laid on John iii, 23: "And John was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." Enon had its name from the springs, in which it abounded. If John had chosen Enon for his baptism because of the "much water there" for the purpose of immersing in place of the Jordan, it would have been unfavorable to this purpose. But if we suppose that he chose Enon on account of its many springs, as a place affording to the thousands thronging to him an abundance of good water for drinking in this sparsely-settled country, his choice is well accounted for.

3. The passages, Romans vi, 3, and Colossians ii, 12, are appealed to in proof of immersion with great assurance. It is confidently contended, that the immersion of the person baptized, and his rising again from out of the water, is incontrovertibly proved by the comparison drawn by the apostle between baptism and the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is not the place for a full exposition of these passages, yet a few general remarks may find a place here. Let us, therefore, examine the apostle's argument. To the question, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. vi, 1,) the apostle replies, in the first place: "God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" As if he had said: If the sinner's justification by faith involves his dying unto sin, how can he continue in sin in a justified state? This conclusion he corroborates by a reference to the significance of Christian baptism. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" that is, know ye not, that ye, that received Christian baptism, have thereby assumed the obligation, to die unto sin, as he died for your sins? And then the apostle goes on to say: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The apostle's object is to compare the believer's death unto sin with the

death of Christ, and his walk in newness of life with the resurrection of Christ. But in order to express the idea of the believer's dying unto sin fully and forcibly, he makes use of the term, "We are buried with him into death," because burial is the last and surest proof of death, and adds "*by baptism*," because those whom the apostle addressed, confessed and confirmed by their baptism their faith in Christ, by which they had died unto sin. That baptism is mentioned here as identical with faith in Jesus Christ, we see from Colossians, (ii, 12,) where the apostle says: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead." If the apostle had intended to describe here the mode of baptism — not required by the scope of his argument — that is, to represent immersion as a being buried with Christ, he would also have called the rising out of the water a resurrection with Jesus Christ. But the apostle says not, buried with him into the water, but *into death*, and it is clear that the expression "*into death*" must be understood figuratively of death unto sin. The term "*buried into death*" is, consequently, synonymous with the other expressions used by the apostle: "Dead with Christ," (v. 8,) "dead unto sin," (v. 11,) just as the walking in newness of life is called a "being risen with Christ," (Col. iii, 1,) a "being raised together with him," (Eph. ii, 6.) Dying unto sin is compared to the death of Christ, just as walking in newness of life to the resurrection of Christ. That the apostle does not refer to the mode of the application of the water, but solely to this, that the believer must look upon himself as being, with Christ, dead unto sin, (v. 11,) appears plainly from the fact, that he represents this death unto sin under other images. As he speaks in verse 4 of our being buried with Christ by baptism into death, so he speaks in verse 5 of "*our having been planted together in the likeness of his death*," and in verse 6 of "*our old man being crucified with him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Under these three different images one and the same idea is represented; namely, that we are dead unto sin with Christ. Are we, then, justified in interpreting the comparison in verse 4, *literally*, and in verses 5, 6, *figuratively*? In the parallel passage of the Epistle to the Colossians we find, moreover, the same idea expressed under a still different image. In Colossians ii, 11, the apostle says, that "we are" [not only buried with Christ by baptism into death, but also] circumcised in him with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh" — that is, of the whole body, the sum total of the sins of the flesh. It is admitted on all hands, that the apostle speaks here not of circumcision proper. He introduces

circumcision, merely because it signified cleansing from filth, and then passes on to baptism, because it had the same meaning. All that the apostle wanted to prove is, that Christians ought to be dead unto sin. He mentions circumcision and baptism only with reference to their significance and object. This interpretation of these two passages receives an additional confirmation from the fact that baptism is no where else represented under the image of the grave or of death, but always as a cleansing like the ablutions of the Old Testament; moreover, the death of Christ, the meritorious cause of our cleansing from sin, is symbolized, not in the sacrament of baptism, but in the Lord's Supper.

4. The strongest proofs advanced by the Baptists, that **βαπτίζειν** has no other meaning than that of immersing, are of a historical character. It is maintained: (1.) "That this word, in nearly all versions, is rendered either by a word that means to immerse, or is left untranslated. (2.) That the great majority of pedobaptistic theologians, especially the great linguists of Germany from Luther down to the present day, admit, that **βαπτίζειν** means nothing else than to immerse. (3.) That, according to the incontrovertible testimony of Church history, baptism was administered in the earliest ages of the Church by immersion, while pouring or sprinkling came into use in a later period, and was practiced at first only in the case of sick persons."

It is not the province of a commentary to enter into a full discussion of a question of Church history. But even if we admit the three points — the first and second point will stand or fall with the third — it does not subvert the pedobaptist interpretation of **βαπτίζειν** for the following reasons:

1. There is no historical testimony on record that, in the first centuries of the Christian era, baptism was *exclusively* administered by immersion. It is, on the contrary, very remarkable that a painting from the fourth or fifth century, when immersion was still the order of the day, represents Christ as standing in the water while John pours water upon his head from a bowl. In the same way, a painting of the baptism of Constantine the Great does not represent the emperor as being immersed, but as sitting in a basin while water is being poured upon his head. To this very day baptism is administered by pouring, not only in the whole Greek Church, but also in the Churches of Asia Minor.

2. That immersion became predominant at a very early period of the Church is easily accounted for by the strong predilection of that period for imposing ceremonies, and especially by the misinterpretation of the figurative

language of Romans vi, 4, and Colossians ii, 12. This appears from the fact that most of the German interpreters, who claim for **βαπτίζειν** the exclusive meaning of immersing, base their view solely on Romans vi, 4; and in the same way the ancient versions may be accounted for. That some of the figurative expressions of the apostles were literally interpreted at an early period, and that, in consequence of it various unscriptural ceremonies were introduced, appears from the writings of those very Fathers to whom the Baptists mainly appeal in support of immersing. Because Paul and John speak of an unction of Christians, the custom arose of applying *oil* in baptism. Because Peter speaks of the sincere milk of the Gospel which the new-born babes ought to desire, milk and honey were laid upon the tongue of the person baptized. In order to symbolize the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man, the subject of baptism laid off all clothes and put on white ones after baptism. Because baptism is administered in the name of the three persons of the adorable Trinity, a threefold immersion was adopted. Under these circumstances it is not difficult to perceive how strong an incentive to immersion the words, "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death," must have been.

3. We do not deny that the apostles *may* have administered baptism at times by immersion; but there is not one example on record in the whole New Testament which proves positively that they did so. But, even if they baptized by immersion, they never commanded that immersion should be the *only* mode of administering baptism. Now, if the Baptists maintain that we have no authority to baptize infants, *because we have no plain apostolical example and no express command for it*, they have no right to claim immersion as the only valid mode of baptism, *because they can point to no undisputed apostolical example, and to no express command*. We must distinguish, both in baptism and in the Lord's Supper, between the essential and the non-essential. As it is not essential to the Lord's Supper to celebrate it by night, or in a reclining position, or with unleavened bread, so the quantity of water applied in baptism and the mode of its application are in themselves indifferent. Finally, inasmuch as baptism is the Divinely-appointed rite of entering into his *Church for all men in all ages and countries, and under all circumstances*, we may take it for granted that Christ chose such a rite as would be fully adapted to so universal an application. But is this the case if immersion is the only mode of administering baptism? For such as are sick unto death, in icy regions, or in torrid regions and deserts, immersion is out of the question. Is it,

then, not reasonable to suppose that the great Head of the Church, in designating the rite, designedly chose a term which indicates simply that which is symbolized by the application of water, but leaves the mode of its application undefined? It must, moreover, not be forgotten that, in those ages and countries where immersion was practiced, immersion was never considered absolutely necessary or essential to the validity of the sacrament. This is testified by the same historical authorities that are appealed to in proof of immersion. The assertion that baptism by immersion *alone* is valid, was first made by the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. If this assertion were well founded, it would follow that, before the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the visible Church of Christ had entirely disappeared; that the reformers, and the many other men of God who were not immersed, were no members of the Church of Christ, although God owned and blessed their labors so signally; in short, that the visible Church consists of those alone that have been received into it by immersion! No wonder, therefore, that old Roger Williams, who could not see how baptism could be restored again, if once lost, became so perplexed about the doctrines of the Baptists and the visible Church, as to reject altogether, with the Quakers, both baptism and the visible Church!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

INTRODUCTION
TO
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

§ 1. ITS AUTHORSHIP.

THE oldest testimony concerning the authorship of the second Gospel is that of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, as given by Eusebius in his Hist. Eccl., III, 39; it is to this effect: "This also [John] the elder said: Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, wrote down exactly whatever things he remembered, but yet not in the order in which Christ either spoke or did them." Irenaeus also calls Mark an interpreter and follower of Peter, and cites the opening and the concluding words of the Gospel as we now possess them. Eusebius says further, on the authority of Clement of Alexandria, that the hearers of Peter at Rome desired Mark, the follower of Peter, to leave with them a record of his teaching; upon which Mark wrote his Gospel, which the apostle afterward sanctioned with his authority, and directed that it should be read in the Churches. (Euseb. H. E., II, 15.) Elsewhere, quoting Clement again, we have the same account, except that Peter is there described as "neither hindering nor urging" the undertaking. (Euseb. H. E., VI, 14.) Both statements are easily harmonized by supposing that Peter neither helped nor hindered the work before it was completed, but gave his approval afterward. Subsequent Fathers repeat the statement of Eusebius.

But what have we to understand by Mark "*being the interpreter of Peter?*" Some explain this word to mean that Mark translated into Greek what Peter dictated to him in Aramaic. But if this had been the case, the Gospel would have borne no other name than that of Peter, and there are internal evidences against this supposition. We should certainly have a more detailed account of several events which concerned Peter more especially; as, *e.g.*, of what took place on the morning of the resurrection. It is far more probable to suppose that the influence of the apostle Peter upon Mark's Gospel was only an indirect one, and that the latter was called an interpreter of Peter, because

his Gospel conformed more exactly than the others to Peter's preaching. It is natural that the early Fathers would attach especial importance to the relation between Peter and Mark, in order to strengthen the apostolical authority of the latter's Gospel. "It is likely," says Alford, "that Mark, from continual intercourse with and listening to Peter, and possibly from preservation of many of his narratives entire, may have been able to preserve in his Gospel those vivid and original touches of description and filling-out of the incidents which we discover in it." There are certainly peculiarities in this Gospel which can not be otherwise accounted for than by the supposition that the writer drew his account from a vigilant eye-witness. The description of the same points that Matthew and Luke record is far more vivid; touches are introduced that make us almost, while reading, eye-witnesses of what the Savior said and did. On the various critical suppositions with regard to the relation of the Gospel of Mark to those of Matthew and Luke, see General Introduction, § 32.

"As an Evangelist of youthful freshness and zeal, who delights more to deal in facts, and to represent living scenes, than to state abstract doctrines and ideas," says Lange, "Mark draws upon the evangelical tradition for material in order to delineate in a few graphic sketches a history of the official life of Christ. And the tradition of the evangelical history, which is his guide, came to him chiefly through the medium of Peter, whose mode of viewing and delivering it was peculiarly suited to the wants to supply which Mark seems to have designed; the style of the lively Evangelist corresponds also to Peter's ardent temperament and practical character. Add to this that the Evangelist was solicited by the Christians of Rome to write his Gospel, whose wants were best met by a graphic narrative of the principal facts from the public ministry of Jesus. In all this we see the origin of just such a Gospel as our second Gospel is. Mark narrates in his own original style; consequently there is stamped upon his narratives the impress of his own impulsive, vigorous character; he draws for his subject-matter on the discourses of Peter, in which the facts and events were related out of their chronological connection; for this reason his Gospel lacks the order of historical sequence; he writes for the Christians at Rome, and this accounts for his confining himself to the concrete and using so many Latin words and phrases."

The authenticity of this Gospel is sufficiently attested by Justin and Tatian. (See General Introduction, § 9.) To this must be added, that the author's name is not that of a renowned and influential founder of the Church, which an

apocryphal gospel would most likely have selected; nevertheless the Gospel of Mark was received by the Church without any opposition. The objections that have been raised to the genuineness of its close — chap. xvi, 9-20 — we shall consider in our comments on this passage.

§ 2. TIME AND PLACE OF ITS COMPOSITION.

Eusebius (H. E., III, 1) says on the authority of Irenaeus, that Mark published (*παραδέδωκε*, literally, delivered, set forth) his Gospel after the death of Peter and Paul. The statement of Clement of Alexandria — also quoted by Eusebius, (H. E., VI, 14) — that it was written during the lifetime of Peter, is not contradictory; for Clement's statement may refer to the beginning, and that of Irenaeus to the conclusion of the composition; the composition and the publication of a book do by no means coincide in point of time. As long as the apostles preached the Gospel by word of mouth, the Church could very well do without any authentic record, but after the apostles had died, the need of a written record was deeply felt. It can not well be supposed that it dates before the reference to Mark in the Epistle to the Colossians, (iv, 10,) where he is only introduced as a relative of Barnabas, as if this was his greatest distinction, and this Epistle was written about A.D. 62. So much is certain, that it could not have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem; for the omission of all allusion to so signal a fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy would be inexplicable.

As the place where this Gospel was written, Clement, Eusebius, Jerome, and others mention Rome, and there is no internal evidence against this statement; yet the Latin expressions in the Gospel furnish no conclusive proof; for there is no reason to doubt that, wherever the Gospel was written, the writer had been at Rome and was familiar with the language. An isolated notice by Chrysostom that it was composed at Alexandria, is not only not confirmed by any other Alexandrian Father, but even Chrysostom himself seems to have had some misgivings about it. The tradition, that the Evangelist spent the last years of his life, and died at Alexandria, has probably given rise to this statement of Chrysostom.

That Mark wrote his Gospel in Greek there can be no reasonable doubt. The assertion of some writers of the Romish Church that it was originally

written in Latin, is destitute of any external or internal evidence. A Latin Gospel written for the use of Roman Christians could not have been lost without any mention of it by an ancient writer. The unfounded report of a Latin original arose from the tradition that the Evangelist wrote for the Christians at Rome. The old Syriac version has the gloss: "He [Mark] preached the Gospel at Rome in the Roman language," and on the strength of this gloss some Latin manuscripts of the Orient represent him as having written his Gospel in Latin. This view was eagerly laid hold of by Roman Catholic theologians, in order to give the greater authority to the Vulgate, but it was subsequently given up again as altogether untenable. A pretended Latin autograph at Venice has been identified as a fragment of the Vulgate.

§ 3. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF MARK.

The Evangelist Mark is the same that is called in Acts *John Mark*, (xii, 12, 25; xv, 37,) *John*, (xiii, 5, 13,) and *Mark*, (xv, 39; compare Col. iv, 10; 2 Tim. iv, 11; Phile., 24.) His Jewish name appears to have been *John*, but when he entered into the Christian ministry he assumed the name *Mark* — a very common name among the Romans — and this name gradually superseded the former. His familiarity with the Latin language, that enabled him to act as Peter's interpreter, has given rise to the supposition, that either his father or some near relative of his was a Roman proselyte. According to Acts xii, 12, he was the son of a respectable Christian lady at Jerusalem, named Mary, in whose house the disciples used to meet. Olshausen and Lange are of opinion that the event related by Mark alone, as occurring to a young man in the night, when our Lord was seized in Gethsemane, befell himself. From the fact that the mother of Mark evidently was a person of means and influence, Lange infers that she may have been the owner of the garden of Gethsemane or a house near by — a supposition strengthened by the striking resemblance which the young man on the occasion in question, and afterward Mark in his relation to the apostle Paul, manifested; both exhibiting an impulsive and resolute, but at the same time unsteady and changeable temper.

From 1 Pet. v, 13, it has been inferred that Peter was his spiritual father. Being the son of a Christian mother, that attached herself so firmly to the other heroic women of the New Testament, we need not wonder that he consecrated himself at an early period to the cause of apostolic missions. According to Acts

xii, 25, Paul and Barnabas took him with themselves on their journey from Jerusalem to Antioch, possibly in prospect of the missionary tour, which he shortly afterward made with them in the character of an evangelist or servant. (Acts xiii, 5,) He journeyed with them to Seleucia and Cyprus, and thence to Asia Minor. But when they came to Perga in Pamphylia, he left them and returned to Jerusalem, while the two apostles continued their journey as far as Pisidia. When they were subsequently about to make the same tour again from Antioch for the purpose of visiting and strengthening the newly-formed Churches, Barnabas, the uncle of Mark, (Col. iv, 10,) proposed to take him along again, (Acts xv, 37;) Paul, however, opposed this proposition so decidedly that the two apostles separated, and Barnabas went alone with Mark to Cyprus. But after more than ten years we find the amicable relation between him and Paul restored again; for the apostle mentions him (Col. iv, 10, and Philemon, 24) with Luke as his fellow-laborer during his first imprisonment at Rome. "Shortly afterward we find him in company of the apostle Peter at Babylon — the real Babylon, not the mystical Babylon, Rome — whence Peter sends greetings from his son Mark (1 Peter v, 13) to the Christians in Asia Minor, whom he addresses. And as Paul directs Timothy during his second imprisonment (2 Tim. iv, 11) to bring Mark with him to Rome, we may fairly conclude, that Mark was then on his way back from Babylon. It is not unlikely that Peter arrived with Mark at Rome; for the tradition, that Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome at the same time with Paul, comes to us fully authenticated, and on this fact are based the other testimonies of antiquity, that Mark acted as the interpreter of Peter. The character of his Gospel attests his longer intercourse with Peter as fully as Luke's Gospel proves the latter's intimacy with Paul." (According to Lange.) It is the universal testimony of antiquity that after Peter's death Mark went from Rome to Alexandria, founded a Church, (Euseb., III, 34,) and suffered martyrdom there.

§ 4. THE PECULIAR CHARACTER AND OBJECT OF THE SECOND GOSPEL.

The scope and characteristics of this Gospel are most clearly set forth by Lange, whose remarks we give here in a free, condensed form, both from his *Leben Jesu* and the Introduction to his Commentary on Mark. While in the Gospel of Matthew our Lord is prominently set forth as *the theocratic king*

in whom the law and the prophets have found their complete fulfillment, Mark, without reference to the previous revelations of God to his people, except a brief notice of John the Baptist, as his immediate forerunner, introduces Jesus Christ to his readers at once as the Son of God. An appropriate motto for Mark's Gospel would be the words of Peter: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts x, 38.) Mark's chief aim is evidently to record the exploits of the Son of God in his war against Satan. It is a memoir of his victorious conflicts with the various opposing powers of darkness and sin; and the style of the Evangelist is peculiarly adapted to his purpose to give a rapid, but vivid sketch of the mighty deeds of Jesus. He uses the present tense, instead of the narrative aorist, almost in every chapter. The word εὐθέως, "straightway," is used forty-one times. He gives further force and vividness to his style by the accumulation of negatives and other emphatic additions or reiterations, by the choice of rare words and constructions, by an apparently-modern phraseology, by the use of Latin and Aramaic words, and especially by his richness in lively and interesting detail, especially with regard to our Lord's looks, gestures, feelings, etc. How Christ moved the minds of the people, calling forth all possible emotions in them, fright, fear, confidence, hope, delight, and ecstasy, and how he controlled them by his heavenly power, reproving, healing, and sanctifying, we can best learn from Mark. He makes the personality of Jesus pass before our enraptured eyes in life-like pictures following each other in rapid succession. He is constantly surrounded by large crowds of people, so that there is at times no room for standing, no time for eating; yea, his active love shines forth in such bright luster that his brothers and mother attempted on one occasion to take him by force from out of the crowd, apprehending that he might be beside himself, (iii, 21.) Where his arrival becomes known, the diseased of the whole neighborhood are brought to him, or placed in litters in the market-place, that they may but touch the hem of his garment, and all that touch it are healed. Even the mere appearance of Christ affects the multitudes to such an extent that they tremble for awe and joy, (ix, 15.) Of the seven words uttered by the Savior on the cross, Mark has recorded but the one heart-rending exclamation: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Of the resurrection, likewise, he mentions only the stirring and overpowering points. The disciples in their sore distress refuse to believe any report of the resurrection; but as soon as Christ himself appears in their midst, upbraiding

them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, their minds are changed at once. They are prepared for their great commission to preach the Gospel to every creature, and when they went forth, immediately the Divine power accompanied them, authenticating their message. Thus we see how from the beginning to the end Mark's Gospel is a record of the glorious triumph of the Son of God over all the powers of the world, sin, and Satan. Far from being an epitome of Matthew or Luke, it has a most distinct and peculiar character, being a living, organic whole, and its different parts harmoniously conditioning and explaining each other.

That Mark wrote his Gospel for Gentile Christians is placed beyond reasonable doubt by internal evidences. "The genealogy of our Lord and other matters interesting chiefly to the Jews we find omitted; such as the references to the Old Testament and law in Matthew xii, 5-7, the reflections on the request of the scribes and Pharisees for a sign, (Matt. xii, 38-45;) the parable of the King's Son, (Matt. xxii, 1-14;) and the awful denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew xxiii. Explanations are given in some places, which Jews could not require: thus, Jordan is a 'river,' (Mark i, 5; Matt. iii, 6;) the Pharisees, etc., 'used to fast,' (Mark ii, 18; Matt. ix, 14,) and other customs of theirs are described, (Mark vii, 1-4; Matt. xv, 1, 2;) 'the time of figs was not yet,' that is, at the season of the Passover, (Mark xi, 13; Matt. xxi, 19;) the Sadducees' worst tenet is mentioned (Mark xii, 18;) the Mount of Olives is 'over against the Temple,' (Mark xiii, 3; Matt. xxiv, 3;) at the Passover men eat 'unleavened bread,' (Mark xiv, 1, 12; Matt. xxvi, 2, 17,) and explanations are given which Jews would not need, (Mark xv, 6, 16, 42; Matt. xxvii, 15, 27, 57.) Matter that might offend is omitted, as Matt. x, 5, 6; vi, 7, 8. Passages, not always peculiar to Mark, abound in his Gospel, in which the antagonism between the pharisaic legal spirit and the Gospel come out strongly, (i, 22; ii, 19, 22; x, 5; viii, 15,) which hold out hopes to the heathen of admission to the kingdom of heaven even without the Jews, (xii, 9,) and which put ritual forms below the worship of the heart, (ii, 8; iii, 1-5; vii, 5-23.) Mark alone preserves those words of Jesus, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,' (ii, 27.) While he omits the invective against the Pharisees, he indicates by a touch of his own how Jesus condemned them 'with anger,' (iii, 5.) When the Lord purges the Temple of those that polluted it, He quotes a passage of Isaiah, (lvi, 7;) but Mark alone reports as part of it the words 'of all

nations,' (xi, 17;) and he alone makes the scribe admit that love is better than sacrifices, (xii, 88.)" (Smith's Dict. of the Bible.)

§ 5. THE ARRANGEMENT AND DIVISION OF ITS CONTENTS.

Mark arranges his subject-matter neither by chronological sequence nor by a grouping of events on the ground of their similarity, as Matthew does, but yet he has, as we have shown, a distinct scope. Upon this Lange has based his division of the contents; that given in his *Leben Jesu* differs in some respect from that in his Commentary. We prefer the former, but have found cause to make some minor changes.

The grouping of different subordinate sections under one general head, in a Gospel like that of Mark, which has for the most part been expounded in the preceding Gospel of Matthew, we think, will be found very profitable, and in order not to disturb the impression of the reader made thereby, we have judged it best to place the notes after the whole section. For the *exegesis* of the greater part of this Gospel we expect the reader to look to the parallel passages in Matthew, *without special reference in each case*, as, on the other hand, the reader should turn in many portions of Matthew to the parallel passages in Mark for *homiletical suggestions*.

The foot-notes, giving the variations of readings, were fuller in the manuscript than they appear in print. A number of them were thrown out for typographical reasons, where the omission involved no essential detriment. In Matthew the author made it a rule to give various readings only when the sense was essentially affected by it. In Mark our object was to show the general reader, by a number of examples, of how little practical account is the much-talked-of variety of readings.

CONTENTS.

SECTION I.

CHAP. VRS.

The Beginning of the Gospel. John the Baptist's Public Appearance as the Forerunner of Christ, shortly afterward followed by the Appearance of Christ Himself.

CHAPTER I, 1-15.

1. John the Baptist	1 .	1- 8
2. Christ	1 .	9-15

SECTION II.

The First Works by which Christ reveals his Divine Power at the Beginning of his Galilean Ministry.

CHAPTER I, 16-45.

1. Jesus calls his First Four Disciples	1 .	16-20
2. He heals a Demoniac by the Power of his Word. The People are greatly amazed	1 .	21-28
3. His Miraculous Cures in the House of Peter at Capernaum	1 .	29-34

4. He withdraws himself into a Solitary Place to pray. The People inquire after him	1 . 35-39
5. He heals a Leper by touching him	1 . 40-45

SECTION III.

Various Conflicts of Christ with the Scribes and Pharisees

CHAPTER II, 1, TO CHAPTER III, 5.

1. The Paralytic and the Power of forgiving Sins . 2 .	1-12
2. Jesus dines with Publicans and Sinners in the House of Levi	2 . 13-17
3. The Fasting of John's Disciples and of the Pharisees	2 . 18-22
4. The Disciples pluck Ears of Corn on the Sabbath. The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath	2 . 23-28
5. A Man with a Withered Hand is healed on the Sabbath	3 . 1- 5

SECTION IV.

The First Withdrawal of Christ from his Enemies. The People
manifest an increasing reverence for him. His Sphere
of Activity widens, and he selects his Apostles.

CHAPTER III, 6-19.

1. The Pharisees and Herodians plot against Jesus, but great Multitudes of People follow Him	3 . . . 6-12
2. Jesus ordains the Twelve Apostles	3 . . . 13-19

SECTION V.

The Conflict of Jesus with the Blasphemous Unbelief of his Enemies, and the Want of Faith on the Part of his Friends.	3 . . . 20-35
---	---------------

SECTION VI.

Jesus chooses the Parabolic Form of Instruction in Consequence of the Unsusceptibility of the People and the Increasing Hostility of their Leaders	4 . . . 1-34
--	--------------

SECTION VII.

The Glory of Christ increasingly manifested by his Miraculous Power over the Elements of Nature, the World of Spirits, the Domain of Hidden Maladies, and over Death itself.	
---	--

CHAPTER IV, 35, TO CHAPTER V, 43.

1. He rebukes the Storm, and puts to shame the little
Faith of his Disciples 4 . 35-41
 2. Christ triumphs over the Despairing Unbelief of a
Demoniac. The Callous Worldliness of the
Gadarenes 5 . 1-20
 3. The Woman with an Issue of Blood is healed,
and the Daughter of Jairus is raised from the
Dead 5 . 21-43
-

SECTION VIII.

Christ can do no Miracles in his Native Place, owing to the
Unbelief of the People, but he exhibits his Messianic
Power throughout the rest of Galilee.

CHAPTER VI, 1-56.

1. The Envious Unbelief of the Nazarenes 6 . 1-6
2. The Mission of the Twelve Apostles 6 . 7-13
3. John the Baptist is beheaded, and Herod manifests
a Dangerous Interest in Christ 6 . 14-29
4. Jesus retires into a Desert Place beyond the
Lake. The Miraculous Feeding of Five
Thousand Men 6 . 30-44

5. The Disciples enter a Ship to return to the other Side of the Sea. The Wind is contrary. Jesus comes to them, walking upon the Lake. He performs New Miracles on the West Side of the Lake	6 . 40-56
---	-----------

SECTION IX.

Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem attack Christ for
disregarding the Traditions of the Elders. He rebukes
them, makes a Journey through the Border Countries
of Phenicia, and returns to the Coasts of Decapolis.

CHAPTER VII, 1, TO CHAPTER VIII, 9.

1. The Dispute of Christ with Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem	7 . 1-23
2. The Syrophenician Woman	7 . 24-30
3. The Healing of the Deaf Mute	7 . 31-37
4. The Miraculous Feeding of Four Thousand Persons	8 . 1-9

SECTION X.

Jesus withdraws into the Mountainous Region northeast of
the Lake. The Preparation for the Establishment of the
New Testament Church.

CHAPTER VIII, 10, TO CHAPTER IX, 29.

1. The Leaven of the Pharisees and that of Herod .	8 .	10-21
2. The Blind Man of Bethsaida	8 .	22-26
3. Opinions of the People concerning Christ, and the Confession of Peter. The Lord predicts his own Passion, rebukes Peter for his Presumption, and tells his Disciples what he requires of his Followers	(8 27 to 9 1)	
4. Our Lord's Transfiguration on the Mount	9 .	2-13
5. The Demoniac Boy at the Foot of the Mount of the Transfiguration	9 .	14-29

SECTION XI.

The Secret Sojourn of Jesus in Galilee, and his Return
from the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IX, 30-50.

1. Christ foretells his Disciples his Death for the Second Time	9 .	30-32
2. The Disciples dispute about Pre-eminence. Christ reproves the Zeal of John, enjoins a Spirit of Toleration, and warns against offending his Little Ones	9 .	33-50

SECTION XII.

The Sojourn of Jesus in Perea

CHAPTER X, 1-31.

1. Discussion between Christ and the Pharisees
concerning the Law of Matrimony 10 . 1-12
 2. Little Children are brought to Jesus. His
Declaration concerning their Relation to
the Kingdom of God 10 . 13-16
 3. The Rich Young Man. Jesus speaks of the
Dangers of Worldly Riches, and the Rewards
of his Followers 10 . 17-31
-

SECTION XIII.

The First Departure of Jesus from Perea to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER X, 32-52.

1. Jesus announces the Third Time his Sufferings
and Death 10 . 32-34
 2. The Request of the Sons of Zebedee 10 . 35-45
 3. The Blind Beggar Bartimeus 10 . 46-52
-

SECTION XIV.

Christ's Solemn Entrance into Jerusalem. The Withered Fig-Tree, and the Cleansing of the Temple.

CHAPTER XI, 1-26.

1. Christ's Solemn Entrance into Jerusalem	11	1-11
2. The Withered Fig-Tree, and the Cleansing of the Temple	11	. 12-26

SECTION XV.

The Last Conflicts of Jesus with his Enemies at Jerusalem
on Tuesday of the Passion-Week.

CHAPTER XI, 27, TO CHAPTER XII, 44.

1. The Question of the Sanhedrim as to Christ's Authority, and the Counter Question of Christ as to John the Baptist's Mission	12	. 27-33
2. The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen	12	. 1-12
3. The Treacherous Attack of the Pharisees and Herodians concerning Tribute to Caesar, and their Discomfiture	12	. 13-17
4. The Attack of the Sadducees concerning the Resurrection of the Dead, and their Defeat	12	. 18-27
5. The Question of the Scribe as to the First Commandment	12	. 28-34
6. The Counter Question of the Lord to the Scribes concerning David and his Son	12	. 35-37

7. Christ's Public Warning against the Scribes . .	12 .	38-40
8. The Widow's Mite	12 .	41-44

SECTION XVI.

The Prophecy of Christ concerning the Destruction of the
Temple and his Judicial Coming.

CHAPTER XIII, 1-37.

1. The Occasion of his Discourse	13 . .	1-4
2. A General Survey of what is to precede Christ's Judicial Coming	13 . .	5-13
3. The Premonitory Signs of the Approaching Destruction of Jerusalem, and of the Judgment which is to take Place when the Times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled . .	13 .	14-23
4. The Last Type and Virtual Beginning of the Final Judgment	13 .	24-27
5. The Suddenness of our Lord's Judicial Coming, and the Necessity of Constant Watchfulness . .	13 .	28-37

SECTION XVII.

The Last Passover.

CHAPTER XIV, 1-16.

1. The Cowardice and Confusion of his Enemies	14	... 1, 2
2. The Supper at Bethany. The Treachery of Judas	14	... 3-11
3. The Preparation for the Passover	14	. 12-16

SECTION XVIII.

Jesus eats the Passover with his Disciples.

CHAPTER XIV, 17-31.

1. The Traitor unmasked	14	. 17-21
2. The Institution of the Lord's Supper	14	. 22-25
3. The Prediction of the Offense of the Disciples and of Peter's Denial	14	. 26-31

SECTION XIX.

Jesus in Gethsemane.

CHAPTER XIV, 32-52.

1. The Agony of our Lord in Gethsemane	14	. 32-42
2. The Seizure of Jesus, and the Flight of his Disciples	14	. 43-52

SECTION XX.

Jesus before the Ecclesiastical Tribunal. Peter denies Him.

CHAPTER XIV, 53-72.

1. Jesus before the High-Priest	14	. 53-65
2. Peter's Denial	14	. 66-72

SECTION XXI.

Jesus before the Tribunal of Pilate	15	. 1-19
---	----	--------

SECTION XXII.

Jesus is led away to Calvary and Crucified	15	. 20-32
--	----	---------

SECTION XXIII.

The Dying Hour of Christ, the Power of his Death, and	
---	--

his Burial	15	. 33-47
------------------	----	---------

SECTION XXIV.

Christ's Resurrection and Ascension.	
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CHAPTER XVI, 1-20.

1. An Angel announces to the Women the Resurrection of our Lord	16	. 1- 8
2. Mary Magdalene and the Two Disciples	16	. 9-13
3. The Last Instructions of our Lord to his Apostles, and his Ascension	16	. 14-20

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

SECTION I.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL — JOHN THE BAPTIST'S PUBLIC APPEARANCE AS THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST, SHORTLY AFTERWARD FOLLOWED BY THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST HIMSELF.

CHAPTER I, 1-15.

1. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Verses 1-8. (COMPARE MATTHEW iii, 1-12; LUKE iii, 1-18; JOHN i, 19-28)

(1) **THE beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.** (2) As it is written in the prophets, ^[1] Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee; ^[2] (3) the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight: (4) John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (5) And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. (6) And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; ^[3] (7) and preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. (8) I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

[1] "We deem ourselves justified by the testimony of Irenaeus, and other Fathers, as well as by Codd. A, P, in retaining the reading '*in the prophets*,' in preference to the other reading, '*in Isaiah the prophet*,' as supported by

Codd. B, D, L, and others, and adopted by Griesbach and most of the modern critics. Either the reading 'in Isaiah' crept into the text, with reference to the second quotation, from an indistinct recollection, or an emendation of the text was attempted by inserting the reading 'in the prophets.' If the reading 'in Isaiah the prophet' is preferred, the passage from Malachi must be considered as a further development of the principal prophecy of Isaiah, which is emphasized as the first prediction of the forerunner." (Lange.)]

[2 "Before thee" is wanting in many manuscripts.]

[3 See footnote on Matthew iii, 4.]

2. CHRIST.

Verses 9-15. (COMPARE MATTHEW iii, 13-iv, 17; LUKE iii, 21, 22; iv, 1-15; JOHN i, 29-34.)

(9) **AND it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.** (10) **And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:** (11) **And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** (12) **And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.** (13) **And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.** (14) **How after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God,** (15) **and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.**

VERSES 1-8. THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL. Some commentators connect these words with verse 2; namely, "The beginning of the Gospel was, as it is written in the prophets;" others with verse 4: "The beginning of the Gospel was, that John baptized." Both these connections, however, are improbable. The first verse is the title of the whole book, indicating that it contains the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The primitive Church considered Christ's public ministry, commencing with his baptism and ending with his resurrection, as the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was generally read in the Churches. (Comp. Acts i, 22.) — OF JESUS

CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD. Matthew says, "the Son of David." As Mark wrote especially for Gentile Christians, he did not make the relation of Christ to the theocracy so prominent. He introduces "Jesus" and "John" to his readers as well known, indicating thereby, that he purposes to narrate well-known facts in an abridged form. Although he is silent on the miraculous birth of Jesus, so minutely related by Matthew, yet he indicates the great fact by calling him the "*Son of God*." — **JOHN DID BAPTIZE.** These words form the conclusion or apodosis to, "As it is written in the prophets," in verse 2. As it is written, so John actually came forward in the wilderness baptizing. Additionally to what we have said in the introductory remarks to chapter iii in Matthew, we subjoin here, in a condensed form, what Lange says on the Baptist in his *Leben Jesu*. "John the Baptist was in his whole personal appearance and public ministry like a blazing torch; his whole being preached with irresistible force; hence he may well be called the 'voice of one crying in the wilderness.' On examining, however, the leading traits of character in this imposing personage, we may clearly distinguish the Nazarite, the prophet, and the zealous champion of the theocracy, although these traits formed in him a perfect harmony. He grew up in the sacred solitude of the wilderness near his native place, (Luke i, 80,) and there the Spirit of God communed with his own spirit. As a Nazarite his wants were few and simple. He is at the same time fully impressed with the importance of his mission; namely, to call Israel, blinded by formality, into the wilderness, that it might be cleansed and prepared for the new economy of the kingdom of God. But the Divine commission that constituted him a prophet, was the revelation of the dawn of the promised kingdom of God, and of the approach of the Messiah, as the founder of this kingdom, for whom he (John) was to prepare the way. The Spirit of God, also, was to make known to him, by a sign from heaven, whom he should point out to the people as the Lord and founder of this kingdom. With the idea and presentiment of his mission he had become familiar in his father's house. While in the wilderness, he received the inward assurance that the Messiah had already made his appearance among the people, though unknown to them, and in the decisive moment, on the banks of Jordan, the person of the Messiah was divinely pointed out to him. John seemed to be the personification of the last prophetic presentiment of the Messiah among his people. By his prophetic penetration he had long before discovered, on his annual journeyings to Jerusalem, the moral and religious corruption of his people, notwithstanding their imposing Temple worship and boasted self-righteousness. He looked upon the corruption of the scribes and

Pharisees with the indignation of a genuine Israelite. The holy zeal of all the prophets centered in the lofty indignation of his strong mind, and constituted him one of those champions, that in decisive moments appeared as the restorers of the declining theocracy; such as were Phinehas, (Num. xxv, 7,) and Elias, yea, Christ himself, at the moment he cleansed the Temple. In this zeal he became the Baptist. The whole nation appeared to him, unworthy and unprepared to enter into the holy kingdom of the new covenant, but, most of all, the nation's leaders and representatives. He was certain that a great and universal apostasy from true Israelitism had taken place, and that even the better members of the theocracy had first to submit to a great purification, before they could receive the King of Israel, who would even then have to separate with his fan the wheat from the chaff. The theocratic champion preached, therefore, the baptism of repentance for the reception of the Messiah. It was an uncommonly-bold act of his to come before the whole congregation of Israel with the solemn declaration, that the whole camp was unclean, and that all had first to submit to the act of a holy washing before they could enter into the new congregation."

— THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE; that is, a baptism which not only involved the obligation of a change of mind, but represented it also symbolically. The ministry of John was not confined to merely preaching "repentance," but was connected, also, with the observance of an outward rite. He did this, however, not arbitrarily, but in obedience to a Divine command — for he had been sent to baptize with water, (John i, 33.) As washings constituted so important an ingredient in the Jewish ritual, the people could not fail to perceive the importance and significance of this rite. At what time the Jewish custom of requiring of a proselyte from the heathens baptism, in addition to circumcision, arose, is a much controverted question. The two strongest reasons for assuming its existence prior to John's baptism are: 1. If there had not been such a baptism, there would have been no initiatory rite at all for female proselytes. 2. A sign is seldom chosen unless it already has a meaning for those to whom it is addressed. The fitness of the sign would be in proportion to the associations already connected with it. It would bear witness — on the assumption of the previous existence of the proselyte-baptism — that the change from the then condition of Judaism to the kingdom of God was as great as that from idolatry to Judaism. The question of the priests and Levites, "Why baptizest thou then?" (John i, 25,) implies that they wondered, not at the thing itself, but at its being done for Israelites by one who disclaimed the name which, in their eyes, would have justified the introduction of a new order. In like

manner the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, (John iii, 10,) imply the existence of a teaching as to baptism like that above referred to. He, "the teacher of Israel," had been familiar with "these things" — the new birth the gift of the Spirit — as words and phrases applied to heathen proselytes. But he failed to grasp the deeper truth which lay beneath them, and to see that they had a wider, a universal application. — **FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS.** The baptism of John was not itself to secure the forgiveness of sins, but merely to prepare the way for it; it was to set forth the truth significantly, that the Messiah grants the forgiveness of sins, but that repentance on the part of the sinner is an indispensable condition for it. — The proper place to consider fully the relation of John's baptism to that of the Christian Church is Acts xix, 1-4. — **HE SHALL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY GHOST.** As Mark makes no mention of the Baptist's announcement of the Messianic judgment, he omits, also, the addition "*and with fire.*"

VERSES 9-15. Mark's report of the baptism of Jesus is less full than that of Matthew. The view of Dr. A. Clarke and other English commentators, that Christ's baptism was his solemn induction into his priestly office, is not tenable. "As the priests had, according to the law, (Ex. xxix,) to be washed with water and to be anointed with oil, before they entered upon their office, so Christ, as the high-priest over the house of God, was baptized with water and the Holy Ghost." But in this comparison the fact is altogether overlooked, that Christ was to be a high-priest according to the order of Melchizedek, not according to that of Aaron, (Heb. vii, 21.) As our Lord did not belong to the tribe of Levi, an induction into his priestly office, as is assumed, would have been not a fulfillment, but a violation of the ceremonial law. — **HE WAS WITH THE WILD BEASTS.** By wild beasts — θήρια — we need not understand beasts of prey, since this is not the usual meaning of θήριον, which rather means a brute as distinguished from man. That he was with the beasts, implies, that he was cut off from all human society and ordinary sources of the supply of food. Mark does not expressly mention Christ's continued fasting, which Matthew and Luke represent as the occasion of the first temptation, but the ministrations of the angels imply it. — **JESUS CAME INTO GALILEE.** The Evangelist passes on at once to the beginning of our Lord's public ministry in Galilee. Why the Synoptists do not relate the Judean ministry, has been fully explained in our introductory remarks to Matthew iv, 12-25. — **PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** The Lord commences his preaching with the

same words which the Forerunner had already used, (Matt. iii, 2.) By his prophetic office he prepares himself the way to his mediatorial and kingly office. — THE TIME IS FULFILLED. "*The fullness of the time is come*, (Gal. iv, 4.) The design of the old covenant is accomplished; the set time of waiting and preparation, which was necessary for the sake of humanity at large, has expired. The Son is born, has grown to maturity, has been anointed and tempted. The testimony of him who was to bear witness has been uttered, and now he bears witness to himself. Now begins that last speaking of God by his Son, (Heb. i, 2,) *the Gospel*, which henceforth is to be preached in all the world till the end cometh. What a glance into the past and the future is this!" — REPENT YE. "The last and greatest prophet before Christ utters at the close of the Old Testament this great and comprehensive word; and Christ himself, as the prophet of his own kingdom of grace, takes it up again, for it is the essential word of connection between the Old and the New Testaments. It remains, also, the ever-recurring word of preparation for faith, and the reception of grace; for the kingdom of heaven belongs only to the spiritually poor and mourners in heart. All the apostles preach repentance and faith; and even from heaven the Lord cries to his Church below — *Repent!* (Rev. ii, 5-16; iii, 3, 19.) In Matthew the "Repent" is significantly connected with "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" by *for*. The exhortation to repentance is always made on the ground of promised grace; for the law preaches no repentance, but only life for the righteous and death to all sinners; nor can true repentance spring merely from the terrors of the law." (Stier.) — AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL. These words are omitted by Matthew. Faith is inseparably joined to true repentance; therefore, both terms are often used as implying one another.

SECTION II.

THE FIRST WORKS BY WHICH CHRIST REVEALS HIS DIVINE POWER AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS GALILEAN MINISTRY.

CHAPTER I, 16-45.

1. JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST FOUR DISCIPLES.

Verses 16-20. (COMPARE MATTHEW iv, 18-22; LUKE v, 1-11.)

(16) NOW as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. (17) And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. (18) And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. (19) And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. (20) And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

2. HE HEALS A DEMONIAC BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD. THE PEOPLE ARE GREATLY AMAZED.

Verses 21-28. (COMPARE LUKE iv, 31-37.)

(21) AND they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. (22) And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. (23) And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, (24) saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. (25) And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. (26) And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. (27) And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean

spirits, and they do obey him. (28) And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

3. HIS MIRACULOUS CURES IN THE HOUSE OF PETER AT CAPERNAUM.

Verses 29-34. (COMPARE MATTHEW viii, 14-17; LUKE iv, 38-41.)

(29) AND forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. (30) But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her. (31) And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. (32) And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. (33) And all the city was gathered together at the door. (34) And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

4. HE WITHDRAWS HIMSELF INTO A SOLITARY PLACE TO PRAY. THE PEOPLE INQUIRE AFTER HIM.

Verses 35-39. (COMPARE LUKE iv, 42-44.)

(35) AND in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. (36) And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. (37) And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee. (38) And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. (39) And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

5. HE HEALS A LEPER BY TOUCHING HIM.

Verses 40-45. (COMPARE MATTHEW viii, 1-4; LUKE v, 12-16)

(40) AND there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (41) And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. (42) And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. (43) And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; (44) and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. (45) But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

VERSES 16-20. ""Two things claim our attention here: How the Lord's profound wisdom lays hold of lower and external objects to become the *images* of the higher relations in the kingdom of heaven; and, also, how familiarly his thought and language attach themselves to those *Old Testament typical expressions* in which the Spirit had already prophetically exhibited all the germs of the New Testament consummation. It is not a casual matter, but a real, though secret, prelude of the Holy Ghost, that the Lord named, in Jeremiah, (xvi, 16,) those who were sent forth for the restoration of Israel *fishermen*; and again, in Ezekiel, (xlvii, 10,) spoke of the fishers who should gather exceeding many fishes in the new waters of the living. That which there pointed into the most remote futurity of the kingdom of God, is here beginning to be manifest; and the previous occupation of the first apostles was itself a pre-intimation, just as it has pleased Divine Providence in the case of *many other* important persons, to shadow out their future calling in their earlier relations in life; in David's sheepfold, for instance, his own kingdom and that of his great antitype.—I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN. This signifies not merely, I appoint you to this, and will train you for it; but it includes the promise, Ye shall, with success and blessing, labor in the ministry of my Word, which shall catch men, even as your net the fish. This meaning comes out with especial prominence in the two prophetic draughts of fishes. (Luke v, and John

xxi.) Whatever else grace made of these Galilean fishermen — themselves sinful men, who had been just gathered and saved, even up to their thrones and crowns of apostolical dignity, in the regeneration of the world, *this one thing* remains the climax and the crown of their honor and dignity, that they were made ministers and helpers of the grace which saved mankind." (Stier.)

VERSES 21-28. "The first miracle recorded by Matthew is the cure of a leper by the touch of Jesus, his opposition to the hierarchical theocracy and its tradition being the main point of view to that Evangelist; the first miracle recorded by John is the change of water into wine, symbolizing the transformation of the old world into a new one. The first miracle recorded by Luke and Mark is the cure of a demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum, spoken of in our text. But even these two Evangelists contemplate this manifestation of miraculous power from somewhat different stand-points. To Luke the healed man seems to be the main point; while Mark's principal object is to point out Christ's power over the power of Satan." (Lange.) — AND THERE WAS IN THEIR SYNAGOGUE A MAN, etc. From this it appears that this demoniac enjoyed hours of rest, as he could, otherwise, not have been admitted into the synagogue. — WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT — literally, *in*; that is, under the power of an unclean spirit. — AND HE CRIED OUT, SAYING. The unclean spirit spoke through the man in his power — he used him as his organ. — LET US ALONE. The Greek word *έσα* may be the imperative of the verb *έάω*, *desist*; but it is more probably an interjection of anguish and terror, like our ah! woe! — WHAT HAVE WE TO DO WITH THEE? Although only one unclean spirit is spoken of, yet this one speaks in the name of his companions. — JESUS OF NAZARETH. By these words the Savior is generally designated, where his majesty and glory is left out of view. (Comp. chap. xvi, 6; Acts ii, 22-24; xxii, 8; John xix, 19.) — ART THOU COME TO DESTROY US? This is the cry of abject fear that would fain avert the doom which with Christ's presence in the world appears so near. — I KNOW THEE, WHO THOU ART. Here, as it would seem, the consciousness of the demoniac flowed together with that of the demon, as in Matt. viii, 29, where the demon recognizes likewise the Messiah at once. — THE HOLY ONE OF GOD. The rendering of this testimony, in so far as it came from the demon, was calculated to bring the truth under suspicion, because it was rendered by the spirit of lies. — AND JESUS REBUKED HIM. Not as Michael the archangel, "The Lord rebuke thee," (Jude 9,) but in

his own name and in his own power. — HOLD THY PEACE! Christ does not suffer himself to be praised by the devils. As the Master does here, so did his apostle afterward, (Acts xvi, 16-18,) but his followers in our day often fail, as Stier says, to reject, with sufficient decision, testimony given in their favor by ungodly men. The kingdom of God does not need, and ought not to admit such helps. The best testimony for God's kingdom is its own triumph over the powers of darkness. — AND WHEN THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT HAD TORN HIM. Luke says: "And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and *hurt him not.*" It is worthy of note that in all such cures performed by the Lord, the demoniacs had the worst paroxysms while under the hands of the Savior, whereupon they were restored to perfect health all at once. In this way the reality and greatness of both the evil and the cure became apparent to all, and there was no room left for cavil. There is an obvious practical reflection drawn from what accompanied the cure of the demoniacs. Satan vexes with temptations and with buffetings none so much as those who are in the act of being delivered from his dominion. When the devil has to yield, he rages fearfully. — AND CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE. The demon obeyed the command of the Lord, and spoke not another word. His cry was merely an inarticulate noise of rage and pain. — AND THEY WERE ALL AMAZED, etc., both at his doctrine and the cure of the demoniac, very properly connecting the one with the other. — WHAT NEW DOCTRINE IS THIS? "From the manifestation of a new redeeming power they infer the coming of a new revelation; for revelation and redemption, miracle and prophecy, stand in reciprocal relation to the Israelite." (Lange.) — In this section is presented to us *the great contrast between the condition of fallen men and that of the fallen angels in their relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.* The direct and indirect influences of the incarnation of the Son of God upon those intelligent beings, who remained holy as they were originally created, we can only conjecture, but its bearing upon the condition of the fallen angels we learn from the words of this unclean spirit. 1. He intimates that Jesus had come to destroy them, not to annihilate them, but to destroy their works, to deliver men from the power and slavery of Satan. This is the destruction so much dreaded by the demons. 2. Fallen angels are fully convinced that not they, but men alone have an interest in the Savior. "*What have we to do with thee?*" Nothing at all; they know that he is a Savior, but not for them. His power of saving is the cause of their downfall — the salvation of mankind is their ruin. How vastly different is it with us! In Christ we have a Redeemer who was

made like unto us in all things, sin alone excepted. He lived, died, and rose from the dead for us. We have the right to claim him as the Savior intended for us, and in his name to come with boldness to the mercy-seat. 3. The knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of mankind, fills the fallen angels with terror and despair; for men it is glad tidings. But how strange that fallen angels knew and confessed Christ, while men refused to recognize him! (John ix, 29.) 4. The conduct of Jesus toward a fallen angel forms a great contrast with that toward fallen man. He had no look of compassion for the unclean spirit, no word of encouragement, no open ear for his prayers. On the other hand, with what meekness did he endure the contradiction of sinning men! He never acted toward a sinner in distress as he did toward this unclean spirit. Let us with adoring gratitude contemplate both the goodness and the severity of a holy God.

VERSES 29-34. The Greek particle ἐνθέως, translated *forthwith, anon,* and *immediately*, occurs here three times in rapid succession, and is peculiar to Mark's vivid style. But it has, nevertheless, the full force of its literal meaning, especially the "*immediately*," in verse 31. The cure was instantaneous and complete. She, who had lain prostrate and helpless, was at once enabled to provide for them what was necessary for their entertainment. — We learn here, as well as at the wedding of Cana, how Jesus sympathizes with us in our family circumstances, how ready he is to afford help and relief. He is still the same — let us ever have recourse to him in the hour of need; and let those who have been restored to spiritual health, never forget to use their strength in ministering to Christ and to his people. — AND AT EVEN. In order not to break the Sabbath, the people waited till evening before they brought their sick to the Lord, thus depriving him of the rest of the night. — ALL THAT WERE DISEASED, AND THEM THAT WERE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS. How clearly here, as in Matt. viii, 16, are natural diseases distinguished from demoniacy!

VERSES 35-39. AND IN THE MORNING RISING UP A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY. "We can not hesitate to believe that this retiring of Christ to a solitary place for the purpose of praying was in accordance with a real want of his nature, since the Lord did nothing for mere appearance' sake. On the contrary, according to the Scriptures, Jesus was made like unto his brethren in all things, sin alone excepted, (Heb. ii, 17;) and to contemplate him in his true humanity is a never-failing fountain of consolation, and enables us to

set him before us as our pattern. If we view Jesus in his human development, his prayers — which, though he prayed alway, as he commands us, (Luke xviii, 1,) nevertheless had their culminating points in certain hours of sacred devotion — were even to him the times of heavenly refreshing and strengthening from above, amid the constant assaults of the powers of darkness from without. They were at the same time the hours which he especially devoted to the deepest meditations on the Father's counsel concerning him and the purposes of Divine mercy, to consecrate himself to the accomplishment of his work." (Olshausen.) — This section sets before us *Christ's day's-work as a pattern for our labors*. I. Before he enters upon the labors of the day, he prays, teaching us thereby: 1. Our need of prayer, seeing that even *He* prayed, whose relation to the Father was that of no created being, and who being sinless did not need prayer, as we do, to overcome sinful inclinations. 2. The right kind of earnest prayer; he prayed in a solitary place, and gave even a portion of his night's rest for devotion. II. He prays not only, but labors also, teaching us thereby what constitutes acceptable labor in the sight of God. He labors: 1. With a hearty will, ("Let us go," v. 38.) 2. With a clear consciousness of doing the will of God, ("For therefore came I forth.") 3. To destroy the work of the devil by word and deed, (v. 39.) Our work on earth should have for its object the building up of the kingdom of God by preaching Jesus both with our lips and by our works.

VERSES 40-45. In addition to what has been said on leprosy in the notes on Matt. viii, 1-4, we here subjoin the following extract from Trench: "There is a common misapprehension that leprosy was catching from one person to another; and that they who were suffering under it were so carefully secluded from their fellow-men, lest they might communicate the poison of the disease to them. All those who have examined into the matter the closest, are nearly of one consent, that the sickness was incommunicable by ordinary contact from one person to another. A leper might transmit it to his children, or the mother of a leper's children might take it from him; but it was by no ordinary contact transferable from one person to another. All the notices in the Old Testament, as well as in other Jewish books, confirm this. Thus, where the law of Moses was not observed, no such exclusion necessarily found place; Naaman and Gehazi talked familiarly with the king of apostate Israel. (2 Kings viii, 5.) And even where the law of Moses was in force, the stranger and the sojourner were expressly exempted from the ordinances in relation to leprosy; which could not

have been, had the disease been contagious, and the motives of the leper's exclusion been not religious but civil, since the danger of the spreading of the disease would have been equal in their case and in that of native Israelites. How, moreover, could the Levitical priests, had the disease been this creeping infection, have themselves escaped the disease, obliged as they were by their very office to submit the leper to such actual handling and closest examination? The ordinances concerning leprosy had quite a different and a far deeper significance, into which it will be needful a little to enter. It is clear that the same principle — which made all that had to do with death, as mourning, a grave, a corpse, the occasions of a ceremonial uncleanness, inasmuch as all these were signs and consequences of sin — might, in like manner, have made every sickness an occasion of uncleanness, each of these being also death beginning. But instead of this, not pushing the principle to the utmost, God took but one sickness, one of these visible outcomings of a tainted nature, in which to testify that evil was not from him, and could not dwell with him. Leprosy, which was indeed the sickness of sicknesses, was selected of God from the whole host of maladies and diseases which had broken in upon man's body; to the end that, bearing his testimony against it, he might bear his testimony against that out of which it and all other sicknesses grew — against sin, as not from him, as grievous in his sight; and the sickness itself also as grievous, not for itself, but because it was a visible manifestation, a direct consequence of the inner in-harmony of man's spirit, a commencement of the death which, through disobedience to God's perfect will, had found entrance into a nature made by God for immortality. And terrible indeed, as might be expected, was that disease, round which this solemn teaching revolved. Leprosy was really nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humors of life; a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away. Aaron exactly describes the appearance which the leper presented to the eyes of the beholders, when, pleading for Miriam, he says, 'Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.' (Num. xii, 12.) The disease, moreover, was incurable by the art and skill of man; not that the leper might not return to health; for, however rare, such cases are yet contemplated in the Levitical law. But then the leprosy left the man, not in obedience to any outward means of healing which had been applied by men, but purely and merely through the good-will and mercy of God. This helplessness of man in the matter is recognized in the speech of the king of

Israel, who, when Naaman is sent to him that he may heal him, exclaims, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" (2 Kings v, 7.) The leper, thus fearfully bearing about in the body the outward and visible tokens of sin in the soul, was handled throughout as a sinner, as one in whom sin had reached its highest manifestation, that is, as one dead in trespasses and sins. The leper was to bear about the emblems of death, (Lev. xiii, 45,) the rent garments, that is, mourning garments, he mourning for himself as for one dead; the head bare, as they were wont to have it who were in communion with the dead, (Num. vi, 9; Ezek. xxiv, 17;) and the lip covered. (Ezek. xxiv, 17.) In the restoration, too, of a leper, exactly the same instrument of cleansing were in use, the cedar-wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet, as were used for the cleansing of one defiled through a dead body, or aught pertaining to death, and which were never in use upon any other occasion. (Comp. Num. xix, 6, 13, 18, with Lev. xiv, 4-7.) No doubt when David exclaims, "Purge me with *hyssop*, and I shall be clean," (Ps. li, 7,) he in this allusion, looking through the outward to the inward, even to the true blood of sprinkling, contemplates himself as a spiritual leper, as one whose sin had been, while he lived in it, a sin unto death, as one needing, therefore, absolute and entire restoration from the very furthest degree of separation from God. And being this sign and token of sin, and of sin reaching unto and culminating in death, it naturally brought about with it a total exclusion from the camp, (Lev. xiii, 46; Num. v, 2-4; 2 Kings vii, 3,) or afterward out of the city; and we find this law to have been so strictly enforced, that even the sister of Moses might not be exempted from it, (Num. xii, 14, 15;) and kings Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi, 21) and Azariah (2 Kings xv, 5) themselves must submit to it; men being by this exclusion taught that what here took place in a figure, should take place in the reality with every one who was found in the death of sin: he should be shut out of the true city of God. Thus, taking up and glorifying this and like ordinances of exclusion, St. John exclaims of the New Jerusalem, 'There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.' (Rev. xxi, 27.) It need hardly be observed, that in all this it was not in the least implied that he who bore this plague was of necessity a guiltier man than his fellows; though being, as it was, this symbol of sin, it was most often the theocratic punishment, the penalty for sins committed against the theocracy, as in the cases of Miriam, of Gehazi, of Uzziah; and we may compare Deut. xxiv, 8, where the warning, 'Take heed of the plague of leprosy,' is not that they diligently observe the laws about leprosy, but that they

beware lest this plague of leprosy come upon them, lest by their disobedience they incur the theocratic penalty. The Jews themselves termed it 'the finger of God,' and emphatically, 'The stroke.' They said that it attacked first a man's house, and, if he did not turn, his clothing; and then, if he persisted in sin, himself: a fine symbol, whether the fact was so or not, of the manner in which God's judgments, if men refused to listen to them, reach ever nearer to the center of their life. So, too, they said that a man's true repentance was the one condition of his leprosy leaving him. Seeing, then, that leprosy was this outward and visible sign of the innermost spiritual corruption, there could be no fitter form of evil over which the Lord of life should display his power. He will prove himself the conqueror of death in life, as of death completed. This victory of his over this most terrible form of physical evil is fitly brought out as a testimony of his Messiahship: 'The lepers are cleansed.' (Matt. xi, 5.) Nor may we doubt that the terribleness of the infliction, the extreme suffering with which it was linked, the horror which must have filled the sufferer's mind, as he marked its slow but inevitable progress, to be arrested by no human hand, the ghastly hideousness of its unnatural whiteness, (Num. xii, 10; Exod. iv, 6; 2 Kings v, 27,) must all have combined to draw out *his* pity, who was not merely the mighty, but no less the loving, Physician and Healer of the bodies as of the souls of men." (Condensed from Trench.) — **HE FORTHWITH SENT HIM AWAY.** He would allow no lingering, but required him to hasten to the priests, lest the report of what had been done should outrun him, and the priests, in their hostility to Jesus, should deny that the man was really cured. — **BUT HE WENT OUT AND BEGAN TO PUBLISH IT.** It would seem that his feelings of gratitude made it impossible for him to be silent about the matter; but although this kind of disobedience is not specifically reprobated, it is nevertheless unjustifiable, and is recorded for our warning. It might, indeed, have been difficult for him to keep the matter by himself, but his obedience would only have been the more praiseworthy for it. Our duty is to obey the Lord, although this may do violence to our feelings. Obedience is better than sacrifice, (1 Sam. xv, 22.) Many lay great impediments in the way of the kingdom of God, by giving too free scope to their emotions. We may learn from the repeated injunctions of silence to those whom the Lord had healed, that there are circumstances under which we ought not to speak publicly of the miracles of Divine grace; namely. 1. If God's work would suffer thereby, and especially, 2. Before those who only abuse the truth, without deriving the least benefit from it.

SECTION III.

VARIOUS CONFLICTS OF CHRIST WITH THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

CHAPTER II, 1, TO CHAPTER III, 5.

1. THE PARALYTIC, AND THE POWER OF FORGIVING SINS.

Verses 1-12. (COMPARE MATTHEW ix, 1-8; LUKE v, 17-26.)

(1) AND again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house.^[1] (2) And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door:^[2] and he preached the Word unto them. (3) And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. (4) And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. (5) When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. (6) But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, (7) Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies?^[3] who can forgive sins but God only? (8) And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? (9) Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? (10) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) (11) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. (12) And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

[1 The Greek εἰς οἶκον implies that he had gone into the house, that is, that he returned home; for the house is evidently meant which he occupied in Capernaum. (See Matt. iv, 12.)]

[2 That is, in the square yard that was within every larger house. (See foot-note on Matt. xxvi, 58.)]

[3 The reading in A, B, D, adopted by Tischendorf, is, "Why does this man speak thus? he blasphemes."]

2. JESUS DINES WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS IN THE HOUSE OF LEVI.

Verses 13-17. (COMPARE. MATTHEW ix, 9-13; LUKE v, 27-32.)

(13) AND he went forth again by the sea-side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. (14) And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alpheus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. (15) And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him. (16) And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? (17) When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. ^[4]

[4 *To repentance* is probably an addition taken from Luke v, 32. It is found only in some Minuscules.]

3. THE FASTING OF JOHN'S DISCIPLES AND OF THE PHARISEES.

Verses 18-22. (COMPARE MATTHEW ix, 14-17; LUKE v, 33-39.)

(18) AND the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? (19) And Jesus said unto

them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can not fast. (20) But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. (21) No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. (22) And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

4. THE DISCIPLES PLUCK EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH DAY. THE SON OF MAN IS LORD ALSO OF THE SABBATH.

Verses 23-28. (COMPARE MATTHEW xii, 1-8; LUKE vi, 1-5.)

(23) AND it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. (24) And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful? (25) And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was a昏gered, he, and they that were with him? (26) How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high-priest, ^[5] and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? (27) And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: (28) Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

[5] Literally, *During the high-priesthood of Abiathar*. "In 1 Samuel xxi, from which this account is taken, Ahimelech, not Abiathar, is the high-priest. There is, however, considerable confusion in the names about this part of the history. Ahimelech himself is called Ahiah in 1 Samuel xiv, 3; and whereas, according to 1 Samuel xxii, 20, Ahimelech has a son Abiathar, in 2 Samuel viii, 17, Ahimelech is the son of Abiathar, and in 1 Chronicles xviii, 16, Abimelech. Amid this variation we can hardly undertake to explain the difficulty in the text." (Alford.)]

5. A MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND IS HEALED ON THE SABBATH.

Chapter iii, 1-5. (COMPARE MATTHEW xii, 9-13; LUKE vi, 6-11.)

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

[6 *As the other* is an addition not found in the best Codices. It was probably taken from Matthew xii, 13.]

VERSES 1-12. THEY UNCOVERED THE ROOF. "They first ascended to the roof: this was not so difficult, because commonly there was a flight of steps on the outside of the house, reaching to the roof. Our Lord assumes the existence of such, when he says, 'Let him that is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house,' (Matt. xxiv, 17.) Some will have it, that, on the present occasion, the bearers having thus reached the roof, did no more than let down their sick through the grating or trap-door, (2 Kings i, 2;) or, at most, that they might have widened such an aperture, already existing, to enable them to let down the sick man's bed. Others, that Jesus was sitting in the open court, and that to this they got access by the roof, and breaking through the breastwork or battlement (Deut. xxii, 8) made of tiles, which guarded the roof, and removing the linen awning which was stretched over the court, let him down in the midst before the Lord. But there seems no sufficient reason for departing from the obvious meaning of the words. In St. Mark, at least, they are so plain and clear, that we can suppose nothing else than that a part of the actual covering of the roof was removed, so that the bed on which the palsied man lay might be let down before the Lord. The whole circumstance will be much more easily conceived, when we keep in mind that

it was probably the upper chamber, where were assembled those that were drawn together to hear the Lord. This, as the most retired, and probably the largest room in the house, extending oftentimes over its whole area, was much used for such purposes as that which now drew him and his hearers together. (Acts i, 13; xx, 8.)" (Trench.) Let us come to Christ — says an old writer — through the door or through the roof, that is, in a regular or irregular way. True faith, that worketh by love, breaks through all impediments. Love makes every thing seemly and proper, even what apparently is not so. — SON, THY SINS BE FORGIVEN. Matthew has the additional words: *Be of good cheer*. Trench remarks: "This is a striking example of the way in which the Lord gives *before* men ask, and *better* than men ask: for this man had not asked any thing, save, indeed, in the dumb asking of that earnest effort to come near to Jesus; and all that he dared to ask even in that, or at least all that his friends and bearers hoped for him, was that his body might be healed. Yet there was, no doubt, in himself a deep feeling of his sickness in its innermost root; as growing out of sin, perhaps as the penalty of some especial sin whereof he was conscious; and some expression of contrition, some exclamation of a penitent heart, may have been the immediate occasion of these gracious words of forgiveness, as, indeed, the address, '*Son, be of good cheer,*' seems to imply that he was a person evidently burdened and cast down, and, as the Lord saw, with more than the weight of his bodily sicknesses and sufferings. In other cases the forgiveness of sins *follows* the outward healing. But here the remission of sin takes the precedence; the reason no doubt being, that in the sufferer's own conviction there was so close a connection between his sin and his plague, that the outer healing would have been scarcely intelligible to him, would have scarcely carried to his mind the sense of a benefit, unless his conscience had been also set free; perhaps he was incapable even of receiving it, till there had been spoken peace to his spirit."

VERSES 18-22. AND THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN AND OF THE PHARISEES USED TO FAST. There is here no reference to a time of fasting prescribed by the law, since it is not likely that Jesus should not have observed it. The Greek expression, *ἥσαν νηστεύοντες*, were fasting, may mean either, *they were*, at the time being, *fasting*, that is, observing a fast occasioned by the imprisonment of John or some other cause, or they were in the habit of fasting. It is very probable that John's disciples imitated their ascetic master, especially in fasting. And as the Pharisees attached likewise great importance

to fasting, their joint-action in the case before us is easily accounted for. — NO MAN PUTTETH NEW WINE INTO OLD BOTTLES. We are taught in these words important truths of general import, as has been shown in the comments on the parallel passage in Matthew. Here we will only remind the reader to note the course of the true followers of Christ with regard to old and new forms: 1. They do not, in the bondage of formality, cling to what is old, merely because it is old. 2. Nor do they prematurely adopt the new, simply because it is new. But, 3. Free from slavish conservatism and radical liberalism, they are led by the spirit of Christ to prepare new bottles for new wine.

VERSES 23-28. THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, AND NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH. The end for which the Sabbath was ordained was to bless man; the end for which man was created was not — to observe the Sabbath. Man is the end, and the ordinances of the law the means; not these the end, and man the means. Man is, therefore, not required on account of the Sabbath to do himself any injury. — **THEREFORE THE SON OF MAN IS LORD ALSO OF THE SABBATH.** From the fact that the institution of the Sabbath is only a means to subserve man's best interest, and man is not created for the interest of the Sabbath, our Lord argues that he, the Son of man — by which mysterious term the Jews understood at least so much that he claimed to be a man unlike every other man — is Lord of the Sabbath, and what he permits his disciples to do is right. *We*, knowing who this Son of man is, can understand these words in a fuller and higher sense. He who created man, and who instituted the Sabbath for his benefit, could not pervert his own law from its original meaning and design. This original meaning and design is the benefit of man, which the scribes and Pharisees had entirely lost sight of and perverted. Hence their groundless charges against Christ and his disciples for desecrating the Sabbath. — On the *institution of the Sabbath, its significance, and grounds, and permanent obligation* we can present to the reader no argument so thorough and lucid, and at the same time so concise, as that of Dr. Schaff, contained in his Essay on the *Anglo-American Sabbath*, read before the National Sabbath Convention at Saratoga, Aug. 11, 1863, and adopted and published by the New York Sabbath Committee as one of their tracts. Dr. Schaff first lays down the view generally held by Christians in England and America as the true Scriptural view, in contradistinction to the European continental theory on the Sabbath. It is as follows: "The Sabbath, or weekly day of holy rest, is, next to the family, the oldest institution which God

established on earth for the benefit of man. It dates from Paradise, from the state of innocence and bliss, before the serpent of sin had stung its deadly fangs into our race. The Sabbath, therefore, as well as the family, must have a general significance; it is rooted and grounded in the physical, intellectual, and moral constitution of our nature as it came from the hands of its Creator, and in the necessity of periodical rest for the health and wellbeing of body and soul. It is to the week what the night is to the day — a season of repose and re-animation. It is, originally, not a law, but an act of benediction — a blessing and a comfort to man. The Sabbath was solemnly reaffirmed in the Mosaic legislation as a primitive institution, with an express reference to the creation and the rest of God on the seventh day, in completing and blessing his work, and at the same time with an additional reference to the typical redemption from the bondage of Egypt. (Deut. v, 15.) It was embodied, not in the ceremonial and civil, but in the moral law, which is binding for all times, and rises in sacred majesty and grandeur far above all human systems of ethics, as Mount Sinai rises above the desert, and the pyramids of Egypt above the surrounding plain. There the Sabbath law still stands on the first table, as an essential part of that love of God which is the soul and sum of all true religion and virtue, and can as little be spared as any other of the sacred ten — the number of harmony and completeness. Diminution here is necessarily mutilation, and a mutilation not of any human system of legislation or ethics, but of God's own perfect code of morals. Let us remember that the fourth, like every other of the ten commandments, was immediately spoken by the great Jehovah, and that under an overwhelming and unparalleled display of Divine majesty; that it was even written by his own finger — written not on paper, like the rest of the Pentateuch, but upon tables of stone — the symbol of durability; that it was preserved in the most sacred place of the tabernacle; that it was emphatically 'a sign between Jehovah and his people,' (Ezek. xx, 12;) that it received the express sanction of Christ and his apostles, when they comprehended all the laws of God and the duties of man under the great law of love to God and to our neighbor, and declared that the Gospel, far from overthrowing the law, establishes and fulfills it. The Savior, according to his own solemn declaration, came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill. (Matt. v, 17-19; comp. Rom. iii, 31.) He was neither a revolutionist nor a reactionist, but a reformer in the highest sense of the term; he re-enacted the law of Sinai from the mount of beatitudes with the fullness of the Gospel blessing, as the fundamental charter of his heavenly kingdom; he explained, deepened, and

spiritualized its meaning, satisfied its demands, delivered us from its curse, infused into it a new life, and enables us, by his Holy Spirit, to keep it, in imitation of his own perfect example. Finally, the Jewish Sabbath rose with the Savior from the grave, as a new creation, on the morning of the resurrection, with the fullness of the Gospel salvation, and descended with the Holy Ghost from his exalted throne of glory on the day of Pentecost; to be observed as the Christian Sabbath, as 'the Lord's day,' in his Church to the end of time. Its temporary, ritual form was abolished, its moral substance was preserved and renewed. The Jewish Sabbath was baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost — it was Christianized and glorified. Henceforward it was emphatically the commemoration day of the resurrection, or of the new spiritual creation and the accomplished redemption, and hence a day of sacred joy and thanksgiving, 'the pearl of days,' the crown and glory of the week, and a foretaste and pledge of the eternal Sabbath in heaven. — The Sabbath, then, rests upon a threefold basis — the original *creation*, the Jewish *legislation*, and the Christian *redemption*. It answers the physical, moral, and religious necessities of man. It is supported by the joint authority of the Old and the New Testament, of the law and the Gospel. It has still a twofold legal and evangelical aspect, and we must keep both in view in order to do justice to its character and aim. Like the law in general, the fourth commandment is both negative and positive, prohibitive and injunctive; it is to all men a mirror of God's holiness and our own sinfulness; to the unconverted a wholesome restraint, and a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ, and to the converted a rule of holy obedience. But the Sabbath is also a Gospel institution: it was originally a gift of God's goodness to our first parents before the fall; it 'was made for man,' (Mark ii, 27,) and looks to his physical and spiritual well-being; it was 'a delight' to the pious of the old dispensation, (Isa. lviii, 23,) and now under the new dispensation it is fraught with the glorious memories and blessings of Christ's triumph over sin and death, and of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; it is the connecting link of creation and redemption, of paradise lost and paradise regained; a reminiscence of the paradise of innocence, and an anticipation of the paradise in heaven that can never be lost. 'It is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.' (Ps. cxviii, 24.) Rest in God is the end of all creation, (Heb. iii, 11; iv, 1-11) — not the rest of inaction, but the rest of perfection and benediction, which is one with the highest spiritual activity and joy in unbroken peace and harmony. To this rest the Sabbath points and prepares us from week to week; it is — to borrow freely some expressions

from an English poem of the seventeenth century — heaven once a week; the next world's gladness prepossessed in this; a day to seek eternity in time; a lamp that lights man through these dark and dreary days; the rich and full redemption of the whole week's flight; the milky-way chalked out with suns; the pledge and cue of a full rest, and the outer court of glory!" — Dr. Schaff then proceeds to state and answer the objections which are urged against the alleged perpetuity of the fourth commandment. "1. It is objected, first, 'that the fourth commandment alone required a positive enactment, while all the other commandments of the decalogue are co-extensive in their obligation with reason and conscience.' But a law may be positive, and yet generally binding. So is the law of monogamy, which is equally primitive with the institution of the Sabbath, and yet was equally disregarded by heathens and Mohammedans, and fell even into gross neglect among the Jews, till Christ restored it in its primitive purity and force. Where is the Christian who would on this account defend polygamy, which destroys the dignity of woman, and undermines the moral foundation of the family? The fourth commandment, however, by pointing back to the creation, gives the Sabbath at the same time a place in the order of nature. It is not so much a new commandment, as the solemn re-enactment of an institution as old as man himself. It antedates Judaism, and therefore survives it; it combines the three elements of a permanent Christian institution, being rooted in the order of nature, enacted by positive legislation, and confirmed by the Gospel of Christ. 2. The second objection is derived from the change of day from the seventh to the first, under the Christian dispensation. But this change is at best a mere matter of form, and does not touch the substance of the commandment. The law itself does not expressly fix on the *last* day of the week; it only requires six days for labor, and *every* seventh day, not necessarily *the* seventh day — dies *septenus*, not dies *septimus* — for the rest of worship. It undoubtedly establishes the week of seven days as a Divine order. All days, in themselves considered, are equal before God, (Rom. xiv, 5,) and the selection of the particular day of the week for holy purposes depends on Divine facts and commandments. In the Old Testament it was determined by the creation and the typical redemption; in the new dispensation, by the resurrection and full redemption of Christ. The Gospel only changed the ceremonial or ritual form of the Sabbath law, but preserved and renewed its moral substance. It is also worthy of remark, that the first Sabbath of the world, although the last day in the history of God's creation, was in fact the first day in the history of man, who was made on the sixth day, as the crowning work

of God. 3. A third objection is taken from the general spirit of the Christian religion, which it is said abolished the Jewish distinction of sacred and profane times and places, and regards all time as sacred to God, and every place of the universe as his dwelling. But this argument closely pressed would turn every week-day into a Sabbath, and give us seven Sabbaths for one. This, for all practical purposes, proves too much for the anti-Sabbatists. It anticipates an ideal state of another and better world. There is, indeed, an eternal Sabbath in heaven, which remaineth for the people of God. But while we live on earth, we must, by the necessities of our nature, and by God's own express direction, *labor* as well as rest, and do all our work, with the exception of one day in the week, when we are permitted to rest from *our* work, in order to do the work of *God*, and to prepare ourselves for the eternal rest in heaven. Let us by all means give to God as much of the week as we can, and let us do all our secular work for the glory of God, and thus consecrate all our time on earth to his holy service; but let us not, under the vain delusion of serving him better, withhold from him even that day which he has reserved for his special service. Let us raise the week-days, as much as we can, to the sanctity of the Sabbath, instead of bringing down the Sabbath to the level of the ordinary workdays. Our view, far from secularizing the weekdays, has a tendency to elevate them, by bringing them under the hallowed influence of the Lord's day; while the pseudo-evangelical theory has just the opposite effect in practice; it cries out, spirit, but with the masses it ends in flesh; it vindicates liberty, but it favors lawlessness, which is death to all true freedom. As regards *intrinsic* holiness, all times and seasons, as well as all labor and rest, are alike. This we fully grant. How could we otherwise defend the change of the day from the seventh to the first, or answer the obvious astronomical objections? God undoubtedly fills all time, as he fills all space. But God is also a God of order; he has constituted man a social being, and fitted him for public as well as private worship, which, like every other act of a finite being, must be regulated by the laws of time and space. We all know that the omnipresent Jehovah may be worshiped in the silent chamber, in the lonely desert, and the dark catacomb, as well as in the Temple of Jerusalem and on the Mount Gerizim. But shall we on that account destroy our churches and chapels, or desecrate them by turning them into 'houses of merchandise?' The objection we have under consideration falsely assumes, that the consecration of particular days to God necessarily tends to secularize the other days, when just the contrary is the case. The keeping of the Sabbath, far from interfering with the *continual* service of God, secures,

preserves, promotes, and regulates it. The meaning of the Sabbath law is, not that we should give to God the seventh part of our time *only*, but *at least*. So we should pray 'without ceasing,' according to the apostle's direction; but this, instead of annulling, only increases the obligation of devoting *at least* a certain time of every day to purposes of private devotion. It is not by neglecting, but by strictly observing, the custom of morning and evening prayers, that we can make progress toward our final destination, when our whole life shall be resolved into worship and praise. 4. The last and strongest argument is professedly based upon what we all admit to be the highest authority, beyond which there is no appeal. Christ and St. Paul, it is urged, deny the perpetuity of the Sabbath law. (Matt. xii, 1-5, 10-12; Mark ii, 27; Luke xiii, 11-16; xiv, 2-5; John v, 16; ix, 14; Rom. xiv, 5, 6; Col. ii, 16; Gal. iv, 9, 10.) But if we keep in mind the general relation of the Savior to the law, as explained especially in the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. v, 17-19,) we can not for a moment suppose that he should have shaken the authority of any of God's commandments, the least of which he declared to be more enduring than heaven and earth. The passages so often quoted are not aimed at the Sabbath which the Lord hath made, but at the later Jewish perversion of it. They in no wise oppose the proper observance of the Sabbath by works of Divine worship and charity, but the negative, mechanical, self-righteous, and hypocritical sabbatarianism of the Pharisees, who idolized the letter and killed the spirit of the law; who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel; who exacted tithe from the smallest produce of the garden, and neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; who, like whitened sepulchers, appeared beautiful without, but within were full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Wherever the Christian Sabbath is observed in the same spirit, it is an abuse of God's ordinance, and falls, of course, under the same condemnation as the Jewish sabbatarianism of the days of Christ. Christ is indeed 'Lord of the Sabbath day.' (Matt. xii, 8; Mark ii, 28.) But in the same sense he is Lord of all the commandments, as the lawgiver is above the law. He is also Lord of life, and yet never weakened the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' but sharpened and deepened it by condemning even the hatred of the heart against our neighbor as murder before God. He uniformly set an example of the right observance of the Sabbath by devoting it to works of worship and charity. He emphatically declared the Sabbath to be made for the benefit of man. (Mark ii, 27.) He exhorted his disciples, in the extremities of the last days, to pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath day, lest they might be tempted to desecrate it. (Matt. xxiv, 20.) And,

as to St. Paul, it is certain that while he opposed the *Jewish Sabbath* and the Judaizing mode of its observance, he observed the *Christian Sabbath* by acts of worship, (Acts xx, 7,) and enjoined its observance by acts of charity upon his congregations. (1 Cor. xvi, 2.) St. John, the bosom disciple of Christ, the apostle, Evangelist, and seer of the New Testament, has sufficiently defined his position on the Sabbath question by conferring upon the first day of the week the high distinction of the *Lord's Day*. (Rev. i, 9.) The apostles in retaining without dispute the divinely-established weekly cycle, necessarily retained also the Sabbath, which constitutes and completes the week, and which ceased no more than the weeks to run their ceaseless round. The universal religious observance of Sunday, which we find in the Christian Church east and west immediately after the apostles, would be an inexplicable historical mystery without the preceding practice and sanction of the apostles. We conclude, therefore, that they regarded the Sabbath, as it was intended to be, as a *perpetual* sign between Jehovah and his people. (Ex. xxxi, 17.)" Dr. Schaff closes his argument by setting forth how the practical purposes of the Sabbath can only be secured and realized by the view held by the Evangelical Churches of England and America: "1. The Anglo-American view goes back to the *primitive Sabbath* of the race, given to man as man. It plants it deeply in the original constitution of man and in the order of nature. This is of the utmost importance as a basis for all the temporal benefits of the Sabbath, and for an appeal to utilitarian considerations which must be allowed to have their proper weight upon the world at large, especially on those who can not be reached by the higher moral and religious considerations. For godliness is profitable unto all things, and has a promise for this life as well as for that which is to come.' Experience, which speaks louder than argument, comes to the aid of our position by furnishing abounding proof that the Sabbath rest is favorable and necessary to the body as well as the soul, to the preservation and promotion of health, wealth, and the temporal happiness and prosperity of individuals and communities. It is an undeniable fact that the two nations which keep the Sabbath most strictly — Great Britain and the United States — are the wealthiest and the freest on earth. The philosophy of this fact is plain. Sabbath rest is the condition of successful week-labor for man and beast, and successful labor is the parent of wealth. The proper keeping of the Sabbath, moreover, is one of the best schools of moral discipline and self-government, and self-government is the only ground on which rational and national freedom can rest, and be permanently maintained. 2. The Anglo-American view retains the

legal basis of the Sabbath by teaching the perpetuity of the fourth commandment. It thus secures to the Sabbath the authority of the Divine Lawgiver, which attaches to all other parts of the decalogue, and appeals to the conscience of man. It raises it far above the sphere of mere expediency and temporal usefulness into the sphere of moral duty and sacred obligation. It can enforce it by an irresistible, *Thus saith the Lord*. By strengthening the decalogue in one member we strengthen all the other members, and promote the general interests of morality. 3. By placing the fourth commandment on a level with the other commandments, and bringing it especially into close contact with the fifth, which enjoins obedience to parents, and with the seventh commandment, which condemns all unchastity in thought, word, and deed, the Anglo-American view acknowledges the inseparable connection between the strict observance of the Sabbath and the moral welfare and happiness of the *family*. The Sabbath and the family are the two oldest institutions of God on earth, both date from Paradise, both look toward the happiness of man, both flourish and decay together. What God has joined together no man should dare to put asunder. 4. The Anglo-American view makes more account of the distinction between the *religious* and the *civil* Sabbath than the Continental, and lays greater stress on the necessity of the latter. It regards the civil Sabbath as essential for public morals and the self-preservation of the State. Hence our Sabbath laws, throughout the land, which militate as little against religious freedom and the separation of Church and State as the laws upholding monogamy. On the contrary, they are a support to our civil and political freedom. For freedom without law is licentiousness and ruin to any people. Our separation of Church and State rests on mutual respect and friendship, and is by no means a separation of the nation from Christianity. The *religious* Sabbath can not and ought not to be enforced by law; for all worship and true religion must be the free and voluntary homage of the heart. But the *civil* Sabbath can and ought to be maintained and protected by legislation, and a Christian community has a natural right to look to their government for the protection of their Sabbath as well as for the protection of their persons and property. All good citizens can rally around the support of the *civil* Sabbath from moral and patriotic motives, whatever may be their *religious* opinions. Such cooperation is not possible on the continent of Europe, where Church and State are inextricably mixed up. 5. But while we hold fast to all these great characteristics and advantages, let us never lose sight of the fact that the Sabbath is *gospel* as well as law, and its observance a *privilege* as well as a

duty. It is *law to all citizens, gospel to the believers*. If we insist exclusively or chiefly upon the legal element, we are in danger of relapsing into Jewish sabbatarianism, and make its observance a burden instead of a joy. Its advent will then not be hailed but dreaded, especially by the youth, and the way be prepared for a successful reaction, which would sweep away both the evangelical and the legal, the religious and the civil Sabbath, with all its great blessings, from our midst. There is a false legalism as well as a false evangelism, and we must keep equally clear from both extremes."

CHAPTER III, VERSES 1-5. IS IT LAWFUL TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH DAYS? "The apparent variation in the different records of this miracle, that in St. Matthew the question proceeds from the Pharisees, in Sts. Mark and Luke from the Lord, is no real one; the reconciliation of the two accounts is easy. The Pharisees first ask him, '*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?*' He answers this question, as was his wont, (see Matt. xxi, 24,) by another question. That this is such another counter-question comes out most plainly in St. Luke: '*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?*' Our Lord, with the same infinite wisdom which we admire in his answer to the question of the lawyer, 'Who is my neighbor?' (Luke x, 29,) shifts the whole argument and lifts it altogether into a higher region, where at once it is seen on which side is the right and the truth. They had put the alternatives of doing or not doing; here there might be a question. But he shows that the alternatives are, doing good or failing to do good — which last he puts as identical with doing evil, the neglecting to save as equivalent with destroying. Here there could be no question: this under no circumstances could be right; it could never be good to sin. Therefore, it is not merely allowable, but a duty, to do some things on the Sabbath. You have asked me, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?* I answer, It is lawful *to do well* on that day, and therefore to heal. They can answer him nothing further — *they held their peace.*" — **WITH ANGER, BEING GRIEVED.** These words are peculiar to Mark. He loves to dwell upon and graphically describes the emotions of the Savior. With his anger there was grief mingled, when he saw how these men criminally hardened their hearts. Anger in Jesus, the Holy One and great Friend of sinners, is a feeling of pain and grief on account of the wickedness and hardness of heart of the sinner. "The existence of grief and anger together in the same heart is no contradiction: indeed, with Him who was at once perfect love and perfect holiness, grief for

the sinner must ever have gone hand in hand with anger against the sin; and this anger, which with us is ever in danger of becoming a turbid thing, of passing into anger against the man, who is God's creature, instead of being anger against the sin, which is the devils corruption of God's creature, with him was perfectly pure; for it is not the agitation of the waters, but the sediment at the bottom, which troubles and defiles them, and where no sediment is, no impurity will follow on their agitation."

SECTION IV.

THE FIRST WITHDRAWAL OF CHRIST FROM HIS ENEMIES. THE
PEOPLE MANIFEST AN INCREASING REVERENCE FOR HIM.
HIS SPHERE OF ACTIVITY WIDENS, AND HE SELECTS HIS
APOSTLES.

CHAPTER III, 6-19.

1. THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS PLOT AGAINST JESUS, BUT GREAT MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE FOLLOW HIM.

Verses 6-12. (COMPARE MATTHEW xii, 14-16; LUKE vi, 11, AND
17-19.)

(6) **AND** the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. (7) But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, (8) and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, ^[1] and *from* beyond Jordan; ^[2] and they about Tyre and Sidon, ^[3] a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. (9) And he spake to his disciples that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. (10) For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. (11) And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. (12) And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

[1 Idumea, the *Edom* of the Old Testament, the country of Esau, to whom the name Edom, which signifies *red*, was given on account of the color of the pottage for which he sold his birthright. (Gen. xxv, 29-34.) The ruddy hue of the mountain-range given to Esau may also have been the cause of the name. Previously that country was called *Mount Seir*, which means *rugged*, (Gen. xxxii, 3; xxxvi, 8,) from Seir, the progenitor of the Horites, (Gen. xiv, 6; xxxvi, 20-22.) It lay on the south-east of Palestine, along the eastern side of the great valley, extending from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea. The Edomites, hereditary enemies of Israel, were subdued by David, but during the Babylonish captivity they possessed themselves of the southern part of Palestine as far as Hebron, but were again conquered and incorporated with the Jews by John Hyrcanus, one of the Hasmonean princes, about one hundred and twenty-five years before the birth of Christ. Mark probably understands by Idumea here the southern part of Palestine, which was sometimes called Idumea, as having been wrested from the Edomites after the captivity.]

[2 The so-called *Perea*, that part of the land of Israel which was east of Jordan.]

[3 See footnotes 4 and 5 to Matthew xi, 21.]

2. JESUS ORDAINS THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

Verses 13-19. (COMPARE MATTHEW x, 1-8; LUKE vi, 12-16)

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

VERSES 6-12. WITH THE HERODIANS — the courtiers and partisans of Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, (see note on Matt. xxii, 16,) because they could do nothing without the secular arm. That the Pharisees made at that

early period common cause with the Herodians, whom they hated and despised in their hearts, shows their growing hatred to Christ. — AND A GREAT MULTITUDE FOLLOWED HIM. From this multitude is to be distinguished the other multitude, of which it is said, "*They came unto him.*" Griesbach, DeWette, Meyer, and Lange commence a new sentence with the words, "*And from Judea.*" This following Jesus, even of the Galileans, was, however, with many of them only transient.

VERSES 13-19. AND HE CALLETH UNTO HIM WHOM HE WOULD. No one was allowed to follow him to the mountain without being especially called. Those whom he appointed apostles had been his disciples before. We may learn from this, that no one should take upon himself the office of the evangelical ministry without a Divine call, and that before receiving such a call a man must be already a disciple of Christ. — AND HE ORDAINED TWELVE. This setting apart for the apostolic office had been preceded by several calls extended to the men individually to become his followers, and even the act here mentioned seems to have been only a preparatory setting apart, (comp. Luke vi, 12,) in order to prepare and fit them for their future real mission, recorded by Matthew, (x, 5,) Mark, (vi, 7,) and Luke, (ix, 1.) Mark mentions the ordaining of the twelve without specifying the time. — The apostolic calling included three things: 1. That they might be eye and ear-witnesses of what the Lord said and did on earth; 2. That they might preach the Gospel; and, 3, have the power of performing miracles. — AND SIMON HE SURNAME PETER. Mark simply mentions the new, significant, and permanent name of the great apostle, without saying when it was first given him. — BOANERGES, WHICH IS, THE SONS OF THUNDER. "As Simon was surnamed Peter at an earlier period, the sons of Zebedee may have received their appellations earlier or later. The new name given to each of them indicates *two* things: *first*, a description of their *natural* character — as brothers — a character full of meaning; and, *secondly*, their *apostolic* character. Every view which entirely disregards one of these is false; especially that view which finds a mere expression of *blame*. The Lord has by this title designated them neither as 'boisterous' nor as 'hot-headed' men; but most certainly, though not without a warning running side by side, he indicates a good, natural ground in them, out of which his grace shall afterward produce something of powerful efficacy. To connect the incident related by Luke (ix, 54, 55) with the giving of these names, is in so far correct, as these brothers, who

generally spoke and acted together, were men of a strong, ardent spirit, and not in the least of the soft and effeminate character, which unfortunately, and without any reason, has been supposed to have belonged to John. But the idea that, at the time when they would have called down fire from heaven, the Lord gave them this name in the way of a reprimand, is to be rejected. There is not a single instance in the whole New Testament, or even within the entire compass of Bible history, of a reproof being given by affixing a name; and surely St. Mark would not, in his catalogue of apostles, and along side of the name of Peter, have fastened upon the brethren a nickname which, on this supposition, the Lord most assuredly did not intend should remain with them.

— That St. Mark's translation, 'sons of thunder,' must be correct, is self-evident. And though we can not exactly restore the root of the Aramaic word, this much is certain, that the thunder here is used in the sense of power to shake. On whatever occasion the Lord may have said, ye are or shall be called *sons of thunder*, he must thereby have conveyed to their minds this: 'I know that out of the depths of the strong feelings of your fervent heart there shall break forth a *powerful* testimony of the Word. I will, therefore, make you, as my apostles, thunderers.' We know nothing further of St. James, who met an early martyrdom, but St. John's thunder-power is sufficiently seen in the sharp edge and the fearless, unimpeded march of his majestic *testimony* along side of that stream of abounding love which pervades it and sheds its halo around it." (Condensed from Stier.) — JUDAS ISCARIOT. Let us learn from the choice of this apostle, 1. The boundless love of the Lord, which hoped all things, (1 Cor. xiii, 7;) 2. The depth of human corruption; 3. The dangers of the ministerial office, and of any outward connection with the Lord, when the heart is not right. — From our Lord's choice of his disciples we may draw the following lessons: I. *That no one can become a minister of Christ by his innate strength of intellect.* He must be called by the Lord; the natural darkness of the mind must first be dispelled by the Lord, commanding his light to shine into the heart. II. *That the Lord dispenses his gifts according to his good pleasure.* 1. The qualification for preaching [*χάρισμα προφητείας*] the Lord has promised to his Church to the end of this dispensation. 2. The gift to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons, as the apostles received it, was an extraordinary charisma bestowed upon them in order to confirm the first preaching of the Gospel by miracles. But spiritual miracles attend the ministry of Divinely-called preachers to this day. III. *That every personal peculiarity can be made useful in the service of Christ.* The courage and energy of

Peter, which might have degenerated into rashness and arrogance without the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, the Lord changes or develops into that firm and unshaken faith that removes mountains. The excitable mind of John and James, which may have been naturally prone to sinful anger, he fills with holy zeal and earnestness. The less gifted of his disciples he knows equally well how to make useful in his service. IV. *Where this is not accomplished, it is man's fault*, of which we have a melancholy instance in Judas, who might have made himself very useful in the kingdom of God by his natural talent in administering its temporal affairs.

SECTION V.

THE CONFLICT OF JESUS WITH THE BLASPHEMOUS UNBELIEF OF HIS ENEMIES, AND THE WANT OF FAITH ON THE PART OF HIS FRIENDS.

CHAPTER III, 20-35. (COMPARE MATTHEW xii, 22-50; LUKE viii,
19-21; xi, 14-26.)

(20) **AND they went into a house;** ^[1] **and the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.** (21) **And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him:** for they said. He is beside himself. (22) **And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.** (23) **And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?** (24) **And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom can not stand.** (25) **And if a house be divided against itself, that house can not stand.** (26) **And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he can not stand, but hath an end.** (27) **No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.** (28) **Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:** (29) **But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:** ^[2] (30) **Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.** (31) **There came then his brethren and his**

mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. (32) And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren ^[3] **without seek for thee. (33) And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? (34) And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! (35) For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.**

[1 Literally, *they came home*, that is, to Capernaum. This clause, in the English version connected with verse 19, commences verse 20 in the best Greek editions, and in Luther's translation.]

[2 According to a reading approved by Griesbach, Lachman, and Tischendorf, of an eternal sin.]

[3 Several manuscripts approved by Lachman, Griesbach, and Tischendorf, have the addition, "and thy sisters."]

VERSE 20. On chronological order, compare notes on Matthew. Mark evidently does not narrate events according to chronological sequence.

VERSE 21. By "HIS FRIENDS," [the Greek, *οἱ παρὸς αὐτοῦ*, means those from him, that is, those belonging to him,] we have not to understand the disciples, but the relatives of Jesus. — WENT OUT from the place where they then were; that is, either from the house in which Jesus made his home, and which he had left again, or from Nazareth; the latter supposition seems improbable. — HE IS BESIDE HIMSELF. The expression is used in the same sense as in 2 Cor. v, 13. Strong as it is, it does not necessarily imply that they regarded him *insane*, but simply means that they thought he was overtasking himself; he was doing too much, exposing both his health and his personal safety. If we bear in mind that in a certain sense these his relatives did not yet believe in him, (John vii, 5,) we can easily account for their conduct; they could not understand his zeal, and may have even apprehended that his mind might have given way under the too great exertion. — How often is the charge of mental derangement brought against serious and zealous Christians! When a person, thoroughly convicted of his sins, prays much, and turns his back to his usual pleasures, or turns away from the general course of the world — or when a Christian consecrates himself without any reserve to the service of God,

looking at every thing in the light of the realities of eternity — or when a minister manifests unusual zeal and self-denial in the cause of his Master — the world is at once ready to cry out that they are deranged or beside themselves. It is something quite common for impious and unbelieving relatives, self-righteous Pharisees, or merely nominal Christians, to start and to believe such charges. On the other hand, a man may traverse land and sea in order to acquire wealth, he may plunge headlong into the vortex of pleasures and vices, he may neglect the duties toward his family and his own calling — and the world will not only not question the soundness of his mind, but call him a smart and clever man, provided he is successful in gaining wealth, honor, and position! — Even Schleirmacher remarks, on this passage: "So those have always been judged, whom God had selected to be his particular instruments; the same has been the case in the times of the great reformation of the Church, and the same will be the case whenever times of darkness require reformers of unreserved devotion and zeal."

VERSE 22. The scribes had come from Jerusalem to watch him closely, to destroy his influence with the people, and to collect materials for a formal charge against him. While his relatives repaired to the spot where the Lord was, the miraculous cure (Matt. xii, 22, 23) took place, and the people ask, in astonishment, whether he was not the Messiah. Enraged at this exhibition of admiration on the part of the people, the scribes charge him with being in league with Satan. This malicious slander and horrible blasphemy the Lord meets with a firmness, a consciousness of innocence, and a freedom from every feeling of resentment, that could not fail to convince every unprejudiced person of his spotless purity and holiness. — There have been, alas! at all times enemies of the truth, who have attempted to decry the converting and sanctifying influences upon the human heart, in the same way as was done here by the scribes.

VERSES 23-27. The Savior lays down the important proposition, that whoever is instrumental in pulling down the kingdom of Satan, is not the servant of Satan, but of God. 1. The kingdom of Satan, though it has its internal discord and contention, is a unit so far as its opposition to the kingdom of God is concerned. 2. He that blasphemeth those that are successful in destroying Satan's kingdom, is an ally of Satan, however he may pretend to do God a service.

VERSES 28, 29. Mark does not mention the blasphemy *against the Son of man*, but makes the same distinction between pardonable and unpardonable blasphemies, as Matthew and Luke, by restricting the unpardonableness of wicked resistance to the Divine Being to those cases where a person blasphemes in spite of the highest degree of inward conviction by the illumination of the Holy Ghost. Terrifying as our Lord's declaration concerning the unpardonable sin is, it is at the same time a rich source of consolation for him, that is deeply convicted of his sins and feels the need of God's pardoning grace. But let those that flatter themselves with the notion that it is impossible for the God of love to inflict endless punishment upon any of his creatures bear in mind, that the sinner can attain to such a degree of hardness of heart, that he himself has no more desire for salvation.

VERSE 31. THERE CAME THEN HIS BRETHREN AND HIS MOTHER. "The Greek particle οὖν, translated *then*, is not to be taken for an adverb denoting time, but as a logical connective, in the sense of *so then*, when an interrupted narrative or argument is resumed and continued. It connects the incident that follows with the statement in verse 21, that his own friends or relatives came out to secure his person, thinking him beside himself. Having been led to give some account of the effect produced by Christ's increasing popularity upon his most malignant enemies, (verses 22-30,) the writer now returns to the effect upon his friends." (A condensed remark of Dr. Alexander.) — STANDING WITHOUT. If we assume that these friends came out of the house which Jesus had left, we must understand by *without*, outside of or beyond the crowd, by which the Savior was surrounded in the open air.

SECTION VI.

JESUS CHOOSES THE PARABOLIC FORM OF INSTRUCTION IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE UNSUSCEPTIBILITY OF THE PEOPLE AND THE INCREASING HOSTILITY OF THEIR LEADERS.

CHAPTER IV, 1-34. (COMPARE MATTHEW xiii, 1-23, 31-35; LUKE viii, 4-18.)

(1) AND he began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. (2) And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine, (3) Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: (4) And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air^[1] came and devoured it up. (5) And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: (6) But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. (7) And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. (8) And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred. (9) And he said unto them. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (10) And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.^[2] (11) And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know^[3] the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables: (12) That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them. (13) And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables? (14) The sower soweth the Word. (15) And these are they by the wayside, where the Word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the Word that was sown in their hearts. (16) And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the Word, immediately receive it with gladness; (17) and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the Word's sake, immediately they are offended. (18) And these^[4] are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the Word, (19) and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful. (20) And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit,

some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred. (21) And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel,^[5] or under a bed?^[6] and not to be set on a candlestick? (22) For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. (23) If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. (24) And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear^[7] shall more be given. (25) For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. (26) And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; (27) and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. (28) For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. (29) But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. (30) And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? (31) It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: (32) But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. (38) And with many such parables spake he the Word unto them, as they were able to hear it. (34) But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

[1 "Of the air" is wanting in some of the manuscripts. It was probably inserted from Luke.]

[2 Tischendorf has adopted, according to Codd. B, C, L, A, the reading, "*the parables.*" The parable in question induced them to consult him on the tendency and object of the parabolic method of instruction in general.]

[3 "To know" is wanting in A, B, C, and elsewhere. Tischendorf and Lachman have left it out of the text.]

[4 According to the reading adopted by Lachman and Tischendorf: "*and others are they which are,*" etc.]

[5 See foot-note 3 to Matthew v, 15.]

[6 A couch. It is best to understand by it here not a bed, but the triclinium, (Matt. xxiii, 6,) on which the meals were taken. The idea to be conveyed is, that a light is placed on, not under the table.]

[7 "That hear" is omitted by Lachman and Tischendorf, according to B, C, D, G, L.]

VERSE 2. Matthew records seven parables as delivered in immediate succession, Mark only three; but these three, like those recorded by Matthew, treat of the kingdom of God. The first describes the kingdom of God in its incipiency and the difficulties connected with it; the second in its safe and natural development; the third in its wonderful and glorious spread and completion. Mark seems to introduce the parables here, in order to show how the parabolical mode of instruction became necessary, in consequence of the unsusceptibility of the people and the increasing hostility of their leaders.

VERSES 11, 12. THOSE THAT ARE WITHOUT, form the natural contrast to those that were *with* Christ, his disciples who had addressed the question to him. In 1 Cor. v, 12, and Rev. xxii, 15, it is the designation for unbelievers, for all that are not Christians. — THAT SEEING THEY MAY SEE, AND NOT PERCEIVE. The words quoted from Isaiah have been explained in Matthew xiii, 14, 15. The Greek conjunction *ινα*, *that*, must be taken in its proper acceptation: "in order that." For the leading idea is, that parabolic instruction is made use of, in order that those who are determined to harden their hearts may remain in blindness. To see and not to perceive, to hear and not to understand, can evidently only take place in consequence of a determination on the part of men not to perceive or to understand. They are bent on preventing their conversion, and avoid for this very purpose every contact with truth. On such men God does not force his truth, but leaves their choice perfectly free, presenting the truth to them in parables, which only the sincere inquirer after truth can understand. — We subjoin an abridged sketch from the Homilist, though we do by no means agree with all its propositions: "The subject which the present section presents is, *The revealment of the Gospel*; and we shall notice, I. THE EVIDENT NECESSITY OF ITS REVEALMENT. The mysteries of the kingdom may be regarded as meaning the *elements of the Gospel* — its cardinal truths and provisions: these, till they are revealed, are *secrets*, or mysteries. It is important to remark, that there is a distinction between the Gospel and its revelation. The Gospel is something

existing independent of revelation. As astronomy is something independent of all astronomical books, so the Gospel existed before a revelation. But apart from the revelation, the Gospel would be a *secret* — a mystery. The necessity of its revelation will appear from these three facts: First, *That the Gospel can only benefit us as it is believed*. Faith in its 'mysteries' or secrets is the necessary condition of spiritual salvation. It is no arbitrary arrangement which leaves our destiny dependent on faith. 'He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.' Secondly, *That there can be no belief without knowledge*. We have no faith, we can have no faith, in any thing that has not come within the range of our consciousness. 'How can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?' Thirdly, *That without a revealment the realities of the Gospel could never have been known*. The truths of the Gospel are not, like the truths of science, written on the pages of nature for men to decipher and to interpret. They transcend human discovery.

II. THE PARABOLICAL METHOD OF ITS REVEALMENT.

Christ, in order to reveal the 'mysteries,' the cardinal elements of the Gospel, dealt largely in parables. The reason is, *the spiritual obtuseness of sinners*; but he did not teach in parables *in order to* conceal his meaning from his ungodly hearers. We can not entertain this thought for the following reasons: First, *The language does not necessarily imply this idea*. Jesus does not say, I speak to them in parables because I want to hide from them my meaning — want to render more dense the atmosphere, more impenetrable the veil of their hearts. No, he says that it is because they are already so blind that he thus teaches. He gives parables, not to produce moral obliquity, but because moral obliquity existed. Secondly, *This idea is essentially inconsistent with the nature of parabolical teaching*. The very nature and design of a parable are to make an obscure truth clear — to *illustrate*. Had he spoken in intricate allegories and enigmas, or in scholastic technicalities, there might be some show of reason in supposing that Christ spoke in order to conceal. Thirdly, *This idea is incompatible with the character and mission of Christ*. Does it comport with his kindness to suppose that he sought to intensify the darkness of the human spirit? An attempt on Christ's part to do this would have been superfluous, and inconsistent with all our notions of his character and purpose. We hold, therefore, to the principle that he taught in parables because of the existing spiritual *obtuseness* of his hearers. Had their spiritual intuitions been clear they would have caught his meaning by a simple sentence, and they would not have required such time spent in illustrations. Besides making Divine truth

clear to the ignorant, parables serve other subordinate and auxiliary purposes. (1.) They serve to reflect the manners and customs of the ancients. Christ's parables are pictures taken from olden times. (2.) They serve to show the mercy of Jesus in thus condescending to meet the benighted condition of our minds. (3.) They serve to invest the Bible with all the charms of variety and life. Christ's teachings being parabolical, are full of nature and human life. (4.) They seem to show the importance of adapting our methods of teaching to the conditions and capacities of our hearers.

III. THE DIFFERENT SPIRITUAL RESULTS OF ITS REVEALMENT. Man has a threefold vision; the sensuous, the intellectual, and the spiritual. The last is that which makes the object real, brings it home to the heart, and makes it part of our nature. Unless a man has a spiritual vision of the Gospel he is injured by it; he seeing sees not. But in these two opposite results it is important to remember three things: I. The Gospel benefits by design — it does not injure by design. 2. The Gospel benefits by adaptation — it does not injure by adaptation. It has no aptitude for this. 3. The Gospel benefits by Divine influence — it does not injure by Divine influence."

VERSES 21-23. Mark and Luke introduce here words which our Lord had spoken before in the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. v, 15,) and in the instruction given to the apostles. (Matt. x, 26.) There is no reason whatever to doubt that our Lord repeated such sayings. Their connection with the preceding is obvious. The Lord had drawn a distinction between his disciples and the people *without*, and told them that by speaking in parables the truth should be withheld from the latter. Lest the disciples should draw erroneous conclusions from this, he tells them that what they learn of him they are not to keep to themselves, as a privileged class, but to publish it wide and far. "As the sower seeds the seed that it may shoot forth, so a lamp is brought into a room that it may give light. Think not that the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, of which I spoke, are committed to you to be kept secret; you twelve know and should remember that I send you to speak publicly that which you now receive alone, to preach afterward on the house-tops what you now hear in the ear!" (Stier.)

VERSES 24, 25. TAKE HEED WHAT YOU HEAR. "This is to be taken as another application of the general exhortation, He who has ears let him hear! But it is sharpened in its form with special reference to the disciples who have eyes and ears; their *seeing* is to be a more careful looking to themselves *after* hearing, while the people have not even the first seeing *in order to*

hearing." (Stier.) — WITH WHAT MEASURE YE METE, etc. Here we have again words that occur in the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. vii, 2; Luke vi, 37); in the latter connection they are used with special reference to harsh and rash judgments; here they refer to what precedes, that is, Christ's instruction and its proper improvement. "The essential meaning of the maxim in both cases is, that giving and receiving are reciprocal, like action and reaction as a law of physics. The specific application here is, that he who would receive instruction must give something in return, to wit, intelligent attention, a desire to be instructed, and a proper use of what he knows already. This specific application is distinctly intimated in the next clause: *unto you that hear shall more be given.*" (Alexander.) The sense of the passage is accordingly: "If ye receive carefully into your hearts what you hear, you will thereby fit yourselves for receiving still more. But if you come to me with but a faint desire, with a divided heart, with a distracted mind, the Divine truth will be meted to you according to your measure of receiving it." Lange, however, thinks that the mere hearing and receiving does not exhaust the idea of *meting*, and he finds accordingly the additional meaning in the words, "According to your zeal in instructing others, your Master shall increase your own knowledge." The proverb of the following verse is here likewise used with special reference to the amount of zeal displayed in the Gospel ministry. — Faithful pastors and attentive hearers receive from day to day an increasing measure of light and grace; but an indifferent soul becomes poorer from day to day, till it loses finally every thing. O, how much more rapid would be our progress in the work of grace, if we would make a more faithful use of all the means of grace!

VERSES 26-29. This is the only parable which is peculiar to Mark. Like that of the leaven, it declares the secret, invisible energy of the Divine Word — that it has life in itself, and will unfold itself according to the law of its own being; but besides that which it has in common with that parable, it teaches us that the further growth of the seed, after it is sown, proceeds. 1, secretly, without the knowledge of man; 2, independently of human care and effort; 3, at certain fixed times, in a natural progress from one step of advancement to another. — AS IF A MAN SHOULD CAST SEED INTO THE GROUND. Whom shall we understand by the man casting seed into the ground? Is it the Son of man himself, or his servants, the ministers of the Gospel? Stier takes the ground that only the latter can be meant. "It can not be said of the Lord, that he knows not how the seed sown in the hearts of his people springs and grows

up; since it is only his continual presence by his Spirit in their hearts which causes it to grow at all. Neither can he fitly be compared to a sower who, having scattered his seed, goes his way and occupies himself in other business, feeling that it lies henceforth beyond the sphere of his power to further the prosperity of the seed, but that it must be left to itself and its own indwelling powers. This is no fit description of Him who is not merely the author and finisher of our faith, but who also conducts it through all its intermediate stages, and without whose blessing and active co-operation it would be totally unable to make any, even the slightest, progress. But there is, on the other hand," says Trench, "another and not slighter difficulty; for at verse 29 it is said, '*when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.*' Of whom can it be said, save of the Lord of the harvest, that he putteth in the sickle — that he gathereth his people, when they are ripe for glory — when they have finished their course — when the work of faith has been accomplished in their hearts — into everlasting habitations?" Trench, therefore, as we shall see, endeavors to apply the parable both to the Lord himself and to his servants. How Stier avoids the difficulty presented by verse 29, we shall also presently see. — AND SHOULD SLEEP, AND RISE NIGHT AND DAY. "He lets day and night succeed each other according to the ordinary course of nature; he leaves the God of heaven to bring day and night over the earth, an operation beyond the reach of man, and remains quietly within his own sphere, the sphere allotted to man; he sleeps during the night, and is awake during the day. Indolent sleep during the day, of course, is not permitted; on the contrary, the daily new awaking or rising expressly includes all diligence, carefulness, and attention on the part of the *laboring* husbandman, (2 Tim. ii, 6,) rendered necessary by the place he occupies. Not to concern himself at all about the seed, after he has once cast it, were assuredly culpable neglect. But our Savior means to say this: that no one need be in painful anxiety about it. Eccles. xi, 6, and Ps. cxxvii, 1, teach us the due medium between useless, tormenting anxiety and ruinous, thoughtless indolence. This much is certain; all that man can do in protecting and helping is a mere trifle; the great business of springing up and growing goes on without us. The expression *night and day* signifies, moreover, the necessary amount of the time intervening between sowing and harvest; so many days and nights must elapse ere the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear appear in succession. — AND THE SEED SHOULD SPRING AND GROW UP, HE KNOWETH NOT HOW. "Those who under Christ are teachers in his Church, are here instructed to rest

satisfied that the seed should grow and spring up without their knowing exactly how; let them not be searching at its roots to see how they have stricken into the soil, nor seek prematurely to anticipate the shooting of the blade, or the forming of the corn in the ear; for the mystery of the life of God in any and in every heart is unfathomable — any attempt to determine that its course shall be this way, or that way, is only mischievous." So says Trench, in harmony with Stier, but continues then: "But let us also consider in what sense that which is said of leaving the seed to itself can be affirmed of Christ. It is true that the inner spiritual life of men is never in any stage of its development without the care and watchfulness of the Lord who first communicated that life; yet are there two moments when he may be said especially to visit the soul; at the beginning of the spiritual life, which is the seed-time, and again when he takes his people to himself, which is their time of harvest. Between these times lies a period in which the work of the Lord is going forward without any such manifest interpositions on his part — not indeed without the daily supply of his Spirit, and the daily ordering of his Providence, but so as that he does not put to his hand so plainly and immediately as at those two cardinal moments. And the difficulty will be slighter when we make application of the parable — as undoubtedly we are bound to do — to the growth and progress of the universal Church, and not only to that of the individual soul. The Lord at his first coming in the flesh sowed the word of the kingdom in the world, planted a Church therein, which having done he withdrew himself; the heavens received him till the time of the consummation of all things. Many and many a time since then the cry has ascended in his ears, 'O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down!' — often it has seemed to man as though the hour of interference had arrived, as though his Church were at its last gasp, at the point to die, as though its enemies were about to prevail against it, and to extinguish it forever, unless he appeared for its deliverance. Yet he has not come forth, he has left it to surmount its obstacles, not indeed without his mighty help, but without his visible interference. He has left the Divine seed, to grow on by night and by day, through storm and through sunshine, increasing secretly with the increase of God; and will let it so continue till it has borne and brought to maturity all its appointed fruit. And only then, when the harvest of the world is ripe, when the number of his elect people is accomplished, will he again the second time appear unto salvation, thrusting in his sickle, and reaping the earth, and gathering the wheat into his barns." — FOR THE EARTH BRINGETH FORTH FRUIT OF HERSELF, "because God has originally endowed it with

the fertility which meets the seed, and which he continually renews and fertilizes by influences from above. These words imply only that there is a vitality for the seed independent of *man*, but they include the energy of God. (Compare 1 Cor. iii, 6, 7.) The seed has now been sown, it has its own part to act; you may now be quiet and act yours; see that you procure good seed, do your day's work in sowing it, then *wait*, (James ii, 7.)" (Stier.) — FIRST THE BLADE, THEN THE EAR, AFTER THAT THE FULL CORN IN THE EAR. "We have here the natural progress of the plant from stage to stage, between seed-time and harvest. The *three* stages correspond to the little children, young men, and fathers in 1 John ii, 12, 13. Our Lord gives every thing here in a figure drawn from nature, simple yet full of meaning, that we may meditate upon the kingdom of God; teaching us not to despise quiet perennial growth, not to lose heart because of small beginnings, but to wait, without any precipitate misconceptions, for the right termination." (Stier.) — BUT WHEN THE FRUIT IS BROUGHT FORTH — literally, *offers itself*. "To the eye of the husbandman the fruit *presents itself with sufficient distinctness* at the proper time, as ripe. This idea, in contrast to the concealed condition of the plant at its origin, and to its uncertain appearance at the intermediate stages, is expressed emphatically by the Greek verb here used. The fruit visibly invites to the harvest. It is only in its most general application that *this* harvest can be regarded as denoting also the last great harvest of the whole world before God; the parable speaks of the manifold *human* sowings and reapings which intervene between God's seed-time and God's harvest. The harvest, therefore, is the human harvest, with a view to a sowing to be again immediately commenced. Do not come back with the harvest wagons immediately after thou hast sown a little, but let the earth and the seed get time; dost thou see, however, the fruit, then immediately put in the sickle. (Joel iv, 13.) The Lord does not speak here of reapers, as in Matthew xiii, 30, for here it is the people connected with the farm that are sickle-bearers; there is no need for angels. The man must now appropriate to himself the corn that has grown up. He reaps it, that he may again sow it out to advantage. (John iv, 36.) His design is not to store up in granaries, that he may rest and enjoy himself before the time. Thus the parable returns to its beginning; thus the growth of the kingdom advances before men upon the earth." (Stier.) We think Stier has thus satisfactorily removed the difficulty which Trench sees in applying this part of the parable to human sowers alone.

SECTION VII.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST INCREASINGLY MANIFESTED BY HIS MIRACULOUS POWER OVER THE ELEMENTS OF NATURE, THE WORLD OF SPIRITS, THE DOMAIN OF HIDDEN MALADIES, AND OVER DEATH ITSELF.

CHAPTER IV, 35, TO CHAPTER V, 43.

1. HE REBUKES THE STORM AND PUTS TO SHAME THE LITTLE FAITH OF HIS DISCIPLES.

Chapter IV, 35-41. (COMPARE MATTHEW viii, 23-27; LUKE viii, 22-25.)

(35) **AND the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.** (36) And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. (37) And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. (38) And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? (39) And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. (40) And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? (41) And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

2. CHRIST TRIUMPHS OVER THE DESPAIRING UNBELIEF OF A DEMONIAC. THE CALLOUS WORLDLINESS OF THE GADARENES.

Chapter V, 1-20. (COMPARE MATTHEW viii, 28-34; LUKE viii, 26-39.)

(1) AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. (2) And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, (3) who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: (4) Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him. (5) And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. (6) But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshiped him, (7) and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. (8) (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.) (9) And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many. (10) And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. (11) Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. (12) And all the devils ^[1] besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. (13) And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. (14) And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. (15) And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid. (16) And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine. (17) And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. (18) And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. (19) Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great

things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.
(20) And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.

[1 *All the devils* is wanting in many manuscripts.]

3. THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD IS HEALED, AND THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

Verses 21-43. (COMPARE MATTHEW ix, 1 18-26; LUKE viii, 40-56.)

(21) AND when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; and he was nigh unto the sea. (22) And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, (23) and besought ^[2] him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. (24) And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. (25) And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, (26) and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, (27) when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. (28) For she said, ^[3] If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. (29) And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague. (30) And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? (31) And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? (32) And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. (33) But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. (34) And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. (35) While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead; ^[4] why troublest thou the Master any further? (36) As soon as Jesus heard

the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. (37) And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. (38) And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. (39) And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. (40) And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. (41) And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise. (42) And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. (43) And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

[2 Tischendorf had adopted the present tense, according to A, C, L.]

[3 Namely, within herself.]

[4 Literally, *died*, without any reference to the present; not *is dead*.]

VERSES 35-41. AND THE SAME DAY, WHEN THE EVEN WAS COME. The three Evangelists who relate this event agree in placing it immediately before the healing of the possessed in the country of the Gadarenes. Mark tells us expressly that it was on the evening of the day, when he had concluded a series of parables. — LET US PASS OVER UNTO THE OTHER SIDE. On these words Stier remarks, "that the Lord who so often is under the necessity of opposing his majestic I to all other men, condescendingly speaks of the *we* and *us* in the external things of ordinary life." — EVEN AS HE WAS — without further preparation for the voyage; that is, without delay. — AND THERE AROSE A GREAT STORM OF WIND. The Lake of Tiberias, surrounded with mountain gorges, is known to be especially exposed to very sudden and violent squalls; this must have been one of unusual vehemence, else the disciples, who were experienced fishermen and familiar with all the changes of the lake, would not have been so greatly terrified. — AND HE WAS IN THE HINDER PART OF THE SHIP, ASLEEP ON A

PILLOW, laying his weary head upon the wooden railing of the ship, and sleeping so soundly and tranquilly that he was not roused by the storm and uproar around him. — AND THEY AWAKE HIM SAYING. Matthew gives the words of the disciples in their simplest expression; Luke indicates the urgency of their feeling by the twice-uttered *Master! Master!* Mark adds the appeal, *Carest thou not that we perish?* almost reproaching him for being unmindful of their safety, though they no doubt included in this "*we*" their beloved Master as well as themselves. — AND HE AROSE, "in the same majestic tranquillity with which he had sunk to sleep, in the most perfect self-possession and power of his spirit. Let any man reflect how one suddenly roused with outcries of distress and danger of death around him would, in the weakness of humanity, comport himself; and it will help him to perceive and estimate the unapproachable dignity of this Being, even while one with us he is paying his tribute to the infirmity of our flesh." (Stier.) — AND REBUKED THE WIND, AND SAID UNTO THE SEA, PEACE, BE STILL. The Lord addresses the excited elements, as we speak to living and conscious beings. The older commentators see in these words "a distinct recognition of Satan and the powers of evil as the authors of the disharmony in the outward world, a tracing of all these disorders up to their source." There is no reason to doubt that, as Gerlach remarks, "the destructive powers of creation are, in consequence of man's apostasy from God, in the service of evil spirits," or, as Trench expresses it, that "nature, who should always have been man's willing handmaid, being held in thrall by evil powers, often becomes the instrument of his harm and ruin." — The authority which Jesus here exerts over nature, strikingly corresponds to the sublime description of the power of God over the elements of nature in Proverbs xxx, 4: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is *his son's name*, if thou canst tell?" The answer to the mysterious question concerning his Son's name is here given us. — AND HE SAID UNTO THEM. According to Matthew, the Lord first spoke the word of admonition to the disciples *before* he turned to the winds and the waves. In Mark and Luke the admonition follows the pacifying of the storm. Probably, he spoke first to them, quieting with a word the tempest in their bosoms; and then, having allayed the tumult of the outward elements, he again turned to them and reproved them for their lack of faith. — WHY ARE YE SO FEARFUL? HOW IS IT THAT YE HAVE NO FAITH? Perfect faith in God expels all

fear. Fearing and believing are opposites. Yet they were not wholly without faith; for, believing in the midst of their unbelief, they turned to Christ in their need. They had faith, but it was not quick and lively, it was not at hand as it should have been. Luke expresses this by the question, "*Where is your faith?*" The imperfection of their faith consisted not in this, that they appealed unto the Lord for help, for herein was faith; but in the excess of their terror, imagining it to be possible that the ship which bore their Master could ever perish. — The Church has always ascribed a symbolical and prophetical significance to this miraculous event. Stier remarks: "The whole human life of the Son of God is in all its circumstances and details altogether symbolical, because he — who is the image of the invisible God in the flesh — appears in commerce with the world, with nature and with men; and this symbolical, typical, prophetical character meets us with special significance on some most striking occasions. This passage over the lake is human life generally, disciple-life in particular: the ship in which he protectingly and savingly voyages with them, as it is the heart of his disciple, so it is also his Church, the antitype of the Ark." Trench carries out this thought further by remarking: "As the kernel of the old humanity, Noah and his family, was once contained in the Ark which was tossed upon the waves of the Deluge, so the kernel of the new humanity, of the new creation, Christ and his apostles, in this little ship. And the Church of Christ has evermore resembled this tempested bark, in that the waves of the world rage horribly around it, in that it has evermore been delivered out of the perils which seemed ready to overwhelm it, and this because Christ is in it; who, being roused by the cry of his servants, rebukes these winds and these waters, before they utterly overwhelm this ship. In the Old Testament Ezekiel gives us a magnificent picture of a worldly kingdom under the image of a stately and gorgeous galley, which he describes with every circumstance that could highten its glory and its beauty, (xxvii, 4-9;) but that ship, with all its outward bravery and magnificence, utterly perishes; 'thy rowers have brought thee into great waters; the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas,' and they that have hoped in it and embarked in it their treasures, wail over its wreck with a bitter wailing, (vs. 26-36;) this kingdom of God meanwhile, which seems by comparison but as the slight and unhonored fishing-boat that every wave would engulf, rides triumphantly over all, and comes safely into haven at the last."

CHAPTER V, VERSES 1-20. AND THEY CAME OVER. There is something very striking in the connection in which this miracle stands with that

other which went immediately before. Our Lord has just shown himself as the pacifier of the tumults and the discords in the outward world; he has spoken peace to the winds and to the waves, and hushed with a word the elemental war. But there is something wilder and more fearful than the winds and the waves in their fiercest moods — even the spirit of man, when it has broken loose from all restraints and yielded itself to be the organ, not of God, but of him who brings uttermost confusion wheresoever his dominion reaches. And Christ will do here a yet mightier work than that which he accomplished there; he will prove himself here also the Prince of Peace, the bringer back of the lost harmony; he will speak, and at his potent word this madder strife, this blinder rage which is in the heart of man, will allay itself; and here also there shall be a great calm. — INTO THE COUNTRY OF THE GADARENES. Matthew calls it the country of the *Gergesenes*. The manuscripts greatly vary; some have in Mark and Luke *Gerasenes*, and even *Gergesenes*, and some have in Matthew *Gadarenes*. The correct reading can only be settled by topographical researches, and the latest results of these by Dr. Thomson, (in his *The Land and the Book*, Vol. II, pp. 34-38,) make it more than probable that the correct reading is *Gergesenes*. The miracle could not have occurred at *Gadara*, a city mentioned by Josephus as the capital of Perea, whose site is generally admitted to be the present *Umkeis*, for it is too far from the lake shore to agree with the place described by the Evangelists; nor could it have been the country of the Gadarenes, because the territory of Gadara did not reach to the south end of the lake; besides, there is no mountain there adapted to the topography described, and the miracle is expressly said to have been wrought in sight of the city. Nor could it have been at *Gerasa*, for that city was situated still further from the lake shore. But Origen mentions a *Gergesa*, as a town lying upon the lake of Tiberias, and near the shore, and adds, that the precipice was still pointed out from which the swine rushed into the lake. The site of this town Dr. Thomson identifies with some ruins, which bear the name of *Kerza* or *Gersa*, and says: "It is a small place, but the walls can be traced all round, and there seem to have been considerable suburbs. In this *Gersa* or *Chersa* we have a position which fulfills every requirement of the narrative, and with a name so near that in Matthew as to be in itself a strong corroboration of the truth of this identification. It is within a few rods of the shore, and an immense mountain rises directly above it, in which are ancient tombs, out of some of which the two men possessed of the devils may have issued to meet Jesus. The lake is so near the base of the mountain that the swine, rushing madly down it, could not stop,

but would be hurried on into the water and drown. It is moreover a singular fact, that the locality still abounds with hogs, that seem to be as wild and fierce as though they were still possessed. The place is one which our Lord would be likely to visit, having Capernaum in full view to the north, and Galilee 'over against it,' as Luke says it was." The different readings Dr. Thomson accounts for in this way: "I have an abiding conviction that Matthew wrote the name correctly. He was from this region, and personally knew the localities. His Gospel, also, was written first of all, and mainly circulated, in the beginning, in these Oriental regions. John does not mention the miracle, and Mark and Luke were strangers to this part of the country, and may possibly have intended, by mentioning the *country* of the *Gadarenes*, to point out to their distant Greek and Roman readers the mere vicinity of the place where the miracle was wrought. Gergesa, or Gerasa, or Chersa, however pronounced, was small and unknown, while Gadara was a Greek city celebrated for its temples and theaters, and for the warm baths on the Hieromax just below it. They *may*, therefore, have written '*country* of the *Gadarenes*'; but I think it far more probable that intermeddling scholiasts made the change from Gergesa to Gadara, in order to indicate to the unlearned the spot where the wonder took place. There is a certain resemblance between the names, and, when once introduced into a leading manuscript, the basis for the controversy would be fairly laid down. Learned annotators would be misled by the very extent of their geographical knowledge, which, however, would not be sufficiently exact to prove to them that the miracle *could not* have taken place at Gadara." — A MAN WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT. Mark and Luke speak only of one, while Matthew mentions two. Of the condition of the miserable man Mark gives the most detailed, graphic account. "The man had his dwelling among the tombs; that is, in unclean places, unclean because of the dead men's bones which were there. To those who did not on this account shun them, these tombs of the Jews would afford ample shelter, being either natural caves, or recesses hewn by art out of the rock, often so large as to be supported with columns, and with cells upon their sides for the reception of the dead. Being, too, without the cities, and oftentimes in remote and solitary places, they would attract those who sought to flee from all fellowship of their kind. This man was possessed of that extraordinary muscular strength which maniacs so often put forth, and thus all efforts to bind and restrain him had proved ineffectual. St. Luke alone relates that he was without clothing, although this is involved in St. Mark's account, who tells us that after he was healed he was found '*clothed*,

and in his right mind, 'sitting at Jesus' feet. Yet with all this, he was not so utterly lost, but that there evermore woke up in him a sense of his misery, and of the terrible bondage under which he had come, although this could express itself only in his cries, and in a blind rage against himself, out of which he wounded and cut himself with stones." — BUT WHEN HE SAW JESUS HE RAN AND WORSHIPED HIM. This is mentioned by the three Evangelists. In the very moment the demoniac got sight of Jesus, he cried aloud — according to Luke — and rushed wildly toward him. This sets forth strongly the effect which the appearance of Jesus had upon the demoniac. He may have heard of Jesus before; at any rate, it is a psychological fact, that the power of presentiment manifests itself especially in those cases where the human organism is impaired or deranged; and thus the demoniac's immediate recognition of Jesus may be accounted for. However that may be, the running to and worshiping Jesus, indicative of a glimmering hope that he might be healed, was the act of the man without the co-operation of the demons, who would much rather have driven him away from the Savior. Jesus commanded the demon to come out of him, and all at once he was seized by a violent paroxysm, and his own self-consciousness being drowned by the action of the demons upon him, he cried out, identifying himself with the demons, "What have I to do with thee?" although he had come to Jesus, while enjoying for a few moments the light of his own consciousness, to find help and relief at his hands. Gerlach remarks: "As some peculiar operations of the Holy Ghost, in the supernatural *charismata*, can, and sometimes do, produce states, wherein the self-consciousness of the believer is, for the time being, suspended, (2 Cor. xii, 2,) so the self-consciousness of a demoniac was at times so completely overwhelmed by foreign influences that the demon occupied the place of the human consciousness. Yet Jesus has come to destroy also these works of the devil." — AND CALLED WITH A LOUD VOICE, AND SAID. Here the demon himself, making use of the possessed man's organ of speech, speaks. — I ADJURE THEE BY GOD. On these words Dr. Alexander remarks: "A much stronger expression than those used by Luke (viii, 28) and Matthew (viii, 29.) *To adjure* is properly to *make swear* or administer an oath, that is, to exhort one in the name of God to tell the truth; and by a wider application the verb denotes any solemn charge or exhortation in the name of God, (as in 1 Thess. v, 27,) particularly such a call addressed to evil spirits, and requiring them to leave their victim, (as in Acts xix, 13,) whence the verb *exorcise* and its cognate terms, *exorcism* and *exorcist*, found their way through the later

ecclesiastical Greek and Latin writers into our own and other modern languages. The simple verb, as here used, denotes urgent entreaty in the name of God, or with express appeal to his authority as sanctioning the prayer. It is equivalent to saying, 'I implore thee to do that which God himself approves or would approve in this case.' This appeal to God was not a mere audacious blasphemy, but a plausible deduction from his having really deferred the full infliction of their sentence, so that Christ's interference with them might be speciously described as an anticipation of their final doom, or tormenting them before the time. (Matt. viii, 29.)" — FOR HE SAID UNTO HIM. The imperfect tense is here to be taken in the sense of the pluperfect.; Luke says, "For he *had* commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man." It is evident that the adjuration of the demon was caused by a preceding command of the Savior. That the demon did not at once obey the command of the Lord, had its cause not in his power to make a successful resistance, but in the permission of the Lord for wise purposes, the state of the man making such a gradual preparation for his final cure necessary. — AND HE ASKED HIM. The question, though answered by the demon himself, was not directed to him, but to the man possessed, for the purpose of bringing him to the consciousness of his own personality, of which a man's name is the outward expression, and thus to enable him to distinguish himself from the evil spirits, who had control of him, to remind him of what he was, before he fell under the dominion of these alien powers. But the unhappy man was still so completely under their control that the evil spirits do not suffer him to speak in his own name, but in their name. This is far more probable than to suppose that the question was directed to the evil spirit; for the Lord needed no such information, nor would it have been of any use to others; the question, moreover, presupposes a single demon, while there were more than one, as appears from the sequel. — MY NAME IS LEGION, FOR WE ARE MANY. The demon speaks of himself in the singular and yet of many, because being, as it were, the commander of these many; this idea is indicated by the name *legion*, which implies an organized whole. Lange finds in this answer a blending of the sufferer's own consciousness with the defiant language of the demons that possessed him. — THAT HE WOULD NOT SEND THEM AWAY OUT OF THE COUNTRY. This request is a repetition of their prayer that they should not be tormented before the time, but has, at the same time, reference to circumstances connected with the spiritual world, with which we are not acquainted. — SEND US INTO THE SWINE. Matthew and Luke express

the sense of "*send us*" by saying, "*Suffer* us to go." The devil has no power over the brute creation without Divine permission. "These evil spirits had their prayers heard; but only to their ruin. They are allowed to enter into the swine, but the destruction of the whole herd follows; and that which they dreaded would seem to have come upon them; no longer finding organs in which and through which to work, they are driven perforce to the abysmal deep, which they fain would have shunned." (Trench.) — AND FORTHWITH JESUS GAVE THEM LEAVE. The cavils brought against this permission of our Savior have been noticed in our comments on Matthew — perhaps, too, fully according to Stier, who exclaims: "Silly expositors, orthodox and heterodox of every shade, come forward, and think they have a right to ask whether the Lord Jesus could have given this permission. Many fly from this narrative, as if the spirits had entered into *them* and driven them into the sea of unbelief; they enter upon all kinds of uncalled-for apologies for the swine and their owners, forgetting, or seeming to forget, what the apologies of ages have testified on behalf of Jesus. Others, with better views, adduce many ingenious reasons for the act. We have no need whatever of any of these remarks, true or otherwise, concerning this sublime transaction; for we fix our eyes upon the plain fact, that *the deed itself is its own justification.*" — Concerning the susceptibility of animals to demoniac influence Trench, referring to Kieser's Tellurismus and Passavant's Untersuchungen über das Hellsehen, remarks: "How remarkable in this respect are well-authenticated cases of clairvoyance, in which the horse is evidently, by its terror and extreme agitation and utter refusal to advance, a partaker of the vision of its rider! And indeed in our common life the horse, and the dog no less, are eminently receptive of the spiritual conditions of their appointed lord and master, man. With what electric swiftness does the courage or fear of the rider pass into the horse; and so the gladness or depression of its master is almost instantaneously reflected and reproduced in his faithful dog. It is true that we should expect, as we should find, far less of this in the grosser nature of the swine than in those creatures of nobler races. Yet the very fierceness and grossness of these animals may have been exactly that which best fitted them for receiving such impulses from the lower world as those under which they perished." — AND THEY WERE AFRAID — "*terrified*, not merely filled with dread of further loss, or bodily damage to themselves, but *awe-struck*, seized with that religious terror which arises even in the irreligious, upon any striking indication of a superhuman power or the presence of superior beings." (Alexander.) — AND THEY BEGAN TO PRAY HIM TO

DEPART OUT OF THEIR COASTS. In the impenitent the manifestations of Divine power create only dread, while the enmity of the carnal mind is not overcome by the plainest and greatest manifestations of Divine goodness, Many, like these Gadarenes and Pharaoh of old, recognize the hand of God, yet they do not submit to him. An old German Bible has on this verse the marginal note: "The course of this wicked world is to love hogs more than Jesus." But even where Jesus is not rejected for hogs, how many keep away from him in the midst of powerful revivals of religion, simply from fear of some worldly disadvantage! They do not consider that a rejection of Jesus is invariably followed by temporal as well as by eternal ruin. — HE PRAYED HIM THAT HE MIGHT BE WITH HIM. "Was it that he feared, as Theophylact supposes, lest in the absence of his deliverer the powers of hell should regain their dominion over him, and only felt safe in immediate nearness to him? or merely that out of the depth of his gratitude he desired henceforth to be a follower of Him to whom he owed this mighty benefit? But whatever was his motive the Lord had other purposes with him; though he was himself leaving them who were as yet unfitted to welcome him, he would not leave himself without a witness among them. This healed man should be a standing monument of his grace and power — that he would have healed them, and was willing to heal them still, of all the diseases of their souls." — GO HOME TO THY FRIENDS, from whom thou hast been so long estranged. Our testimony of Divine grace should begin in the domestic circles. They should first be convinced of the reality of our conversion. — HE BEGAN TO PUBLISH IN DECAPOLIS. In Galilee and Judea our Lord forbade often to speak publicly of his miracles, because there was danger to arouse the carnal Messianic expectations of the people. In Perea, which Jesus left forthwith again, this danger did not exist; it was, on the contrary, necessary to call the attention of the people to the person of Jesus. In this section let us note, 1. *The power of darkness*, as it manifested itself in the demoniacs and still does in all sinners, causing them to break through all restraints, and resulting in tortures to themselves. 2. *The power of Christ* over all moral evil, punitive and destructive to the powers of darkness, saving the sinner. 3. The bearing of the world to the victories of Divine grace.

VERSES 21-43. AND WHEN JESUS WAS PASSED OVER AGAINST, etc.; that is, to Capernaum. (Matt. ix, 1.) Matthew's statement of the locality is not at variance with what Mark here says, that Jesus was nigh

unto the sea, when the ruler came unto him; for Matthew does not say that Jesus was teaching in his own house, or that of Levi, when the ruler came to him. The discussion after the feast very probably took place in an open place.

— AND BEHOLD, THERE COMETH . . . JAIRUS. This is the old Hebrew name Jair, (Num. xxxii, 41; Deut. iii, 14; Judg. x, 3; 1 Chron. ii, 22; Esth. ii, 5,) with a Greek or Latin ending. — MY LITTLE DAUGHTER; tender expression of an anxious father. Luke says that this was his only child. — COME AND LAY THY HANDS ON HER. The faith of Jairus is less bold and decided than that of the centurion, who said, "speak but one word." He thinks that the Lord must come in person in order to effect the cure of his child. This his weak faith is now subjected to a severe trial by the delay which the woman caused to the Lord on his way to the ruler's house. — AND MUCH PEOPLE FOLLOWED HIM. This accounts for what Peter says in verse 31.

— AND A CERTAIN WOMAN WHICH HAD AN ISSUE or BLOOD. Her complaint made her legally unclean. (Lev. xv, 25.) The malady of this woman was great: 1. On account of the nature of her disease — she could not mention it without doing violence to her womanly feelings. 2. Her disease was of an obdurate character, having lasted for twelve years, and having been only aggravated by the painfulness of the many remedies prescribed for that disorder, of which we find a full account in Jewish writings. 3. The expenses that had attended her long sickness had brought her to poverty. "It is important, though it may be difficult to realize the situation of this woman, once possessed of health and wealth, and, no doubt, moving in respectable society, now beggared and diseased, without a hope of human help, and secretly believing in the power of Christ, and him alone, to heal her, yet deterred by some natural misgiving and by shame from coming with the rest to be publicly recognized and then relieved. However commonplace the case may seem to many, there are some in whose experience, when clearly seen and seriously attended to, it touches a mysterious chord of painful sympathy." (Alexander.) — AND TOUCHED HIS GARMENT; that is, the hem of his garment, as Matthew says, by which we may understand not only the extremest part, as that which she could most easily reach, but that blue fringe which was put on the borders of the garment by Divine command, and was to remind the Jews that they were God's people. (Num. xv, 37-40; Deut. xxii, 12.) As it had acquired a religious significance, she may have attributed to it a peculiar virtue. This is, however, only conjectural; yet it is evident that she attributed to the person of Jesus a certain magical influence, with which if she could put herself in contact, she

would obtain that which she desired. But her faith, though mingled with error in regard to the manner in which the healing power of Christ presented itself to her mind, was true in essence, and manifested itself in just such a manner as we would expect from a woman in her peculiar condition. — **AND JESUS, IMMEDIATELY KNOWING IN HIMSELF THAT VIRTUE HAD GONE OUT OF HIM.** "We must infer from these words, as well as from Luke v, 17, and vi, 19, that there was a healing power inherent in the God-man, which might be imparted through touching him; but this did not occur in a physical way without or against the intervention of his conscious will. And it is just to refute this very error of the woman, which would otherwise have been confirmed and propagated, that he speaks and will not keep silence; and that he is constrained in all kindness to abash still more the ashamed woman by bringing her into prominence. The physical virtue, which passes over, does not go from him without his *will*; that will is *always disposed*, stands, as it were, always open and prepared for *approaching faith*, and *this* is the reason why that which occurred could take place. Further, not without his *knowledge*, as is immediately shown; the touch which derived the virtue from him was assuredly unexpected, but he *marks* it immediately, knowing it within himself, rejoicing over the *faith* by which he is well pleased to allow himself even thus to be *touched*. We can apprehend this spiritual-physical virtue only by taking into account this *spiritual relation*; the people generally throng and press him *without that relation*, but the timid touch, which scarcely laid hold of his garment, brings healing to the sick woman, because she has faith to be healed. A striking figure for the preacher, often used to distinguish the crowds from the few around Jesus!" (Stier.) They crowded upon Christ, but did not touch him in any way that he took note of. And thus it is ever in the Church; many *press* upon Christ; his in name; near to him and to his sacraments outwardly; yet not *touching* him, because not drawing near in faith — not looking for, and therefore not obtaining life from him, through the appointed means of grace. — **WHO TOUCHED MY CLOTHES?** "This might be construed as implying that he was ignorant of the person who had done it, and only uncertainly apprehended that something had taken place. If he knew, it might be argued, to what purpose the question? But, as the sequel of the history will abundantly prove, there was a purpose; since if she had been allowed to carry away her blessing in secret as she proposed, it would not have been at all the blessing to her, and to her whole after spiritual life, that it now was, when she was obliged, by this repeated question of the Lord, to own that she had come to seek, and

had found health from him. And the other objection is easily dissolved; namely, that it would not have been perfectly consistent with truth to have asked as not knowing, when indeed he knew all the while, who had done that, concerning which he inquired. But a father when he comes among his children, and says, Who committed this fault? himself conscious, even while he asks, but at the same time willing to bring the culprit to a free confession, and so to put him in a pardonable state, can he be said in any way to violate the laws of the highest truth? The same offense might be found in Elisha's 'Whence comest thou, Gehazi?' (2 Kings v, 25,) when his heart went with him all the way that he had gone; and even in the question of God himself to Adam, 'Where art thou?' In each of those cases, as here, there is a moral purpose in the question — an opportunity given even at the latest moment for undoing at least a part of the fault by its unreserved confession, an opportunity which they whose examples have been here adduced suffered to escape; but which she, who it needs not to say had a fault of infinitely a slighter nature to acknowledge, had ultimately grace given her to use." (Trench.) Stier, controverting the view expressed by Trench and held by most commentators, as not recognizing what was essentially human in the Son of man, and as inconsistent with the most distinct words of the Evangelists, says: "The indefinite masculine, ὁ ἀψάμενος, who is the one having touched me? does not favor this view. Mark further reports that the Lord turned round to find him who had done, or, as he speaks in relation to the known fact, her, who had done this thing; yea, that the woman came and *told him all the truth*. Consequently he did not yet fully know her from the beginning; he knew only that which his genuine question expresses, that *somebody*, as Luke says, had touched him with such longing of faith as had drawn from him his healing virtue." — **BUT THE WOMAN FEARING AND TREMBLING.** The woman's agitation of mind arose not only from her womanly bashfulness on account of her peculiar disease, but also, as we may suppose, from a fear that she might be censured for having in her legal uncleanness mixed with the people, and even touched the sacred person of the renowned Teacher. Olshausen brings out here, with much beauty, how in all this the loving and gracious dealings of the Son of man, who always sought to make through the healing of the body a way for the healing of the soul, are to be traced. She had borne away a maimed blessing, hardly a blessing at all, had she been suffered to bear it away in secret and unacknowledged. She desired to remain in concealment out of a shame, which, however natural, was untimely here in this crisis of her spiritual life; and this her loving Savior would not suffer

her to do; by a gracious force he drew her from it; yet even here he spared her as far as he could. For not before, but after she is healed, does he require the open confession from her lips. She had found it perhaps altogether too hard, had he demanded it of her before; therefore does he graciously wait till the cure is accomplished, and thus helps her through the narrow way. Altogether spare her this painful passage he could not, for it pertained to her birth into the new life. — That the Lord, who so tenderly regards every genuine emotion of the human heart, exacted of this woman a confession so repugnant to her feelings, teaches us the absolute necessity of making a public confession of religion. Whoever has experienced the healing power of Jesus Christ ought to confess the work of grace openly, however difficult he may find it. It is an inviolable law in the kingdom of Christ, which commands us not only to believe in him with the heart unto righteousness, but also to confess him with the mouth unto salvation.

— DAUGHTER, THY FAITH HAS MADE THEE WHOLE. "Thy *faith*, thy touch in faith has saved thee, not merely thy touch or my garment! It was, indeed, with all its improper admixture, a strong faith which trusted that the hem of his garment could do more to heal her than the instrumentality of all physicians. The Lord now, as ever, praises such faith, and compensates her for all the pain and shame which his testimony for truth had required that he should not spare her, by his gracious '*Daughter*.' O, how his love rejoices over such faith, in whatsoever form he finds it! Alford very properly refers to this 'as being a miracle full of the highest encouragement to all who might be disposed to think despondingly of the ignorance or superstition of much of the Christian world — as a token that he who accepted this woman for her faith even in error and weakness, may also accept them.'" — BE NOT AFRAID, ONLY BELIEVE. "Be not disconcerted by this message of death. Thou hast summoned me to be thy Helper, and I will assuredly help. That the man had from the beginning been aware of his daughter's death, and had attributed to Jesus the power even to awaken the dead, is inconceivable in itself, and would be unexampled in the whole evangelical history, though the rapid, condensing brevity of Matthew, at the commencement of his narrative might lead the unwary reader to think so. Matthew passes over the intermediate message, which was certainly not unknown to him, and in his brief and comprehensive reference to it *throws back upon the former part of the transaction the impression and feeling of the latter*. This is his manner: his first Gospel delivers its narrative in this unstudied style, because he can presuppose a living tradition of the more minute details of important occurrences before the

subsequent Evangelists had rendered them permanent. But with all this he ever writes the truth; for strictly considered, the ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν — translated, *my daughter is even now dead* — means no more than Mark's 'she lieth at the point of death.' There is the greatest danger; all haste is needful; probably she may be, while I am calling thee, already dead. Nothing else is obviously meant — and this is decisive — by Luke's ἀπέθνησκεν — she lay a dying — from which he himself in verse 49 distinguished actual death by τέθνηκεν. The words, 'she shall live,' in the first request of the father, (Matt. ix, 18,) therefore, means not she shall again return to life, but she shall continue to live, survive the immediate peril of death, as explained in Mark, 'that she may be healed; and she shall live.' But that our Lord did not doubt the correctness of the subsequent intelligence that the daughter was now actually *dead*, is self-evident. If he had hoped, as rationalists explain, that the maid was not dead, he would, to preserve the truth, have contradicted the intelligence at once before the people." — SAVE PETER, AND JAMES, AND JOHN THE BROTHER OF JAMES. This seems to be the first occasion on which our Lord selected these three from the rest of the disciples. — THE DAMSEL IS NOT DEAD BUT SLEEPETH. That our Lord by these words did not mean to call in question her actual death, has been shown in the note on Matthew ix, 24. "But why did the Lord use this expression? His word has a sublime, universal meaning, as it regards all who are by us termed 'the dead,' and specifically with a twofold design, as it regards those who then heard him. To the tumultuous people without it is vailed; to have said, 'She is dead, but I will raise her up again,' would not have suited his holy humility, and would have been repulsive to that crowd of turbulent mourners. And to strengthen the faith of the desponding father, he substitutes for the word of fear and dismay, *she is dead*, the cheering word, *she sleepeth!* One whom it is his will to awake immediately as in this instance, sleeps indeed only a short sleep of death. Even we have no other way of speaking of it than to call it a *re-awakening*. The Lord, however, does not speak now with reference only to the present occasion. There rises before him, in one great, comprehensive view, the death and resurrection of all the children of men, and he speaks in language of sublime and majestic superiority over the narrow thoughts of mortals." (Stier.) — AND WHEN HE HAD PUT THEM ALL OUT. "Their presence was evidently inappropriate and superfluous there; they were mourners for the dead, and she was not dead; or, at least, her death was so soon to give place to returning life, that it did not deserve the name; it was but as a sleep and an awakening, though they, indeed,

who heard this assertion of the Lord, so little understood it, that they met it with laughter and with scorn, 'knowing that she was dead,' that they were mourners for the dead. This would have been reason enough for silencing and putting out those mourners. But in addition to this, the boisterous and turbulent grief of some, the hired lamentations, it may be, of others, gave no promise of the true tone and temper, which became the witnesses of so holy and awful a mystery, a mystery from which even apostles themselves were excluded — not to speak of the profane and scornful spirit with which they had received the Lord's assurance that the child should presently awake. The scorners were not to witness the holy act." — **AND HE TOOK THE DAMSEL BY THE HAND**, to awake her up as one would take a sleeping child. He addresses her as one already living — all the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God — in Aramaic, probably for the sake of her parents, and to add to the solemnity of his words. — **TALITHA CUMI**. Peter, as an eye and ear-witness, had in all probability communicated to Mark the identical words our Lord used, as also in vii, 34; xiv, 36. We learn from this that our Lord sometimes spoke Aramaic; but it does by no means decide the question of the language he used generally in his public discourses. — **AND HE CHARGED THEM STRAITLY THAT NO MAN SHOULD KNOW IT**. Though the miracle itself could not be kept a secret, our Lord forbade all mere vainglorious rumor of it, to prevent a premature agitation of the public mind, which would only have led to efforts to proclaim him a Messiah according to the carnal, Jewish expectations. — **AND COMMANDED THAT SOMETHING SHOULD BE GIVEN HER TO EAT**. "This command is not so much a confirming assurance that she now truly lived and was quite restored — although that might be necessary for the astonished people who were unable to realize it — as, if we mistake not, an indication of an affectionate care, which even in the midst of the greatest things forgets not the least, and which would provide for the necessities of the exhausted child on her return to life. He has given back life and health, and thus imparted help beyond the father's prayer or thought. But at this period he restrains that miracle-working power; it had restored a life physically healthy, of which the surest mark was the ordinary ability to eat and drink; and he now points them to the restored functions and ordinances of nature." (Stier.) Wesley remarks, "When natural or spiritual life is restored, even by immediate miracle, all proper means are to be used to *preserve* it."

SECTION VIII.

CHRIST CAN DO NO MIRACLES IN HIS NATIVE PLACE, OWING TO THE UNBELIEF OF THE PEOPLE, BUT HE EXHIBITS HIS MESSIANIC POWER THROUGHOUT THE REST OF GALILEE.

CHAPTER VI, 1-56.

1. THE ENVIOUS UNBELIEF OF THE NAZARENES.

Verses 1-6. (COMPARE MATTHEW xiii, 54-58.)

(1) AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. (2) And when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? (3) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. (4) But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. (5) And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*. (6) And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

2. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

Verses 7-13. (COMPARE MATTHEW x, 1, 7-11; LUKE ix, 1-6.)

(7) AND he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; (8) and commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse: (9) But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.^[1] (10) And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place. (11) And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you,^[2] when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a

testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. (12) And they went out, and preached that men should repent. (13) And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

[1 According to the best authenticated reading, "Do not put on two coats." The sudden transition from the historical style into *oratio directa* gives greater emphasis to the command.]

[2 According to a reading adopted by Tischendorf, "Nor they hear you."]

3. JOHN THE BAPTIST IS BEHEADED, AND HEROD MANIFESTS A DANGEROUS INTEREST IN CHRIST.

Verses 14-29. (COMPARE MATTHEW xiv, 1-12; LUKE ix, 7-9.)

(14) AND King Herod heard *of him*; (for his name was spread abroad;) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. (15) Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. (16) But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. (17) For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. (18) For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. (19) Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: (20) For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed ^[3] him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. (21) And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee; (22) and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the King said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. (23) And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of *me*, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. (24) And she went forth, and said unto her

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

[3 *Observed* — literally, watched him closely.]

4. JESUS RETIRES INTO A DESERT PLACE BEYOND THE LAKE. THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND MEN.

Verses 30-44. (COMPARE MATTHEW xiv, 13-21; LUKE ix, 10-17;
JOHN vi, 1-15.)

(30) AND the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. (31) And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. (32) And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. (33) And the people ^[4] saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. (34) And Jesus, when he came out; saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. (35) And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: (36) Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. (37) He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? (38) He saith unto them,

How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. (39) And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. (40) And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. (41) And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. (42) And they did all eat, and were filled. (43) And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. (44) And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

[4 *The people* is wanting in A, B, D, and seems to have been taken from Matthew. The other variations are equally unimportant.]

5. THE DISCIPLES ENTER A SHIP TO RETURN TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SEA. THE WIND IS CONTRARY. JESUS COMES TO THEM, WALKING UPON THE LAKE. HE PERFORMS NEW MIRACLES ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE LAKE.

Verses 45-56. (COMPARE MATTHEW xiv, 22-36; JOHN vi, 15-21.)

(45) AND straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. (46) And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. (47) And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. (48) And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. (49) But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: (50) For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. (51) And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. (52) For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves; for their heart was hardened. (53) And when they had passed over, they came into the land

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

VERSES 1-6. AND CAME INTO HIS OWN COUNTRY; that is, his native town, Nazareth. Elsewhere Galilee is called his native country in the same sense in which Nazareth was his native town; for, although he had been born in Bethlehem in Judea, yet his parents had lived in Nazareth prior to his birth, and he had been brought up there, so that he passed generally for a Nazarene and Galilean. — That this was a second visit to Nazareth has been shown in Matthew xiii, 54-58. — FROM WHENCE HAS THIS MAN THESE THINGS? "The son of Mary must have walked till his thirtieth year like the son of no other Nazarene, of no other Israelite, of no other man, so as to call up in those who had right eyes and right hearts the presentiment that he is something higher than he appeared to be. But the beggarly village pride of the Nazarenes can not at all comprehend the humility of the Great One; they are ready to say, 'Who is this that won't keep quiet, but brings himself into public notice?' Thus the humanity of the Divine Savior is incredible at first to all of us. 'Whence has this man this wisdom and these deeds?' From his father and mother he has got no education, as his brothers and sisters show; he has not studied any where else, (John vii, 15;) consequently, as we do not know whence he has got learning, he has got nothing that we can acknowledge. Thus Nazareth very naively confirms what other people say of it. (John i, 46.)" (Stier.) — THE SON OF MARY. It is strange that Joseph, his reputed father, is not mentioned here, and this omission can, perhaps, be satisfactorily accounted for only on the supposition that he had died years before. — AND THEY WERE OFFENDED AT HIM. "Their offense had its roots in an unbelief common with people of narrow minds and contracted views, which can not comprehend as divinely great what is near at hand and ordinarily human. The experience which Jesus made with regard to this kind of unbelief, namely, that a prophet is no where less honored than in his own country and among his own kin, may serve as the fit heading of a whole chapter of the

history of the world and of the Church. The prejudice of this vulgar notion, that from one's neighborhood or home, yea, consistently, out of all mankind, nothing really good can come, has given rise to all those systems which make the God-man either a mere man or a doketic phantom." (Lange.) — AND HE COULD THERE DO NO MIGHTY WORK. The miracles of Christ are not of a magical character, but presuppose on the part of their recipients faith, or at least a certain susceptibility, a sincerity of purpose which will save a man from hardened unbelief. — AND HE MARVELED BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF. With great propriety attention has been called to the marvel of Christ at the unbelief of his countrymen, that had beheld his Divine life so long to no purpose, and at the faith of the heathen centurion at Capernaum. The expression of astonishment or marvel and other emotions, which the Evangelists ascribe to our Savior, shows us the reality of our Lord's humanity.

VERSES 7-13. We have remarked in chapter iii, 13-19, that the Evangelist distinguishes between the setting apart of the twelve and their first mission in the same way as Luke does, while Matthew comprehends the two events in one. This mission of the apostles did not include their later and full calling as apostles, but was only transient and preparatory, to spread the tidings that the Messiah had come, and to this Mark confines himself in giving their instruction, while Matthew records what our Lord, at the same time, had spoken prophetically of their subsequent and general mission. — BY TWO AND TWO, that they might counsel and assist each other, in keeping with the principle laid down in Ecclesiastes iv, 9. This trait is peculiar to Mark. — AND GAVE THEM POWER OVER UNCLEAN SPIRITS. Here, as elsewhere, Mark places the casting out of demons at the head of the miraculous cures. — SAVE A STAFF ONLY. According to Matthew and Luke, the apostles were forbidden to take even a staff along; according to Mark, this privilege was granted them. The same idea, namely, that they should not burden themselves with things unnecessary, is contained in the two statements, which are but in appearance contradictory. The staff is the extreme limit of what they are allowed to carry with themselves. They may take their staff along, if they have it at hand, but must not first anxiously seek it as if they could not go without it. The same is the case with the sandals allowed them according to Mark, and the shoes forbidden them according to Matthew. The fundamental idea is, they should set out on their journey with the least possible preparation, fully trusting in Providence, which would amply furnish them with means to satisfy all their

necessary wants. — FOR A TESTIMONY AGAINST THEM; that is, as a symbolical act, well understood by the Jews, signifying that they were excommunicated, and like publicans and heathen. — AND THEY WENT OUT AND PREACHED, THAT MEN SHOULD REPENT. The final conjunction *ivα* — in order that — has here its primary meaning. They preached not so much along with other doctrines the necessity of repentance, as they made repentance, its nature and necessity, the main, if not the sole object, of their preaching. The Baptist, the Lord himself, and the disciples on their missionary tour, insist upon repentance, a change of heart, as the indispensable condition of entering into the Messianic kingdom, which they proclaim as near at hand. To the penitent alone promises of blessedness are given. The doctrine of repentance is an essential part of evangelical preaching now as it was then, and will be so to the end of time. The first aim of the preacher of the Gospel must be to convince men of their guilt and danger; before this end is reached, the promise of pardon and blessedness is entirely out of place. — AND ANOINTED WITH OIL MANY THAT WERE SICK. As physicians in the Orient were in the habit of using oil on account of its medicinal qualities, the apostles made use of it also in their miraculous cures, not, however, as if these were effected by the oil, but the oil was merely an outward sign, just as the imposition of his hands upon the sick by Christ was. For as the sick were restored to health all at once, and not gradually, it was self-evident that the cure was not the effect of the oil. The anointing with oil, on the other hand, which St. James recommends to the elders of the Church, (v, 14,) seems to have been the use of a natural remedy connected with the efficacious power of prayer. The practice recommended by James has nothing in common with, but is diametrically opposed to, the idea of the extreme unction as practiced by the Roman Catholic Church. Quite to the point is the remark of Lange: "The extreme unction of the Roman Catholic Church is an involuntary acknowledgment on the part of that Church, that she has failed to impart to the dying member the Holy Ghost, the imparting of which, they say, extreme unction typifies."

VERSES 14-29. On this section Lange makes the following interesting general remarks: "1. The workings of a spiritual, moral power, such as the mission of the apostles, have always been suspected and dreaded by despots, who are for the most part superstitious and cowardly. 2. Herod was a forerunner and companion of Pilate in this, that he recognized the innocence

and dignity of John without having the moral courage to release him. 3. The judgment passed by the attendants of Herod bear a remarkably strong resemblance to the judgment passed in our days by the would-be higher classes on the Christian religion. 4. Herodias, the intriguing prostitute at the court, the woman in the demon-like greatness of malice — a world-historical character; so likewise the dancer. 5. The satanic power of evil manifests itself here in a fearful contrast — the head of the greatest preacher of repentance is given by a Jewish prince to a Jewess, as a reward for dancing at a Jewish court in the Greek fashion." — We add: In Herod we see an illustration both of the *power* and of the *impotence* of conscience. I. Of its power. 1. It reminds man faithfully of his evil deeds; 2. Condemns them; 3. Tortures the sinner with evil forebodings of every kind. II. Of its impotence. It is unable, 1. To undo what is done; 2. To enable man to conquer what he has recognized as evil; 3. To guard him against new, still more heinous offenses.

VERSES 40-44. As the news of John's imprisonment induced Jesus to retire from Judea into Galilee, and to continue his public ministry there, (chap. i, 14,) so he retired on receiving the news of his death from Galilee into a desert place. The time of the miraculous feeding appears most plainly from John's account. It is the time shortly before the Passover, with which agrees the green grass of Mark, (v. 39,) the verdant Spring. See more in the notes on Matthew xiv, 14-21.

VERSES 45-56. On this section Lange has the following homiletic sketch: "*The miraculous walking of Christ upon the sea according to its holy motives.* I. Jesus retires alone to the mountain, owing to the revolutionary pressure of the people: 1. As the only Free One supreme; 2. As the omniscient and omnipotent Lord of Nature. II. He constrains his disciples to commit themselves to the sea: 1. In order to separate them from the people; 2. In order to make them feel how much they stood in need of his presence; 3. In order to convince them that though bodily absent from them, yet he succors them in every time of need. The phantoms and specters of vain fear vanish before the personal appearance of Christ.

SECTION IX.

SCRIBES AND PHARISEES FROM JERUSALEM ATTACK CHRIST FOR DISREGARDING THE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS. HE REBUKES THEM, MAKES A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BORDER COUNTRIES OF PHENICIA, AND RETURNS TO THE COASTS OF DECAPOLIS.

CHAPTER VII, 1, TO CHAPTER VIII, 9.

1. THE DISPUTE OF CHRIST WITH SCRIBES AND PHARISEES FROM JERUSALEM.

Verses 1-23. (COMPARE MATTHEW xv, 1-20.)

(1) THEN came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. (2) And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault. (3) For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft,^[1] eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. (4) And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as the washing*^[2] of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. (5) Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? (6) He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. (7) Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. (8) For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as the washing of pots and cups:* and many other such like things ye do. (9) And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. (10) For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: (11) But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban,* that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.* (12) And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother; (13) making the word of God of none effect

through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. (14) And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me *every one of you*, and understand: (15) There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. (16) If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. (17) And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. (18) And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* can not defile him; (19) because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? (20) And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. (21) For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, (22) thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: (23) All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

[1 The Greek word πυγμή, translated *oft*, has been rendered variously. Alford translates it *diligently*; but there is no reason to give up its literal rendering, *with fist*. Tradition may have prescribed that one hand ought to be washed with the other clinched, for some foolish or superstititious reasons, which we find so often lying at the bottom of traditionary precepts.]

[2 The original, here rendered *washing*, is βαπτισμόί, which, according to the Baptist interpretation, means only immersion.]

2. THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN.

Verses 24-30. (COMPARE MATTHEW xv, 21-29.)

(24) AND from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon,^[3] and entered into a house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid. (25) For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: (26) The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. (27) But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet

to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. (28) And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. (29) And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. (30) And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

[3 *And Sidon* is wanting in D, L, A, and other manuscripts. Tischendorf has omitted it.]

3. THE HEALING OF THE DEAF MUTE.

Verses 31-37.

(31) AND again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. (32) And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. (33) And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; (34) and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. (35) And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. (36) And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*; (37) and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

4. THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF FOUR THOUSAND PERSONS.

Chapter viii, 1-9. (COMPARE MATTHEW xv, 32-39.)

(1) IN those days the multitude being very great, ^[4] and having nothing to eat, Jesus ^[5] called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them, (2) I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now

been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: (3) And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. (4) And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness? (5) And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. (6) And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people. (7) And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*. (8) So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets. (9) And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

[4 Chap. viii, verse 1; instead of *being very great*, B, D, G, S, M, A, and other Codices read, *Being great again*.]

[5 Jesus is probably inserted as an explanation.]

VERSES 31-37. AND AGAIN, DEPARTING FROM THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON, HE CAME UNTO THE SEA OF GALILEE. Meyer, Lange, and Alford, according to the reading adopted by Tischendorf, translate, "Departing from the coasts of Tyre, he came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee." If this is the correct reading, "he went northward from Tyre, and, passing through Sidon, probably proceeded along the Phenician border line to the Jordan, near Dan, (Laish,) and journeying along its eastern bank came to the region of Decapolis, south-east of the lake." (Andrews.) — AND THEY BRING UNTO HIM ONE THAT WAS DEAF, AND HAD AN IMPEDIMENT IN HIS SPEECH. It was the case of a man, whose malady is clearly distinguished from possession, such as we find in Matthew ix, 32; Luke xi, 14. — AND THEY BESEECH HIM TO PUT HIS HAND UPON HIM. "It is not, however, exactly in this way that he is willing to heal him. There is no doubt a deep meaning in all the variations which mark the different healings of different sick and afflicted, Divine Wisdom ordering all the circumstances of each particular cure. Were we acquainted as accurately as he who knew what was in man, with the spiritual condition of each who was brought within the circle of his grace, we should then perfectly understand why

one was healed in the crowd, another led out of the city ere the work of restoration was commenced; why for one a word effected a cure, for another a touch, while a third was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam ere he came seeing; why for these the process of restoration was instantaneous, while again another saw at first 'men as trees walking.' At all events, we are not for an instant to suppose in these gradually-accomplished cures any restraint on the power of the Lord, save such as was willingly imposed by himself — and this, doubtless, in each case having reference to, and being explicable by, the moral and spiritual state of the person who was passing under his hands; though our ignorance of this prevents us from at once seeing the manifold wisdom which ordered each of his proceedings, and how it was conducted so as best to make the bodily healing a passage to the spiritual, which the Lord had ever in his eye." — AND HE TOOK HIM ASIDE FROM THE MULTITUDE. "His purpose in this was, that apart from the din, and tumult, and interruptions of the crowd, in solitude and silence, the man might be more recipient of deep and lasting impressions; even as the same Lord does now oftentimes lead a soul apart when he would speak with it, or heal it; sets it in the solitude of a sick chamber, or takes away from it earthly companions and friends. The putting his finger into the ears of the man, the spitting and touching the man's tongue therewith, are easily recognized as symbolic actions. Nor is it hard to perceive why he should specially have used these in the case of one afflicted as this man was — almost all other avenues of communication, save by sight and feeling, were of necessity precluded. Christ by these signs would awaken his faith, and stir up in him the lively expectation of a blessing. The fingers are put into the ears as to bore them, to pierce through the obstacles which hindered sounds from reaching them. This was the fountain evil; he did not speak plainly because he did not hear; this defect, therefore, is mentioned as being first removed. Then, as it is often through excessive drought that the tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth, so the Lord gives here, in the second thing which he does, the sign of the removal of this evil, of the unloosing of the tongue. And, at the same time, all the healing virtue he shows to reside in his own body; he looks not for it from any other quarter; he takes nothing from any one else; but with the moisture of his own mouth upon his finger touched the tongue which he would set free from the bands which held it fast. It is not made use of for its medicinal virtue, but as the suitable symbol of a power residing in and going forth from his body." (Trench.) — AND LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN, HE SIGHED. The *looking up to heaven* we are to regard as intended to indicate that he did no

other things save those which he saw the Father do. (John xi, 41, 42.) Lange thinks that our Lord by this act wished to impress on the people of this half-heathenish country — who were so much inclined to a belief in demigods and magicians — that he acted in concert and was dependent upon the only true and living God. "It is very significant," he says, "how carefully Jesus used his miraculous powers in districts that were more or less infected with heathenish elements, as in this instance and in the case of the Syrophenician woman, and that of the blind man of Bethsaida." His *sighing* Stier expounds thus: "The holy sigh was an utterance characteristic of his office as high-priest — an expression of his sympathy with this and every malady of sinful humanity, bodily and spiritual, all in one. In contrast to those fools who fancy they have discovered in the narratives of healings peculiar to St. Mark, something which will enable them to account for miracles on rationalistic principles, the simple wisdom of Luther may teach us what the exposition of a spirit of faith brings up at the right place. 'It was not drawn from him on account of the single tongue and ears of this poor man; but it is a common sigh over all tongues and ears, yea, over all hearts, bodies, and souls, and over all men, from Adam to his last descendants. This Gospel thus paints Christ that he who was man took such an interest in thee and in me, and in all of us, as we ought to take in ourselves.' Luther, who on other occasions is hostile to all playing with allegory, also points out admirably that this sympathetic sigh breaks out especially over the deaf and dumb, at least, why it is on such an occasion that the Holy Ghost has recorded it. We hold, likewise, that there is good reason for supposing that it was exactly under this bodily emblem that there came up before the thoughts of the heart of the Savior of men, on the one hand, compassion for spiritual blindness, from which proceeds also, as in the case before us, the incapacity of the tongue to speak and to praise God, and, on the other hand, the lamentable evils of tongue-sins all over the world. Luther renders prominent this latter point. 'Our beloved Lord saw well what an amount of sufferings and sorrows would be occasioned by tongues and ears. For the greatest mischief which has been inflicted on Christianity has not arisen from tyrants, but from that little piece of flesh between the jaws: it is it that inflicts the greatest injury upon the kingdom of God.' We really believe that these and similar thoughts made up the hidden substance of this *Ephphatha uttered in a sigh.*" — AND HE CHARGED THEM, THAT THEY SHOULD TELL NO MAN. "Among the '*them*' is undoubtedly comprehended the man who was healed. Thus the gift of speech was scarcely given him, when silence was enjoined upon him, in order that he,

or at least we, might learn that right *hearing* consists in *obeying*; the right use of the unbound tongue consists in its willing bondage with a view to obedience." (Stier.)

SECTION X.

JESUS WITHDRAWS INTO THE MOUNTAINOUS REGION NORTH-EAST OF THE LAKE. THE PREPARATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

CHAPTER VIII, 10, TO CHAPTER IX, 29.

1. THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND THAT OF HEROD.

Verses 10-21. (COMPARE MATTHEW xvi, 1-12.)

(10) AND straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. ^[1] (11) And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. (12) And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. (13) And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side. (14) Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. (15) And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. (16) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have no bread. (17) And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? (18) Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? (19) When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. (20) And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. (21) And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

[1 See foot-note to Matt. xv, 39.]

2. THE BLIND MAN IN BETHSAIDA.

Verses 22-26.

(22) **AND he cometh** ^[2] **to Bethsaida; [3] and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.** (23) **And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.** (24) **And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.** ^[4] (25) **After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.** (26) **And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.** ^[5]

[2 According to a reading adopted by Lachman and Tischendorf, *They come.*]

[3 See Matt. xiv, 22.]

[4 According to a reading adopted by all modern critics, "I see men, for as trees, I see them walking."]

[5 The words *in the town* are wanting in several Codices. Tischendorf omits the whole sentence, "Nor tell it to any in the town."]

3. OPINIONS OF THE PEOPLE CONCERNING CHRIST, AND THE CONFESION OF PETER. THE LORD PREDICTS HIS OWN PASSION, REBUKES PETER FOR HIS PRESUMPTION, AND TELLS HIS DISCIPLES WHAT HE REQUIRES OF HIS FOLLOWERS.

Chapter viii, 27-ix, 1. (COMPARE MATTHEW xvi, 13-28; LUKE ix, 18-27.)

(27) **AND Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? (28) And they answered, John the**

Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. (29) And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. (30) And he charged them that they should tell no man of him. (31) And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief-priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (32) And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. (33) But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. (34) And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (35) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. (36) For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (38) Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

CHAPTER IX. (1) And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

4. OUR LORD'S TRANSFIGURATION ON THE MOUNT.

Verses 2-13. (COMPARE MATTHEW xvii, 1-13; LUKE ix, 28-36.)

(2) AND after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. (3) And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. (4) And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. (5) And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. (6) For he wast not what to say; for they were sore afraid. (7) And there was a cloud that

overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. (8) And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. (9) And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. (10) And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean. (11) And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? (12) And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at naught. (13) But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

5. THE DEMONIAC BOY AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION.

Verses 14-29. (COMPARE MATTHEW xvii, 14-21; LUKE ix, 37-43.)

(14) AND when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. (15) And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him. (16) And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? (17) And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; (18) and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. (19) He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. (20) And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. (21) And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. (22) And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. (23) Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, ^[6] all things are possible to him that believeth. (24) And straightway the father of the

child cried out, and said with tears, [7] Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. (25) When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. (26) And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. (27) But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. (28) And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? (29) And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

[6 In the original, **τὸ εἰ δύνη πιστεῦσαι**. The definite article in the neuter gender, **τὸ**, (the,) prefixed to the words, "If thou canst," is difficult to translate, and is, therefore, omitted in most translations. Its genuineness is not doubted. It has been explained in various ways. Alford renders it *the saying*; namely, "Jesus said to him *the saying*, If thou canst believe," etc. Others translate, "This *if thou canst believe* [and supply the words] is the point at issue." Others again consider it a quotation referring to the father's "if thou canst," and render, "As to the if thou canst, [taking **πιστεῦσαι** as an imperative,] believe;" but the grammatical usage does not justify this construction. As the word *believe* is omitted in several manuscripts, and in the Arabic and Coptic versions, others translate, "As to the *if thou canst*, [and supply the words,] know, All things are," etc. The simplest solution of the difficulty is perhaps to accept the common reading, and take it as a question: "Canst thou believe?" Inasmuch as **τὸ** is sometimes used before indirect questions, so it may here have been placed before a direct question.]

[7 *With tears* is wanting in A, B, C, L, D.]

VERSES 10-21. SEEKING OF HIM A SIGN FROM HEAVEN. To what has been said on this point in the parallel passage of Matthew, we add the following remarks of Lange: "1. In seeking a sign from heaven, they sought *the* decisive and fully-accrediting sign from heaven. 2. If Jesus had complied with this their request, the logical consequence would have been that he was to assume the Messianic position they desired. For which reason it is added, 'Tempting him.' This demand of a sign from heaven was like the first and third temptations in the wilderness. A refusal to comply with it could but secure his death. 3. The demand was, therefore, not absolutely hostile, since the parties concerned were willing to receive Christ, if he would consent to act according

to their notions and desires. 4. The sign from heaven, which Christ denied to them, bore, therefore, an intimate relation to the sign of Jonas. The denial of the one was the announcement of the other. 5. What the Lord denied to the Pharisees he soon afterward prepared for his select disciples on the mount — the heavenly sign of his transfiguration." — **AND HE SIGHED DEEPLY IN HIS SPIRIT.** This expression of deep sorrow is peculiar to Mark, as well as most of the notices of the Savior's looks and gestures. (Comp. chap. vii, 31; iii, 5.) The word *spirit* is used here, not in contradistinction to soul, but in the sense of *heart*, the seat of the emotions and passions. He sighed deeply, not only on account of the hardened unbelief of these men, but also from the full knowledge that the decisive moment of his rejection by the Jewish nation was at hand. At the same time the sighing may indicate his abstaining from the exercise of his judicial power, and the firm resolution to submit to suffering and death.

VERSES 22-26. AND THEY BRING A BLIND MAN UNTO HIM. From his saying, when his eyes were first opened, "I see men as trees, walking," we must infer that he had not been blind from his birth, but lost his sight afterward. "We have here a second narrative of healing by St. Mark, containing a description of a particularly-circumstantial procedure on the part of the Lord; not certainly as if something like it had happened on other occasions, though not recorded by the Evangelists, but because the incidents were peculiar to this case. We see how each Evangelist brings forward his peculiar gifts, supplementing and completing the scenes described by the others. Our Lord treats this man with a condescension similar to what he had shown to the deaf man on a former occasion, entering into his necessities and circumstances, of which, however, we know nothing more than what is here recorded. He also acts in the exercise of his wisdom differently from what he had been asked to do, and what would have been more convenient for himself; he not only touches his eyes, as he had done on another occasion, (Matt. ix, 29,) but kindly takes pains to lead him away out of the crowd." (Stier.) Various reasons for this have been assigned, but they are all conjectural. So much only seems clear, that the leading him aside was intimately connected with the slow, gradual process of healing, which the Savior judged best for him. Chrysostom and others find a reason for this in the imperfect faith of the blind man, which they infer from the circumstance that this man did not, like others, cry to Jesus for the opening of his eyes, but was brought to him by others, himself, perhaps,

scarcely expecting a benefit. The gracious Lord, then, who would not reject him, but who could not cure him so long as there was on his part a lack of earnest desire and of faith, gave a glimpse of the blessing, that he might kindle in him a longing and hope for the fullness of it and show him that he was an opener of blind eyes. Whatever the peculiar condition of that blind man may have been, the manner in which the Lord healed him is an apt symbol of the long-suffering wisdom and gracious condescension with which the Savior must deal with by far the greater part of those who are spiritually blind. — AND HE SENT HIM AWAY TO HIS HOUSE, which was not in the town, as appears from the appended prohibition. — NEITHER GO INTO THE TOWN, NOR TELL IT TO ANY IN TOWN. There is no inconsistency in this twofold injunction. The man is told to go directly home, without going into the town, or telling it to any of the town people whom he might meet out of town. The reason of this prohibition is not important for us to know, else it would have been indicated to us.

VERSE 27 TO CHAPTER IX, 1. Peter's confession is related by the Synoptists with but slight variations. Luke remarks that it was made while the Lord was alone with his disciples, and prayed. He, as well as Mark, omits to mention the blessing pronounced on Peter. It is of great significance, that the Gospel that was written under Peter's superintendence does not even mention the distinction conferred upon him in the apostolic college; consequently fully ignores his pretended primacy. It is also worthy of note, how intimately connected the confession of Christ is, according to Mark, with the prediction of his sufferings and with the solemn declaration of Christ, that all that desire to follow him must follow him in suffering, and bearing the cross. — The full exposition of this whole section has already been given in Matthew. On verses 36 and 37, we will only add a word from Stier: "If, in a general fire raging around thee, thou wert to save and preserve thy great and well-filled palace, and yet be destroyed thyself by the fire, what wouldest thou have gained in comparison with him who, while his goods were burned, has yet escaped with his life? Therefore, also, conversely, What shall it *damage* a man though he should give up the whole world — which will at one time pass away and be consumed — if only his soul be saved? The true, eternal salvation of one human soul is of infinitely more value than the whole world; thus must we set profit and loss against each other; and he who has not so reckoned will, in the end, find to his eternal loss how terribly he has miscalculated! Then will the bankrupt be

forced to cry out, *What shall a man give in exchange, or for an equivalent?* To which the Psalmist has long ago answered, *It must cease forever.* (Ps. xlix, 8.) God alone has found the ransom for man's soul. (Matt. xx, 28.) He who despises this, who makes its power and sufficiency of none effect for himself, has lost all forever; but his personality remains to all eternity to rue his loss."

CHAPTER IX, VERSES 2—13. To what we have said on the transfiguration in our introductory remarks to section 38 in Matthew, we add the following remarks of Van Oosterzee: "If philosophy is disposed to question the ability of mortals to discern disembodied spirits, we simply answer, that it is altogether unqualified to pronounce judgment upon an order of things, which it does not know either intuitively or by logical inferences. — The christological importance of this event for all coming times is self-evident. A new light is shed from heaven on the person of the Redeemer, both as to the reality of his humanity, which needs new strength from on high, and as to his Divine-human glory which is made known to inhabitants of earth and heaven. There is also a symbolical truth in this, that the appearance of the prophets is represented as transient, while Christ's stay with his disciples is permanent. Their brightness disappears like that of stars; his sun shines perpetually. Not less light is shed here on the work of the Lord. The internal oneness of the old and new covenant plainly appears from this event, and it becomes manifest, that in Christ the highest expectations of the law and of the prophets are fulfilled. His death, far from being something accidental, appears here as the carrying out of the eternal purposes of God, and is of such importance, that ambassadors come from heaven in order to discuss it on earth. The weight of suffering he is to undergo in making propitiation for the sin of the world we may also infer from this, that he is strengthened in an extraordinary way for this struggle. And the grand object of his suffering, the reconciliation of heaven and earth, (Col. i, 20,) how vividly is it here presented to our view, when we see on that Mount, although but for a few moments, heaven come down to earth and inhabitants of the earth in intercourse with heavenly visitors! Moreover, the Mount of Transfiguration gives us a glimpse of disembodied spirits in glory. We see here, that the spirits of the saints, although they had died many centuries ago, live unto God, and we find them actively engaged in the affairs of the kingdom of God on earth. Although Moses and Elias had been far removed from each other by time and space in their earthly lives, yet they met and recognized each other in the higher regions of the world of spirits. The center of their communion

is the suffering and glorified Jesus, and their state is so full of bliss, that even their transient apparition sends forth the light of heavenly joy into the hearts of the inhabitants of this sublunary world. The Canaan, which Moses could not enter in his lifetime, is now thrown open to him many centuries after his death. Thus they appear before us as types of what the sainted dead are now already, and as prophets of what the redeemed shall be in a still higher degree at the coming of the Lord. In the last place, we have presented to our view the intimate connection between the suffering and the glory not only of the Lord, but also of his disciples. Tabor is the consecration for Golgotha. There are still in the Christian's life hours like those spent by Peter and his fellow-disciples."

— The destructive criticism of Strauss and others, taking every thing supernatural for a nonentity, arrives at the conclusion, that two strangers appeared unto Jesus, out of whom the symbolizing spirit of the Evangelists afterward made Moses and Elias! There is no need of repeating the proofs of the historical character of this event. Apart from every other consideration, the Gospel account of the transfiguration can not be fictitious for psychological reasons, since such a fiction by the Evangelists would demonstrate simple and unlettered fisher-men to have been poetical geniuses of the highest order. This would be a change of their individuality, far more mysterious and incomprehensible than the change which, according to their report, took place in their Master! "Whoever ascribes this wonderful event to the subjectivity of the apostles," says Van Oosterzee, "will find it impossible to explain how the simple and earthly-minded disciples, by their own exertion, could have elevated themselves into an ecstasy, that made them believe that they saw the heavens opened over the head of the Messiah. On the contrary, the records of the three Evangelists show conclusively that the three disciples perceived with their senses, their eyes, and ears, an objective phenomenon in full self-consciousness. For, although Peter did not know what he *should* say, yet he knew perfectly well what he *saw*; if he and his companions had been led astray by their overwrought imagination, and had expressed themselves accordingly to the nine other disciples, the Lord would certainly not have failed to set them right on the subject. At the same time, it is readily admitted that they were entranced by what they saw with their outward eyes, and were thus enabled to hear the heavenly voice. For he that finds, like Peter, not only nothing frightful in the intercourse with inhabitants of the spirit-world, but rather wishes that it may be of longer duration, thereby shows that he is raised beyond himself." — AND HIS RAIMENT BECAME SHINING. "Mark confines his

formal description to the garments, without expressly mentioning the change in his countenance spoken of by Matthew and Luke, which, however, is included in the general idea of effulgence over-spreading and surrounding the whole person. It is very remarkable, indeed, that these descriptions should be all so strong, so various, yet so harmonious, as if each of the eye-witnesses had furnished an account of his own impressions of the same glorious object at the same eventful moment. *Shining* is a term in the original, applied by Homer to the glistening of polished surfaces and to the glittering of arms, by Aristotle to the twinkling of the stars, and by Euripides to the flashing of lightning. The word translated *white*, means originally clear and bright, as applied by Homer to pure water. Here it no doubt expresses more than the mere neutral sense of whiteness; namely, that of an effulgent white light without shade or spot, such a whiteness as no fuller can produce. The addition *on earth* may either be a strong expression, meaning in the whole world, or contain a more specific reference to the heavenly source from which alone such brightness could proceed." (Condensed from Alexander.) — WHY SAY THE SCRIBES THAT ELIAS MUST FIRST COME? The appearing of Elias, which the disciples had just witnessed, reminded them of Malachi's prophecy concerning the forerunner of the Messiah, which was to be Elias in his personal identity according to the interpretation of the scribes. But as Christ had entered upon his public ministry long before this appearing of Elias, the disciples could not understand the connection of these two events. — ELIAS VERILY COMETH FIRST AND RESTORETH ALL THINGS. In these words the Lord confirms and explains the prophecy of Malachi. By this *restoring* must be understood what the angel had announced to Zacharias concerning his son John: "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and many of the children of Israel shall he 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." (Luke i, 15-17.) Elias was the reformer of the Old Testament Church, and was, therefore, the fittest type of John the Baptist. — AND HOW IS IT WRITTEN OF THE SON OF MAN? This sentence is not without its difficulties, and is differently construed. Meyer, Lange, and others put an interrogation point after "the Son of man," others at the end of the verse. The difference of meaning is but slight. To the question of the disciples how it was with Elijah's coming before the Messiah, the Lord returns first a direct answer; namely, that such a forerunner, as Malachi had prophesied, must precede the Messiah, and then

asks the counter-question: "And how is it written about the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be set at naught?" To this follows in verse 13 the partial answer: ELIAS IS INDEED COME, [before the Messiah,] AND THEY HAVE DONE UNTO HIM WHATSOEVER THEY LISTED. The legitimate inference, which, however, is not expressed, is: inasmuch as the prophecy concerning the forerunner has been fulfilled, the fulfillment of that concerning the Messiah's suffering and death is at hand. — AS IT IS WRITTEN OF HIM. What the Scripture says about the fate of Elijah, (1 Kings xviii, xix,) was a type of John's fate, although Elijah did not die a violent death. The rejection of the Baptist was also hinted at in the concluding words of Malachi, which imply that the mission of the forerunner would prove "a curse" to some.

VERSES 14-29. Mark's statement of this memorable cure, which was performed, according to the three Synoptists, immediately after Christ's coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, is by far the fullest. He gives us in his account a number of features peculiar to himself. Of great importance is, especially, the discussion between the Lord and the father of the sick boy, (vs. 21-25.) — AND WHEN HE SAW HIM, STRAIGHTWAY THE SPIRIT TARE HIM. "The moment when the boy beholds Jesus, the evil spirit that possesses him raises a fearful paroxysm. But without any trace or tincture of that horror which, as it seems, had restrained the faith of the disciples, with a calmness which is at the same time a feeling of deep sympathy with the wretchedness before him, Christ looks on the tearing, rolling, and foaming, wisely delays the help in order that all who were agitated might be tranquilized and prepared for the salutary impression, and kindly asks the father how long it is since this happened to the poor boy. The father begins anew to describe the case in stronger terms than before, and as he before complained that the disciples could not help him, so now, in his anguish, he speaks very unbelievingly the bold word: '*But if thou canst do any thing, [more than the disciples in thy name,] have compassion on us, and help us!*' This *us*, proceeding from paternal love, this cry for pity would, in ordinary cases, notwithstanding all the boldness of the *if*, have moved Christ immediately to say, Be whole. Now, however, his mind is so full of thoughts about faith and unbelief, that the bodily malady, bad as it is, falls into the background; he delays still the help which will certainly come, and must first speak and testify of faith. The poor father's faith could and must, first of all, do the most, as the son

appears almost passively incapable; his *unbelief* next to the power of the malady, had been to the disciples the obstacle that had put out their little spark of faith." (Stier.) — IF THOU CANST BELIEVE. The difficulty in the Greek text has been noticed in foot-note 5. It does not affect the sense, which is plainly this: "That *if* of thine, that uncertainty whether this can be done or not, is to be solved by thee and not by me. Thou hast said, If I can do any thing; but the question is, *If thou canst believe;*" this is the hinge upon which all must turn." (Trench.) — ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE TO HIM THAT BELIEVETH. Thus the father's faith is here made the condition of the healing of his child, as in the case of the Syrophenician mother. On the vast, general import of these words, see the comment on Matthew xvii, 20. — AND STRAIGHTWAY THE FATHER OF THE CHILD CRIED OUT. The poor father is drawn out into a sense of the unworthiness of his distrust, and the little spark of faith which is kindled in his soul reveals to him the abysmal deeps of unbelief which are there. "We deeply pity any one," says Stier, "who does not feel constrained to acknowledge that such narratives and sayings as Mark here gives, can not be rationally accounted for on any other ground but that they were *facts* in the living conflict of the Son of God with the children of men. Where do we read the like? Where has the like been done? Into whose mind could such things come if they did not actually take place?" — LORD, I BELIEVE, HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF. Only a thorough conviction of our unbelief gives birth to true, living faith. What a vast difference is there between a mere prayer for help and the firm conviction that our prayer will be answered! Our praying is in vain till we are convinced that we must pray for faith. The father knows by this time, that his boy is safe as soon as his own unbelief is cured. Hence he entreats the Lord to assist his feeble faith. Through the aid of Christ the power of faith is born in the faintly-believing, struggling soul, and thus help comes within the believer's reach. Let every one, whose faith is weak, do as this father did, let him humble himself before God and he will receive strength to believe. — THOU DUMB AND DEAF SPIRIT; thus the demon was called from the effects which he produced. An old writer makes the following application: "Those who like neither to speak of God nor to hear others speak of him, are likewise possessed of a deaf and dumb spirit, but Christ can cast out also the spirit of gloomy, melancholy taciturnity, and of rebellious, grumbling grief. He compels him to cry out aloud, and thus he is cast out." — I CHARGE THEE, COME OUT OF HIM. This sets Christ's power in open contrast with the weakness of the disciples, who had failed in their

attempt to cast out the demon; and in order to give the most perfect assurance to the father, and son, and all the hearers, he adds the command, which occurs only here, that it should depart, never again to enter into him. — HE WAS AS ONE DEAD. The evil spirit having vented his rage for the last time, left the boy in utter exhaustion, so that it required, as it seems, another miraculous exertion on the part of Jesus to restore him to health and strength. This feature is also very significant and symbolical of that which often occurs in the ordinary conversion of men.

SECTION XI.

THE SECRET SOJOURN OF JESUS IN GALILEE, AND HIS RETURN FROM THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES AT JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER IX, 30-50.

1. CHRIST FORETELLS HIS DISCIPLES HIS DEATH FOR THE SECOND TIME.

Verses 30-32. (COMPARE MATTHEW xvii, 22, 23; LUKE ix, 43-45.)

(30) **AND they departed thence, ^[1] and passed ^[2] through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it.** (31) **For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.** (32) **But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.**

[1] That is, from the place where he had healed the possessed child, from the region of Cesarea Philippi.]

[2] Lange translates, "They passed on by-ways," which is the exact meaning of παραπορεύεσθαι.]

2. THE DISCIPLES' DISPUTE ABOUT PRE-EMINENCE. CHRIST
REPROVES THE ZEAL OF JOHN, ENJOINS A SPIRIT OF
TOLERATION, AND WARNS AGAINST OFFENDING HIS LITTLE
ONES.

Verses 33-50. (COMPARE MATTHEW xviii, 1-9; LUKE ix, 46-50.)

(33) AND he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? (34) But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest. (35) And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all. (36) And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, (37) Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. (38) And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. (39) But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in ^[1] my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. (40) For he that is not against us ^[2] is on our part. (41) For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my ^[3] name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. (42) And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. (43) And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: (44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (45) And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: (46) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (47) And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: (48) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (49) For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. (50) Salt is good: but

if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

[1 Several Codices omit the preposition *ἐν*. Lange considers this the better reading, and translates, "By" or "through thy name."]

[2 The best readings have "*you*" and "*your*" for "*us*" and "*our*."]

[3 Most manuscripts omit "*my*," and read, "in the name;" that is, "for the reason that."]

VERSES 33-50. AND HE CAME TO CAPERNAUM. Lange places this sojourn of the Lord at Capernaum not immediately after the events in the preceding section, but after the Lord's return from the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem. He thinks that the dispute of the disciples concerning pre-eminence is much better accounted for by this supposition, inasmuch as our Lord's authoritative procedure there, recorded by John, (chap. vii, 1-10, 21,) and the favorable impression made upon many Jews, had most probably revived the hopes of the disciples that he would now forthwith proceed to establish his kingdom, and the Lord's sayings concerning his suffering and death were thus obliterated from their minds. The difference between the chronological position assigned to this section in our Synoptic Table (98-107) and Lange's view is not essential, as we agree with him in assuming that our Lord returned once more to Galilee between the Feast of Tabernacles and that of dedication. (See note on Matt. xix, 1.) — **AND JOHN ANSWERED HIM.** The discourse of our Lord preceding the case which John now brings before him, has been fully considered in Matthew. We need only point out the connection of that which Mark and Luke record, with the immediately-preceding words of our Savior, which Matthew also has recorded. John replies to the saying: "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." John, quickly apprehending the import of this saying, and remembering a case in which he, with his fellow-disciples, might have acted contrary to the principle just now inculcated by his Master, honestly asks for information. — **WE SAW ONE CASTING OUT DEVILS IN THY NAME.** It was not a person that merely made the attempt to do so, as the sons of Sceva, (Acts xix, 13,) but one who actually did it; and he did it in the name of Christ, consequently by faith, a faith

stronger than the disciples had shown at the foot of the Mount. — AND WE FORBADE HIM, *because he followeth not us*, or, as Luke expresses it more mildly, because he followeth not *with us*, namely, *thee*. The disciples were, evidently, under the impression that they *alone* had been commissioned to cast out devils, but the Lord had no where told them so. "We have here," says Dr. Alexander, "an instance of the natural but erroneous disposition to infer from the existence of a divinely-instituted order, that its author can or will do nothing to promote the same end independently of it." The same assumption is to this day the fruitful source of all sectarianism. Whether the man had or had not received authority from the Lord, of this they, to say the least, were not the competent judges. — FORBID HIM NOT. The answer of our Lord is positive, and involves a principle of general application, but one which, alas! has been most grossly violated by professed followers of Christ in every age and country, "The answer of our Lord to John's inquiry," says Van Oosterzee, "breathes the same spirit as the words of Moses on the prophecy of Eldad and Medad, (Num. xi, 26-29,) and furnishes us with a safe criterion for the philanthropic and Christian efforts of those whose personal relation to the Lord we do not know with certainty. The Lord had, indeed, declared in his Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. vii, 22, 23,) that a man might cast out demons in his name and yet be finally lost, but though this may prove to be the case with some, his disciples were not to decide this beforehand. Their duty was to hope for the best, and this the more, as none could succeed in an attempt of exorcism in his name, from hostile motives and without faith. If their acts were attended with success, it was a presumptive evidence that the agent, for the time being at least, was not an enemy of Christ." It is, however, also worthy of note that while the Lord directs his disciples not to interfere with the man's course, he does not tell them to unite with him outwardly, and to make him a member of their body; for it would have been, on their part, fully as rash to receive him into their midst, before they knew more about him or before he expressed a desire to that effect, as it was to forbid him to do aught in Jesus' name. The casting out demons in Jesus' name was *in itself* — it must be admitted — no infallible proof, that he was a genuine disciple of the Lord, (Matt. vii, 22; 1 Cor. xiii, 2.) — We may, at least, learn from this, that the unity of the Church or of the kingdom of God does not depend on the oneness of the outward organization. The unity of the members of Christ's mystical body does not consist in this, that they are members of the same denomination, but in this, that they are governed by one spirit, and have one and the same end in view. The true unity of the

Christian Church is best promoted by all Christians vying with each other in becoming more and more like Christ and doing his will. — FOR THERE IS NO MAN WHICH SHALL DO A MIRACLE IN MY NAME, THAT CAN LIGHTLY [ταχύ, quickly or hastily] SPEAK EVIL OF ME. The Lord kindly assigns a reason for his injunction, and extends the special case of casting out devils to the working a miracle, which involves the general idea of ejecting or performing a good work in his name. "Anticipating a case which might occur, he says: Whoever uses my name for a good work, will not be able forthwith, *shortly afterward*, to revile me. Compare the expression of the apostles in 1 Corinthians xii, 3, which may be understood as meaning: to confess Jesus as Lord with the powerful conviction wrought by the Spirit, and to curse him, can not co-exist in the same individual. But how? Are there really none who call Jesus Lord, and have not the power of the Holy Ghost? Were there really no hypocritical miscreants who nevertheless cast out devils and removed mountains? (Matt. vii, 22, 23; 1 Cor. xiii, 2.) Is there really *no one* who may unwarrantably perform deeds in the name of the Lord? Certainly; but to know such is reserved for the Searcher of hearts, and for us after successive, manifest evidences of hostility toward the Lord. The Lord, therefore, can by his general statement only mean: It becomes you in every case, in the first instance, lovingly and humbly to assume it to be so, so long as you see in the confession and conduct of any one nothing else than, what you tell me, a good effect resulting from the use of my name against the kingdom of the wicked one.' That this is the proper sense is confirmed by what the Lord immediately adds in the next verse; for the following statement is not to be taken as unconditionally true in all cases, no more than what the Lord says here. Many a one may take the name of Christ into his lips, may preach his Gospel 'of contention, not sincerely,' (Phil. i, 16-18;) but the great apostle, by putting kindly into the background the 'whether in pretense or in truth' in a very clear case, and by not suffering his joy over the preaching of Christ to be disturbed by the hostility manifested against himself, speaks and acts in the spirit of the Lord's declaration, which dictates to us nothing else than that modest *presumption* with which it is proper for us to act." (Stier.) Dr. Alexander remarks on this passage: "Although the age of miracles is past, and therefore no such case can now arise, the principle involved is evidently pertinent to many other cases, and especially to that of spiritual influences visibly attending certain ministrations, and affording a more certain test of their validity than any mere ecclesiastical connection or commission. It is no objection to this application or extension of

the principle here laid down, that apparent spiritual attestations may be spurious, for so might the miraculous appearances of old; and as the rule originally laid down was to be applied to none but genuine performances of that kind, so the rule as here extended is to be applied to none but genuine and valid proofs of the Divine approval, to determine which is no part of our present task, though easily [in most cases, but *not infallibly* in all cases — and this is the point against which the Savior cautions] deducible from Scripture and experience." Lange includes, in the case supposed by the Savior, such as are not yet decided followers of Christ, though performing great deeds in his name, and says: "Christ, therefore, desires his disciples to appreciate, esteem, and leave untrammeled all-individual beginnings or germs of faith beyond the pale of the Church. Men of this class must not be importuned to join this or that denomination." This is very true, but it can not be legitimately deduced from the text. — **FOR HE THAT IS NOT AGAINST US IS ON OUR PART;** according to the correct reading: *he that is not against you is for you.* This saying of our Lord is by no means at variance with that former one in Matthew xii, 30: "He that is not with me is against me;" on the contrary, the one serves to explain the other. As to being *personally* and internally united with Christ and working with him, there is an absolute "*either or.*" He, the Searcher of hearts, can not say of any man's relation *to himself:* he who is not against me is for me. Precisely in opposition to this mischievous error, which would be an impossibility, is the declaration of Christ: he that is not with me is against me. But the internal relation of every man to Christ is not perfectly cognizable to human eye and judgment. This the disciples did not consider properly, making their "*us*" equivalent to the *me* of Christ: "he follows [thee] not with *us*, he followeth not *us!*" He, therefore, does not declare of them what he declares of himself: he who is not *with you*, is *against you.* *This* Christ will affirm of no visible Church of his believing followers whatever; he has not even granted it to the apostles, as we see from the case before us. The lack of *outwardly* visible fellowship of him who cast out devils in his name did not justify their conclusion that he was not with Christ; humility and love should induce us to reckon every one a friend who does not declare himself an enemy, according to the principle in law that a man should be considered innocent till he is proved to be guilty. The "*you*" in the passage before us forms the great contrast to the "*me*" in the passage of Matthew, and sets both passages in the clearest light. If, then, Christ would not and could not so bind himself up even with his apostles as to allow them to say, no communion with Christ without outward

fellowship with us, much less has any Christian communion or branch of the visible Church any right to say, *there is no salvation out of our pale!* Stier, whose thoughts we have given in a free, condensed form, continues his comment thus: "The faithful, wise Teacher lays hold of this individual case in its deep, general significance and symbolical import, sees here in its kernel all Popery in the widest sense of the word, rising in the assuming *us* of his beloved apostles, and therefore he decidedly rejects and condemns it for all time to come. His word strikes at the smallest beginnings of assumption, as well as against its full development in the '*Church, which alone confers salvation,*' against all restraining and quenching of the Spirit with rules, forms, and pretensions based upon '*us,*' against all binding of the gifts of grace to any communion or succession, against all narrow-mindedness of creed, system, and method. Our Lord is most assuredly a God of order in his Church, and inculcates upon his people, *as the rule*, fellowship with each other, and, as far as possible, exact uniformity. But, inasmuch as his people are very much inclined to misunderstand this order, and to substitute, first, the best form, and then by and by some other form, instead of the internal reality; for this very reason, *his Spirit makes exceptions*, and he himself *gives us in this passage the rule* for real exceptions in peculiar circumstances, as well as for a whole field of human assumption, which will quickly see unjustifiable exceptions. O how far and deeply does his brief master-saying penetrate, if only the hearts of his people were willing to receive it! Bind no man so to your doctrine as that you shall say: he speaks not as *we* speak, therefore we regard it not though he also, as well as we, confesses and serves our Lord. Bind not the people to your ways, so as to say: whoever does not as *we* do does not right. Finally, never, in this or in any other sense bind any one to your communion unconditionally, as to say: whoever does not adhere to us we can not regard as a follower of Christ. Our Lord speaks on this subject in the spirit of kind concession, because he has the apostles before him, and with regard to their official character it could be said: whoever is really against you is also against me, (Luke x, 16;) but *in our case* there may be very good reason for a man being *against us* and yet no opponent of the Lord; it may, indeed, be in obedience to the Lord's will that he is opposing what is faulty in us." — FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL GIVE YOU A CUP OF WATER. The conjunction *for* introduces a new reason why the apostles should not interfere with any one that casts out devils in the name of Christ. If the least service rendered to any one that bears the name of Christ will meet with a reward, with how much more

consideration should we treat a man, who not only bears the name of Christ, but also performs a great and good work in his name! — AND WHOSOEVER SHALL OFFEND ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES. With these words Mark turns again into the train of thought in Matthew. "The expressions of our Lord alternate between kindness and seriousness, between promise and warning. Scarcely has the Savior expressed disapprobation of the assumption of the disciples, who would not acknowledge as a follower of the Lord the man who followed not them, when he begins again to assure them of the dignity and honor which belonged to them, according to verse 37; scarcely is this said to them when they are again impressively exhorted to avoid on their part offending any little one. For that in the kingdom of heaven we should be loving children, honoring one another reciprocally and equally, is, as we have already seen in Matthew, the fundamental thought of the whole discourse of our Lord. What Matthew has drawn in brief, Mark gives in its original fullness. It is not to be imagined that the strong, thrice-repeated, stunning expression about the worm and fire had its origin any where else than in the lips of our Lord himself; as the natural sequence of this expression, we find a corresponding, threefold expression about the hand, and foot, and eye." (Stier.) Most commentators connect what our Lord says concerning offenses with verse 37, and understand by the cutting off the hand and the foot, the same as in Matthew v, 29, 30; not so Lange, as we have shown in Matthew xviii, 8, 9. However strange Lange's interpretation of *hand*, and *foot*, and *eye*, may appear, a thorough examination of the context will make it very probable. The offense given to little ones is, by Lange, primarily referred to the conduct of the disciples toward him whom they had forbidden to cast out devils in the name of Jesus. The Lord having enjoined it upon the disciples, in answer to the question of John, to recognize all who do good works in his name, (vs. 39, 40,) and having, moreover, enforced this injunction by the declaration, that even the least respect paid to the name of Christ should not be left without its reward, adds now the solemn warning not to give any offense to any that stand in a spiritual relation to him. Further explanation of the nature of the offenses see in the parallel passage of Matthew. — FOR EVERY ONE SHALL BE SALTED WITH FIRE, AND EVERY SACRIFICE SHALL BE SALTED WITH SALT. The exegesis of this passage is very difficult. Scarcely two commentators find one and the same sense in it. The main question is: who must be understood by "every one?" and this again is closely connected with the other: to what does the conjunction "*for*" refer? Some interpreters understand

by "*every one*" only the finally lost, others only the true believers, and others again all men. We will take up and examine these different interpretations in regular order. Meyer maintains, that the "for" must be referred to the preceding verse, and the "*every one*" be likewise restricted to the individuals specified there. According to him, a new subject is introduced, and quite an opposite idea advanced with the second clause, commencing "*every sacrifice.*" Fire and salt are opposites, and by the "fire" the fire of hell is meant. Lost men may allegorically be called sacrifices, and "*shall be salted*" must not be understood in any other sense than that of the well-known use of salt in connection with sacrifices. Meyer, accordingly, paraphrases the passage as follows: "I speak very properly of their fire, (v. 48;) for every one of those that are thrown into gehenna will be salted there with fire; that is, the claims of the Divine covenant will be vindicated by fire in the case of every one of them; and every sacrifice, that is, every true believer, will be salted with salt; that is, he will set forth in his own person the claims of the Divine covenant at his entrance into the Messianic kingdom; that is, he will be made acceptable unto God, as is done with every sacrifice by salting it." Other expositors consider it more natural to connect the "for" of verse 49 with the entire threefold exhortation, "Cut it off, pluck it out, it is better for thee!" But they also do not agree in their interpretation of the words. Stier, restricting both clauses of the verse to believers, expounds as follows: "Every one who would not come into gehenna, but would obtain the *better part*, shall be salted with fire. To *salt* does not signify to *destroy*, but to *preserve*, to render *durable* and *pleasant*. The '*and*' between the two clauses is equivalent to an '*as*;' for, whatever is salted with the salt of the covenant — and this might be done with fire or merely with salt — is an acceptable *offering*. The Lord quotes from the Mosaic law of sacrifices, (Lev. ii, 13,) and unfolds its typical import. He speaks at once of the fire and of the salt of the sacrifices, and embraces both in one by the one word 'shall be salted,' which he applies to both. The same fire of the Divine purity and holiness, which must, in the future state, unquenchably burn the impure soul, must, in this world, salt every one who would come into contact with it; that is, must sanctify him by putting to death every thing within him that is worthy of death, by a gracious, condemning, purifying destruction of sin, accompanied by the deliverance of the sinner. This is the thought of the Lord, (comp. 1 Peter iv, 12-17; Luke xxiii, 31.) But he expresses this in the typical language of sacrifice, both because this language supplied him with the briefest and most comprehensive expression, and because Isaiah, of whose concluding words he

had quoted two of the preceding verses, had affirmed that the saints should be brought to the Lord for a meat-offering, (Isa. lxvi, 20; comp. lx, 7; Mal. i, 11; Rom. xv, 16.) The fire consumes only the combustible matter that is thrown into it; if the worm in gehenna would die, the fire also would be extinguished, and there would remain in the ashes the pure salt, which resists all destruction as well as corruption. Of what, then, does our Lord speak in verse 49 after he had previously spoken of hell fire? He advises us as a free-will self-offering, to allow ourselves to be sanctified, not only by *the salting salt*, but also by *the salting-fire*, which every one must experience, as no one without some burnt-offering — to which salt was also applied, (Lev. iii, 1, 2; Ezek. xliii, 24) — can become an acceptable offering before God. He intends, therefore, to teach us that, in order to escape condemnation, there remain for us *two* means of becoming holy and happy. These two means are the *salt of truth* and the *fire of affliction*. The being salted with salt would thence denote the voluntary purification of our souls, in obeying the truth through the Spirit, (1 Peter i, 22;) in this way the life which mortifies the old man comes to us in the softest possible manner, though the Gospel must even thus show its burning power against sin; for the holiness of God, manifested along with his grace, chastises us severely, demanding the denial of our ungodly nature. But who has become an offering of God without the aid of affliction, which, through the accompanying help of God, constrains us to obedience? Consequently, we must not sever the two united means of grace; they go always in various ways together as the Lord here embraces them in one view. In themselves they are not entirely separated; because the salt burns as well as salts, and the fire salts as well as burns. Even the word is a fire (Jer. xxiii, 29) in the same way as the Holy Spirit is, (Matt. iii, 11.) Besides, in every case the rod of affliction is indispensable, (Heb. xii, 6-8;) and, on the other hand, no affliction is salutary unless the word of God accompany it. Each gives efficacy to the other; but the salt is, and continues to be, the main thing even when fire accompanies it. The conflict teaches us to attend to the word, (Isa. xxviii, 19,) and the word renders the conflict salutary to us." However instructive and edifying this interpretation of Stier is, yet we prefer that of Olshausen as grammatically more correct, plainer, and more exact. "The salting with fire refers exclusively neither to the everlasting fire of hell, [as Meyer holds,] nor merely to the exhortation to self-denial, [as Stier holds,] but includes both, so that '*every one*' is to be understood literally of the whole human race. The sense of the expression therefore is this: because of the general sinfulness of the race, every individual

must be salted with fire, either, on the one hand, by his entering of his own free will on a course of self-denial and earnest purification from his iniquities, or, on the other hand, by his being carried against his will to the place of punishment. The fire appears here first as the cleansing, purifying element, and then as that which inflicts pain. But for him who submits in earnest to the pain which is necessarily associated with the overcoming of sin, it works beneficially. As every sacrifice is, on the part of him who offers it, a type of his inwardly devoting himself with all that he is and has to the eternal source of his being, so the salt was intended to show that such a sacrifice could never be well-pleasing to God without the pain of self-denial, and the quickening influence of the Spirit of fire from on high. We are, then, to explain the grammatical connection of the two clauses so as not to understand by the sacrifice being salted with fire a different thing from the person's being salted with salt: the latter clause contains the sensible image and type of the spiritual process indicated by the first clause. It is not necessary, however, on this account to give to the article '*and*' the meaning of '*as*'; we have only to supply '*therefore*', so that the sense should be, '*and* for this reason [as it stands written] must every sacrifice be salted with salt.' We have, accordingly, in this passage an authoritative explanation of the meaning of a sacrifice, and of the ceremony of presenting them to the Lord sprinkled with salt." With the interpretation of Olshausen Lange agrees in substance: "Every human being must pass through fire according to the symbolical meaning of the burnt-offering; he must either enter into the fire of gehenna, which in his case is the substitute of the salt, which he lacked, or as the burnt-offering of God into the furnace of the enumerated self-denials, after he has been seasoned before with the salt of the Spirit." So Ewald: "The '*for*' of verse 49 contains or introduces the cause on which the preceding exhortation rests. Sacrifice rather your hand, or foot, or eye, in the service of God, than be cast with your whole bodies as sacrifices of death into the fire of hell. For it is the unalterable law for the race: every thing through the fire. But, in order that fire may become for man a sacrificial fire, he must be voluntarily prepared as a sacrifice and be seasoned with salt; otherwise the fire of gehenna will replace the salt and the sacrifice." — **SALT IS GOOD: BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST HIS [its] SALTNESS, WHEREWITH WILL YE SEASON IT? HAVE SALT IN YOURSELVES.** Expositors differ as widely on the connection of verse 50 with verse 49 as on that of verse 49 with the preceding. But it is not necessary to give all the various views. It seems most natural to suppose that the Lord passes in verse 50 from the specific use and

meaning of salt in sacrifices to the generic properties, which, if they are once lost, the Savior tells us, can not be given to it again. But Stier, holding fast the connection with verse 49, as interpreted by him, says: "In so far as we are a meat-offering, well-pleasing to God, certainly not without a burnt-offering to be prepared in the first instance, and also afterward, in so far as we would be, and would continue to be such, among each other and before the world — we are exhorted in the most friendly manner never to suffer this salutary and necessary salt to be wanting, never suffer it to be lost. The fire must, alas! strike us because of sin; but it is not as an evil now that it is spoken of: *salt* is and remains the best for us, the unmingled good — καλὸν, which of itself can and will help to the καλόν σοι, *better for thee*, (verses 43-48.) Hold this fast, *have it*, keep it, and use it well, says our Lord to his disciples. The more salt there is in you, the less will you need fire. To take in and to hold fast the power of sanctifying truth for free-will obedience in self-denial, and to reject our own inward corruption — to forsake all that we have, (Luke xiv, 33, 34) — this is good and beautiful. And this admonition is sharpened by recalling to their minds the impossibility of seasoning salt which has lost its powers." — AND HAVE PEACE ONE WITH ANOTHER. "These closing words point back to the commencement of the discourse. Perhaps the expression '*have salt*' is intended to form a contrast to the '*have peace*.' The former seems to describe a sharp and caustic, the latter a gentle, mode of action; both are to be united in the regenerate; in regard to the ungodliness that is in the world he must reprove and rebuke, and in so far he must, like Christ himself, (Matt. x, 34,) bring in strife, but in regard to all that is congenial and kindred in the children of God, gentleness must prevail. As, therefore, salt does not season salt, but only that which is unsalted, so the living energies of the children of God should not be expended in contests among themselves, but be devoted to the awakening of life in the world. The closeness with which the last verses in Mark connect themselves both with the preceding context and with the commencement of the whole discourse, makes it to my mind improbable that they originally stood in any other connection." (Olshausen.) Lange remarks: "As salt, the spirit of chastening grace, is the primary condition of peace with God, so it is also the basis of the peace which Christians have one with another. Hence the word of the Lord: *have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.* The Lord places the ambitious dispute of the disciples on an equal footing with their uncharitable zeal against a beginner in faith. All ungodly zeal displayed within

and without the Church proceeds from one and the same fundamental defect, the lack of salt, that is, of obedience to the truth."

SECTION XII.

THE SOJOURN OF JESUS IN PEREA.

CHAPTER X, 1-31.

1. DISCUSSION BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE PHARISEES CONCERNING THE LAW OF MATRIMONY.

Verses 1-12. (COMPARE MATTHEW xix, 1-9.)

(1) AND he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan; ^[1] and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. (2) And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. (3) And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? (4) And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. (5) And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. (6) But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. (7) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; (8) and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. (9) What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (10) And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. (11) And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. (12) And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

[1] Instead of "by the farther side of Jordan," some Codices read, "*and beyond Jordan,*" (**καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ιορδάνου**, instead of **διὰ τοῦ πέραν τοῦ Ιορδάνου**;) a number of ancient versions have the same reading, which is considered the better by Lachman, Tischendorf, and Meyer. These critics think that the "and" (**καὶ**) was dropped in order to make the passage agree

with Matthew xix, 1, and that the preposition (**διὰ**) was inserted as an explanation. Lange, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the reading, "**καὶ**," arose from the want of a correct insight into the other reading. (Compare note on Matt. xix, 1.) Between our Lord's leaving Galilee and the following discourse all that Luke records from ix, 52, to xviii, 14, is to be inserted. (See Synoptic Table, Nos. 108-140.)]

2. LITTLE CHILDREN ARE BROUGHT TO JESUS. HIS DECLARATION CONCERNING THEIR RELATION TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Verses 13-16. (COMPARE MATTHEW xix, 13-15; LUKE xviii, 15-17.)

(13) **AND** they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*. (14) But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. (15) Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. (16) And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

3. THE RICH YOUNG MAN. JESUS SPEAKS OF THE DANGERS OF WORLDLY RICHES, AND THE REWARDS OF HIS FOLLOWERS.

Verses 17-31. (COMPARE MATTHEW xix, 16-30; LUKE xviii, 18-30.)

(17) **AND** when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? (18) And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God. (19) Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother. (20) And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. (21) Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure

in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. (22) And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. (23) And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (24) And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! (25) It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (26) And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? (27) And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. (28) Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. (29) And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's, (30) but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. (31) But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

VERSES 2-12. Let us take to heart Christ's teachings on the marriage relation: 1. That it is a Divine institution, holy and indissoluble, the basis of human society and the emblem of the life-union between the Lord and his Church. 2. That sin has disordered this holy and blissful relation, and made it the instrument of wretchedness and misery. 3. That the law can not restore the Divine order before man's relation to his Maker is restored.

VERSES 13-16. WHOSOEVER SHALL NOT RECEIVE THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS A LITTLE CHILD, HE SHALL NOT ENTER THEREIN. Our Lord repeats here in other words the same lesson he had taught his disciples before, when he said to them: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." We must become as a little child in self-obliviousness, simplicity, and truth. He that is most childlike is the greatest in the estimation of God.

VERSES 17-31. THE INCONSISTENCIES IN THE YOUNG MAN'S CONDUCT. "1. He hastens to Jesus full of enthusiasm — leaves him with a

heart filled with sadness. 2. Not regarding what men would say, he kneels down before Jesus, and not regarding his own convictions, he sets at naught his advice. 3. He comes to the Lord with a keen sense of needing salvation, and leaves him with the conviction of guilt in his bosom." (Lange.) — **ONE THING THOU LACKEST.** I. The young man had many good qualities, which were recognized even by Christ himself: 1. He possessed a high respect for what is morally good; 2. He entertained no doubts as to the reality of an eternal life, and was equally certain that Jesus could point out to him the way leading to that life; 3. He was anxious to become a partaker of this eternal life. Neither his station in life nor his wealth satisfied him; there was an aching void within him; 4. He had a spirit of genuine docility. Though he knew much, he sought for more information, and sought it from Christ, disregarding the prejudices and opposition of his fellow-men; 5. His external morality was faultless. No one could charge him with the violation of any social law or right; nevertheless, 6. His moral susceptibility was so keen that he did not feel at ease. II. The one thing which he lacked was a full and perfect surrender of the heart to God. Selfishness is the very opposite of the two great commandments: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. To love our neighbor truly we must love God supremely. Whatever else we have, if we have not this love we are nothing, (1 Cor. xiii,) we are morally worthless and wretched, clouds without water, wandering stars, rushing into boundless gloom and ruin. Whatever we love more than God, no matter what it is, must be sacrificed. The young man's heart was addicted to his earthly possessions; for this reason the Lord commanded him to sell all he had and give it to the poor. Only under this condition he could follow Christ. What sacrifice does the Lord require at *thy* hands? Make it, and thou shalt have a great treasure in heaven. Take thy cross upon thyself, come and follow Jesus, who, though he was rich, became poor, that we might become rich! — **HOW CAN A RICH MAN ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD?** 1. The thing itself is difficult from the very nature of the case; 2. It is impossible as long as the rich man sets his heart on earthly possessions; 3. The inward change necessary to make it possible is a miracle of Divine grace. These truths are, (1.) Full of terror for the worldly-minded rich man; (2.) Full of comfort for the pious poor; (3.) A cause of the deepest gratitude to God for his superabundant grace both for the rich and poor. — **BUT HE SHALL RECEIVE A HUNDREDFOLD.** In the possession of true religion we find a hundredfold indemnification for every sacrifice of temporal advantages; first, in the higher and purer enjoyment of the

blessings of this world; secondly, what we have forsaken or lost on account of our embracing religion, is restored to us by houses of hospitable friends, Christian brethren and sisters, spiritual mothers and children, fields of labor, etc. The spiritual nature of the new acquisitions appears, among other considerations, also from this, that among the things to be found again, neither father nor wife is mentioned. Yet godliness is profitable for all things, and has the promise of the life which now is as well as of the life to come. Thirdly, we obtain eternal life in the perfected kingdom of God, a participation in the glory of the Lord. — WITH PERSECUTIONS; that is, not only along with and in spite of persecutions, but these persecutions will be part of the very best acquisitions, (see Matt. v, 12; Rom. v, 3; James i, 2, 4; 1 Peter i, 6; Heb. xii, 6.) The Lord adds this, lest his disciples might look forward for uninterrupted prosperity. The spiritual nature of the blessings enumerated appears also from this, that they are independent of the favor of men and can not be reached by persecutions.

SECTION XIII.

THE FINAL DEPARTURE OF JESUS FROM PEREA FOR JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER X, 32-52.

1. JESUS ANNOUNCES THE THIRD TIME HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH. Verses 32-34. (COMPARE MATTHEW xx, 17-19; LUKE xviii, 31-34.)

(32) **AND** they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, (33) *saying*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief-priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: (34) And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again.

2. THE REQUEST OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE.

Verses 35-45. (COMPARE MATTHEW xx, 20-28.)

(35) AND James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. (36) And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? (37) They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. (38) But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (39) And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: (40) But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared. (41) And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John. (42) But Jesus called them *to him*, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. (43) But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: (44) And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. (45) For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

3. THE BLIND BEGGAR BARTIMEUS.

Verses 46-52. (COMPARE MATTHEW xx, 29-34; LUKE xviii, 35-43.)

(46) AND they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging. (47) And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me. (48) And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me. (49) And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be

called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. (50) And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. (51) And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. (52) And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

VERSES 32-34. AND THEY WERE IN THE WAY GOING UP TO JERUSALEM. See note on Matthew xx, 17, and Synoptic Table, Nos. 135-144. — AND JESUS WENT BEFORE THEM, AND THEY WERE AMAZED. "The amazement of the disciples was caused by the heroic, determined conduct of their Master. They saw in his majestic, solemn, and determined bearing, that the crisis was imminent. As this trembling and amazement of the disciples took place before his final, positive declaration, that the time of his suffering and death was at hand, their painful emotions must have arisen from a dark foreboding of the nearness of the decisive moment." (Lange.) — AND AS THEY FOLLOWED, THEY WERE AFRAID. Meyer recommends the reading of some of the Codices, "but those that followed him were afraid." The meaning, according to this reading, is, that the majority of the disciples, in their amazement, hesitated and remained behind, while those that continued to follow him did so in great fear. But Lange justly objects to this view, because the reading is not sufficiently authenticated, and because we find no intimation in the Gospel of John, that at that time some of his followers left him. Moreover, the contrast between such as left the Lord at that time, and those that followed him with fear and trembling, *if it existed*, would be set forth in stronger language, as is the case in John vi, 66. Yet the expression used by the Evangelist seems to indicate a hesitancy on the part of many followers, a danger of their scattering, which the Lord meets by taking the twelve apart and telling them in positive language that he would now speedily suffer and die, adding, however, at the same time the glorious declaration, that he would rise again from the dead. And from the ambitious prayer of the two sons of Zebedee, which was soon afterward made, and from the conduct of all the disciples when they learned the nature of that prayer, we may infer that the Lord succeeded by this communication to raise the drooping spirits of his disciples. — AND BEGAN TO TELL THEM. *This third and pointed*

prediction of his suffering, clearly sets forth, 1. The highest prophetic clearness of the Lord; 2. His perfect willingness to be made a sacrifice; 3. His royal certainty as to his final triumph. — *What a contrast between the Master and his disciples!* 1. While they are enveloped in darkness his knowledge is full and clear; 2. While they tremble with fear, his equanimity is undisturbable; 3. While they but reluctantly follow him, he boldly goes ahead to meet his enemies, and death itself. — *Three weighty reasons why we should be willing to go with Jesus into suffering and death:* 1. Jesus has taken the lead in the severest suffering; 2. Jesus has sanctified and taken away all bitterness from our suffering by his own suffering and death; 3. Jesus has secured, through his own victory over all his enemies, a glorious issue of all our sufferings.

VERSES 35-45. "Christ has now prepared his disciples for his last journey to Jerusalem and its importance, and has come forth from out of the desert of Ephraim; the first group of Galilean pilgrims, consisting, in all probability, of his special friends and followers, who had journeyed directly from Galilee through Samaria to Ephraim, and went thence with the Lord to Jericho, had by this time undoubtedly joined him. This appears from the presence [in the crowd] of Salome, and the part she took in the petition of her sons. Matthew represents Salome herself as advancing the prayer, while according to Mark her sons do it; such variations, however, which are explained by the nature of the case, show only the mutual independence of the Evangelists, and instead of impairing, greatly increase the weight of their statements. Even according to Matthew, the Lord addresses himself more particularly to the sons, after their mother has merely acted as the speaker." (Lange.) — Let us learn from this section the difference between *false* and *true greatness*. I. The conduct of the disciples exhibits many marks of false greatness: 1. Such greatness is selfish. The mother of the two disciples thought only of her sons and of herself. True greatness is not attainable through selfish motives; 2. It aims at a phantom, yea, at something that would be ruinous to its possessor, if it should be reached. II. The nature of true greatness: 1. The condition of real glory is a fellowship with the sufferings of Christ; as the apostle expresses it, "to be crucified and buried with Christ, to become like unto his death;" that is, we must possess the spirit of self-denial, as exhibited in his suffering. Without this spirit man can never attain the character that is pleasing in God's sight and approved of men. 2. God is the fountain of all real greatness, (v. 40.) Those for whom true greatness is prepared are those that comply with

God's established conditions: they attain to it conditionally, as the husbandman secures the harvest, or the scholar learning, by putting forth the necessary efforts on his part. 3. It manifests itself in the promotion of the best interests of all, (vs. 43, 44.) Its mission is to minister, not to be ministered unto — to give, not to rule. 4. Jesus Christ is the only pattern of true greatness, (v. 45.) Fix your eyes upon Christ till riches appear to you as dust, worldly distinction as child's play, and honor with men as an empty dream.

VERSES 42-52. On the apparent discrepancies and the details of this miraculous cure, see the parallel passage of Matthew.

SECTION XIV.

CHRIST'S SOLEMN ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM. THE WITHERED FIG-TREE, AND THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

CHAPTER XI, 1-26.

1. CHRIST'S SOLEMN ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

Verses 1-11. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxi, 1-11; LUKE xix, 29-46;
JOHN xii. 12-19.)

(1) **AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,** (2) **and saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*.** (3) **And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.** (4) **And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.** (5) **And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?** (6) **And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.** (7) **And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.** (8) **And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.** (9) **And they that**

went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: (10) Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. (11) And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the Temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

2. THE WITHERED FIG-TREE, AND THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

Verses 12-26. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxi, 12-22; LUKE xix, 45, 46.)

(12) AND on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: (13) And seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. (14) And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard *it*. (15) And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; (16) and would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the Temple. (17) And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. (18) And the scribes and chief-priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. (19) And when even was come, he went out of the city. (20) And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. (21) And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away. (22) And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. (23) For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. (24) Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. (25) And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have

aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. (26) But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

VERSES 1-11. AND WHEN THEY CAME NIGH TO JERUSALEM.

On the chronology see introductory remarks to Matthew xxi, 1-11, and the Synoptic Table, No. 147. — YE SHALL FIND A COLT TIED. Matthew says: "an ass and a colt with her." Such variations serve greatly to set forth the historical character of the Gospels and the independence of their authors. — BLESSED BE THE KINGDOM OF OUR FATHER DAVID. "The Messianic kingdom was the re-establishment of the kingdom of David in a higher form; as David was a type of the Messiah, so his kingdom was one of the Messiah's kingdom. In waiting for the Messiah, the Jews waited for his kingdom, and in saluting the Messiah, they saluted, consequently, the appearance of his kingdom. Christ and his kingdom can not be separated from each other; but his kingdom while in a state of development differs as widely from his kingdom of glory, as the glorified Christ differs from Christ in his humiliation." (Lange.) — AND WHEN HE HAD LOOKED ROUND ABOUT UPON ALL THINGS. "Brief, pointed, and lofty is the closing part of the report, which Mark gives of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Jesus enters the city, visits the Temple, examines every thing with the eye of a sovereign, whereupon he retires to Bethany in the evening with his disciples. To this distinction between the day of the solemn entry and that of the Temple cleansing we are indebted to Mark alone. Matthew and Mark connect the cleansing of the Temple with the royal entry, because the Lord takes, thereby, as it were, possession of his Father's house, and exercises the rights that belonged to him in consequence of his birth." (Lange.)

VERSES 12-26. AND ON THE MORROW; that is, on Monday morning. Mark gives in this particular the chronological order the most exactly. Sunday was the day of the entry and on which every thing was examined. Monday is the day on which the fig-tree was cursed and the Temple cleansed, by which latter act the rage of the Sanhedrim was raised to its highest point. It was, probably, also on Monday that the Greeks desired to see Christ, (John xii, 20-36.) — AND HE WOULD NOT SUFFER THAT ANY ONE SHOULD CARRY A VESSEL THROUGH THE TEMPLE; that is, through

the court, (see Lev. xix, 30; Deut. xii, 5; Ex. xxx, 13.) The court seems to have been used as a passage from one part of the city to the other. The Lord did not allow any one to carry tools, etc., through the vestibule, whereby the quiet of the sacred place would have been disturbed. — **MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED OF ALL NATIONS THE HOUSE OF PRAYER.** "*Of all nations*" is in the dative case in Greek, and must be construed with "the house of prayer;" the meaning is: My house shall be the house of prayer to all nations. Though this declaration could be *fully* verified only after the destruction of the Temple, when the house of God ceased to be a limited locality, and became co-extensive with the Christian Church, yet it was, in part, realized even during the Old Testament dispensation, by permitting the strangers in Israel to offer sacrifices, (Lev. xvii, 8; xxii, 19; Ezra ii, 43; vii, 7;) and the court of the Gentiles shadowed forth the future universality of the worship of the true and living God. — The Lord refers to two passages, Isaiah lvi, 7, (comp. Is. ii,) and Jeremiah vii, 11. — **HAVE FAITH IN GOD.** Faith evidently means here *trust, confidence*. Have unshaken confidence in God. — **BELIEVE THAT YOU RECEIVE THEM, AND YE SHALL HAVE THEM.** See note on Matthew xxi, 22. Whoever prays in the Divine assurance of faith, receives in the very act of prayer the object of his desire, (Heb. xi, 1.) This faith, however, is essentially the miracle-working faith of which the Lord here speaks. — **AND WHEN YE STAND PRAYING, FORGIVE.** That our Lord repeats here what he had said in the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. vi, 14, 15,) on the necessity of forgiving, to pray acceptably, seems to bear a significant relation to the symbolical judgment he had just pronounced on the barren fig-tree. As that act was associated in the minds of the apostles with the miraculous powers promised to the prayer of faith, the Lord deems it necessary to remind them that this miracle-working faith must not be exercised by them for the gratification of feelings of revenge, or in the service of fanaticism. But there is, apart from this consideration, a more general connection *between forgiving and the prayer of faith*, as Stier remarks: "Whenever the heart, conscious of its own guilt, is not perfectly ready to exercise forgiveness; whenever there is any ban of enmity, there is a secret *doubting* which breaks and hinders the power of prayer. This is what the apostle means in 1 Timothy ii, 8: 'without *wrath* and *doubting*'."

SECTION XV.

THE LAST CONFLICTS OF JESUS WITH HIS ENEMIES AT JERUSALEM ON TUESDAY OF THE PASSION-WEEK.

CHAPTER XI, 27, TO CHAPTER XII, 44.

1. THE QUESTION OF THE SANHEDRIM AS TO CHRIST'S AUTHORITY, AND THE COUNTER QUESTION OF CHRIST AS TO JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MISSION.

Chapter XI, 27-33. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxi, 23-27; LUKE xx, 1-8.)

(27) **AND** they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the Temple, there come to him the chief-priests, and the scribes, and the elders, (28) and say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? (29) And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. (30) The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me. (31) And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? (32) But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. (33) And they answered and said unto Jesus, We can not tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

2. THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

Chapter XII, 1-12. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxi, 33-46; LUKE xx,
9-17.)

(1) **AND** he began to speak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about *it*, and digged *a place* for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. (2) And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. (3) And they caught *him*, and beat *him*, and sent *him* away

empty. (4) And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled. (5) And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. (6) Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. (7) But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. (8) And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard. (9) What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. (10) And have ye not read this Scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: (11) This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? (12) And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

3. THE TREACHEROUS ATTACK OF THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS CONCERNING TRIBUTE TO CAESAR, AND THEIR DISCOMFITURE.

Verses 13-17. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxii, 15-22; LUKE xx, 20-24)

(13) AND they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians. to catch him in *his* words. (14) And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? (15) Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*. (16) And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. (17) And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's: And they marveled at him.

4. THE ATTACK OF THE SADDUCEES CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THEIR DEFEAT.

Verses 18-27. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxii, 23-33; LUKE xx, 27-40.)

(18) THEN come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, (19) Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife *behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. (20) Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. (21) And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. (22) And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. (23) In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. (24) And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? (25) For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. (26) And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? (27) He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

5. THE QUESTION OF THE SCRIBE AS TO THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

Verses 28-34. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxii, 34-40.)

(28) AND one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? (29) And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: (30) And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. (31) And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (32) And the scribe said unto

him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: (33) And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. (34) And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him *any question.*

6. THE COUNTER QUESTION OF THE LORD TO THE SCRIBES CONCERNING DAVID AND HIS SON.

Verses 35-37. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxii, 41-46; LUKE xx, 41-44.)

(35) AND Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the Temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? (36) For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. (37) David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

7. CHRIST'S PUBLIC WARNING AGAINST THE SCRIBES.

Verses 38-40. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxiii; LUKE xx, 45-47.)

(38) AND he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the marketplaces, (39) and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: (40) Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

8. THE WIDOW'S MITE.

Verses 41-44. (COMPARE LUKE xxi, 1-4.)

(41) AND Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: ^[1] and many that were rich cast in much. (42) And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two

mites, [2] which make a farthing. (43) And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: (44) For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

[1 Not the treasury proper is meant here, but a box or chest into which the worshipers cast their offerings. Being, however, to a certain extent part of the treasury, it went by that name. According to the Rabbins this box consisted of thirteen brass chests, called trumpets from their orifices, which were wide above and small below, and stood in the court of the women. In addition to the regular tribute-money the voluntary offerings were deposited there. According to Lightfoot there were nine chests for the regular tribute-money, and four for voluntary offerings, from which wood, frankincense, decorations of the Temple, burnt-offerings, etc., were purchased. The voluntary offerings flowed most liberally before the Feast of the Passover. Scarcely any one ever entered the Temple without giving something. This practice is still observed in the synagogue.]

[2 The **λεπτὸν** was the smallest copper coin. The widow gave two such coins, and might, as Bengel observes, have kept one. Mark states the actual value of the coin by telling us that two made one (Roman) quadrans, which was itself one-fourth of a Roman *as*, ten of which made a denarius. A *lepton* was, therefore, about one-fifth of a cent.]

VERSES 27-33. BY WHAT AUTHORITY DOEST THOU THESE THINGS? "The Sanhedrim evidently referred to Christ's whole appearance and conduct in the Temple as the Messiah, whom the people believed him to be; the cleansing of the Temple was only an isolated function of his Messianic office. The law commanded to prove the prophets, (Deut. xiii, 2.) The great criterion by which his claims were to be tested was his perfect agreement with the revealed religion of the Jewish theocracy: the power to perform miracles was not indispensably necessary; the presence of miraculous powers without a perfect agreement with the teachings of the Pentateuch was insufficient to accredit the prophet, while the same is not said about the absence of miraculous powers. (Comp. Deut. xviii, 20; Ezek. xiii, 1.) That Jesus had performed miracles in proof of his Divine mission, could not possibly be denied, but his enemies endeavored to lay to his charge the attempt to found a new

religion. For this reason they demand of him a proof, 1. Of having received from God his miracle-working power and prophetic inspiration; and, 2. Of his theocratic commission. Inasmuch as the latter involved the former, Jesus appeals at once to John. John was the latest and greatest of the Old Testament prophets, and he had declared Jesus to be the Messiah. The Sanhedrim, though not recognizing the claims of John, did not dare to call his mission into question before the people. They had designed to entrap Jesus in his words, expecting that he would appeal to his Divine dignity; but Jesus appealed to John's testimony, thereby frustrating not only their design, but confounding them before the people. This appeal to John's testimony was an appeal to an authority which they did not dare to impugn, and, at the same time, a solemn declaration to them, that their rejection of John's testimony made them guilty of formal apostasy from the hope of their fathers." (Lange.)

CHAPTER XII, VERSES 1-12. Of the three parables, which, according to Matthew, Jesus delivered in the Temple, Mark gives only the second; on the one hand, more condensed than Matthew; on the other, more full than Luke. According to Matthew, Christ's adversaries pronounced the sentence themselves, while according to Mark, Christ passes it. (See note on Matthew xxi, 41.)

VERSES 18-27. Like the Sadducees of old, modern infidels still attack the Christian faith by supposing the greatest improbabilities, if not absolute impossibilities. Worthy of our special notice is the calm dignity and meekness with which our Lord answers these mocking Sadducees. He simply reminds them of their ignorance of the Scriptures, and their spiritual unsusceptibility. Carnal men conceive of eternal life as something carnal, earthly, because they have no organ for the apprehension of the Divine. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, that only those who know God as the living God, from their own inward experience, believe from the heart the resurrection of the body. — "In this narrative of our Lord's encounter with the skeptics of his day, four things claim our notice: *The objection. The refutation. The argument. The limitation.* I. THE OBJECTION. The objection of the Sadducees, although illustrated by an extreme case, was on their grounds perfectly legitimate. They urged the confusion which must result from relationships, which in this life are successive, becoming at the resurrection coterminous. Exactly analogous to this is a difficulty propounded by some at the present day, based on the fact, that the particles composing the living body are perpetually changing; whence

it has been asked, If a soul has been vitally united to many successive sets of atoms, to which of those sets shall she be united in the resurrection? *'for they all had her.'* II. THE REFUTATION. The reply of our Lord disposes at once both of the ancient and modern difficulty. He assures them that those marital rights, which seemed to them involved in such hopeless confusion, will exist no longer. In like manner it may be replied to the modern objector that, if the change of particles alluded to does not interfere with the present identity of the body, much less can we affirm it to preclude the perpetuation of that identity under conditions totally unknown to us. For any thing we know, atomic identity may form no feature in the resurrection body. III. THE ARGUMENT. The argument propounded by our Lord in proof of a resurrection rests on the words addressed by Jehovah to Moses from out of the burning bush. In it we remark two peculiarities: 1. That this affirmative argument is not drawn from any thing in man's own nature, *but from his relationship to the Everlasting.* This is high ground, and it is the only safe ground. Who that has studied the subtleties of metaphysicians about immateriality and indestructibility has not felt a painful misgiving as to the soundness of such evidence on which to rest an immortal hope? After all the labored pleadings does not the thought intrude, 'That which has had a beginning may have an end?' Hence heathen theories of immortality have mostly leaned for support either on Platonic pre-existence, on the one hand, or on Oriental absorption, on the other. It is only when we leave our dialectics and turn to the moral evidence, and see in the many triumphs of guilt and sufferings of innocence the necessity of an after-death retribution, that the mind attains any thing like satisfaction on the subject. And what is this, but an argument based on the moral character of God as reflected from the conscience of man? If, therefore, the general consideration of suffering virtue and successful crime demands a future adjustment, much more does the fact of a Divine covenant instituted with individual man, and of which the promises remain yet to be fulfilled, demand a future life for its realization. Such a covenant existed between Jehovah and the patriarchs. At the time of Moses this covenant existed still. 'I AM the God,' not 'I was the God.' But they had slept in the cave of Machpelah for several centuries. Yet they had sought a better country — a father-land, and in faith they died, 'not having received the promises;' 'wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.' (Heb. xi, 13-16.) This then is the Christian argument for immortality; the promise of Him who can not lie. 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' [It is vital union with him, who, having been 'raised up from the dead by

the glory of the Father, is become the first-fruits of them that slept.' Herein lies also the truth, that the hope of eternal life rests only upon man's personal communion with his God, and that a man, in order to be assured of his own personal immortality, must be assured of his personal union with God. And this argument points the Sadducees at the same time to the proper source of all their doubts, which was nothing else than the estrangement of their inward life from God. The testimony of our own heart is, that without the consciousness of a personal union with God all faith in the soul's immortality has neither consolation nor a firm basis. This has been the uniform experience of all believers in the old as well as in the new dispensation; not before man has attained an assurance of the favor of God, can he have a hope of a blessed immortality, (Ps. xvi, 10, 11; lxxiii, 25, 26; lxxxiv, 12; Rom. viii, 38, 39;) and this Divinely-wrought hope remains firm and unshaken as long as the inner religious life lasts.] 2. We notice that our Lord's doctrine of immortality includes the resurrection of the body as a necessary part of the endless life of humanity. These promises belonged to the patriarchs, not as disembodied spirits, departed souls, ghosts, shades, but as MEN — creatures consisting of both body and soul. In body and soul, therefore, must they finally receive them. Herein the Gospel far outsoars the loftiest flight of human philosophy. Unassisted reason could only suggest the probability of the soul's surviving the death of the body. The oracle, which Revelation writes 'with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever,' is, 'In my *flesh* shall I see God.' This is the broad line of demarkation which distinguishes the immortality of Christian faith from that of philosophic speculation; and it must not be lost sight of. For the leaven of Platonism still works among us, as it did in the early days of the Church. And though it may not in the majority of minds run to the extreme of resolving all history into myth, all prophecy into allegory, and all objective doctrine into subjective sentiment, yet there is danger of its substituting a vapid, misty, pseudo-spiritualism, for that vivid realism which characterizes Revelation in every page.

IV. THE LIMITATION. This is important. The Savior's argument refers not to the universal resurrection belonging to man genetically, but to 'the resurrection of life' belonging only to those who are in covenant with God in Christ. As the Sadducees' objection lay against *any* resurrection, it was sufficient for its refutation that 'the resurrection of the just' should be demonstrated; leaving our Lord at liberty on this occasion to pass over its terrible opposite. Now, without at all entering into the question of the two resurrections spoken of in St. John's Revelation, it is most certain that a

resurrection of peculiar blessedness is promised to God's chosen people, quite distinct from that which the general work of redemption insures to all men. This is no millenarian dream, but a cardinal truth of our holy religion. 'This,' said Jesus, 'is the Father's will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.' When St. Paul, shaking from him all things else as dross, pressed forward with all the eagerness of his strong soul, 'if by any means he might attain to the *out-rising from among the dead*,' he must have had in view something more than the common destiny of all men. And when the old confessors did not accept deliverance 'that they might obtain a better resurrection,' they are represented, not as fanatics, but as exemplars of Divine faith. This then is the 'living hope' of the true Christian, and of him alone. To him the resurrection is but the consummation of that conformity to the Divine Head, which by faith has already commenced in his soul. He is heir, with 'faithful Abraham,' 'of the covenant of promise.' But such a hope belongs not to those, who, 'without God in the world,' are 'dead in trespasses and sins;' for 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living.'" (Condensed and altered from the Homilist.)

VERSES 28-34. IS MORE THAN ALL WHOLE BURNT-OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES. Love and inclination is what is required, not service and work; all that is outwardly brought as an offering to the Lord is ordained and accepted only on account of the heart. To an apprehension of this great truth the Old Testament Scriptures were well calculated to lead the devout reader, because they point out in many instances the superiority of a proper condition of the heart over all outward religious forms and practices. (See 1 Sam. xv, 22; Ps. xl, 7; Hos. vi, 6.) — AND WHEN JESUS SAW THAT HE ANSWERED DISCREETLY — literally, having or using his reason, *intelligently*. A legitimate use of the reasoning faculty leads man to God, on which account the Lord said of this man that he was not far from the kingdom of God. "Whoever apprehends the spiritual nature of the law, especially in its contrast to outward forms of worship, is spiritually minded — rational in a moral point of view — is in a fair way of turning away from self-righteousness, and of obtaining that knowledge of himself which is an indispensable condition of entering into the kingdom of God. What this scribe still lacked was the total surrender to his conviction, its practical carrying out in following Jesus. The impression made upon him was an earnest of Christ's final victory over his most respectable opponents."

(Lange.)— By a proper discernment of the spirit and intent of the Divine law a man gets near the kingdom of God; but in order to enter into the kingdom he needs a saving knowledge of *Christ*, through which alone the internal discord, between his delight in the Divine law and his constant violation of it, can be removed, (comp. Luke xiii, 24.) We may, also, find in this passage an intimation that many outside of the pale of his visible Church have a spiritual insight into the law and the Gospel, and are, consequently, nearer the kingdom of God than many a nominal member of the Church, but to such the word of Bengel applies: If thou art near the kingdom of God, enter into it. If thou fail to enter, it would have been better for thee never to have been near. — AND NO MAN AFTER THAT DURST ASK HIM ANY QUESTION. Luke connects this remark with the discomfiture of the Sadducees, while Matthew has it after the question asked by the Lord. The reference in each case is true; for the object of the Pharisees in sending the scribe with his question was defeated beforehand by the personal character of the inquirer, he being himself pronounced by the Savior to be not far from the kingdom of God. "Thus the remarkable fact was brought out," says Dr. Alexander, "that while the worst of his opponents were unable to convict him of an error or betray him into a mistake, the best of them, when brought into direct communication with him on the most important subjects, found themselves almost in the position of his own disciples."

VERSES 35-37. The great question addressed by our Savior to the Pharisees after their various insidious attempts to insnare him, is stated by Matthew, in its full historical significance, as the last decisive question put to his adversaries. In that Evangelist it has, therefore, the form of a discussion or rabbinical disputation. Mark also indicates the same by saying, "And Jesus answered." From him we learn further, that Jesus addressed this question in hearing of the people. "The comment of Mark, that *the common people heard him gladly*, foreshadows the Lord's moral conquest of the better disposed of the people, and his complete, intellectual triumph over all his adversaries. It shows us, also, that Jesus had it in his power at that moment to crush the hierarchy by the mere indication of his will before the people. But he, whose kingdom was not of this world, would not thus triumph over his enemies." (Lange.)

VERSES 38-40. Of the withering denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, which is given by Matthew at length, Mark and Luke give only what

Matthew has in the introductory warning and the first woe, the three leading features of their character, namely, ambition, avarice, and hypocritical self-righteousness. A full delineation of pharisaic Judaism had not the same value for heathen converts, for whom Mark and Luke wrote, as for the Jewish Christians, for whom Matthew primarily wrote.

VERSES 41-44. Most commentators connect this pleasing and significant short narrative with the Lord's denunciation of the avarice of the Pharisees, as if the severity of the rebuke thus administered was to be still heightened by the contrast between the poor widow, who gave to God all her substance, and those who, out of their abundance, cast in only a scanty portion, although they might not have acquired their property by unfair means like the Pharisees. But Stier apprehends the true connection more correctly, when he says: "Immediately after the denunciation of woes upon the Pharisees, and consequently, as Matthew informs us, after the announcement of the judgments upon Jerusalem, and of the desolation of the Temple, after the parting word, 'Ye shall henceforth see me no more,' he does not at once go away, but he sits down quietly once more to *observe* what is going on in this Temple. By his very silence he says, 'Have ye whom I have now upbraided any answer to return? I am ready to hear it.' He does not seek to escape from the wrath he had provoked by his powerful rebukes, for his hour is not yet come. This is one point. Another point is this: he sits down right opposite the treasury-chest to observe how the people put in their contributions. During the few preceding days he had taken a view of every thing in the Temple; he lingers here ere he leaves it. For what other purpose but to manifest his condescending, patient sympathy with the sanctuary, now desecrated and given over to destruction, and then to intimate symbolically along with this, what in future he would by no means fail to do in every house and sanctuary of his people as the rightful Lord and supreme guardian? It has been supposed that our Lord takes notice of the pious widow contributing out of her absolute poverty in order to draw a contrast that might put to shame the rapacity of the Pharisees, who devour widows' houses. But this idea seems to us to destroy the tender beauty of his conduct and saying. We suppose that after having uttered the lamentation, recorded in Matt. xxiii, 37, he has entirely finished his rebukes, and he has no intention to renew them. He rather calms his agitated heart by kindly condescending to any trace of godliness which is still to be found in that den of thieves so soon to be broken up, and really rejoices over a pair of mites

brought to the Temple with simple good-intent for the sake of God. This is a lofty contrast between wrath and love! What a man! He is never exhausted in the immovable depths of the love of his holy soul, never unduly excited and moved by the most powerful outbursts of judicial, zealous testimony. Immediately after a discourse like the preceding one, he has again the mind, the calmness, the delight, the readiness for quietly searching out and observing the smallest good. Did he then feel and act thus in the flesh? How does he now look down upon the gifts and offerings in every little Church and community, upon what is given and done in the whole world, that he may try it according to its value, want of value, or relative value, especially that he may not overlook the smallest thing, and that he may remind in the Churches each individual, '*I know thy work,*' as at last he will proclaim it to all from the judgment-seat, '*This ye have done, this ye have not done.*' — The incident here recorded has always been acknowledged to be one of the greatest importance to the Church; a homiletical application seems to us to be in place here, and we know of no better one than is contained in the following homily abridged from the Homilist: This fragment of evangelical history illustrates three facts: First. *That secular contributions for religious purposes are a Divine institution.* Here, in one of the angles of the Temple, was a treasury chest to receive the offerings of all who entered the sacred edifice. God has made the sustentation, as well as the spread of religion in the world, to depend upon the *secular* offerings of man. Why this? He could have studded the earth with temples and filled the world with Bibles, without such help. The arrangement is for man's good. "*Collections*" for religious purposes are among the most important means of grace. This is a point which requires to be insisted upon. The Church has come to regard a collection rather as a necessary evil, than a Divine ordinance; it is shunned rather than hailed; considered a sacrifice rather than a privilege. Secondly. *That Jesus observes both the sum and spirit of these secular contributions.* In a position commanding a view of the chest, Jesus stood, and saw *who* contributed; *what* was contributed; and *how* it was contributed. Men frequently conceal the sum from their fellow-men, and nearly always the spirit; but Christ knows both, in every case. Thirdly. *That the spirit of secular contribution is, to Christ, a far more important thing than the sum.* Jesus was now in the midst of all grades of society; some distinguished by wealth, some by office, and some by learning; and from all these contributors he singles out one, whom he pronounces as having done more, and as being *greater*, than all the rest. What was it that gave this distinguished dignity to this woman?

FEELING. Her heart was right. Perhaps she looked the image of sorrow and poverty. There she is, meanly attired, her countenance furrowed, it may be, by grief, and pale with want; yet in her breast there circulate the noblest sympathies: her *moral* pulsations are healthy and strong. This passage leads us to infer three things *concerning the worth of true feeling*. I. THAT IT IS GREATER THAN SECULAR WEALTH, The narrative tells us, that "rich men" were present, but Christ pronounces no commendation on them. It was that poor, friendless, forlorn widow, that enlisted his sympathies and won his high encomium, and that, because of the warm and genuine generosity of her heart. This conduct of our Savior suggests two remarks. First. *That his conduct here is strikingly singular*. Read the history of the world, or even mark the doings of your cotemporaries, and where will you find men that act as Jesus now acted, declaring, in the presence of the rich men of the day, the *superiority* of the pious poor to them? To what do men take off their hats and render obeisance? Not to noble feeling, as it glows in the bosom of the poor man, but to the gorgeous displays of opulence. The fact that Jesus acted contrary to the common practice of the race shows that he went against the general current of the world's feeling and conduct. Secondly. *That his conduct is manifestly right*. Although *singular*, man, every-where, *feels* it to be right. Had Jesus acted otherwise — had he mingled with the wealthy and stood aloof from the poor — paying ever more attention to the affluent worldling than to the indigent saint, humanity *never could* have believed that he was, what he professed to be, the Son of God. Christ teaches here, then, what *all must feel* to be right, though but few practically recognize, *that true feeling is greater than secular wealth*. Another thing which this passage leads us to infer, concerning the worth of true feeling, is: II. THAT IT IS GREATER THAN MUNIFICENT DEEDS. These rich men cast in their "abundance;" some of them, probably, gave large sums; and yet Jesus said, "This poor woman hath cast in more than they all." What is meant by the "more?" He must mean one of three things — either *financially*, *proportionably*, or *morally*. It can not be the first. Is it the second? Does he mean to say that she put in "more" in *proportion* to her means? This was no doubt true. And it is frequently true that many who give sums too small to record in "reports," give *more* than those who lay down hundreds, or even thousands. The Christian law of proportion in giving is violated in every Church. But we do not think this is the meaning here. An individual may give much "more" in proportion to others, and yet not *acceptably* to Christ. The third we take to be the meaning: it was more

morally: she gave her heart and self with her mites. First. *This is more valuable in itself*. In fact, there is no real value in a gift, unless it is done with the heart. "Though I give my body to be burned," etc. Secondly. *This is more valuable in its influence*. He who gives his strongest desires and best sympathies to a cause, gives that which will do far more good, though he has not a fraction of money to bestow, than if he presented his thousands without heart. If the man's *heart* is with it, his *efforts, prayers, life* — the *totality* of his influence, will be ever helping it on. Another thing which this passage leads us to infer, concerning the worth of true feeling, is: III. THAT IT IS GREATER THAN ARTISTIC MAGNIFICENCE. The Temple in which Jesus now stood was a truly-magnificent place, formed and furnished with the most costly materials, and arranged with the most exquisite taste and skill. Many of the visitors were now taken up in admiring it; "they spoke of the Temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts." But what did Jesus say? Had he no eye for that fine specimen of Divine art? He looked at it; he was not unconscious of its grandeur; but feeling more impressed with the worth of *souls*, and, perhaps, with that specimen of noble feeling which the poor widow had displayed, he said, (Luke xxi, 5, 6,) "As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." This Temple is built of perishing materials and will share the fate of all that is earthly, but the soul is imperishable. If we suppose, as is certainly natural, that Jesus thus refers to the magnificent Temple in comparison with the noble feelings which the poor widow had developed; then we have, undoubtedly, the idea that *true feeling* is greater than any artistic magnificence. "As for these things" — as if Christ had said — "what are they to the noble heart of that widow?" This will apply to *the temples of a people, in relation to their worship*. In these days people seem marvelously interested in rearing magnificent edifices for worship; they must have tall steeples, gothic roofs, painted windows, and architectural elaborations, even though, in some cases, they can not pay for them by some thousands. We rejoice in the improved taste of Christians in their ecclesiastical buildings. But, as "for these things," what are they in comparison with the *feeling* of the worshipers? We must judge of the prosperity of religion, not by the number nor magnificence of our temples, but by the amount of true feeling which the worshipers display.

SECTION XVI.

THE PROPHECY OF CHRIST CONCERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND HIS JUDICIAL COMING.

CHAPTER XIII, 1-37.

1. THE OCCASION OF HIS DISCOURSE.

Verses 1-4. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxiv, 1-3; LUKE xxi, 5-7.)

(1) **AND as he went out of the Temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!** (2) And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. (3) And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, over against the Temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, (4) tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

2. A GENERAL SURVEY OF WHAT IS TO PRECEDE CHRIST'S JUDICIAL COMING.

Verses 5-13. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxiv, 4-14; LUKE xxi, 8-19.)

(5) **AND Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:** (6) **For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ;** and shall deceive many. (7) **And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled:** for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet. (8) **For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:** and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows. (9) **But take heed to yourselves:** for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. (10) **And the Gospel must first be published among all nations.** (11) **But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up,** take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye

premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. (12) Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. (13) And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

3. THE PREMONITORY SIGNS OF THE APPROACHING DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, AND OF THE JUDGMENT WHICH IS TO TAKE PLACE WHEN THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES SHALL BE FULFILLED.

Verses 14-23. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxiv, 15-28; LUKE xxi, 20-24.)

(14) BUT when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: (15) And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house: (16) And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. (17) But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! (18) And pray ye that your flight be not in the Winter. (19) For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. (20) And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. (21) And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not: (22) For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect. (23) But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

4. THE LAST TYPE AND VIRTUAL BEGINNING OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

Verses 24-27. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxiv, 29-31; LUKE xxi, 25-28.)

(24) BUT in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. (25) And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. (26) And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. (27) And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

5. THE SUDDENNESS OF OUR LORD'S JUDICIAL COMING, AND THE NECESSITY OF CONSTANT WATCHFULNESS.

Verses 28-37. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxiv, 32-51; LUKE xxi, 29-36.)

(28) NOW learn a parable of the fig-tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that Summer is near: (29) So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even at the doors*. (30) Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. (31) Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. (32) But of that day and *that hour* knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. (33) Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. (34) *For the Son of man is*, as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. (35) Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: (36) Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. (37) And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

VERSES 1-4. *Why does the national punishment of the Jewish people, here predicted, impress the mind with a deeper awe than that of any other nation?* I. On account of the import of the simple, historical fact. It was not

only the complete destruction of their capital city and national life, but the total subversion of the sanctuary of God, and the dispersion of the covenant people of God. II. On account of the typical significance of the great catastrophe. The destruction of Jerusalem is the type and earnest of our Lord's coming to judgment. As he overturned the opposing power of the Jewish hierarchy and polity, he will put all his enemies under his feet. III. On account of its concomitant events. 1. The fall of Jerusalem was the beginning of the spread of the Gospel among all nations, and is, for this very reason, the type of the judgment to be visited upon the antichristian nations, which shall precede the ushering in of the millennium. But, 2. This is the reason why prior to the introduction of the millennium the Church is militant, characterized by persecutions from without, and by heresies, apostasies, and lukewarmness from within.

VERSES 5-13. *The prophecy concerning the false Christs* refers to all those that claim Christ's place in relation to man, such as the pretended vicar of Christ, and his priesthood, ecclesiastical despots, high-church bigots, etc., and has, alas! been fulfilled in every age of the Church. — *What use are believers to make of the signs of the times in determining the time of Christ's coming?* I. What are the signs that shall precede his coming? In general, every great change in the kingdom of God points to this greatest and last one. Such are, 1. Ecclesiastical convulsions by the manifestation of antichristian principles; 2. Political and national convulsions, desolating wars, the rise and downfall of kingdoms and nations; 3. Natural phenomena, such as famines, pestilences, and earthquakes; 4. Persecution of the faithful, apostasy, increase of wickedness. II. How far we may look for the coming of Christ as near at hand from these signs of the times? 1. We must not confine every coming of Christ to his last coming to judgment. 2. Every violent commotion in the political and physical world may be viewed as a coming of Christ, but not as his last coming. 3. His last coming is conditioned by the preceding preaching of the Gospel all over the earth. 4. As the exact time of his coming to judgment is not revealed to us, the Lord gives us a threefold exhortation: (1.) To beware of deceivers; (2.) Not to be disheartened, but to examine boldly and attentively the signs of the times; (3.) To persevere to the end in faith, hope, and charity. — *The circumspection and intrepidity which the Lord recommends to his disciples in reference to his coming:* 1. Circumspection and care with reference to enticing illusions of a counterfeit Christianity; fearlessness with

regard to threatening wars and other national calamities; 2. Circumspection and care with regard to the enemies of the Gospel and their treachery; fearlessness with regard to the defense of the Gospel; 3. Care and circumspection with reference to the temptations coming from the nearest relations and the world in general; fearlessness in view of the certain deliverance of the faithful Christian.

VERSES 14-23. How God displays his mercy even in the visitation of the severest judgments: 1. God mercifully apprises men of the impending storm and indicates its coming by unmistakable signs; 2. He opens a place of refuge and directs his children to flee thither; 3. He points out prayer as the best means of mitigating his judgments; 4. He never loses sight of those that innocently suffer; 5. He shortens the time and lessens the severity of his judgments for the elect's sake; 6. He mercifully warns against apostasy as the greatest of all possible calamities. — *The great tribulation:* 1. The central point of the Divine judgments upon the ancient world; 2. The type of the judgments that shall fall upon the modern world; 3. The beginning and the last premonitory sign of the end of the world. — *Wherever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together* — a law of life: 1. Typified in nature; 2. Fulfilled and constantly fulfilling in the course of history; 3. Waiting for its final fulfillment at the end of time.

VERSES 24-27. The second advent of Christ. I. Its prevenient signs, startling commotions both in Church and State, corresponding to violent convulsions in nature; their simultaneous appearance will show the close harmony between the laws of nature and those of the spiritual world. II. Its nature. 1. There is a twofold coming of Christ, a gradual and a final coming. For this reason the preparatory signs are at all times more or less visible, showing forth important periods of progressive developments in the Church, all of which, however, point in their turn to the end. 2. In every such development, connected with powerful and painful commotions, the faithful will recognize the exercise of Christ's judicial office in his Church. For by severe judgments he will bring about a salutary sifting, and in this way prepare the Church for his abiding and perfect spiritual reign. 3. The last coming of Christ will comprise all his antecedent, typical comings, and fulfill them at the same time. III. How far is our preparation for his coming affected by the nature of his coming? 1. With the coming of Christ this present world-system will come to a close; let every one, therefore, tear himself inwardly loose from the world, lest he perish with

it. 2. Inasmuch as scarcely one preparatory sign will appear, that has not appeared in substance before, the last decisive day will come for most men unexpectedly, and thus prove their ruin. 3. For this reason all signs of all times bear the image of the last signs and times, in order that we should not be careless and indifferent at any time, but rather look upon every day as possibly the day of the final judgment. — *The last day — the great festival-day of the Church:* 1. While all created luminaries grow pale, the Lord himself shall appear as the bright luminary of his day; 2. The impersonal elements of the world disappear, while the glorified person of the Redeemer is fully revealed, and thus his personal kingdom is ushered in; 3. All the wicked being separated and removed, there is no alloy in the union of pure spirits; 4. Angels shall be the ministering servants at this great day — all the elect, both in heaven and on earth, being gathered by them.

VERSES 28-37. *How will men be affected when they see the signs preceding the final catastrophe?* I. *The effects of these signs on the world.* 1. Seeing the fallacy of all their shrewd calculations, men are seized with great fear; 2. Seeing that what they considered an impossibility comes nevertheless to pass, their hearts shall fail them for fear; completely paralyzed in all their energies, they shall tremblingly await the things that are to come; 3. At last they shall see the Son of man himself come in his glory, and shall be compelled to pronounce upon themselves the sentence of condemnation. II. *Their effects upon believers.* 1. Oppressed and persecuted a long time by the world, they shall then raise their heads, seeing that their redemption is nigh; for as the leaves of the fig-tree proclaim the presence of the Spring, so these signs and wonders assure them with infallible certainty of the nearness of the coming of their Lord; 2. They are diligent in the discharge of all their duties, persevering in prayer; the signs of the times do not discourage them, but whatever wonderful phenomena take place, they are so many solemn admonitions to them to be always ready to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. — *The last day — known to the Father alone:* 1. To the Father as the Omnipotent Creator and Dispenser of all things; 2. To the Father in the dealings of his grace and drawings to his Son; 3. To the Father in the exercise of his supreme long-suffering and of his awful wrath; 4. What Christ in the day of his flesh did not know, what angels can not know, Christians ought not to pry into. Not knowing the exact time of Christ's coming, we ought the more to have a daily assurance of our personal salvation.

SECTION XVII.

THE LAST PASSOVER.

CHAPTER XIV, 1-16.

1. THE COWARDICE AND CONFUSION OF HIS ENEMIES.

Verses 1, 2. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 3-5.)

(1) AFTER two days was *the feast of* the Passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief-priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death. (2) But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

2. THE SUPPER AT BETHANY. THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS.

Verses 3-11. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 6-16; LUKE xxii, 1-6.)

(3) AND being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on his head. (4) And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? (5) For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. (6) And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. (7) For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. (8) She hath done what she could: she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying. (9) Verily I say unto you, Wheresover this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (10) And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief-priests, to betray him unto them. (11) And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

3. THE PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER.

Verses 12-16. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 17-19; LUKE xxii, 7-13.)

(12) AND the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover? (13) And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. (14) And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? (15) And he will shew you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us. (16) And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover.

VERSES 1, 2. Let us observe *how God can disappoint the designs of wicked men, and overrule them to his own glory*. Our Lord's enemies did not intend to make his death a public transaction. They sought to take him by craft. They said, not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. Their plan was to do nothing till the Feast of the Passover was over, and the worshiping multitudes had returned to their own homes. The overruling providence of God completely defeated this politic design. The betrayal of our Lord took place at an earlier time than the chief-priests had expected. The death of our Lord took place on the very day when Jerusalem was most full of people, and the Passover Feast was at its hight. In every way the counsel of these wicked men was turned to foolishness. They thought to have put him to death privily and without observation; and instead, they were compelled to crucify him publicly, and before the whole nation of the Jews. There is comfort in all this for the followers of Christ. They live in a troubled world, and are often tossed to and fro by anxiety about public events. Let them not doubt that every thing is ordered for good by an all-wise God, that all things in the world around them are working together for their Father's glory. Let them call to mind the words of the Psalmist: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take council together against the Lord." "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." It has been so in time past. It will be so in time to come.

VERSES 3-9. Let us observe *how good works are sometimes undervalued and misunderstood*. Mary's act, springing from gratitude and love to the Lord, was blamed even by the disciples. Their colder hearts could not understand such costly liberality. They called it "waste." Let us beware of the spirit of narrow-minded fault-finding. It is too common in the Church. There are always such as decry what they call *extremes* in religion, and are incessantly recommending what they term *moderation* in the service of Christ. If a man devotes his time, money, and affections without reserve to the pursuit of worldly things, they do not blame him. But if the same man devotes himself and all he has to Christ, they can scarcely find words to express their sense of his folly. Let charges like these not disturb us; let us rather pity those who make them. If a man once understands the sinfulness of sin, and the mercy of Christ in dying for him, he will never think any thing too good or too costly to give to Christ. He will fear wasting time, talents, money, affections on the things of this world, but he will not be afraid of wasting them on his Savior. He will fear going into extremes about business, money, politics, or pleasure; but he will not be afraid of doing too much for Christ. Let us devote ourselves and all we have to Christ's glory. Our position in the world may be lowly, and our means of usefulness few. But let us, like Mary, *do what we can*. Finally, let us see in the praise our Savior bestowed upon her a sweet foretaste of things yet to come in the day of judgment. Let us believe that the same Jesus, who here pleaded the cause of his loving handmaid when she was blamed, will one day plead for all who have been his servants in this world. Let us work on, remembering that his eye is upon us, and that all we do is noted in his book. Let us not heed what men say or think of us because of what we do in the service of Christ. The praise of Christ at the last day will more than compensate for all we suffer in this world from unkind tongues.

VERSES 10, 11. Let us learn from the melancholy history of Judas, *to what lengths a man may go in a false profession of religion*. Judas was chosen by the Lord himself to be an apostle. He was privileged to be a companion of the Messiah, and an eye-witness of his mighty works. He was sent forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to work miracles in Christ's name. He was so like his fellow-apostles, that they did not suspect him of being a traitor. And yet this very man turns out at last a false-hearted child of the devil. Never was there such a fall, such an apostasy, such a miserable end to a fair beginning. And how can this amazing conduct of Judas be accounted for?

The love of money was the chief cause of this man's ruin. The Holy Ghost declares plainly "he was a thief." (John xii, 6.) And his case stands before the world as an eternal comment on the solemn words, "the love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. vi, 10.) May we then lay to heart our Lord's caution, to beware of covetousness! (Luke xii, 15.) It is a sin that eats like a cancer, and once admitted into our hearts, may lead us finally into every wickedness. The true Christian ought to be far more afraid of being rich than of being poor.

VERSES 12-16. *The extraordinary direction* which the Lord gave his disciples *with regard to the preparation of the Paschal meal*, was designed, I. To impress upon this last Passover the stamp of Divine dignity and authority, and to furnish them with a lesson of faith and obedience, from which they should learn to obey the Lord implicitly, and to leave their future, temporal support with Him, in whose service they should lack nothing. These revelations of the hidden glory of their Lord were to be to them, at the same time, a counterpoise to that depth of humiliation into which they were soon to see him sink. II. It is very probable, that our Lord gave the mysterious direction in order to keep the place where he desired to eat the Passover a secret from Judas, and thus to prevent him from communicating it to the high-priests. Even this should have been a warning to Judas.

SECTION XVIII.

JESUS EATS THE PASSOVER WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

CHAPTER XIV, 17-31.

1. THE TRAITOR UNMASKED

Verses 17-21. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 20-25; LUKE xxii, 21-23;
JOHN xiii, 21-30.)

(17) **AND in the evening he cometh with the twelve. (18)** And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. (19) And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another said, *Is it I?* (20) And he answered and said unto them, *It is one of the twelve, that*

dippeth with me in the dish. ^[1] **(21) The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.**

[1 According to John xiii, 26, our Lord said: "To whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it." Lange supposes that Judas, in order to conceal his embarrassment and to feign composure, stretched out his hand for the sop while Jesus' hand was still in the dish, and that, for this reason, Jesus added the words recorded here.]

2. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Verses 22-25. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 26-29; LUKE xxii, 19, 20; 1 CORINTHIANS xi, 23-25.)

(22) AND as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; ^[2] this is my body.
(23) And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. (24) And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new ^[3] testament, which is shed for many. (25) Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

[2 "Eat" is wanting in A, B, C, and several other Codices.]

[3 "New is wanting in B, C, D, L. Tischendorf omits it; Lachman retains it according to A and other Codices. The reading is also fluctuating in Matthew. The expression, 'The blood of the testament,' can, from the nature of the case, mean nothing else than, *of the new testament.*" (Lange.)]

3. THE PREDICTION OF THE OFFENSE OF THE DISCIPLES, AND OF PETER'S DENIAL.

Verses 26-31. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 30-35; LUKE xxii, 31-34; JOHN xiii, 36-38.)

(26) AND when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. (27) And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: [⁴] for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. (28) But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. (29) But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will not I*. (30) And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. (31) But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

[4 The words, "because of me this night," are wanting in many manuscripts, and may have been transferred from verse 29. Lachman, however, has retained "because of me" according to A and other Codices, and he has also "this night" in brackets.]

VERSES 17-20. Let us learn from this passage that *self-examination should precede the reception of the Lord's Supper*. By the solemn warning, "One of you which eateth with me shall betray me," the Lord meant to stir up in the minds of his disciples those very searchings of heart which are here so touchingly recorded. He meant to teach his whole Church throughout the world, that the time of drawing near to the Lord's table should be a time for diligent self-inquiry. The benefit of the Lord's Supper depends entirely on the spirit and frame of mind in which we receive it. The state of mind which we should look for in ourselves before going to the Lord's table is well described in the Catechism of the Church of England. We ought to "examine ourselves whether we repent truly of our former sins — whether we steadfastly purpose to lead a new life — whether we have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, and a thankful remembrance of his death — and whether we are in charity with all men." If our conscience can answer these questions satisfactorily, we may receive the Lord's Supper without fear. More than this

God does not require of any communicant. Less than this ought never to content us.

VERSE 21. *We are here taught the relation which man's free agency bears to the Divine government of the world.* The two are perfectly consistent; for, 1. Man is a free, moral agent. The Lord would not attribute any guilt to Judas, nor pronounce the awful woe against him, if he had been the passive instrument of a Divine decree, which he could not resist. 2. The infinite power and wisdom of God can make even the sins of men to subserve the carrying out of his Divine mercy in our redemption.

VERSES 22-25. Lange remarks: "As the first Passover was celebrated by the Israelites in the firm belief of their being spared, before they were actually spared in that terrible night, so the New Testament Passover — the Lord's Supper — was instituted in the full assurance of the salvation of the human race by the Lord Jesus Christ, before this great fact was accomplished by his death and subsequent resurrection." — AND THEY ALL DRANK OF IT. This is an expression not used of the bread, and prophetically condemns the practice of the Romish Church, which withholds the cup from the laity. Mark, as it seems, desiring to lay special stress on the fact that they all drank from the cup in their turn, introduces the words of our Lord, as spoken while the cup was passing round. — *The Lord's Supper.* 1. Its institution is inexplicable for him who sees in the Lord's death nothing more than the death of a very holy man, who left us an example how to die. 2. It is the fulfillment of what was typified in the Old Testament, and no type was so full of meaning as the Passover at its original institution. 3. A covenant-act. 4. A grateful acceptance of the atonement. 5. A mutual communion of the redeemed. 6. A type of the joys of heaven. — Let it be a settled principle, that no unbeliever ought to go to the Lord's table, and that the sacrament will not do our souls the slightest good, if we do not receive it with repentance and faith. Those who come to it without repentance and faith will go away worse than they came. It is meant to strengthen and increase grace, but not to impart it — to help faith to grow, but not to implant it. If we have faith in Christ, it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to go to the Lord's Supper, and if we turn our back on his table we commit a great sin. If we live yet in sin and worldliness, we have no business at the communion. We must repent and believe with the heart unto righteousness. Then, and not till then, can we worthily eat and drink.

VERSES 26-31. BEFORE THE COCK CROW TWICE. The other Evangelists speak only of one crowing of the cock; Mark is more exact in the statement, based on the words of Peter, that even the first crowing (v. 68) did not bring him to himself. From this statement of Mark we learn, also, the time of the trial of the Lord. (See note on Matt. xxvi, 31-35.) — We are taught here *how much ignorant self-confidence is often found in the heart of professing Christians*. Peter could not think it possible that he would ever deny his Lord. "If I should die with thee," he says, "I will not deny thee in any wise." And he did not stand alone in his confidence. The other disciples were of the same opinion. "Likewise also said they all." Yet what did all this confident boasting come to? Twelve hours did not pass away before all the disciples forsook our Lord and fled. So little do we know how we shall act in any particular position till we are placed in it! There is far more wickedness in all our hearts than we know. We never can tell how far we might fall, if once placed in temptation. There is no degree of sin into which the greatest saint may not run, if he is not held up by the grace of God, and if he does not watch and pray. The seeds of every wickedness lie hidden in our hearts. "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool," (Prov. xxviii, 26.) "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," (1 Cor. x, 12.)

SECTION XIX.

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE.

CHAPTER XIV, 32-52.

1. THE AGONY OF OUR LORD IN GETHSEMANE.

Verses 32-42. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 36-46; LUKE xxii, 39-46.)

(32) **AND they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.** (33) **And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;** (34) **and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.** (35) **And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.** (36) **And he said, Abba, Father,**

all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt. (37) And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? (38) Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak. (39) And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. (40) And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. (41) And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (42) Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

2. THE SEIZURE OF JESUS, AND THE FLIGHT OF HIS DISCIPLES.

Verses 43-52. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 47-56; LUKE xxii, 47-53; JOHN xviii, 3-12.)

(43) AND immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief-priests and the scribes and the elders. (44) And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead *him* away safely. (45) And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him. (46) And they laid their hands on him, and took him. (47) And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high-priest, and cut off his ear. (48) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take me? (49) I was daily with you in the Temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. (50) And they all forsook him, and fled. (51) And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him: (52) And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

VERSES 32-42. AND BEGAN TO BE SORE AMAZED AND TO BE VERY HEAVY. The verb ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, rendered, *to be sore amazed*, is

applied to the fright caused by a thunder-clap, (Acts ix, 6,) and by a specter, (Matt. xiv, 26.) On the unheard-of anguish of soul that now seized the Savior, see the notes in Matthew. Lange remarks: "The treacherous, false, and despairing world, represented by Judas, grieves his heart; the powers of darkness, under whose control sinners act, fill him with horror, while the impotent, lettered humanity, represented by the three chosen disciples, wrapt in sleep for sadness, calls forth in him the feeling of entire loneliness." — AND PRAYED THAT IF IT WERE POSSIBLE THE HOUR MIGHT PASS FROM HIM. While Mark lays the main stress on the agonizing supplication of Jesus, Matthew emphasizes more the unconditional surrender of his will to his Father's will. — ABBA, FATHER. "*Abba*, the Aramaic word for *Father*, is here preserved by the Evangelist, like other vernacular expressions which we have already met with, (v, 41; vii, 11; ix, 5; xi, 21.) He also gives the Greek translation, not as uttered by our Lord himself, but as necessary to its being understood by Gentile readers. This seems more likely than the opinion of some writers, that the two forms, Greek and Aramaic, had become combined in practice so as to form one name, which they prove from Paul's employing the same combination, (Rom. viii, 15; Gal. iv, 6.) But how could such a combination have arisen, if not from the necessities of those to whom the language of our Lord was not vernacular? Paul's use of the Aramaic form arose, most probably, from the tradition of our Savior's having used it on this occasion." (Alexander.) — SIMON, SLEEPEST THOU? The Lord calls him very significantly Simon, as he generally did, whenever he designed to remind him of his weakness and old nature. — NEITHER WIST THEY WHAT TO ANSWER HIM. *Wist* is the past tense of the obsolete *was*, to know. They had no excuse to offer, and, therefore, kept silent, (comp. chap. ix, 6.) — SLEEP ON NOW [literally, *sleep the rest*, namely, of your time] AND TAKE YOUR REST. Some expositors take these words as an interrogation: *Do ye yet sleep?* But the Greek **τὸ λοιπόν**, refers only to the future. The verb is, therefore, to be taken as an imperative. Meyer, and most of the German interpreters, regard it as ironical, implying a still more severe reproof: "*Sleep on, continue to sleep!*" and say that after a short pause, seeing Judas come, he told them in earnest, that there is now no time for sleeping; but how improbable is it, that the Lord should have spoken ironically on an occasion like this! We, therefore, follow Bengel, who supplies the words, "if you can," and supposes that after the Lord had gone through his agony, some time still elapsed before Judas appeared, and that Jesus kindly suffered his disciples to

sleep the few remaining moments, awakening them when the traitor approached. — IT IS ENOUGH. In Greek it is a single word, ἀπέχει, the meaning of which is rather obscure. The translation, *It is enough*, is approved by most expositors, If construed with what goes before, it means, *You need no longer watch with me*; but it is better to refer it to what follows, meaning, *You have slept enough now*. — We subjoin a few homiletical sketches on this important section from different stand-points. *Gethsemane, or God's Nearness to Man*. Man needs a realizing sense that, though the Divine be infinitely removed from the human, there is between them *oneness of soul and sympathy*. To render this possible, the Divine comes down to the level of the human — becomes *human*. "*The Word was made flesh*." In Christ we feel that the great God is our Father. "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same." Gethsemane teaches us in the most affecting manner *God's oneness with man in the person of Jesus*. We there learn how the Son of God is sinless, and yet like us in feeling and heart.

— *The agony of Christ — the effect of his priestly sympathy with a fallen world*. 1. He feels all its woes, hence his suffering. 2. He realizes the whole power of sin in its woes, hence the struggle. 3. He atones for the whole guilt in its woes, hence his persevering prayer. — *How does the contemplation of the darkest hours in the life of our Savior strengthen and comfort us in the hour of our sorest trials?* I. It teaches us patience. 1. The courage of the patient sufferer does not consist in an unnatural suppression of human feelings; 2. On the contrary, pain is to be keenly felt, yet not as coming accidentally, but as being inflicted upon us by the all-wise and gracious will of God. II. It teaches us to pray, 1. With filial confidence; 2. With perfect resignation; 3. Fervently. III. It teaches us to watch, 1. Over our body, lest it be overwhelmed with grief and pain; 2. Over the soul, lest it fall a prey to unbelief; 3. Over our heart, lest it lose its sympathy with the sufferings of others. IV. It points out to us the only true help in the hour of our sore distress. This help consists, 1. In the assurance wrought by God in us, that his purposes are always good and merciful, but at the same time absolutely necessary; 2. In the strength imparted, which enables us to suffer God's will readily and willingly. — From our Lord's agony in the garden let us learn, 1. *How keenly he felt the burden of the sin of the world*. Why is the Almighty Son of God, who had worked so many miracles, so heavy and disquieted? Why is Jesus, who came into the world to die, so like one ready to faint at the approach of death? There is but one reasonable answer to these questions. The weight that pressed clown our Lord's soul was not the fear

of death and its pain. Thousands have endured the most agonizing sufferings of body, and died without a groan, and so, no doubt, might our Lord. But the real weight that bowed down the heart of Jesus was the weight of the sin of the whole world which he was now taking upon him; 2. *What an example our Lord gives us of the importance of prayer in time of trouble;* 3. *That entire submission of will to the will of God should be our chief aim in this world;* 4. *That there is great weakness, even in true disciples of Christ, and that they have need to watch and pray against it.* We see Peter, James, and John, those three chosen apostles, sleeping, when they ought to have been watching and praying. Does our Lord excuse this weakness of his disciples? By no means. He uses that very weakness as an argument for watchfulness and prayer. He teaches us that the very fact that we are encompassed with infirmity, should stir us up continually to watch and pray. We must watch like soldiers — we are upon the enemy's ground. We must always be on our guard. We must pray without ceasing. Watching without praying is self-confidence and self-conceit. Praying without watching is enthusiasm and fanaticism. The man who knows his own weakness, and knowing it, both watches and prays, is the man that will be held up and not allowed to fall.

VERSES 43-52. AND THERE FOLLOWED HIM A CERTAIN YOUNG MAN. It is very probable that the Evangelist himself was this young man, as has been shown in the Introduction to this Gospel, (p. 657.) — AND HE LEFT THE LINEN CLOTH, a loose garment worn at night. The action of this young man may be viewed as representative of those that follow Jesus in a moment of enthusiastic excitement, without properly counting the cost. — AND THE YOUNG MEN LAID HOLD OF HIM. "*The young men*" is lacking in B, C, D, and other Codices. Lachman and Tischendorf expunge it as spurious. If it is genuine, it most probably means, "disorderly young men, such as are found in every mob, ready to commit acts of violence." — Mark in this section, 1. *How little our Lord's enemies understood the nature of his kingdom.* The chief-priests and scribes clung obstinately to the idea, that our Lord's kingdom was a worldly kingdom, and therefore they supposed that it would be upheld by worldly means, that he would be vigorously defended by his disciples, and would not be taken prisoner without fighting. 2. *How our Lord submitted to be made a prisoner of his own free will.* He was not taken captive, because he could not escape. It would have been easy for him to scatter his enemies to the winds, if he had thought fit. "Thinkest thou," he

saihth to Peter, "that I can not pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? 3. *How our Lord condemns those who think to use carnal weapons in defense of him and his cause.* The sword has a lawful office of its own. It may be used righteously in the defense of nations against oppression. It may become positively necessary to use it, to prevent confusion, plunder, and rapine upon earth. But the sword is not to be used in the propagation and maintenance of the Gospel. Christianity is not to be enforced by bloodshed, and belief in it extorted by force. Happy would it have been for the Church if the command of Christ had been obeyed! But, alas! there are few countries in Christendom where the mistake has not been made of attempting to change men's religious opinions by compulsion, penalties, imprisonment, and death? The cause of truth does not need force to maintain it. False religions, like Mohammedanism, have been spread by the sword, and a false Christianity, like that of the Roman Church, has been enforced on men by bloody persecutions. But the real Gospel of Christ requires no such aids as these. It stands by the power of the Holy Ghost. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Zech. iv, 6.) "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." 4. *How much the faith of true believers may give way, and how little they know of their own hearts till they are tried.* We are told that when Judas and his company laid hands on our Lord, and he quietly submitted to be taken prisoner, the eleven disciples all forsook him and fled. Perhaps up to that moment they were buoyed up by the hope that our Lord would work a miracle, and set himself free. But when they saw no miracle worked, their courage failed them entirely. Their former protestations were all forgotten. The fear of present danger got the better of faith. The sense of immediate peril drove every other feeling out of their minds. How many professing Christians have done the same! How many, under the influence of excited feelings, have promised that they would never be ashamed of Christ! They have come away from the communion-table, or the striking sermon, or the experience meeting, full of zeal and love, and ready to say to all who caution them against backsliding, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" And yet in a few days these feelings have cooled down and passed away. A trial has come, and they have fallen before it. Let us learn from this section lessons of humiliation and self-abasement. Let us resolve by God's grace to cultivate a spirit of lowliness and self-distrust. And let it be one of our daily prayers, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

SECTION XX.

JESUS BEFORE THE ECCLESIASTICAL TRIBUNAL. PETER DENIES HIM.

CHAPTER XIV, 53-72.

1. JESUS BEFORE THE HIGH-PRIEST.

Verses 53-65. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 57-68; LUKE xxii, 54; 63-71; JOHN xviii, 12-14; 19-24.)

(53) AND they led Jesus away to the high-priest: and with him were assembled all the chief-priests and the elders and the scribes. (54) And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high-priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. (55) And the chief-priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. (56) For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. (57) And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, (58) We heard him say, I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. (59) But neither so did their witness agree together. (60) And the high-priest stood up in the midst,^[1] and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee? (61) But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high-priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? (62) And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (63) Then the high-priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? (64) Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. (65) And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.^[2]

[1 "In the midst" is wanting in the best Codices.]

[2 Lange, with Lachman and Tischendorf, prefers the reading ἔλαβον, instead of ἔβαλλον, according to A, B, C, K, and translates accordingly: "And the servants received him with slaps on the face while leading him into the guard-house from the room where he had been examined." If this reading is adopted, we have to understand by the "servants" the keepers of the prison, and by the preceding "some," the Temple officers. Meyer refers "some" to the members of the Sanhedrim.]

2. PETER'S DENIAL.

Verses 66-72. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvi, 69-75; LUKE xxii, 55-62;
JOHN xviii, 15-18; 25-27.)

(66) **AND as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high-priest: (67) And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. (68) But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. (69) And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them. (70) And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.^[1] (71) But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. (72) And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.**

[1 "And thy speech agreeth thereto" is wanting in B, C, D, L, and others. Lachman and Tischendorf leave it out of the text, as having been received into the text from Matthew.]

VERSES 53-65. AND THEY LED JESUS AWAY TO THE HIGH-PRIEST. Mark takes no notice of the fact, that Annas, whom the Jews seemed to have regarded as the legitimate incumbent of the office, sent Jesus bound to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was appointed high-priest by the Romans. — AND WARMED HIMSELF AT THE FIRE. From this we have

to infer that it was a cold night. The fire was kindled in the open court-yard, (see notes in Matt.) — AND FOUND NONE — literally, *they did not find*, namely, two who could testify to one and the same act, as the law required. — BUT THEIR WITNESSES AGREED NOT TOGETHER — literally, *the testimonies were not equal*, which may mean, *not adequate* or sufficient to their purpose; or, not *even* or harmonious. The expression has, most probably, reference to the legal requisition of two concurrent witnesses to the same fact. — AND THERE AROSE CERTAIN, etc. At length they seemed to have attained their purpose, having met with a plurality of witnesses to one remarkable expression of the Savior. The particular charge here alleged was false, because they perverted the words of Christ. He had never said that *he* would destroy the Temple. — BUT NEITHER SO DID THEIR WITNESS AGREE TOGETHER; that is, even on this point they did not agree, probably because every one of the witnesses added words of his own to the declaration of Christ. — BUT HE HELD HIS PEACE, AND ANSWERED NOTHING. As the witnesses did not agree together, the accused was not obliged to answer or defend himself; and all he could have said would have been unavailing. — ART THOU THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE BLESSED? "The Blessed" was an epithet reverently applied to the Supreme Being. The high-priest uses it sanctimoniously, in order to make the supposed blasphemy of Jesus, in calling himself the Son of God, appear more prominent. Dr. Alexander, calling attention to the question, "whether the high-priest intended merely to inquire, if Jesus claimed to be the Christ, that is, the Messiah, employing two familiar Messianic titles, or whether he designed to ask, if he claimed also to be a Divine person?" decides in favor of the latter, "because the second title would be otherwise superfluous, and because the answer of our Lord to the question was treated as a blasphemy, for which a mere assumption of the Messianic office would have furnished no colorable ground or pretext." (See more on this subject in Matthew.) — CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS: A MOST DISTRESSING CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SEEMING AND THE REAL. I. *Seeming judges, but real criminals.* In the hall of Caiaphas were assembled the great authorities of the Jewish nation, "the chief-priests, and elders, and all the council." These men were the recognized officers of justice, and justice in its highest forms — justice not only between man and man, but between man and God. The high-priest, who professed to stand in the place of God, to be his representative on earth, was president of this assembly of the judges. No body of men on earth ever professed a profounder deference to

justice than these men. Justice to them *seemed* to be every thing; yet under all this seeming righteousness what have we? Iniquity in its most putrescent forms. In the name of justice they perpetrate four great enormities. 1. They assembled in their judicial capacity for the purpose of putting an untried man to death. They came not to judge, but to murder. 2. To give the appearance of justice to their endeavors, they procured false witnesses. But even false witnesses, in that false age, could not make out a case against him. 3. Without a particle of evidence they condemned as blasphemy the declaration of truth which they extorted from Christ, and which they could not refute. 4. Upon this unfounded charge of blasphemy, they pronounced him guilty of death, and treated him with the utmost cruelty. — What a revelation is here, then, of the moral character of these judges of the land! If such outrages on truth, morality, and religion, were practiced by the chief tribunal of the country, how deeply immersed in depravity must have been the whole of Jewish society at this hour! for the character of a government is always the product and reflection of the people. No wonder that the Son of God rolled in peals of awful thunder his denunciations against this apostate race, who thus affronted Heaven with their hypocrisy. The measure of their iniquities was fast filling up; the whole nation had become, morally, a rotten carcass, and the Roman eagle — Heaven's messenger of justice — already scented the prey, was spreading its wings for Jerusalem, and would soon fasten its talons upon the putrescent mass. II. A *seeming criminal, but a real Judge.* Who is this seeming criminal? Jesus of Nazareth! How wan add sad he seems! No friend stands by him; all his disciples have forsaken him and fled. He is in the hands of heartless ruffians, and at the mercy of rulers who thirst for his blood. He has just been brought up from Gethsemane, and the dark shadow of a mysterious sadness hangs over him, he looks as the very man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Such is the *appearance* of this criminal, but in *reality* this prisoner at the bar is the great Judge of the world. His majesty radiates in Divine splendor. Observe, 1. *His majestic silence.* There is a silence which means more than any words, and speaks ten times more powerfully to the heart. Such was the silence which Christ now maintained in this hall. In his bright consciousness of truth, all their false allegations against him melted away as the mists from the mountain in the Summer sun. His Divine soul looked calmly down upon the dark and wretched spirits in that hall, as the queen of the night looks peacefully upon our earth, amid the rolling clouds and howling winds of nature in a passing storm. Observe, 2. *His sublime speech.* "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting

on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." He only speaks a few words, but in these words he himself appears in all his Divine grandeur. We see sometimes in nature a strong breeze sweeping away from the face of the sun a dark mass of cloud that had wrapt it in concealment, and darkened the whole earth with its shadows. These words of Christ were something like that breeze; they scattered the dark clouds of ignorance and error that had concealed his Divinity, and made him flash for a moment as the Sun of Righteousness upon these guilty people. They are not to be limited to the final appearing of Christ to judgment, but refer to the whole state of his exaltation — an exaltation that was to commence at his ascension to heaven, and continue through interminable ages. Observe, (1.) They would see the sublime dignity of his position. He tells them that they shall see him "sitting on the right hand of power" — an expression indicating the highest exaltation and authority. As if he had said to them, You are now on the judgment-seat, and I appear as a prisoner before you. Nevertheless, I say unto you, it is only in appearance, it is only for the hour; very soon the scene will be changed, and you will see me on the right hand of power, enthroned in majesty and might, as the Judge of all mankind. Observe, (2.) They would see the sublime dignity of his procedure. They would see him "coming in the clouds of heaven." They would see him coming in the dispensation of his Spirit on the day of Pentecost — in the destruction of Jerusalem and the ruin of their own commonwealth — in every event of their future history, and finally in the last, Great Day of Judgment. — Learn from this not to confound the *Seeming with the Real*. Things are not what they seem. Verily, the moral world is upside down. Sinners, not saints, now sit on thrones and judge the earth. Learn to unmask men and things, and judge all by the light of the great thoughts of Him who is now sitting on the right hand of God. Yield not to appearances, not even in religion. (Condensed from the Homilist.)

VERSES 66-72. On the details of Peter's denial. see the notes on Matthew. — AND WHEN HE THOUGHT THEREON; in Greek ἐπιβαλών, literally, *casting* — to which the word *his mind* or *his thoughts* is supplied — *on it*. In this sense the verb is used by classic writers. Others supply the word *his eye*, namely, on the Savior. Lange supplies the reflexive pronoun *himself*, and translates, "*rushing out*." But the common translation in the English version, and in that of Luther is the most natural. — THE FALL AND RISE OF PETER. I. *Peter's fall*. First. *It is easily accounted for*. The

change in the history of this distinguished apostle is no miracle. He was not hurled down from the pinnacle of faithful discipleship by forces over which he had no control. We can trace the process, and mark every step he took in the downward course.

1. Self-sufficiency. His confidence in his own power to do the true thing was amazing; he felt that he could follow Christ any where, he avowed himself ready to lay down his life for his sake. (John xiii, 37.) When warned of this very sin, he declared that though all men denied Christ he would not; he seemed to have been so confident of his own power, that he attempted single-handedly to crush the enemies of Christ in the garden. This state of mind is always the first step downward. Presumption often ends in ruin. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." A humble, practical dependence upon God is the great upholding power of the soul.
2. Partial knowledge. He had not duly considered the sacrificial work of Christ. Frequently had his Master told him that he was going to lay down his life for the sheep, that his mission was a mission of mediatorial suffering. Peter seemed to have ignored all this aspect of his teaching; his mind seemed to have been taken up more with his character, as one who was to effect a temporal deliverance of his country. Hence when the sufferings of Christ began to accumulate, and the approach of a terrible death became more obvious, he became agitated with surprise, and fear, and awful solicitude. Partial knowledge is always dangerous; one-sided views of truth are often perilous in their character.
3. Spiritual negligence. He had been guilty of a sad neglect of duty in Gethsemane; his Master asked him to watch with him, but he fell asleep. Had he kept watch, had his eyes marked the writhings of the agonized frame, and his ears caught the mysterious groans of his Master, he might have got such an inspiration as to the Divinity of the tragedy as would have held him in faithful loyalty; but he lost the advantage of that wonderful power by his negligence. The same neglect he also displayed from the garden up to the palace of Caiaphas. Had he walked step by step with Jesus, chose by his side, interchanged looks and words with him, he might have had an infusion of moral power that would have kept him true. But he followed "afar off;" he was away from the Divine air that encircled Christ, and he breathed the atmosphere of men inspired with the very spirit of hell. Spiritual negligence is a downward step. Once omit a duty, and you receive a downward impulse.
4. Fear of man. Peter had, certainly, no desire to injure Christ. On the contrary, had he believed that his avowal would have rescued his Master from his enemies, we believe he would have made it; but he felt that all was over with Christ now, that his death was inevitable, and

that if he acknowledged his connection with him his doom also would be sealed; and hence, to save himself from the danger, he commits the sin of denial. Secondly. *It is very heinous.* 1. The denial succeeded great advantages. What privileges Peter had enjoyed! What signal favors Christ had bestowed upon him! He had lifted him to the ecstasies of the Transfiguration. He had just witnessed the institution of the New Testament covenant; his Master had significantly washed his feet, and he had heard his farewell discourses! 2. His denial occurred after the most solemn and repeated warnings, and after his deprecation of the possibility of it. 3. It was thrice repeated, each time with aggravated guilt. The first denial was a kind of ambiguous evasion. "I know not what thou sayest" — a pretended ignorance of the very question. The next is a distinct denial, breathing the rising spirit of profanity and contempt. He denied it with an oath, "I know not *the man.*" In the next his temper is gone, passion is rampant, reason and conscience are lost amid the raging of excitement, and he begins to curse and to swear! Peter was an old sailor, and perhaps, like most mariners, in early life had been in the habit of using profane language, and now the Spirit of goodness having left him for an hour, the old sailor, with all his boisterous roughness and wild, dashing profanity, comes up. Such is Peter's fall. He had reached a lofty altitude in spiritual experience; he received the very keys of the kingdom to unlock the treasures of heavenly mercy, and here we find him in the hell of falsehood and profanity. II. *Peter's rise.* There is no more miracle in his rise than in his fall. He is not lifted back to his old state irrespectively of means. We can trace his pathway. First. *There is an incidental occurrence.* While he was in the height of his impious rage, "*immediately the cock crew.*" From Mark we learn that the cock had crowed once before this. This was the second time. It was three o'clock in the morning, and the notes of the bird fell like a thunderclap on the conscience of Peter. This incident arrested his downward course, struck conviction into his heart, and brought reason again into action. Incidents the most simple are the ministers of God, ministers which often arrest the careless, guide the perplexed, soothe the sorrowing, and bless the upright in heart. God can give the microscopic object in nature an arrow to pierce the soul, the weakest sound a thunder that shall rouse the conscience into fury. Secondly. *There is an action of memory.* "And Peter remembered the words of Jesus." The echo of this bird of the morning brought, as with a flash, the words of Christ to his memory, and on these words he dwelt in his mind. Mark says: "When he thought thereon he wept." A Providential incident is powerful to a

man only as it awakens thought, and powerful to him for good only as the thought is engaged on the right subject. Thirdly. *There is a Divine manifestation.* Luke tells us: "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter." What a look was that! Fourthly. *There is a repentant effort.* "He went out from the companionship of ruffians, and the scene of bigotry and injustice — he went out from the circle where he had been tempted to a course of wickedness, the memory of which now struck him with horror — he went out to unburden himself of that load of guilt which he had contracted, and to consecrate his being once more to the will of his Master. He wept bitterly, and his tears were "like blessed showers, which leave the skies they come from bright and holy."

(Condensed from the Homilist.)

SECTION XXI.

JESUS BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL OF PILATE.

CHAPTER XV, 1-19.

(COMPARE MATTHEW xxvii, 1, 2; 11-30; LUKE xxiii, 1-25; JOHN xviii, 28-xix, 16.)

(1) AND straightway in the morning the chief-priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate. (2) And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*. (3) And the chief-priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing. ^[1] (4) And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. (5) But Jesus answered nothing; so that Pilate marveled. (6) Now at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. (7) And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. (8) And the multitude crying aloud ^[2] began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them. (9) But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? (10) For he knew that the chief-priests had delivered him for

envy. (11) But the chief-priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. (12) And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews? (13) And they cried out again, Crucify him. (14) Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. (15) And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him*, to be crucified. (16) And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. (17) And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*, (18) and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! (19) And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshiped him.

[1 "But he answered nothing" is not in the Greek text.]

[2 Instead of ἀναβοήσας — *crying aloud* — several Codices have ἀναβάς — *ascending* — namely, to the Praetorium. Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Lange prefer the latter reading, believing that ἀναβάς was changed into ἀναβοήσας by the copyists, because they did not understand its meaning.]

GENERAL REMARKS. — "Mark notices with Matthew the second formal meeting of the Sanhedrim on the morning of the crucifixion; he states more distinctly with Luke that the *whole* Sanhedrim led Jesus to Pilate, omitting with the same Evangelist the tragical end of Judas, the dream of Pilate's wife, Pilate's washing his hands, and the imprecations of the Jews against themselves, recorded by Matthew; he further omits with Matthew that Jesus was sent to Herod, as stated by Luke, and with the two other Synoptists the details of the trial of Jesus before Pilate, as recorded by John. He intimates, what Luke and John state more fully, that there were several charges brought against Jesus, to which He made no reply, but confines himself with Matthew mainly to the two principal points of the trial of Christ before Pilate; namely, his admission of being the Messiah — the King of the Jews — and that he was put on an equal footing with Barabbas." (Lange.) See the introductory remarks to § 76 in Matthew. — SO THAT PILATE MARVELED. "The refusal of Jesus to give Pilate, who undoubtedly wished to set him free, a reason for his silence is

explained by the consideration that the judge ought to have done so on his own conviction, and that even the most formal contradiction on our Lord's part would not have prevented or delayed the fatal concession by which Pilate ultimately sacrificed him to his enemies. As yet, however, he continues to pronounce him guiltless, and after an attempt to transfer him to Herod's jurisdiction (Luke xxiii, 5-12) still reiterates the same conviction. (Luke xxiii, 13-15.) Passing over these particulars preserved by Luke, Mark proceeds to describe Pilate's next expedient for the rescue of his prisoner." (Alexander.) — AND THE MULTITUDE CRYING ALOUD [or according to another reading, *going up*] BEGAN TO DESIRE. Lange considers this the moment when the crowd returned from the palace of Herod, whither Pilate had sent Jesus. During that time the high-priests, etc., had stirred up, excited, and instructed their partisans. — WILL YE THAT I RELEASE UNTO YOU THE KING OF THE JEWS? From Matthew we learn that Pilate had at first proposed to them to choose between Jesus and Barabbas, not doubting that in this way he would secure the liberation of the former. The terms, *King of the Jews*, used by Mark, and *Christ*, used by Matthew, are evidently taken as synonyms. — AND THEY CRIED OUT AGAIN, CRUCIFY HIM. "Again" refers not to *crucify him*, for they had not demanded that peculiar mode of punishment before, but to their tumultuous demand, stated in verse 8, to have Barabbas released. He would have been crucified by the Roman Government if he had not been released, and they now demand that Jesus should take his place. As crucifixion was a Roman, not a Jewish punishment, our Lord would most probably have been stoned to death if the Jews had at the time possessed the power to inflict capital punishment. "By causes seemingly so accidental," remarks Dr. Alexander, "was the great Providential purpose realized, according to which Christ was to die an ignominious and agonizing death, yet one which should preserve the integrity of his body from mutilation or distortion, and at the same time bring about a literal fulfillment of the curse pronounced on every one who hangs upon a tree, (Deut. xxi, 23; Gal. iii, 13;) the original reference is to the posthumous exposure of the body, after stoning or beheading, by suspension in some public place — the only hanging practiced under the law of Moses, while the terms of the malediction are so chosen as to be appropriate to crucifixion also, a remarkable example of the unexpected way in which the prophecies are often verified. This was, in fact, one of the ends to be accomplished by the Savior's transfer from the Jewish to the Roman power, as we learn from the remarkable expressions of JOHN, (xviii, 32.)"

Compare the note on crucifixion in Matthew. — AND DELIVERED JESUS, WHEN HE HAD SCOURGED HIM, TO BE CRUCIFIED. John looks upon the scourging as the last attempt, on the part of Pilate, to save Jesus, while Mark and Matthew look upon it as the prelude of the crucifixion. Each of these two views is correct from its own standpoint. Pilate intended to move the people to pity by the scourging, but instead of being moved they were but hardened, and thus the scourging proved to be the real beginning of the crucifixion. — On the indignities perpetrated on our Lord, see the notes in Matthew. — *Jews and Gentiles combined in putting Jesus to death.* The death of our Savior was, 1. To set in the clearest light the sin of the whole world; 2. To atone for it, and to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body. (Eph. ii, 14; Col. i, 19, 20.) — *The glorious manifestation of the perfect innocence of the condemned Savior:* 1. By his own silence. 2. By the confessed convictions of his judge. 3. By the blind rage of his enemies. 4. By his Divine patience. — *Christ justified even at the tribunal of his enemies:* 1. By the judge; he seeks to release him. 2. By his accusers and the people — their conflicting testimonies and their demand for the release of Barabbas. 3. By the soldiers; without being aware of it, they adorn him with the emblems of his spiritual dignity. — *Pilate, the judge of Jesus, self-condemned:* 1. In passing the sentence of death on Jesus, he sins against the clear conviction of his own judgment, against the compunctions of his conscience, against faithful warnings. 2. He is the representative of all worldly men, who, against their better convictions, pronounce against the Savior. — *The fatal choice of the Jews — an old and yet ever-repeated fact.* Whoever prefers sin to Christ, prefers, like the Jews, 1. A robber to the richest Dispenser of grace; 2. A rebel to the King of kings; 3. A murderer to the Prince of life. — Let us mark in this section: 1. *What a striking proof the Jewish rulers gave to their own nation that the times of the Messiah had come.* The chapter opens with the fact that the chief-priests bound Jesus and delivered him to Pilate, the Roman Governor. Why did they do so? Because they had no longer the power of putting any one to death, and were under the dominion of the Romans. By this one act they declared that the prophecy of Jacob was fulfilled. "The scepter had departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet," and Shiloh the Messiah, whom God had promised to send, must have come. (Gen. xl ix, 10.) Yet their eyes were blinded. They could not, or would not, see what they were doing. Let us never forget that wicked men are often fulfilling God's predictions to their own ruin, and yet know it not. In the very height of their madness, folly, and

unbelief, they are often unconsciously supplying fresh evidence that the Bible is true. 2. Let us mark *the meekness and lowness of our Lord*. When he stood before Pilate's bar, and was accused of many things, he answered nothing. Though the charges against him were false, and he knew no sin, he was content to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, not answering again. (Heb. xii, 3.) Though he was innocent of any transgression, he submitted to bear groundless accusations made against him without a murmur. How great the contrast between the second Adam and the first! Our first father, Adam, was guilty, and yet tried to excuse himself. The second Adam was guiltless, and yet made no defense at all. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openeth he not his mouth." (Isa. liii, 7.) Let us learn a practical lesson from our Savior's example. Let us beware of giving way to irritation and ill-temper, however provoking and undeserved our trials may seem to be. Nothing in the Christian character glorifies God so much as patient suffering. "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." (1 Peter ii, 20, 21.) 3. Let us learn from the conduct of Pilate, *what a pitiable sight an unprincipled man is*. It is clear that he was convinced of our Lord's innocence. — "He knew that the chief-priests had delivered him for envy." Though willing to save his life, he was afraid to do it, if it offended the Jews. And so, after a feeble attempt to divert the fury of the people from Jesus, and a feebler attempt to satisfy his own conscience, by washing his hands publicly before the people, he at last condemned one whom he himself called "a just person." He rejected the strange and mysterious warning which his wife sent to him after her dream. He stifled the remonstrances of his own conscience, when he delivered Jesus to be crucified! Behold in this miserable man a striking emblem of unprincipled men in high places! How many there are, who know well that their public acts are wrong, and yet have not the courage to act up to their knowledge! They fear the people! They can not bear to be unpopular! Like dead fish, they float with the tide. Self is the idol before which they bow down, and to that idol they sacrifice conscience, inward peace, and an immortal soul. Let us mark, 4. *The exceeding guilt of the Jews*. At the eleventh hour the chief-priests had an opportunity of repenting if they would have taken it. They had the choice given them whether Jesus or Barabbas should be set free. Coolly and deliberately they persevered in their bloody work. The *power* of putting our Lord to death was no longer theirs, but they publicly took upon themselves the *responsibility*

of his death. We marvel at the wickedness of the Jews at this part of our Lord's history — and no wonder. To reject Christ and choose Barabbas was indeed an astounding act! It seems as if blindness, madness, and folly could go no further. But let us take heed that we do not unwittingly follow their example. Let us beware that we are not found at last to have chosen Barabbas and rejected Christ. The service of sin and the service of God are continually before us. Are we making the right choice? Happy is he who can give a satisfactory answer. (Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospel.)

SECTION XXII.

JESUS IS LED TO CALVARY AND CRUCIFIED.

CHAPTER XV, 20-32. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvii, 32-44; LUKE xxiii, 26-43; JOHN xix, 17-27.)

(20) AND when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. (21) And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. (22) And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. (23) And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not. (24) And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. (25) And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. (26) And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. (27) And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. (28) And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. (29) And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest *it* in three days, (30) save thyself; and come down from the cross. (31) Likewise also the chief-priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he can not save. (32) Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

THEY LED HIM OUT TO CRUCIFY HIM; this was done in all executions; within the city no criminal could be executed, (comp. Lev. xxiv, 14; 1 Kings xxi, 13; Acts vii, 58.) According to the Jewish law three, and according to the Roman law ten days were to elapse between the sentence and the execution; in the present case, however, this law as well as so many others were trampled under foot. — THE FATHER OF ALEXANDER AND RUFUS. These men must have been well known in the Church, for which Mark wrote his Gospel more especially; they, like the son of Timeus, speak for the originality of Mark's Gospel and his vivid recollection. Lange thinks the Rufus here mentioned was the same as the one mentioned in Romans xvi, 13. — COMING OUT OF THE COUNTRY. From this item it has been inferred, that our Lord was crucified on Thursday, not on Friday, the first day of the feast. But there is no ground for such an inference. The field from which Simon came may have been within a Sabbath-day's walk from the city limits. Moreover, Friday, though the first day of the feast, was not the Paschal Sabbath; and apart from these considerations, his coming from the field seems to have been regarded as something unusual or strange, so much so, that the attention of the procession was directed to him alone out of so large and so mixed a crowd. — Lange's Bibelwerk contains a very rich collection of *homiletical suggestions* on the scenes of the cross, from which we have selected and modified the following: "*The death on the cross* was, 1. As the most painful and ignominious of all deaths — the most expressive of its vicarious character; 2. It was the best adapted to reveal the spiritual glory of the Savior of the world; it served, 3. To draw most impressively the attention of all men to him; and, 4. To present him — hanging between heaven and earth — as the only Mediator between God and man. — *Jesus Christ on the cross* — *Satan's highest triumph and greatest defeat.* — *The cross* — the emblem of self-sacrificing love, and the most wonderful display of God's holiness and mercy — should change, 1. Our self-righteousness into true repentance; 2. Our unbelieving fears into childlike confidence; 3. Our murmuring under the ills of life into cheerful resignation. — *The mysterious circumstances of the great fact of the propitiation for the sin of the world.* I. The darkness that reigned while it was being accomplished, as seen, 1. In the delusion of the heathen, who believed they were putting to death a pretender to a worldly crown; 2. In the scoffings and revilings of the Jews; 3. In the hiding of the sun; 4. In the silence

of God the Father; 5. In the mysterious words of Christ; 6. In the strange misconstruction of his words. II. The bright light which broke through this darkness, 1. By the triumphant, unobscured self-consciousness of the Divine Sufferer, who refuses the stupefying drink; 2. By praying for the forgiveness of his murderers; 3. By the absolution of a dying sinner; 4. By the sympathetic mourning of nature; 5. By the freedom and obedience with which the Savior realizes death — the wages of sin — in his own self-consciousness, and thus takes away the sting of death from all that believe in him; 6. By the immediate effects of his death. — *The great sermon preached on Golgotha to the whole world*, 1. By God; 2. By the darkened heavens; 3. By the shaking earth; 4. By the few repentant and believing ones; 5. By the wicked; 6. By the dying Savior. — The Homilist, in a series of homilies, contemplates *Christ on the cross* in four aspects: *As the Victim of wickedness; as the Exemplar of religion; as the Deserted of Heaven; and as the Power of God*. We subjoin the outlines of the first-named aspect here, and defer those of the two last ones to the next section. It will scarcely need an explanation to the reflecting reader why we present *here* no homily on the fundamental *doctrines* derived from the death of Christ. For such meditations and applications, there is an abundance of strictly-doctrinal passages in the New Testament. — CHRIST ON THE CROSS — THE VICTIM OF WICKEDNESS. We see, 1. *Wickedness fastening him upon the cross*. It had secured his condemnation, and thus outraged every sentiment of justice; it had scourged and insulted him in the hall of Pilate, and it had compelled him to bear on his own lacerated frame the cross from the hall of judgment to Golgotha. It now fastens him on that cross, drives the rugged nails through his hands and feet, and suspends him there in unknown torture. This is the masterpiece of wickedness. Christ seems powerless before its force. He hangs there in excruciating agony as the helpless prey of human vultures. Their ruthless talons are fastened on the tenderest nerves of his heart and being. He seems to be in the red-hot iron grasp of wickedness. The fiendish thousands of his age closed about him like wild beasts. "Many bulls have compassed me about, strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round." For six thousand years wickedness had been growing. It had wrought deeds of impiety and crime that had wrung the ages with agony, and often roused the Justice of the universe to roll her fiery thunderbolts of retribution through the world. But now it had grown to full maturation; it stands around this cross in such gigantic proportions as had never been seen before, it works an enormity before which the mightiest of its past exploits dwindle into

insignificance. It crucifies the Lord of life and glory. 2. We see *wickedness tormenting him even while on the cross*. It is said that Socrates spent his last hours in quiet. No one was suffered to disturb the tranquillity of his philosophic soul; weeping friends and loving disciples were with him to buoy him up with their kind words and loving looks; even his executioner was touched into compassion, and wept when he gave the fatal cup of hemlock into his hand. But Christ is not allowed to die even with the agonies of the cross, great as they were; his enemies, till his last breath, endeavor to highten his tortures by acts and words of heartless cruelty and blasphemous insults. They that passed by moved their heads in gestures of ridicule, and the chief-priests, with the scribes and elders, said, "He saved others; himself he can not save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." They could not deny that he saved others, that he went about doing good. This being true, why should they treat him thus? Where is the justice, where is the humanity — ay, where is even the simple propriety of putting a social benefactor to death, and treating him thus? As to his not being able to save himself — he could have delivered himself and overwhelmed his enemies with destruction — *physically*. But *morally* he could not, and his moral inability is his glory. He could not because he had promised to die, and he could not break his word. He could not, because the salvation of the world depended upon his death.

SECTION XXIII.

THE DYING HOUR OF CHRIST, THE POWER OF HIS DEATH, AND HIS BURIAL.

CHAPTER XV, 33-47. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxvii, 45-66; LUKE xxiii, 44-56; JOHN xix, 28-42.)

(33) AND when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. (34) And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (35) And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. (36) And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and

put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. (37) And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. (38) And the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. (39) And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. (40) There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (41) who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem. (42) And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, (43) Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. (44) And Pilate marveled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. (5) And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. (46) And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulcher which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulcher. (47) And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME? On these mysterious words, which we have considered at large in Matthew, the Homilist has the following homiletical sketch, which in the main, though not entirely, agrees with the interpretation given in Matthew: "The language can only be taken in one of two senses — either as expressing a fact in relation to God — that *God had actually deserted Christ* — or that Christ merely had *the feeling* that he had done so. Can we accept the former? Are there any just grounds for believing that the Eternal Father did now so change either in feeling or conduct toward his Son, as to warrant the idea of desertion? Did wrath now take the place of love in the Divine heart? Did a dark frown of indignation take, for a moment, the place of a Father's smile? Did He, who before declared, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' — now, for a moment, feel, 'This is my abhorrent Son, in whom I am displeased?' We confess an utter inability to accept such an idea as this, however popular it may be in some

systems of theology. To us it seems repugnant to the character of Him who is immutable in love, and who has pledged himself never to forsake those who trust in him; repugnant, moreover, to the distinct declaration of Christ, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.' (John x, 17.) Christ felt that his giving his life in agony for humanity was rather a reason for Divine love than otherwise. We are, therefore, left to the acceptance of the other idea; namely, that this cry expresses a feeling of desertion in Christ's mind. Our idea is, that amid the dying agonies of the moment, he felt as if the God of infinite love had left him. Let it not be imagined that because it might be only a feeling of desertion in the mind of Christ, and not a fact in the Divine conduct, that it is not a terrible reality. So far as the subject is concerned, it is desertion in its most overwhelming force. The fact, unless it is felt, is powerless. Supposing that God in reality forsakes a man, and that man does not feel the fact, the desertion is nothing to him. On the contrary, supposing that no such desertion takes place on God's part, yet, if a man deeply feel it, it is to him the most terrible of realities. Christ, then, we may suppose, had the feeling in its mightiest force. It was only, of course, as a man that he suffered; and as a man, the anguish of this moment might cloud his consciousness of nearness to Infinite Love. It was, moreover, to him the hour of darkness at this moment. Satan was at the hight of his power, and his huge and hideous proportions, as he passed before the eye of Christ's spirit, would intercept the rays of Divine love, and throw a dark and chilly shadow upon his heart. The feeling seems only to have been momentary; it was just as if hell rolled between him and the heavens — an eclipse for the time of his moral sun. Accepting this, then, as the more likely interpretation, the utterance suggests three observations in relation to Christ at this moment: 1. *That his sufferings were associated with the feeling of distance from God.* This was natural under the circumstances. There is something in great suffering to superinduce this feeling in the mind. From the constitution of the soul we instinctively conclude that where the God of infinite love is, there is happiness, and only happiness. Unsophisticated reason says, 'In thy presence is fullness of joy.' Where the sun is, there is light. Where love is, there is blessedness; and the converse of this is — where there is overwhelming suffering, God is absent. Thus Job felt in his trials, and he exclaimed: 'O, that I knew where I might find him!' Thus David felt: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' And thus the old prophets felt in trial: 'Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself.' Hence, too, souls in anguish involuntarily cry out for God's presence. 2. *That his feeling of distance from*

God was associated with a terrible amazement. 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' His faith is tried, his reason seems to stagger. Surprise rushes on him like a wild tempest. His faculties seem baffled with sore astonishment. *Why?* 'It can not be that I have offended thee? I came into the world to do thy will; and it has been my delight to this hour. I am about finishing the work which thou gavest me to do. I am unconscious of the slightest deviation from thy will. It has been my meat and my drink to do what thou hast commanded. Why, then, hast thou forsaken me? Thy love is as immutable as thyself. My disciples forsook me and fled. I knew their weakness, and understood their conduct. But why dost thou forsake me, and leave me in this utter solitude of inexpressible anguish?' Here, then, the holy Sufferer seems to have been tried in his reason; the desertion he felt was something most unaccountable and perplexing; violently clashing with his clear ideas of his Father's wisdom and love. As a man, he had his intellectual trials, or he would not have been 'tempted in all points like as we are;' but he had not a trial of his reason like this.

3. His terrible amazement was associated with unshaken confidence in God. The felt mystery of his Father's conduct did not destroy his confidence in his character; he continues lovingly to look to him, as his God. *'My God, my God!'* 'On other occasions.' says Bengel, 'he was accustomed to say, *Father*; now he says, *My God*, as being in a degree estranged. Yet he does so twice, and says *My* with confidence, patience, and self-resignation.' There is a lesson for us here. However much our rational faculties may be confounded by the mysteries of the Divine dealing, let us never lose confidence in the wisdom and love of God. Let us feel that although he often seems to hide himself from us, and move in ways inscrutable to our poor understanding, that all his movements are prompted by infinite love, and directed by unerring intelligence. Let us trust Him, where we can not trace Him, and feel with Job, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' Though he might permit us to be overwhelmed with suffering, confounded in intellect, and agonized in heart, let us feel that He is still our God, and in our deepest hour of distress call out, *My God, my God!*" — AND JESUS CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE. The words which he uttered in this cry have been preserved by John, (xix, 30,) and by Luke, (xxiii, 46.) — AND GAVE UP THE GHOST — literally, *breathed out* or *expired*. None of the Evangelists used the word *died*, perhaps in order to suggest more strongly the idea, that our Lord's death was an act of his own will. The Lord expired at the ninth hour — three o'clock, P.M. — the hour of prayer and of the evening sacrifice. (Acts iii, 1.) — *On the Divine power which Christ exerted on the*

cross, and the immediate effects of his death, we quote again from the Homilist: "I. *He displays a power over the material system.* The effects of his power are seen: 1. Upon the sun: 'Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.' Whether the darkness extended literally over the whole earth, or not, we need not discuss here. [See the notes on Matthew.] Obviously, it wrapped Jerusalem in a mysterious gloom. There is no accounting for it on natural principles. There is no known law of nature that can explain it. An eclipse of the sun it was not, for it was at the time of the Passover, and that was at full moon, when an eclipse is impossible; besides a total eclipse can never last longer than a quarter of an hour. 2. Upon the Temple. The vail of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.' This vail symbolized that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. It excluded all from that sacred spot, and none dared to enter save the high-priest, and he only once a year, on the great day of atonement, and then never without the blood of atonement in his hand, which he sprinkled upon and before the mercy-seat seven times. (Lev. xvi, 14.) That thick vail remained for ages, impressing man with the awfulness and difficulty of approaching the Most High. But now that vail was rent from top to bottom — rent, not by human hand or any secondary cause, but by the will of Him who now, by his death, opened up to the human race a way of free access to God. 3. Upon the earth. 'The earth did quake, and the rocks rent.' (Matt. xxvii, 52.) A great earthquake is said by the Latin writers to have occurred about this time, but it can not with certainty be identified with this. With his dying eyes he looked upon the earth, and it trembled; with his thoughts 'he touched the mountains and they smoked.' 4. Upon the bodies of the dead. (Matt. xxvii, 53.) His dying breath shook the empire of death to its foundations. These graves, that were now opened in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, were patterns and pledges of what one day will inevitably take place throughout the vast regions of mortality. Christ's death is the death of death. His last breath upon the cross seemed to fall upon the dominion of the grave, as the first genial thaw of Spring upon the lifeless earth, bringing a few of the dead to life, [see note on Matthew xxvii, 52, 53,] and insuring the resurrection of every buried seed. And, no doubt, the death of Christ had a power not only over the bodies of the departed, but also over their spirits. It penetrated hades; it stirred with thrilling interest the unnumbered spirits of the sainted dead. II. *He displays a power over the moral world.* This is seen: 1. In the salvation he vouchsafed to the dying penitent. (Luke xxiii, 39-43.) There hangs the dying thief. The aggravated sins

of a whole life press on his soul with a weight heavy enough to sink him in despair. A Divine power, however, touches his soul into penitence and faith, and with his last breath he cries to Jesus for salvation: 'Lord, remember me.' And what is the result? That dying One showed himself mighty to save. He rolled the crushing burden of guilt from the man's conscience. He pardoned his sins, and cleansed his soul. He plucked him, as a brand, from the burning. Here is the highest kind of power in the universe, the power to save ruined souls involved in the greatest guilt, and in the last moment of their mortal existence. His power is seen: 2. In the authority which he exercised over the celestial region. This comes out in the wonderful response he gave to the cry of the penitent malefactor: 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' These words imply a commanding power over the celestial world, a power to go into it himself, and a power to take others thither. His power extends to all the realms of being that lie beyond the sphere and ken of mortals. Though dying, he felt that the universe was his, and that in person he would soon be exalted above all heavens. His power is seen: 3. In the change which he wrought in the mind of the centurion, a type of the conversion of the Gentile world; 4. In attracting to himself new disciples — Nicodemus and Joseph; 5. In the effect it produced on the consciences of sinners. (Luke xxiii, 48.) 'They smote their breasts' — a brief but graphic description of the mingled grief, remorse, and terror which filled the spectators of this awful drama. That power his cross still exerts to rouse the guilty consciences and break the hard hearts of sinners. The same effect has been produced in all subsequent ages whenever he has been faithfully exhibited to the spiritual eyes of men as crucified for sinners."

SECTION XXIV.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION.

CHAPTER XVI, 1-20.

1. AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES TO THE WOMEN THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD.

Verses 1-8. (COMPARE MATTHEW xxviii, 1-10; LUKE xxiv, 1-10.)

(1) AND when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. (2) And very early in the morning, the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. (3) And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from ^[1] the door of the sepulcher? (4) And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. (5) And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. (6) And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. (7) But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. (8) And they went out quickly, ^[2] and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*; for ^[3] they were afraid.

[1] Some manuscripts read ἐκ, others ἀπό.]

[2] "Quickly" is wanting in the most important Codices. 3 Instead of γάρ, *for*, Lachman adopts the reading δέ, according to B, D. in the sense of "and."]

2. MARY MAGDALENE AND THE TWO DISCIPLES. Verses 9-13. (COMPARE LUKE xxiv, 15-35; JOHN xx, 11-18.)

(9) NOW when Jesus was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. (10) And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. (11) And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. (12) After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went

into the country. (13) And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

3. THE LAST INSTRUCTIONS OF OUR LORD TO HIS APOSTLES, AND HIS ASCENSION.

Verses 14-20. (COMPARE LUKE xxiv, 36-51; JOHN xx, 19-23.)

(14) AFTERWARD he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. (15) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. (16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (17) And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; (18) they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (19) So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. (20) And they went forth, and preached every-where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the Word with signs following. Amen.

VERSES 1-8. AND WHEN THE SABBATH WAS PASSED; that is, on Saturday evening after sundown. — HAD BOUGHT. The aorist in Greek [*ἠγόρασαν*] ought not to have been rendered as a pluperfect, contrary to its proper use, and without any necessity; for this statement is in no way contradictory to Luke xxiii, 55, where another party of women is referred to. The two Marys, who had on Friday evening lingered too long at the grave to make the purchases then, were joined on Saturday evening by Salome in procuring them. — THAT THEY MIGHT COME AND ANOINT HIM. Inasmuch as embalming, in the strict sense of the term, was not customary with the Jews, and was, when performed, attended to by physicians, it is probable that a mere outward anointment was intended in order to bestow the last honor upon the body, as Nicodemus had already done, (John xix, 39.) — AND VERY EARLY — AT THE RISING OF THE SUN. Lange translates, "when

the sun *had commenced* rising," and contends that this is in accordance with the sense of the aorist used here. Between the beginning and the completion of the rise of the sun we must suppose an interval. There is no more variance in the statement of the women's arrival between Mark and John, than there is between "*very early*" and "*at the rising of the sun*" in Mark. Dawn and sunrise are taken indefinitely in all languages. — AND WHEN THEY LOOKED — literally, looking up. The sepulcher lay, as it seems, on an eminence, and the stone being very great, they saw it from afar, as they came nearer. — AND ENTERING INTO THE SEPULCHER. From John xx, 1, 2, it appears that Mary of Magdala had started back for the city, as soon as she had seen the sepulcher open; but her companions entered it. The tombs consisted generally of several apartments. — THEY SAW A YOUNG MAN. According to Matthew the angel sat on the stone. There is, however, no contradiction between the two statements, since Matthew's account does not imply that the angel always kept that position, nor does Mark say that he [the angel] was inside of the grave; he merely says, that he sat on the right side, perhaps at the entrance and on the stone which he had rolled away. On the apparent discrepancy of minor details see introductory remarks to section 79 in Matthew, (pp. 629-632.) — AND PETER. This addition is peculiar to Mark. The particular mention of Peter was a very great favor for the poor disciple, who was sorely distressed on account of his fall, and needed pardon and the restoration to his apostolic office. — HE GOES BEFORE YOU INTO GALILEE. This message was intended for the whole body of the Galilean disciples, and was, therefore, not at variance with the Lord's appearing on that very day to his eleven disciples and the women; Lange says on this point: "Christ had not only the 'twelve' and a few women, but a large number of others for disciples, [the latter in a more general sense,] who, for the most part, lived in Galilee, but, were then at Jerusalem. Now as he appeared to a few of his disciples first at Jerusalem, it was but natural for the whole body of disciples to expect that he would appear unto them also at Jerusalem. But this was not Christ's purpose. For such an appearance in the midst of *all* his followers a gradual preparation was needed; we see the same preparation even in the case of those of his male and female disciples, to whom he revealed himself at Jerusalem. First, angels appear to the women; then he appears to Mary of Magdala, a soul, that, through the intensity of her longing for the beloved Master, had come so near the borders of the spirit-world, that she was neither afraid of the angels of heaven nor of the terrors of the grave. He

revealed himself, as it seems, first to those of his disciples who were most susceptible and disconsolate, converting them thereby into exulting messengers of the fact of his resurrection for the other disciples. For the same reason he appeared unto Peter and the two other disciples on their way to Emmaus; and after these special manifestations he showed himself to the eleven, as in turn that manifestation was designed to prepare the whole body of believers for beholding him in Galilee. There were many among them that attained but gradually to the proper frame of mind to see him in the glory of his new life. These are the reasons why the Lord did not deem it proper to appear to his whole Church at once, and least of all at Jerusalem. They would have proclaimed his resurrection at once, but for a proper understanding and testimony of this fact they were not prepared before receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Had they proclaimed their Master's triumph in their own strength, they would only have provoked a persecution that might have proved fatal to the infant Church. Hence the order, *to Galilee!* Yet the leaders of the Church were first to be assured of the reality of the resurrection, so that they would not doubt his going before them into Galilee." — FOR [or according to the reading adopted by Lachman, AND] THEY TREMBLED AND WERE AMAZED, They could not yet fully believe, for joy, because their feelings were too highly excited, and for fear, because the evidences of the fact were not yet sufficient to banish all doubt, and because so much was for them at stake, that the apprehension of having their hopes blasted again, prevented them from entertaining any definite hope. — NEITHER SAID THEY ANY THING TO ANY MAN; that is, on the way. Mark, who omits the appearance of Jesus to the women, as related by Matthew, gives prominence to the fact, that "the announcements of the risen Savior through angels, women, and individual disciples were insufficient to banish all doubt from the body of the disciples: they did not become a *body of believers* before *the risen Savior appeared himself in their midst*. And this fundamental idea pervades the whole Gospel, which is mainly based on the preaching of Peter, of that Peter who is made the head of a Church, where Christ is said to be represented by tradition, angels, prophets, holy women, and visions." (Lange.)

VERSES 9-13. NEITHER BELIEVED THEY THEM. This clause seems very strange, especially on comparing Luke xxiv, 37-45. Lange accounts for the doubts of the disciples in the following manner: "The eleven had undoubtedly learned by this time that Jesus had appeared unto Peter, whose

testimony they could not reject. But now the two disciples returned from Emmaus with the news that he had appeared unto them on the way to Emmaus. Having no conception as yet of this new wonderful mode of Christ's existence — he appearing now here, now at another place — new doubts arise. Moreover, some of the eleven may have thought: Why should he have appeared unto the two disciples at Emmaus earlier than unto us, his apostles, at Jerusalem? They conceived, therefore, of his appearance as that of his spirit, and were affrighted when Jesus appeared in their midst, supposing that they saw a spirit, (Luke xxiv, 37,) so that the Lord has to convince them first of all of the reality of his body."

VERSES 14-20. AFTERWARD HE APPEARED UNTO THE ELEVEN. This appearance of Christ did undoubtedly take place on the evening of the resurrection-day, but as with the self-manifestation of Christ in the midst of his disciples every thing is decided, Mark connects with this appearance the great commission and other instructions subsequently given. The unbelief and hardness of heart of the disciples, so often rebuked by their Master, are now fully overcome, and the apostles are thus reinstated into their apostolic office. Though Thomas was not present the first evening, the rest of the apostles are called "the eleven," meaning the apostolic body. All of them, indeed, had the same defect of faith for which Thomas was afterward especially reproved. "It might, indeed, appear as if all that Mark records from verses 14-18 was spoken on the evening of the first day. But the double narrative of this evening's proceedings in Luke and John will not allow any room for such an anticipatory discourse; and then verses 15-18 are too plainly parallel with the conclusion of Matthew to allow any doubt as to its having been spoken on the mountain in Galilee. We must, therefore, intelligently notice the hint which Mark himself gives us in verse 19 by his '*after the Lord had spoken unto them*,' by which his '*and he said unto them*,' in verse 15, loses — as most expositors see — all specific chronological connection with verse 14. After he has in verses 9-14 given prominence to three special appearances, Mark gives us continuously the main substance of the discourses of Christ to the disciples between the resurrection and the ascension, and that according to a view of them peculiar to himself. What specific kind of connection there is between the two accounts of what our Lord spoke on the Galilean mountain — how little or how much that connection extends to the words — what was the precise order of utterances, are questions which it would not be prudent to answer

positively. Though for ourselves we understand Mark's words to have followed the others, we can not prove that it was so. Through the Holy Ghost, who has thus reproduced and delivered to us his Word, the Lord speaks to us now both the one and the other — and both are immediately authentic. But the Divine Spirit rather points our attention away from the mere historical and external connection of the individual words; the great object with us should be to appreciate the one design of the whole discourse, and to grasp it in all its doctrinal completeness. The discourses of the *risen Lord* permit, and indeed demand of us, beyond all that preceded, such an elevation above the petty consideration of the exact, historical connection — such a manifold and yet not altering glorification." (Stier.) — GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD. "All the world" is evidently synonymous with "*all nations*" in Matthew. — AND PREACH THE GOSPEL, the joyful tidings of salvation. "Preaching the Gospel, in this sense, must emphatically *begin* the great work in every place to which the Lord's commissioned servants come; wherever and among whatever people the salvation of the Triune God has not been preached — neither adults nor infants are to be baptized. Mark further that the Lord's command is not — Write down and record my words and my history, but — *Preach!* All that comes in supplementarily; and by the Scriptures of the New Testament the Lord has — as was indispensably necessary — given the certain and all-sufficient text for all Gospel preaching; yet it is a profound truth, which we shall ponder well, that he did not at first and preparatorily speak of or ordain the writing of the Scripture, but connected all with the oral word. Only in the *preaching* Church, which possesses the spirit, does the letter of the Scripture *live* as a living word, and thus the sacraments have their influence and efficiency." — TO EVERY CREATURE — literally, *to the whole creation*. Most expositors understand by this term simply *all men*. But the Greek term κτίσις means no where else merely *men*, and Stier contends that our Lord did not use this unusual and more comprehensive term without intending a wider signification. "Though the rest of the creation have no ears to hear with for themselves, man is their ear; and by means of its connection with man creation becomes actually partaker of a redemption springing out of man's redemption, after having been through man's fall subjected to vanity and corruption, as we learn in Romans viii, 19-23. Bengel's profound glance had slightly perceived the meaning of that passage, and he remarks here: 'To men primarily, (verse 16;) to the rest of the creatures, secondarily; *As the curse, so the blessing.*' In Christ the earth and all that is in it is again blessed; as all was laid under the

curse through the sin of Adam. By reason of the intimate and indissoluble connection of man — both in his old and new creation — with nature which surrounds him, serves him, and with him has become wretched and been restored again, the Gospel applies through him and his mediation to brute creation — just as the Lord in his promise to Noah and his sons included also the lower animals. (Gen. ix, 9, 10.) As the old saying, 'The righteous man is merciful to his beast,' becomes a full reality only through the Spirit of Christ, is this not a blessing, a deliverance flowing to the animal kingdom from that all-renewing grace? When deserts are changed into blooming gardens through civilization following in the train of Christian missions, does the earth not share the blessings of the Gospel? This view is still further confirmed by what is said in verse 18 of the power given to the apostles over those noxious and deadly elements of nature, as it now is, which certainly did not have their origin in Paradise. Every creature, *πᾶσα κτίσις*, the whole creation, includes all that needs restoration. The word *κτίσις* is used expressly to point to the *Creator* who renews his creation, or proclaims a new creation, as the Berlenburg Bible says: 'The entire Gospel refers to the relation of the *creature* to God; helping it to find its Creator again, and its eternal good.' — In a similar manner Lange interprets this passage: "The world, marred and held in bondage by demons, and filled with the fear of death, is to become a world of peace, faith, and life, blessed, set free, and glorified by the Gospel. The renewal or restoration of the world through the Gospel is a promise that pervades the whole Scriptures, (compare Deut. xxviii; Isa. xi; lxv, 17; Rom. viii; Rev. xxi;) and in our text this promise receives the confirmation and sanction of Christ. The fact of his own resurrection is the announcement of glad tidings for the whole creation, and the apostles are to preach it to the whole world, and to seal it by the sacrament, so that it may be appropriated individually. Every true and earnest offer of salvation is henceforth a preaching of the Gospel, that has for its ultimate object the liberation of the creature from the bondage of vanity and corruption, a regenerative power preparing the great restoration of all things that is to be consummated at the end of the present world-period. The idea of a universal palingenesia we find clearly intimated by the apostle Peter. (Acts ii, 20; iii, 20, 21; 2 Pet. i, 4; iii, 13.)" — HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED. In the original the aorist is used, having the force of the second future; *he that shall have believed and shall have been baptized*. Our Lord speaks by anticipation as the future Judge of the world. By "*believing*" we must of course understand a believing with the heart, a living, appropriating trust in

Jesus Christ, as the only Savior and final Judge of mankind, (compare Acts xvii, 31;) from such faith all good works spring. — Baptism appears here to bear such a relation to faith as is thought by Baptists to be irreconcilable with infant baptism. Pedobaptist expositors content themselves with replying that our Lord speaks here only of adult believers, but define, at the same time, baptism in a manner that, in our opinion, must, if consistently applied, lead to the rejection of infant baptism. Thus Owen: "Baptism is the seal of the covenant-obligation of the believer, to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk in all his ordinances and commands. It is not a saving rite, although a duty incumbent on every believing adult who has not been thus pledged to Christ by believing parents." Whedon: "The external baptism by water is a public profession that the baptism by the Spirit has taken place. It is a professional, outward consecration indicating an inward consecration of soul and body to the blessed Trinity. It is an emblematical regeneration figuring a real and spiritual regeneration. It is a figurative washing away of sin, correspondent to the real washing away of sin. It is an external entering into the kingdom of heaven correspondent to the real entering by regeneration into the spiritual kingdom of heaven. It is the being born of water, figuring the being born of the Spirit. Hence he who believes and is baptized really and truly, shall be saved." The objections to such a definition of baptism we have stated in our Dissertation, (pp. 642-644.) Stier says: "The relation between *believing* and *being baptized* is clearly and definitely laid down in the two clauses. To begin with the latter: we miss the corresponding μὴ βαπτισθεῖς in connection with κατακριθήσεται — it is not said: 'He that is not baptized shall be condemned!' Baptized or not, even *if* baptized, the *unbelieving* shall be condemned! And this must lead us to decide that in the former clause the same holds good: the *believer* shall be saved, even though he be *not* baptized. All anxious misunderstanding of the inseparable conjunction of baptism with faith, as the condition of salvation, is removed by the plain sequel of the clause, 'But he that believeth not [*and only he*] shall be condemned.' He that believeth will not omit to seek baptism, if he has not already received it; but we must not think of it as an absolute condition of salvation, for this simple reason, that it is not positively *the baptized* who is said to be saved, but *the believing and the baptized*. The precedence given to believing does not indicate the order of *time* for every individual, first to believe and then to be baptized, but may be understood thus: 'He that believeth *also* even as he has been baptized, that is, not merely *the baptized*.' Faith is evidently the essential matter, whether it

precedes or follows baptism. Inasmuch as only unbelief condemns, the contempt of baptism condemns only the disobedient and the unbelieving; but the lack of baptism on the part of believers, and on the part of little children, does not condemn them. Though the opinions of the perdition of unbaptized children, once so current, are now scarcely to be found in Evangelical Churches, yet a long experience in practical pastoral life, and in a district celebrated for Christian knowledge and piety, has revealed to me the existence of so much confusion, and let me say superstition, in the minds of the people on this question — though springing from a deep anxiety to comply with the precepts of Christ — that I could not consent to further the views of those who would revive the discipline of private baptism for times of danger. It rather appears to me more and more clearly the duty of the minister to defend his people from superstition, and even under certain circumstances to deny the rite which is demanded with an unworthy motive; at least to perform no so-called *baptism of need* without a plain protest against the notion of its *necessity*. I think we may thus better, and with more blessed result, uphold the true appreciation of the sacrament, than by furthering an improper and erroneous value for it. When the ceremony is performed upon a child to all appearance dying, according to the same formulary, as if the child were destined to live — what is this but trifling with holy things? In infant baptism the germ is implanted *for life upon earth*, from which the tree should spring up in the present economy of things; *this* is alone its peculiar significance and *justification*. But the little children whom the Lord calls to die, he calls by their death — as we are in the habit of saying correctly — most surely and effectually *to come unto himself.*" To the above we have to offer but one objection: instead of saying, "In infant baptism the germ is implanted for life upon earth," etc., we would say, The significance and justification of infant baptism rests upon the child's destiny for life upon earth, and an infant that the Lord takes away by death before its baptism, he calls to come unto himself without baptism. The sacraments were instituted for the way of salvation on earth, and not for the spirit-world. (Compare the remarks in the Dissertation on Baptism, III, p. 643.) — SHALL BE SAVED — literally, *delivered*, namely, from sin and its final consequences. "This promise, open and free as long as there is one creature who has not heard the Gospel, and therefore can not have decided to reject it; but the great distinction between salvation and perdition remains an immovable fact, and its eternal reality will be made manifest at the end. Luther: The whole world is thus divided into two portions, and they are separated from each other by a great

and vast difference: one goes to heaven, the other to hell; and no other judgment shall pass at the last day than that upon him who has believed, or who has not believed.' And what will be preached during the long interval? Most assuredly nothing new; nothing even in hades but *this Gospel!* And in order that no man afterward may complain, the decision is given beforehand. 'Whithersoever ye go,' he says to his apostles, 'make this judgment known. Say every-where and to all, He that believeth and is baptized, shall be *saved*; he that believeth not, shall be condemned.' But who shall have believed or not have believed, will be made known with irreversible decision on the last day." (Stier.) — BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT — literally, shall not have believed, that is, has to the close of probation persevered in refusing to believe, in rejecting the Gospel and the Savior, whom it offers. — SHALL BE DAMNED. "A word not too strong to express eternal ruin or perdition, but from its modern use or abuse, awakening different associations from the Greek verb, which means simply, *shall be judged against*, that is, condemned, implying, although not expressing, the same terrible result." (Alexander.) "He that believeth not, shall be condemned. 'Let the world,' says Beck, 'think otherwise on this point, that changes nothing; their unbelief can not save them, their opinion is not the judge over heaven and earth, the dead and the living. If it is to thine own mind incomprehensible that all should be made to depend upon faith, take heed to thyself; and, lest another should have to declare it to thee in vain, become thyself a faithful scholar of the Word of God, and the light will arise in thine own soul.' The declaration of our Savior might be Scripturally paraphrased as follows: He that believeth not, will be judged according to his works, and consequently condemned, because he will not have it otherwise, because he protests against the condition of salvation which Divine grace has ordained. (John v, 45.) But its full import (according to John viii, 24; xii, 47, 48; iii, 15, 18, 36) is, that unbelief is the only damning sin, that whoever will be condemned, receives his sentence only for not having believed. Taken in this sense, even this dreadful threatening is a Gospel, yea, the strongest and most attractive assurance of grace. 'For by these stern words,' as Rieger well observes, 'the Lord Jesus at the same time warns mercifully and threatens fearfully!' To the last moment the way is left open: *Only believe, believe yet,* and thou shalt be saved! On the other hand, unbelief is in truth the worst, the most essential and the most damnable sin, as the same Rieger says in one of his sermons: 'To him who believeth not — all that he does is sin; and sin, not only against the law, but *against the Gospel and against grace*, which is worse

than the sin of the devils.' And for this he adduces the too bold and doubtful words of Anselm, (*Tract. de casu Diaboli:*) 'For the devil sins against a God who has cast him off; man sins against a God who calls him back. The former is hardened against a God who punishes him; the latter hardens himself against a God who shows him the tenderest love. The devil acts in opposition to a God who seeketh him not; the sinner insults a God who dies for him.'" (Stier.) It would scarcely be fair toward an expositor like Dr. Stier, to whom we are indebted for the profoundest interpretations, not to quote his final remark on this passage, however we may differ from him. "Finally," he says, "it is testified and sealed in this utterance, as plainly as if spoken in as many express words, that *without* the preaching of the Gospel going before *no man* will be finally condemned; that it will and that it must be preached to all; and that this, *if it do not take place in the present life*, will necessarily take place after death. Thus, the whole doctrine concerning an intermediate place, and its economy of forbearance and salvation, *down to the full ripeness of unbelief in the whole world*, has here its plain demonstration. It is incomprehensible that so many fail to perceive this, and therefore inveigh against it as doubtful or unscriptural." Why we fail to perceive this, has been shown in the remarks on the unpardonable sin in Matthew. — AND THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE — literally, that have believed. The first question that claims our attention is, How far does the promise of miraculous powers, given here, reach? The common view is, that it must be restricted to the apostolic age, as, according to the will of God, the miraculous powers were to last only till the firm foundation of the Church was laid. But however true it may be that miraculous powers became unnecessary as soon as the Church was formally established, we are not justified in positively declaring that God has withdrawn from his Church from that time, entirely and forever, all miraculous powers. "The promise is not limited strictly to the first ages of the Church. Should occasion arise for its fulfillment, there can be no doubt that it will be made good in our own or any other time. But we must remember that *signs* are not needed where Christianity is *professed*; nor by missionaries who are backed by the influence of powerful Christian nations. There are credible testimonies of miraculous powers having been exercised in the Church considerably after the apostles' time." (Alford.) "Where is the proofs" says Stier, "that what is said in verse 17 must be restricted to the primitive Christians? Faith has at all times exerted a supernatural power over nature, (Heb. xi, 33, 34,) and should it altogether lose its powers in the new dispensation after a short transition

period? The only limitation, or rather condition, which the Lord attaches here to his general promise of miraculous powers is faith, by which we have, indeed, not to understand saving faith in general, but a specific faith on each occasion that such a miracle will be done in the power of God; that is, a divinely-wrought assurance of being able to perform it, joined with a conviction that it ought to be performed according to the will of God and for the promotion of his kingdom." (Compare the notes on Matthew xvii, 20.) But if the promise of the miraculous powers attending the preaching of the Gospel is couched in the same general terms, as the preaching of the Gospel itself at all times and in all countries, how is the fact to be accounted for, that they have, nevertheless, been virtually withdrawn? It is preposterous to say, as the Irvingites do, that they have been withdrawn from the Church on account of her lack of faith, that, from the third century down to the present day, the most gifted Fathers, the great reformers, and those men of God through whose labors and zeal thousands of precious souls have been converted in our days, and the whole Church awakened to a new spiritual life, performed no miracles, because they had lost the primitive faith of Christians! In order to reconcile the absence of miraculous powers in the Church with the general promise in the words of our text, two things must be taken into consideration; namely, 1. The promise does not say that all the signs enumerated will follow all believers of all times. The promise is fulfilled; if the preaching of the Gospel has been attended even only once by the signs in question; one sign in the case of this, another in the case of that believer. 2. While miracles, recognizable by the outward senses, attended the preaching of the Gospel during the first two centuries, when the foundation of the Church was laid, in order to prepare the way for the Gospel, they were at the same time, like the miracles performed by the Lord himself; the proper types and emblems of the vastly more important operations of the Holy Spirit, which are permanent in the Church. It is significant that the miracles are called *signs*. They were not in themselves the ultimate end for which they were wrought, but *the means* to indicate, and prepare for, something more important. Their primary design was, indeed, to prove to Jews and Gentiles, that the first witnesses of Jesus were commissioned of God to proclaim the way of salvation, and miraculous powers shall attend the preaching of the Gospel, whenever and wherever the Lord, who distributes these gifts, deems it expedient and necessary to bestow them. (1 Cor. xii, 11, 27, 29, 30.) But their higher and chief object and value was to point as signs to those spiritual miracles which the preaching of the Gospel works at all times. Thus the

promise, as recorded by Mark, contains only a specification of the more general one, as given by Matthew: "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." As if the Lord intended to say: "The signs of my being with you, of my working in and through you, if you preach, in my name and in obedience to my command, the word of faith, are these." The special application of the outward miracles to the corresponding spiritual miracles, which are permanent in the Church to the end of time, we shall make in the comments on the different items named by Mark. Dr. Whedon draws the following general and plain parallel: "As bodily ills are the shadow of the ills of the soul, so these miracles of external mercy are images of the spiritual and moral miracles that Christianity ever works. In all ages the regenerating spirit casts out devilish passions from men's souls. The young convert to the Gospel speaks with a new language. The powerful grace of God enables the new Christian to handle unharmed the evil things of this life, and perform its secular business, which bite other men and kill them. The cup of temptation and trial which poisons the soul of the unregenerate is drained by the faithful truster in Christ unhurt. And from all the ailments of which men sicken and die, the power of the resurrection shall completely heal them." — IN MY NAME [our Lord cast out devils in virtue of his own Divine authority, but the power of the apostles to do this was derived from him] SHALL THEY CAST OUT DEVILS. For fulfillment of this promise see Acts v, 16; viii, 7; xvi, 18. "Of the miracles performed by the Lord himself *the casting out of devils* was the first, the most mighty, and convincing sign. (Matt. xii, 25.) For this reason the Lord puts it here also first, and says, by his '*in my name*,' no less than this — Ye shall perform the same works which I myself have performed. Satan's power confronts and opposes the coming kingdom of God; how, then, could any thing but this promise stand in the fore-front — the prominent sign of Him who is stronger than Satan? It is well known to the learned that from the time of Justin and Irenaeus onward, and down to the fourth century, the Fathers, and especially the apologists, referred with the utmost confidence of challenge to the actual fact that the demons were constrained to retire before the name of Christ, but something of the same kind continues throughout the whole course of history down to the present time." (Stier.) The promise must be understood here in its widest and deepest sense, the setting free of the world from all evil spirits, by which it is kept in bondage. The power of Satan continuing to control the moral nature of man, though it has no more a control over the bodies of men, as it had in the days of the Savior, is to be broken by the power of the Holy Ghost. — THEY

SHALL SPEAK WITH NEW TONGUES. The speaking with new tongues commenced on the day of Pentecost, but assumed subsequently various forms. "It remained with the early Church," says Dr. Whedon, "as a symbol of the power of Christianity to pervade all the tribes and languages of the babbling earth, and as a means of arresting the attention of the unchristian and unheeding world." The speaking with tongues, however, treated of by the apostle in the Epistle to the Corinthians, must be distinguished from the miracle on the day of Pentecost — their supernatural origin is the only point they have in common. Throughout the Epistles, speaking with a tongue or with tongues is identical with being in the spirit, and this is an ecstatic state in which the individual's self-consciousness and his connection with the surrounding world are suspended, so that the spirit — the *πνεῦμα* — is engaged in the contemplation of Divine things, and in uttering the praises of God. (See 1 Corinthians xiv.) — **THEY SHALL TAKE UP SERPENTS.** The Greek verb *αἴρειν* means to take up, and also to destroy; yet the simpler meaning of "taking hold, taking up," seems to be intended here, as setting forth the person's inviolability. One instance of the literal fulfillment of this promise is given us in Acts xxviii, 5, 6. Other instances are recorded by the Fathers. Stier remarks very pertinently on Luke x, 19: "Serpents are the main representatives of every thing noxious in the animal world, parallel to thistles and thorns in the vegetable world. The Lord means, therefore, every thing hostile in nature as the material emblem of all threatening powers, especially those of a spiritual character, every kind of cunning and snares such as we, for the most part, tread upon ignorantly, and which are fatal to all except those who have been armed by the Lord and are walking by faith." — **AND IF THEY DRINK [have drank] ANY DEADLY THING, IT SHALL NOT HURT THEM.** Poisoning was a very common practice in ancient times, and especially in the East, where the art of mixing subtle and deadly poisons with beverage was carried on to great perfection. The promise seems to be emblematical of that special Divine protection which shall not permit the followers of Christ to be destroyed by the cunning devices of their enemies. It is, however, self-evident that this promise, like all others of the kind, has reference only to those cases where the glory of God and the interests of his Church demand such a direct interposition, and it would be an unpardonable presumption if a Christian, on the strength of this promise, would swallow a poisonous draught. Stier remarks: "All the hurtful elements of nature, as all the hurtful elements in the spiritual kingdom, are derived from the fall; and the power of Christ arms us against them all alike. He preserves our real life

from the philters and poisonous potions of the spirit of the age and its literature, as certainly and as miraculously as preservation from bodily harm is here attributed to his power." — **THEY SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK.** Instances we find in Acts iii, 6, 7; v, 15; Jas. v, 14. It is not to be supposed that every member of the primitive Church possessed miraculous gifts, and much less that those who did were endowed with all of them. (Compare 1 Cor. xii. 9-11.) "The series closes with *healing of diseases*, not by medicines, but by the name of the Lord, accompanied by the usual imposition of hands, which our Lord himself employed. This last sign was to all appearance the least; at the same time it was that one which, according to James v, 14-16, was to be most ordinarily realized in the Church. St. James associates with the mighty power of prayer the symbol of *oil*, which the weaker faith of the disciples had once employed unbidden, (Mark vi, 13;) but the same Mark, who recorded that circumstance, has not added the word here — he simply records now what the Lord actually said. His disciples were to lay on their hands as He had done. Their *hands* also should have a miraculous power of blessing; even as their *mouth* should speak a new language. . . . How much sickness and how many hurts of the *souls* of men are still healed by the blessed agency of the hand and power of Christian men! Let us cry to the Lord: Strengthen and bless Thou the hands of thy authenticated messengers, that they may rightly lay them upon men; and that, before Thy coming again, thy promise may be abundantly fulfilled: *they shall be healed! it shall be well with them.*" (Stier.) — **SO THEN, AFTER THE LORD HAD SPOKEN UNTO THEM.** The Evangelist does not mean to say, that our Lord ascended to heaven immediately after he had spoken the words recorded from verse 14; he evidently sums up in a brief manner the Lord's last instructions. — **HE WAS RECEIVED UP INTO HEAVEN.** Although Matthew and John give no account of our Lord's ascension, the fact is clearly indicated by them. The declaration of the Savior, recorded at the close of Matthew's Gospel, that all power in heaven and on earth is given unto him necessarily implies that he was going to ascend to heaven and seat himself at the right hand of his Heavenly Father. In John's Gospel we read that the Savior says to Mary of Magdala after his resurrection, that he would ascend unto his Father; his ascension is also foretold in John vi, 62, where the Savior says that the Son of man would go up again where he had been before. The fact of the ascension is, likewise, testified by the apostle Peter, (1 Pet. iii, 22; Acts ii, 33; v, 31;) equally pointed and distinct are the words of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (ix, 24; x, 12.) Another

witness is the apostle Paul. His conversion was founded on the appearance of the glorified Christ from heaven. Add to this what the apostle says in various passages. (Eph. ii, 6; iv, 8; Phil. ii, 6-10; 1 Tim. iii, 16.) The ascension of our Lord is, indeed, necessarily involved in his resurrection; for the latter was a return, not to his former state of existence on earth, but to the glory which he had with the Father before his incarnation. The difference between the resurrection and ascension is simply this, that by the latter the Lord's visible intercourse with his disciples, whose outward form was already greatly changed by the resurrection, was now entirely broken off and succeeded by the mission of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. The fact or reality of the ascension is denied by Dr. Strauss, as every thing miraculous, on the ground of its impossibility. "It is inconceivable," he says, "how a human body, that can be handled, that has flesh and bones, and can take food, should be exempted from the law of gravitation." The objection is so silly as scarcely to deserve an answer; yet Dr. Lange condescends to remind the critic that the law of gravitation is conditioned and even in part suspended by the organization, and that the risen Savior's body must necessarily be viewed as an organism in which the body has become fully the organ of the spirit. The second difficulty Strauss finds in this: "That the abode of God and his saints, to which Jesus is said to have risen, is not to be sought in the higher regions, or in any locality." That God as a Spirit is not confined to any particular locality, the sacred writers knew fully as well as our modern critics. But the disembodied spirits of the saints, not being every-where present, must be supposed to be in some particular place or spot, and this place may be denominated, with great propriety, heaven, the seat of God, that is, the place of the highest self-manifestation of God. And when the Scriptures speak of Christ as ascending, the expression is, of course, not to be taken in a local sense. Even in astronomy there is no *above* or *below*. When the Scriptures say, that Jesus "was received up into heaven," the idea to be conveyed is, that his glorified humanity was withdrawn from the earth. Mark's narrative of the ascension is distinguished by that grand simplicity, which is peculiar to the Evangelist, and is quite in keeping with the whole character of his Gospel, which has for its object to set Christ before us as the Omnipotent conqueror of all his enemies and the looser of all bonds. — AND SAW ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. This statement rests, partly, on what the disciples saw with their own eyes, (Acts i, 9,) partly on a revelation, (Acts i, 11,) partly on the words of Christ (John xiv, 3) and on the analogy of faith, but especially on the facts

connected with the Pentecost, (Acts ii, 33.) — AND THEY WENT FORTH [namely, from Jerusalem, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit] AND PREACHED EVERYWHERE.

The apostles no longer mourned and wept, (v. 10.) Like heroes they entered upon their missionary fields, fearing nothing, not even death. How faithfully all of them executed their commission, appears plainly from the rapid spread of Christianity during the lifetime of the apostles, although we have no particular accounts of the acts and doings of most of the apostles after the day of Pentecost. — THE LORD WORKING WITH THEM AND CONFIRMING THE WORD WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING; primarily with the miraculous powers enumerated above, but then also with the miraculous moral effects of the Gospel, symbolized by those miraculous powers. Each Evangelist closes his Gospel with the glory and sovereign power of Jesus Christ in a way peculiar to himself; with Mark it is the power exercised by Christ from heaven through his messengers in setting the world free from the power of the devil and all effects of moral evil.

In conclusion we have to consider the objections against the genuineness of verses 9-20. 1. Eusebius (ad Marin., Quaestio I) says, that verse 8, speaking of the flight of the women, forms the conclusion of the Gospel in nearly all the manuscripts. To this it is replied, that Irenaeus (Adv. Haeres., III, x, 6) was acquainted with the present conclusion of the Gospel, and his authority is both older and greater than that of Eusebius. It is, therefore, more probable that the closing verses were originally in the manuscripts, but fell out afterward by some cause or other, than that they should originally have been wanting and been added subsequently; yea, the former is beyond doubt, since it is utterly inconceivable that the Gospel should have closed with the statement, that the women for fear said nothing to any body of the information given by the angels. 2. It is said, that in this section the peculiarities of Mark's style are wanting. But this objection rests more on imagination than on facts; at all events the absence of Mark's favorite terms, *εὐθέως* and *πάλιν*, is more than counterbalanced by the fact, that the import of this section fully agrees with the spirit and character of his Gospel. What could have characterized Mark more strongly than this very trait, setting the risen Savior before us in the full majesty of his power, converting, as it were, by magic the still lingering unbelief of his disciples into a world-overcoming faith, and promising them that they would triumph over all the powers of death and hell! Lange accounts for the absence

of the closing section in so many manuscripts, by supposing that an unfinished copy of the Gospel was, perhaps, published before the finished one, a supposition that is made highly probable by the anxious longing of the Roman Christians for this Gospel, (see Introduction to Mark, p. 655,) and by the Neronic persecution.