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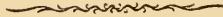
PULPIT, SUNDAY-SCHOOL, AND FAMILY.

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MARK.

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## PREFACE

### TO THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

“John, whose surname was Mark” (Acts xii. 12), was the son of Mary, a woman of piety, who lived at Jerusalem, where the disciples occasionally assembled at her house for prayer, and was sister to Barnabas. (Col. iv. 10.) He is also called Marcus. *John* was his Jewish name; *Mark* was his Roman name, by which he chose to be known among the Greeks and Romans, and it became at length his most usual name. Dr. *Whedon* says: “I am of the decided opinion that he was himself the young man described by himself (xiv. 51) as following Jesus, and narrowly escaping apprehension, as His friend, by the soldiery. (Acts xii. 12; Col. iv. 10; Acts xii. 25, xiii. 5-13, xv. 37-39; Phil. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11; 1 Peter v. 23).”

Peter styles Mark his son (1 Peter v. 13), which is generally taken to mean that he was converted by that Apostle. Mark left Jerusalem for Antioch with Paul and Barnabas (Acts xii. 25), and afterward accompanied them on their first missionary journey. (xiii. 5.) He did not, however, attend them long, but, for some reason not fully explained, left them at Perga, and returned to Jerusalem. (13.) This subsequently gave occasion to a dispute between the two Apostles, for, when they were planning a second journey, Barnabas wished for Mark as a companion, and Paul objected; they therefore separated, Mark sailing with his uncle to Cyprus. (xv. 36-39.) At a later period he was again with Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome (Col. iv. 10); and a communication had been made respecting him to the Colossian Church, perhaps to say that he had fully recovered that Apostle's confidence. And this was more plainly expressed when Paul again desired his presence at Rome. (2 Tim. iv. 11.) We find him also with Peter (1 Peter v. 13), with whom he is said to have traveled, and to have been his amanuensis.

#### GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

*Papias*, a contemporary of Justin, mentions the Gospels of Matthew and Mark by name. He was the friend of Polycarp, and, like him, is said to have been a disciple of John. *Irenæus*, writing to his friend Florinus (about A. D. 177), and fondly recalling his intercourse in earlier days with Polycarp, alludes to the four Gospels under the well understood title of Scriptures, and in his book “Against Heresies,” he mentions the circumstances under which Matthew, Mark, Luke and John severally wrote their Gospels, mentioning them by name and in the order of our present canon. Reference to the Gospel of Mark is also made by *Clement*, of Alexandria, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Jerome*, &c. The universal consent of the ancient Church, indeed, ascribed the second Gospel to John Mark, so that no reasonable doubt can be entertained in regard to the authorship. It has also been said that he wrote under the superintendence of Peter. What, however, we are exactly to understand by this, may admit of question;

especially the testimonies of ancient writers on the point are not altogether consistent. If Mark was, as there is good reason to believe, Peter's companion, and, as he has been called by *Irenæus*, his "interpreter," it is likely that he would derive from him the account of events at which that Apostle was present. The internal evidence is in favor of Peter's superintendence. Scarcely an action or a work of Christ is related, at which Peter was not present, and those events in our Saviour's life are related in detail, which must have made the deepest impression upon Peter. Many things honorable to Peter are omitted by Mark, which are mentioned by the other Evangelists, whilst, on the other hand, the failings of Peter are fully recorded. (Comp. Mark viii. 29 with Matt. xvi. 17. See, also, Mark viii. 33, xiv. 31-71.)

#### WHEN WRITTEN.

On this point nothing positive can be asserted. The traditions are contradictory. *Irenæus* says that the Gospel was written after the death of the Apostle Peter, but in other passages it is supposed to be written during Peter's lifetime. In the Bible there is nothing to decide the question. It is not likely that it dates before the reference to Mark in the Epistle to the Colossians (Col. 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. On the other hand it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. (Mark xiii. 13, 24, 30, 33, &c.) Probably, therefore, it was written between A. D. 63 and 70.

#### WHERE WRITTEN.

The place is as uncertain as the time. Clement, Eusebius, Jerome and Epiphanius pronounce for Rome, and many moderns take the same view. Chrysostom thinks Alexandria, but this is not confirmed by other testimony.

#### FOR WHOM WRITTEN.

The Evangelist scarcely refers to the Old Testament in his own person. The word Law does not once occur. The genealogy of our Lord is not set forth. Other matters, interesting chiefly to the Jews, are likewise omitted; such as the references to the Old Testament and Law, in Matt. 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 Matt. xxiii. Explanations are given in some places which Jews could not require: thus, Jordan is a "river" (i. 5); the Pharisees, &c. "used to fast" (ii. 18), and other customs of theirs are described (vii. 1-4); "the time of figs was not yet," *i. e.* at the season of the Passover (xi. 13); the Sadducees' worst tenet is mentioned (xii. 18); the Mount of Olives is "over against the temple (xiii. 3); at the Passover men eat "unleavened bread (xiv. 1-12); and the explanations are given which Jews would not need (xv. 6, 16, 42). From the general testimony of these and other places, whatever may be objected to an inference from one or other amongst them, there is little doubt but that the Gospel was meant for use in the first instance among Gentiles.

#### STYLE AND DICTION.

The style of Mark may be characterized as vigorous and abrupt. His terms of connection and transition are terse and lively; he is fond of employing the direct for the indirect (iv. 39, v. 8, 9, 12, vi. 23, 31, 37, ix. 25, 33, xii. 6), the present for the past (i. 23, 40, 44, ii. 3, 4, 5, iii. 4, 5, 13, 20, 31, 34, iv. 37, &c., &c.), and the substantive instead of the pronoun; he employs the cognate accusative (iii. 28, vii. 13, xiii. 19, iv. 41, v. 42), accumulates negatives (vii. 12, ix. 8, xii. 34, xv. 5, xiv. 25, xi. 14), and for sake of emphasis repeats what he has said in other words, or appends the opposite (i. 22, 45, ii. 27, iii. 26, 27, 29, iv. 17, 33, 34), and piles up synonyms (iv. 6, 8, 39, v. 12, 23, viii. 15, xiii. 33, xiv. 68), combining this forcible style with a conciseness and economy of expressions consistent with the elaboration of every detail. Mark's diction is nearer to that of Matthew than to that of Luke. It is more Hebraistic than

the latter, though rather in general coloring than in special phrases. According to *Davidson* (*Introd.* i. 154), there are forty-five words peculiar to him and Matthew, and only eighteen common to him and Luke.

## NOT AN ABBREVIATION.

Mark's Gospel is far from being, as some have alleged, a mere abbreviation of Matthew's. There are incidents in our Lord's ministry that we know from Mark, and Mark only—the intervention of His family (iii. 20, 21), the parable of the seed growing secretly (iv. 26–29), the healing of the deaf man of Decapolis (vii. 31–37), and of the blind man of Bethsaida (viii. 22–26), the name of Bartimeus (x. 46), and of Simon of Cyrene's sons (xv. 21), the young man's flight at Gethsemane (xiv. 51, 52). Besides this we have many vivid touches in the narrative, clearly due to an eye-witness, wanting in Matthew, as in the account of the Gadarene demoniac, and of the Transfiguration. Four times he alone of the Evangelists notices our Lord's look. (iii. 34. viii. 33, x. 21, 23.)

"The Gospel of St. Mark," says *Westcott*, "offers a great contrast to that of St. Matthew in its general effect. The peculiarities of language and minuteness of detail, which are least observable in St. Matthew, are most obvious in St. Mark, and, conversely, St. Mark offers nothing which answers to the long expositions of the Lord's teaching in St. Matthew. This fundamental difference is seen at once in the relative proportion in which the records of miracles and parables stand to one another in St. Mark. The number of miracles which he gives is scarcely less than that in the other synoptic Gospels, while he relates only four parables. Like St. Peter, he is contented to lay the foundation of the Christian faith, and leave the superstructure to others. It is enough that Christ should be presented in the most vivid light, unfolding the truth in acts rather than in words, for faith will translate the passing deed into an abiding lesson. Everything centers in the immediate facts to be noticed. Without drawing a complete history, St. Mark frames a series of perfect pictures. But each is the representation of the outward features of the scene. For this reason the Evangelist (as already stated) avoids all reference to the Old Testament. The quotations which occur in the Lord's discourses remain, but after the introduction he adds none in his own person. The living portraiture of Christ is offered in the clearness of His present energy, not as the fulfillment of the past, nor even as the foundation of the future. His acts prove that He is both; but this is a deduction from the narrative, and not the subject of it."

## DIVISIONS.

The Gospel of Mark may be divided into three parts.

(1). The occurrences previous to the commencement of the public ministry of our Lord, including the preaching and baptism of John, our Lord's baptism and temptation (i. 1–13).

(2). Our Lord's ministry in Galilee, including that in Eastern Galilee (i. 14, vii. 23), that in Northern Galilee (vii. 24, ix. 37), that in Peræa, and the journeyings toward Jerusalem (ix. 38, x. 52).

(3). His triumphant entry, passion, death, resurrection and ascension (xi. 1–xvi. 8, [20]).

## PARABLES.

The following parables are recorded by Mark. That which is peculiar to him is marked by italics.

1. The sower (iv. 4–8).
2. *The seed growing secretly* (iv. 26–29).
3. The mustard seed (iv. 30–32).

The unity and completeness of the lesson which these convey must be obvious without comment.

## MIRACLES.

The miracles recorded by Mark are both numerous and characteristic of his Gospel. Peculiar narratives are marked by italics.

1. The unclean spirit cast out (i. 21-25).
2. The fever healed (i. 29-34).
3. The leper cleansed (i. 40-45).
4. The palsy healed (ii. 1-12).
5. The withered hand restored (iii. 1-5) [iii. 10, 11, Many healed; unclean spirits cast out].
6. The tempest stilled (iv. 35-41).
7. The legion cast out (v. 1-17).
8. The woman with issue healed (v. 25-34).
9. Jairus' daughter raised (v. 22 ff).
10. The five thousand fed (vi. 35-44).
11. The walking on the water (vi. 48, 49) [vi. 54 ff, all that touched Christ made whole].
12. The Syro-Phœnician's daughter healed (vii. 24-30).
13. *The deaf and dumb healed* (vii. 31-37).
14. The four thousand fed (viii. 1-10).
15. *The blind man healed* (viii. 22-26).
16. The deaf and dumb spirit cast out (ix. 14 ff.).
17. Bartimeus healed (x. 26-52).
18. The fig tree cursed (xi. 20 ff.).

## FUTURE HISTORY OF MARK.

Tradition says he preached the Gospel in Egypt, and the Coptic or Egyptian Church at this day claims him as its founder. He is supposed to have suffered martyrdom at Alexandria about the eighth year of Nero's reign.

# TABLES OF SCRIPTURAL COINS AND MONEY TERMS,

WITH THEIR VALUE EXPRESSED IN THE MONEY OF THE UNITED STATES,

BY JAMES ROSS SNOWDEN.

AUTHOR OF THE COINS OF THE BIBLE, COINS OF ALL NATIONS, THE MEDALLION MEMORIALS OF WASHINGTON, ETC., ETC.

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## TABLES OF SCRIPTURAL COINS AND MONEY TERMS.

### I.

JEWISH COINS AND MONEY TERMS, WITH THEIR VALUE EXPRESSED IN THE MONEY OF THE UNITED STATES.

	Dollars.	Cents.	Mills.
Gerah, one-twentieth of a shekel, - - - - -	-	2	9
Zuzah, one-fourth of a shekel, - - - - -	-	14	5
Bekah, half-shekel, or shekel of the king, - - - - -	-	29	
Shekel of the sanctuary (silver), - - - - -	-	58	
Shekel of gold, - - - - -	5	80	
Maneh of silver (60 shekels), - - - - -	34	80	
Maneh of gold " " - - - - -	348	00	
Talent of silver (3000 shekels), - - - - -	1,740	00	
Talent of gold " " - - - - -	17,400	00	

### II.

A TABLE OF THE WEIGHT OF JEWISH COINS AND MONEY TERMS EXPRESSED—

1. *In Troy ounces and decimals of the ounce,*

2. *In Avoirdupois weight.*

	Ozs.	Decimals.
1. Shekel, 217 grains, equal to - - - - -	-	.452
Maneh, 13,020 grains, equal to - - - - -	27	.125
Talent, 651,000 grains, equal to - - - - -	1356	.458
	Lbs. Ozs.	Dwt. Grains.
2. Shekel, - - - - -	-	9 1
Maneh, - - - - -	1 1	5 20
Talent, - - - - -	93 0	0 0

### I.

A TABLE OF GREEK COINS (ATTIC) AND MONEY TERMS; WITH THEIR VALUE EXPRESSED IN MONEY OF THE UNITED STATES.

	Dollars.	Cents.	Mills.
Lepton (mite), - - - - -	-	-	2
Obolus, - - - - -	-	2	6
Drachm, - - - - -	-	16	
Didrachm, - - - - -	-	32	
Stater or Tetrachm, - - - - -	-	64	
Mina of silver, - - - - -	16	00	
Mina of gold, - - - - -	160	00	
Talent of silver, - - - - -	960	00	
Talent of gold, - - - - -	9,600	00	

II.

A TABLE OF THE WEIGHT OF GREEK COINS AND MONEY TERMS.

1. *In Troy ounces* ; 2. *In Avoirdupois weight.*

	Ozs.	Decimals		
1. Drachm, 60 grains, equal to - - - - -	0	.125		
Mina, 6,000 grains, equal to - - - - -	12	5		
Talent, 360,000 grains, equal to - - - - -	750			
	Lbs.	Ozs.	Dwt.	Grains.
2. Drachm, - - - - -			2	12
Mina, - - - - -		12	10	
Talent, - - - - -	51	6	5	

A TABLE OF ROMAN COINS EXPRESSED IN THE MONEY TERMS OF THE UNITED STATES.

	Dollars.	Cents.	Mills.
Assarius, one-tenth of a denarius, - - - - -		1	5
Quadrans (or sestertius) one-fourth of the <i>ÆS</i> , about - - - - -			4
Quinarius, one-half of a denarius, - - - - -		7	5
Denarius ("penny"), - - - - -		15	

The Romans usually reckoned money by sestertii, advancing from 1 to 1,000.

	Dollars.	Cents.	Mills.
Thus: 1 Sestertius. (Quadrans), - - - - -			4
10 Sestertii, - - - - -		4	
100 " - - - - -		40	
1000 " denominated Sestertium, - - - - -	4	00	

Their use of the word *talent*, as a money term, was not very exact. The talent, however, as a weight, was equal to 60 libræ or pounds; the pound being divided into 12 ounces. According to the rate and proportion herein adopted, the Roman talent of silver may be valued at \$931.00; the talent of gold at \$9,310.00. The weight of the denarius, during the time of the Commonwealth, is generally put at 60 grains, the same as the Greek drachma, but it was of diminished weight during the Empire.



DENARIUS—VESPASIAN. ("JUDEA DEVICTA.") ABOUT A. D. 70.



DENARIUS—VESPASIAN. ("JUDEA.") ABOUT A. D. 71-79.



DENARIUS OF TIBERIUS—"PENNY." A. D. 14-37.

*A general statement of the coins and money terms of the Bible, referring to the above Tables.*

The general custom, in Europe as well as in America, is to use the Troy ounce of 480 grains, as the unit in weighing and valuing gold and silver. In the tables herein

presented, the weights are expressed in the Troy ounce and its decimal fractions, carrying it to the third figure, namely, thousandths of an ounce. And, for the reason that readers are most accustomed to estimate and calculate weights by the avoirdupois pound and its subdivisions, the weight is also stated according to that system.

In calculating the value of the coins and money terms, we use the Troy ounce. Silver is valued at \$1.225, the Mint price per ounce of standard fineness. This standard is so calculated, that of 1000 parts by weight, 900 are of pure silver, and 100 of copper. This valuation accords very nearly with the price of silver at London and Paris, by whose markets the value of silver throughout the world is regulated. Writers usually arrive at the value of gold as compared with silver, by adopting the proportion between these metals of modern times. This proportion is about one to sixteen; that is to say, one ounce of gold is worth about sixteen ounces of silver: and the tables of the values of ancient coins in our Bibles and commentaries are fixed upon that ratio. But that proportion overstates the value of gold among the Jews and the neighboring nations. From a careful examination of the various authorities on the subject, we have reason to believe that for several centuries, before and after the Christian era, the proportion between the value of gold and silver was as *one to ten*. It is upon this ratio that these tables have been prepared.

*A further notice of some of the coins and money terms of the Bible.*

#### I. THE JEWS.



SHEKEL—(MACCABEES.) ABOUT 145 B. C.

1. The SHEKEL was originally only a weight. The first form in which money was used by the Jews, and by other nations also, was that of pieces of metal without any marks or devices upon them. The precious metals, namely, gold and silver, passed by weight. Abraham *weighed* the four hundred shekels of silver which he paid to Ephron for the field of Machpelah. (Gen. xxiii. 16.) The prophet Jeremiah *weighed* the price of the field of Hanameel, namely, seventeen shekels of silver, in the balance. (Jer. xxxii. 9, 10.) And it may be here noted, that where the term "piece of silver" is used in the Old Testament, it is equivalent to, and is to be understood, in general, to stand for SHEKEL, and "pieces of silver" as shekels. The weight of a shekel was about one-half an ounce avoirdupois; that ounce being composed of four hundred and thirty-seven and a half grains. We adopt the Troy ounce, of four hundred and eighty grains, in our calculations.

It is to be noted that the shekel was not a coin during the entire period embraced in the Old Testament. It first appears as a coin about 160 B. C., and was issued by Simon Maccabeus. The amount of silver in the coin was the same as was contained in the "piece of silver," which was of the weight of a shekel; and the coin took the same name. The Maccabees were rigid adherents of the old constitution, and there can be no doubt that the coin struck by them exactly corresponded, in weight and fineness, to the former standard. Many of these coins are now extant. There is one in the cabinet of the United States Mint, in a fine state of preservation. It weighs 217 grains, and is of the fineness of 950 thousandths. Other specimens of this coin noticed by various authorities, make the weight and fineness about the same. The silver coins of the United States are composed of 900 parts of pure silver in every 1000 parts used in coinage. Reducing the shekel to this standard, the weight may be stated as equal to 229 grains. The Mint price of silver, herein stated, was fixed in

conformity with the market price of silver in Europe and in America, and affords a proper basis to calculate the value of the shekel. At this rate, the value of the shekel of silver is 58 cents. The term Shekel is from *Shakal*, to weigh, and is, pre-eminently, "the weight."

We are thus particular in stating the value of the shekel—and by this we mean the sacred shekel, or the Shekel of the Sanctuary—because by it we obtain the unit, or standard, from which we can, with reasonable certainty, state the value of the other money terms of the Jewish system, referred to in the Sacred Scriptures.

2. The BEKAH, or half-shekel. This piece of money, or coin, is sometimes denominated the royal or profane shekel. The poll-tax paid by the Jews for the support of the tabernacle, and of the temple, was paid in this denomination. We put the value of the bekah at 29 cents.

3. The ZUZAH. Although this piece is not named in the Scriptures, it is referred to in 1 Samuel ix. 8, and finds a place in most of the Jewish tables. Value, 14 cents and 5 mills.

4. The GERAH. This piece being the twentieth part of a shekel, its value consequently is 2 cents and 9 mills.

5. The MANEH. This term was used for silver, and also for gold. The weight of it was sixty shekels; hence the *maneh of silver* was of the value of \$34.80, and the *maneh of gold*, by the proportion herein indicated, namely, as ten to one, was \$348.00

6. The TALENT. The weight of the Jewish talent was 3,000 sacred shekels, or 6,000 royal or half shekels. (See Exod. xxx. 13, and xxxviii. 25.) The shekel we have shown to be of the value of 58 cents. Assuming the silver to be of the fineness of the shekel, and thus being "current with the merchant," the value of the *talent of silver* may be put at the sum of \$1,740. The *talent of gold* was consequently worth \$17,400.

## II. Money and money terms of the Greeks. (Attic).



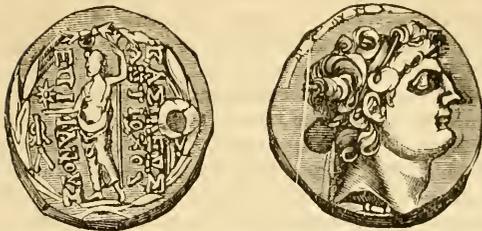
LEPTON. "MITE."—FOUND NEAR THE TEMPLE; CURRENT IN TIME OF CHRIST.

1. The LEPTON or MITE. This coin is the lowest denomination of money mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures. It was composed of a mixture of copper and tin, and was coined by the numerous Greek cities and colonies around the Mediterranean. The precise value is a matter of question; but it may be with sufficient accuracy stated to be 2 mills, or one-fifth of a cent. The text in Mark xii. 42, makes two *Lepta* ("mites") equal to one *kodrantēs* (rendered "farthing").

2. OBOLUS. Was originally a silver coin, and as such was the sixth part of the drachm. It subsequently was struck in copper, and was in common use before and after the Christian era. We put its value at 2 cents and 6 mills.

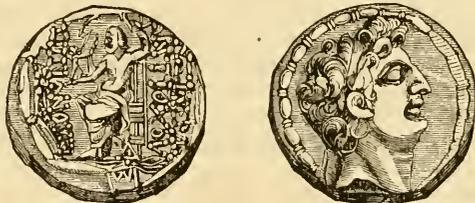
3. DRACHM. The drachm was the principal silver coin of the Greeks, and was current in Judea at and before the period of the New Testament. It is named several times in the second book of Maccabees. In Luke xv. 8, *drachmas deka* is translated "ten pieces of silver." We put the value of the drachm at 16 cents.

4. DIDRACHM. A coin equal to two drachmæ. It was nearly equal to the royal or half-shekel of the Jewish system, the price required to be paid by each male to defray the expenses of the Sanctuary. (Ex. xxx. 13-16. and xxxviii. 26). In Matthew xxii. 24, the term *didrachma* is translated "tribute." The value of this coin we put at 32 cents.



STATER—ANTIOCHUS VI. (EPIPHANES.) B. C. 146-143.

5. **STATER**, or **TETRADRACHM**. This piece was of the value of four drachmæ. The word *stater* which is used in Matthew xvii. 27, is rendered "piece of money" in the A. V. The "tribute," mentioned in the previous text, was the didrachm, and this was about equal to the half-shekel, which each Jew, above the age of twenty years, was required to pay toward maintaining the expenses of the Sanctuary. It will thus be seen that the stater miraculously obtained from the fish's mouth, being more than equal to two half-shekels, was sufficient to pay for Peter as well as Christ. It is also probable that at that time the stater and the shekel, being of approximate value, were taken interchangeably. The value of the stater we put in the tables at 64 cents.



STATER—ANTIOCHUS. (GRYPUS.) B. C. 124-97.

6. **MINA**. The mina represented 100 drachms in the Attic system of money terms and weights. It weighed 12 ounces and a half, as stated in the tables. In Luke xix. 13, the term is rendered "pound;" *Deka Mnai*—ten pounds. The mina of silver is of the value of \$16.00, the mina of gold, \$160.00.

7. **THE ATTIC TALENT**. This talent was of the weight of 6,000 drachms. We put the weight of the drachm at 60 grains, equal to the eighth part of the ounce of 480 grains. The talent, therefore, weighed 750 Troy ounces, or 51 lbs. 6 ozs. 5 dwt. avoirdupois. The drachm of silver being worth 16 cents, the value of the Attic talent, in *silver*, may be put at \$960. And, adopting the proportion herein stated, the same talent, in *gold*, was worth \$9,600.

A talent was two-fold, namely, to express a weight, or a sum of money. The value of it differed according to the different ages and countries in which it was used. In the Old Testament, the talent referred to, with one or two exceptions, which will be noticed, is the Jewish talent of 3,000 shekels.

Thus the golden candlestick, with the tongs and the snuff-dishes, for the tabernacle, was to be made of a talent of gold; this was of the weight of 93 pounds, and of the value of \$17,400. (Ex. xxv. 39.) The amount of gold employed in the tabernacle was 29 talents and 730 shekels, equal to \$508,834; of silver, there were used 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, equal to \$175,029.50. (Ex. xxxviii. 24, 25.)

The silver above named was contributed by 603,550 persons, who each paid a half-shekel, as required in Exodus, xxx. 13, 14. And it is from the enumeration and statement in Exodus xxxviii. 24-26, that we ascertain that the talent contained 3 000 shekels. King Hiram sent to King Solomon 120 talents (\$2,088,000). (1 Kings ix. 14.) The

queen of Sheba gave Solomon a similar amount. (1 Kings x. 10.) Solomon brought from Ophir 420 talents (\$7,308,000.) (1 Kings ix. 28.) The weight of the gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents (\$11,588,400.) (1 Kings x. 14.)

The temple of Solomon was overlaid with gold amounting to 600 talents (\$10,440,000.)

We need not multiply examples; the reader can readily, by the data given, convert the term talent into the money of the United States.

There was another talent of great antiquity, which some authorities call the *Homerical talent*. It was used by the Phœnicians, and is referred to by ancient writers in such a manner as to show that it was of greatly inferior value to the talent we have herein been considering. From data gathered from several authorities, this talent was probably of the weight of 24 drachmas, equal to three ounces Troy. It is highly probable that it is this inferior talent that is referred to in 1 Chron. xxii. 14, where it is said that David had "provided for the temple, 100,000 talents of gold, and one thousand thousand (one million) talents of silver." It is evident that the Jewish talent of 3,000 shekels is not here intended, because the amount would be so enormous as to be utterly incredible, namely, \$2,480,000,000. Adopting the Homeric or Phœnician talent, as being the one here intended, the sum that David gathered together "in his trouble," was \$7,760,000. The same talent is doubtless referred to in 1 Chron. xxix. 4-7. The donation by David, and the contributions of the people, therein recorded, were made after the principal sum above mentioned had been provided for the building of the temple. The total contributions in gold and silver were to the amount of \$406,425.

*Dr. Arbuthnot*, a learned writer on ancient coin, corroborates the views herein expressed. Writing on the same text, he says: "David reigned in Judea after the siege of Troy, so that it is no ways improbable that Homer and he might use the same talent." *Dr. Anthon*, speaking of a small talent, which was probably the same to which we refer, says: "It was called the Sicilian talent, from being much used by the Greeks of Italy and Sicily," and adds, "This small talent explains the use of the term 'great talent' (*magnum talentum*) which we find in Latin authors; for the Attic talent was great in comparison with this."

We have cited these authorities—and many others, to the same effect, might be added—because most writers have supposed that the ordinary Jewish talent was intended in these passages; or that some error had crept into the sacred text. It is quite apparent that an inferior talent was intended, and it is reasonable to suppose that it was the Phœnician talent, as there was a constant intercourse and commerce between that people and the Jews, and most friendly relations existed between these nations at that period.

The weight of the Homeric or Phœnician talent we put at 3 ounces, Troy. Its value was consequently as follows:

Homeric talent of gold,	-	-	-	-	-	\$38.80
"    "    " silver,	-	-	-	-	-	3.88

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

## CHAPTER I.

<sup>1</sup> *The office of John the Baptist.* <sup>9</sup> *Jesus is baptized.* <sup>12</sup> *tempted.* <sup>14</sup> *he preacheth:* <sup>16</sup> *calleth Peter, Andrew, James and John:* <sup>23</sup> *healeth one that had a devil,* <sup>29</sup> *Peter's mother in law,* <sup>32</sup> *many diseased persons,* <sup>41</sup> *and cleanseth the leper.*

**T**HE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ; <sup>a</sup>the Son of God; <sup>b</sup>Matt. xiv. 33; Luke i. 35; John i. 34; Heb. i. 1-2.

On verses 1-8: see on Matt. iii. 1-12; Luke iii. 1-18.

Mark, writing after Matthew, passed over the birth of Jesus and began with John's ministry. This was the *beginning of the gospel*, the introduction of the new dispensation of glad tidings relating to Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, as foretold by the prophets. The *end of the Old Testament is the beginning of the New*. "Now the Gospel began to dawn, and John was like the morning-star, or the blushings which spring from the windows of the East, foretelling the approach of the Sun of Righteousness." He preached repentance as the preparation to receive the Gospel, and faith in the Messiah as the subject of it. (Luke xvi. 16.) It will be observed that he not only commences in the very midst of the Gospel events, but introduces the names of Jesus and of John as familiar to his readers.

The name of *Jesus* is so often added to the name of *Christ* in the New Testament not only that Christ might be thereby pointed out as the *Saviour*, but also that Jesus might be pointed out as the true *Christ*, or *Messiah*, against the unbelief of the Jews. Mark styles Christ *the Son of God*, as Matthew had styled Him before "the Son of David" (Matt. i. 1); the one sets forth the verity of His human nature, the other the reality of His Divine nature, signifying to us, that the true and

promised Messiah was both God and man, in two distinct natures, and one Person forever. He is true and real God, as well as the Father and the Holy Ghost, not a mere man, but God as well as man. It is very interesting that that Gospel which tells us how deep Jesus sank in the miry clay, when the weight and pressure of our iniquities was upon Him, should begin with a declaration of His majesty and glory, that we might never lose sight of the God in His deepest sorrows, or forget that He was the equal of the Father, when He endured the cross for us and our salvation.

<sup>2</sup> As it is written in the prophets, *Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*—<sup>b</sup>Mal. iii. 1; Matt. xi. 10; Luke vii. 27.

Every Evangelist has his proper *exordium*. Matthew and John begin with Christ—Matthew with His human generation, John with the Divine generation; Mark and Luke begin with John the Baptist—Luke with his nativity, Mark with his preaching.

*As it is written in the prophets.* (Mal. iii. 11, and Isa. xl.) *Behold, I send my messenger, &c.* (See on Matt. xi. 10.) The quotation here is exactly in the words which Matthew uses, and except the change in the pronoun *my* for *thy*, is literal from the Hebrew. This *I* in the prophet is spoken by Jehovah. But this Jehovah is the Messiah. So that we have here a true Jehovah-Jesus. *Prepare thy way, &c.* When a man of rank has to pass through a town or village, a messenger is despatched to tell the people to *prepare* the way, and to await his orders. Some then sweep the road, others spread garments, others form arches and festoons on the way. Note, 1. The dignity and authority of the ministers of Christ; they are His messen-

gers, sent by Him to deliver His mind and will unto His people. 2. Their work and office—to prepare people to receive Jesus Christ, offered to them in the Gospel.

3. <sup>c</sup>The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>e</sup>Isa. xl. 3; Matt. iii. 3; Luke iii. 4; John i. 15, 23.

*Voice.* A preacher should, if possible, be nothing but a voice, which should be always heard and never seen. *Crying*—preaching with such force as is worthy of the truth. *In the wilderness.* (See on Matt. iii. 3.) Repentance is preached in the wilderness because it is difficult to hear this voice, except in retirement, and out of the noise and hurry of worldly affairs. *Prepare ye, &c.* (See on verse 4, and Matt. iii. 3, Luke iii. 4.) The advent of the Redeemer was but the visible appearance of the Divine light, with which the radiant cloud of prophecy had long been ready to break forth. (Isa. lx. 1-3; Luke i. 76-8.) Not only knowledge, but every other gift, which we call the gifts of fortune, has power to puff up earth. Afflictions only level these mole hills of pride, plow the heart, and make it fit for wisdom to sow her seed, and for grace to bring forth her increase.

4. <sup>d</sup>John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins. <sup>e</sup>Matt. iii. 1; Luke iii. 3; John iii. 23.

*The wilderness.* A region was thus called if it was thinly inhabited and consisted of pasturage instead of tillage. The wilderness of Judea lay between Jerusalem and the Jordan, and along the western side of the Dead Sea. *Preach.* Not in the methodical style of later times. What he preached is infinitely more important than how he preached. *For the remission, i. e.* the remission of sin being the object or purpose of the baptismal rite. John's preaching and baptism did not of itself procure the remission of sin, which could be effected only by the death of Christ. It however prepared the way for this result. Those who repented and reformed their lives under his ministry, received the pardon of their sins, although the great atoning sacrifice had not actually been offered.

5. <sup>e</sup>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. <sup>e</sup>Matt. iii. 5.

*All the land, &c.* All sorts of the inhabi-

tants. *Confessing their sins.* One part of repentance is to bear the shame and confusion of our sins in confessing them. It is not grievous to any to show this shame and confusion before men, except only those who have none at all for their sins before God. (See on Matt. iii. 5, 6.)

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.

<sup>e</sup>Matt. iii. 4, on which see notes. <sup>e</sup>Lv. xi. 22.

John's coat was wrought of the long and stiff bristles of the camel. His belt was nothing better than a strap of untanned hide. His diet, indicative of the temperance and austerity of his life, was derived from the spontaneous production of the desert—

"His food was locusts, and what there did spring,  
Wild honey that from virgin hives distilled."

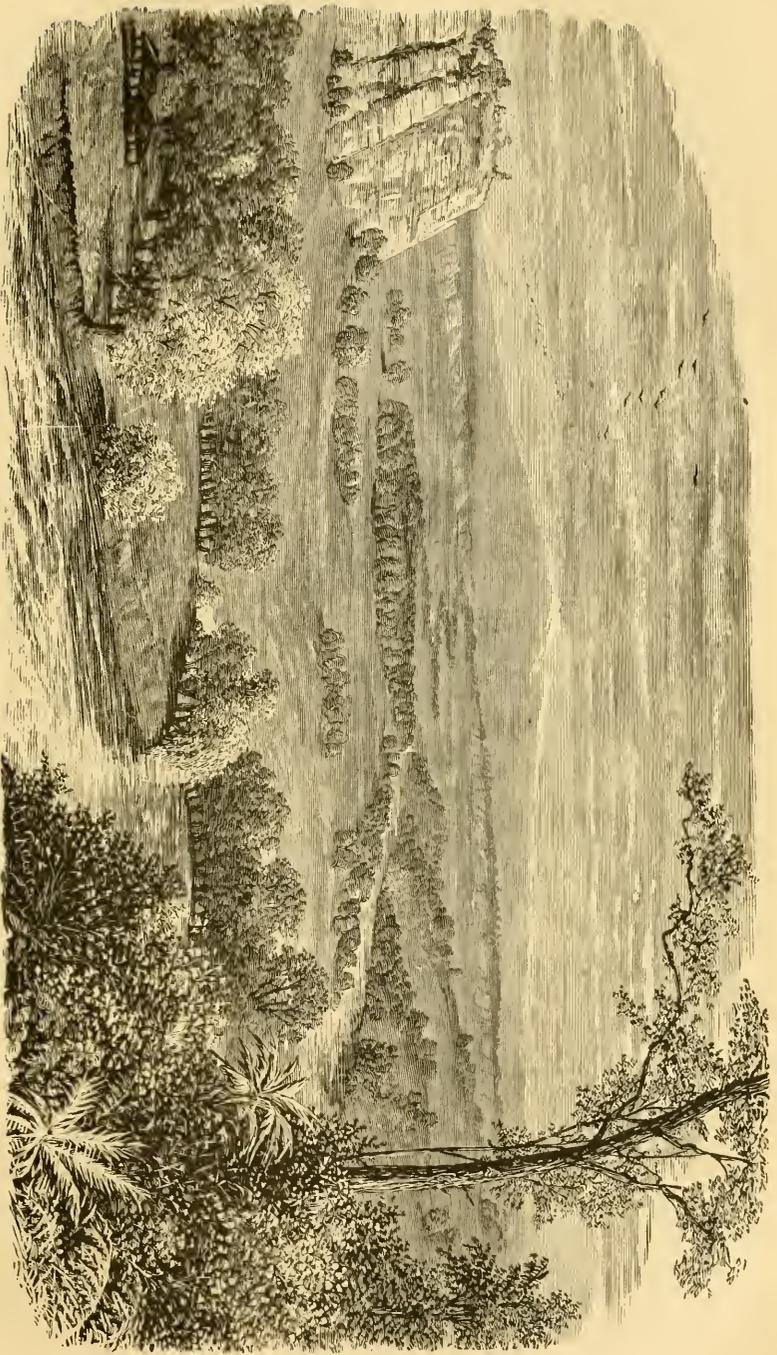
7. And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you

<sup>b</sup>with the Holy Ghost. <sup>e</sup>Matt. iii. 11, and Luke iii. 16, on which see notes; John i. 27; Acts xiii. 25. <sup>a</sup>Acts i. 5, xi. 16, xix. 4. <sup>b</sup>Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28; Acts ii. 4, x. 45, xi. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xii. 13.

*One mightier than I, &c.* John was great, but what was he to the Lord? Loud was that "voice," but what was it to "the Word?" Most glorious was the herald, but what to the King? Glorious was he who baptized with water, but what to Him who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost and with fire? (John iii. 26-36.) "Above all," says one, "have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For, as soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections, and he is content they should excel in good works, provided he can make them proud of them. Therefore, watch over your own virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought as you would reject the most wicked imaginations, and think what a loss it would be to you to have the fruit of all your good works devoured by the vanity of your own minds." (Ezek. xviii. 24; Luke i. 51, 53, xviii. 11, 12; 2 Cor. xii. 7.)

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.

<sup>e</sup>Matt. iii. 13; Luke iii. 21. <sup>e</sup>Matt. iii. 16; John i. 32. <sup>e</sup>Ps. ii. 7; Matt. iii. 17; chap. ix. 7.



VALLEY OF JORDAN.



See on Matt. iii. 13, 16; Luke iii. 21, 22.

*The heavens opened, &c.* The firmament seemed to be disparted, so as to reveal a visible communication between heaven and earth. *He saw.* This evidently refers to Jesus, although John also witnessed the descent of the Spirit. (John i. 32.) *Like a dove.* A fit emblem of the pure and peaceful Spirit, whose influences rested so abundantly on Jesus, and which were to be so conspicuously manifested in the Messiah's dispensation. (See Isa. lxi. 1-3.) This dove-like manifestation of the Holy Spirit may well suggest to us the inquiry, whether we possess the pure and peaceful temper of mind, which the Gospel enjoins and the Holy Spirit produces.

*Thou art my beloved Son, &c.* (See on Matt. iii. 17.) "The Father cannot look upon His well-beloved Son, but graciously and pleasingly. God looks on us out of Christ, sees us rebels, and fit to be condemned; we look on God as being just and powerful to punish us; but when Christ is between, God looks on us in Him as justified, and we look on God in Him as pacified, and see the smiles of His favorable countenance. (Ps. lxxxiv. 9; John xiv. 6; Eph. i. 3, &c.)"

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."  
\*Matt. iv. 1; Luke iv. 1. †Matt. iv. 11.

*Immediately*—after His baptism. *Driveth him, i. e.,* hurried Him on with a strong impulse. The Spirit *impelled* him to go where inclination would not have induced Him. (See on Matt. iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1-13.) *And was with the wild beasts.* "This notice is certainly not introduced," says *Trench*, "as many interpreters would have us to believe, merely to enhance the waste, desolation and savage solitude of that scene, but at once throws us back, as it was intended to throw us back, on the Paradisiacal state, which, in the second Adam, had bloomed anew. He 'was with the wild beasts'—which owned Him for their rightful Lord—He was with them, as Adam had been before he sinned. In Him, the second Adam, the ideal man of the eighth Psalm, the Adamic prerogatives, lost and suspended so long after the deluge, only partially recovered (Gen. ix. 2)—fully reappeared (comp. Gen. i. 26, 28, with Ps.

viii.) This was one of the tokens He gave of the intimate connection between the restoration of man, and the restoration of the outward world." (See Matt. xix. 28; Mark xvi. 18; Luke x. 19; Acts xxviii. 5.)

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

\*Matt. iv. 12. †Matt. iv. 23. ‡Dan. ix. 25; Gal. iv. 4; Eph. i. 10. §Matt. iii. 2, iv. 17.

See on Matt. iv. 12, 23, iii. 2, iv. 17.

*Put in prison, &c.* Mark writes as of a fact known to the reader, either from Matthew or some other source. We are not to understand from this verse that Jesus *began* his ministry when John had *finished* his, for it is evident that the Saviour had preached, and baptized by the hands of His disciples for a considerable time before John was imprisoned.

*The time is fulfilled, i. e.,* the time appointed for sending the Messiah, and particularly the time specified by Daniel, chap. ix. 24-27. In regard to the preaching of the Son of God, note, 1. That everything that is done is according to a plan laid by the Divine wisdom, and never performed till the appointed time was *filled up*. (Gal. iv. 4). 2. That the kingdom and reign of sin are to be destroyed, and the kingdom of grace and heaven established in their place. 3. That the kingdom of God and His reign by grace begins with repentance for past sins, confiding in the joyful intelligence of the Gospel, and the reception of the instructions connected with it. Faith is inseparably joined to true repentance. 4. That this reign of grace is *at hand*, and that nothing but an obstinate perseverance in sin and impenitence can keep any soul out of it, and that *now* is the accepted time to enter in. It will be observed that our 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.

16. "Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. 17. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. 19. And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. 20. And straightway he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. iv. 18, Luke v. 4. <sup>2</sup>Matt. xix. 27; Luke v. 11.  
<sup>3</sup>Matt. iv. 21.

See on Matt. iv. 18-22.

*He saw Simon and Andrew, &c.* The actual constant consideration of God's presence would be the readiest way in the world to make sin to cease from among the children of men, and for men to approach the blessed state of the saints in heaven, who cannot sin; for they always walk in the presence and "behold the face of God." (Gen. xvi. 13; Ps. xvi. 9, ciii. 20; John i. 48.) *A net.* The original word signifies a double net of considerable size. *Casting a net into the sea, &c.* These fishermen, though previously enrolled among the disciples of Jesus, had not, on that account, forsaken their honest callings, as if discipleship and daily work were incongruous. Saul was seeking his father's asses, and David keeping his father's sheep, when called to the kingdom. The shepherds were feeding their flocks when they had their glorious revelation. Matthew was called from the receipt of custom; Amos from among the herdsmen of Tekoah; Moses from keeping Jethro's sheep, and Gideon from the threshing-floor. What does all this tell us, but that Christ honors and consecrates daily industry. (Gen. ii. 15, iii. 19; Acts ix. 43, xvi. 14, 15; 1 Cor. vii. 21; 1 Thes. iv. 11.)

*Come ye after me, &c.* Jesus gradually prepares His people for service and trial. As in mental training, so in spiritual, there is an education—a gradual progressive discipline; "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." These fishermen may have received the first hallowed impressions from casual meetings with the young Nazareth Pilgrim in their journeys to the city of solemnities, or the earliest seed of the kingdom might have been more recently planted by the teachings of the Baptist. This had been still further nurtured by a solemn personal interview with their Lord. Months had elapsed to allow all these to take root. They had been left to themselves during this intervening period to a secret work of faith and prayer. And now, when love has been deepened and faith strengthened, He demands loftier services, imposes heavier responsibilities.

*Fishers of men.* The Lord clothes His promise in the language of that art which was familiar to these men. The fisherman is to catch men, as David, the shepherd, taken from amid the sheepfolds, is to feed them. What tremendous responsibilities and results does this title involve! Death and life are confided to ministers of the Gospel. Their aim is here represented to be, not a mere external varnishing over with new habits, new tastes, new virtues, but to effect a *change of being*. The faithful preaching of the Gospel ought to have for its object a bringing up and out from the deep, dead sea of nature, elevating to a new heaven-born atmosphere. As Christ in promising to make these disciples "fishers of men," addressed them in such a way as was most likely to work upon them, so were the astronomers addressed, to whom was given a star to guide them to the Saviour's birth-place (Matt. ii.), and those who followed Jesus for meat, to whom He preached of spiritual food, and the Samaritan woman at the well, to whom He preached of the water of life. (John iv.) Heaven, likewise, is so represented as, if possible, to "gain" all. To the cheerful man it is represented as all joy, to the ambitious man, as all glory, to the merchant it is a pearl, and to the husbandman, a rich field.

*Mending their nets.* This is explained by reference to Luke v. 6. *And they left their father Zebedee in the ship, &c.* It is a solemn lesson of self-denial we are here taught at the feet of Galilean fishermen. It was, it must have been, for them a trying hour. At a moment's warning their worldly *all* was to be left to attach themselves to the person and fortune of the reputed son of a carpenter, who was often unable to tell of so secure a shelter as had the fox of the mountain or the bird of the forest. Yet they *straightway*, without deliberating, without conferring with flesh and blood, without reasoning on maxims of expediency, willingly surrendered their all, and cast in their lot with the despised and rejected One! What an example of prompt and unreserved obedience! The mention of the *hired servants* shows that Christ in calling these men, and they in obeying the call, did not leave their father desti-

tute of assistance to carry on his business. (vii. 10-12; Eph. vi. 2, 3).

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.

†Matt. iv. 13; Luke iv. 31, on which see notes. \*Matt. vii. 28. †Luke iv. 33. †Matt. viii. 29. †Verse 31. †Chap. ix. 20.

*An unclean spirit.* It was befitting, since death first entered into the world through the devil's envy, that the healing medicine of salvation should first operate against him. (xvi. 17; Gen. iii. 15.) *To destroy us.* Our Lord had not uttered a word respecting judgment or punishment. But guilt accuses and condemns itself. Fear of destruction is the spontaneous offspring of sin, and, whether the Lord reproaches or keeps silence, "there is no peace unto the wicked." (Compare the case of Herod: vi. 14, 16; Gen. iv. 23; Matt. xiv. 1, 2; Acts xxiv. 25.) *Rebuked him.* Jesus silenced the devils, even when they spake the truth, lest He should seem to approve of witnesses, who were liars by nature. (John viii. 44; Rom. xiv. 16; Eph. v. 15.)

*Had torn him, &c.* Though obliged to obey the Lord of all, with what reluctance the unclean spirit quitted his victim! He made him feel his malice before he left him. It is to the malice of such devils that the wicked are to be forever given up. If we "are taken captive by the devil at his will," Jesus can command the devil to let us go, and He will do so, if we implore His help. But the devil will not let go his captives unless he is compelled; he diligently watches over them lest they should believe and be saved—accompanies them to church and follows them home.

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.

†Matt. viii. 14; Luke iv. 38. †1 Cor. ix. 5. †James v. 14, 15.

*Forthwith*—Jesus avoided the din of a crowd. *Simon . . . . . James and John.*

This occasion is peculiarly interesting as being the first on which the sacred triumvirate of Peter and James and John were selected from among the rest, to be a three-fold cord of testimony to certain events in their Lord's life—*Andrew* being present on this occasion, as the occurrence took place in his own house. *Fever.* A disease consisting in a fermentation of the blood, accompanied with a quick pulse. *Took her by the hand, &c.* The miracle here recorded did not, as in some other cases, consist in the cure of an incurable disorder, but in the *mode* of cure, instantly, and by a touch (See Matt. viii. 15.)

*The fever left her, &c.* This was the doing of one that is Almighty. There is no escape from the conclusion. This was "the finger of God." (Exod. viii. 19.) Our great High Priest is very gracious. He can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." No heart can feel for us so much as the heart of Christ. It was a fine saying of an old saint, "My faith can sleep sound on no other pillow than Christ's omnipotence." He can give power to the weak. He can "increase strength to them that have no might." Let us trust Him, and not be afraid. The world is full of snares. Our hearts are weak. But with Jesus nothing is impossible.

See on Matt. viii. 14-15; Luke v. 38-9.

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.

†Matt. viii. 16; Luke iv. 40. †Chap. iii. 12; Luke iv. 41. See Acts xvi. 17, 18.

See on Matt. viii. 16, 17; Luke v. 40, 41.

*When the sun did set.* When the Sabbath was ended, for the Jewish Sabbath began on Friday evening, and ended on Saturday evening. *And all the city, &c.* A very common hyperbole, meaning that a great many of the people of the city were thus assembled. *At the door, of Peter's house.* *Suffered not the devils to speak, &c.* Jesus made no concealment, so far as His own testimony was concerned, of His being the Messiah, but He might have had very wise objections to being publicly called the Messiah by certain sorts of persons, and at certain times. Had no caution been exercised, His appearing as the Messiah might have been greatly abused.

The healing of this multitude was a painful and laborious service. Could Jesus behold, unmoved, the diseased creatures that were brought to Him? Could He hear the ravings of those possessed with devils, and the cries of those in pain, without anguish of spirit? Impossible; for His heart was full of compassion. Some persons turn away from the view of misery, because it gives them uneasiness, but such conduct is selfish. Our blessed Saviour felt far more at the sight of suffering than we can feel, yet he was willing to bear the pangs of sympathy. (See Isa. lvi. 3; Matt. viii. 17.)

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 thenceforth came I forth. 39. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils. 40. Luke iv. 42. Luke iv. 43. Isa. lxi. 1. John xvi. 28, xvii. 4. Matt. iv. 23; Luke iv. 44.

See on Luke iv. 42-44.

*In the morning, &c.* The original means, not literally a great while before day, but very early, or while there was yet much appearance of night. Departed into a solitary place, &c. He would there be less liable to interruption. We have here the example of our Lord to make prayer the first duty of the day, and to secure a place of as much privacy as possible, in order that freedom and fervor of devotion may not be checked through fear of being overheard or interrupted.

*And there prayed.* We cannot 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 always, 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 as-

saults 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.

*Followed after him.* The Saviour's retirement was interrupted by His disciples, who said, "All men seek for thee." Was this addressed to Him who was despised and rejected of men? But how few of those who sought Him truly loved Him. Thus it is now. Multitudes will flock to hear an earnest, interesting preacher, but only a few receive into their hearts the blessed Gospel he proclaims. *Let us go into the next towns, &c.* The Greek word here rendered towns, designates places larger than villages, but unwallled, and less than ordinary cities. *That I may preach there also.* This was part of His office for which he came into the world, to proclaim the mercy of God, and direct men in the way of everlasting life. *For therefore came I forth,* that is, came forth from God, or was sent by God. (See Luke iv. 43; John xi. 14, xvi. 27-30.) Jesus ever remembered the purpose for which He came into the world; not His own pleasure, but the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. How many persons, alas, live as if they were born to live in pleasure or amusement, and then to die like the beasts. A young lady was once converted by meditating on the first answer in the Assembly's catechism. The first question is, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer, "To glorify God, and enjoy Him forever." She felt that she was not fulfilling this end while spending her time in vain and worldly pleasures. By the grace of God she gave them up, and became an eminent Christian. *Throughout all Galilee.* Notice (I), how the succession of events marks the development of Christ's work: 1. The synagogue at home. 2. The house of Peter, as the hearth of the new community of the disciples at its outset. 3. The whole town of Capernaum. 4. The entire land of Galilee. (II) The progression of the influence of our Lord's preaching. 1. His fame goes out through all

Galilee. 2. The whole town of Capernaum presses for help and healing at His door, yea, into His doors. 3. All seek Him after He had withdrawn. 4. Even in the wilderness they come to Him from all parts.

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, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

¶ Matt. viii. 2; Luke v. 12. ¶ Heb. ii. 17, iv. 15. ¶ Ps. xxxiii. 3; Matt. xv. 28. ¶ Lev. xiv. 3, iv. 10; Luke v. 14.

*A leper.* The Jews considered leprosy as a punishment from God; and Moses gives particular directions concerning the treatment of lepers. (See Lev. xiii. 45). The Rev. T. C. Ewald, in his "*Missionary Labors in Jerusalem*," says, "Beyond the walls of the Armenian convent, near the Zion gate, is the wretched village of the miserable lepers. This unfortunate and pitiable race consists of about one hundred. They are compelled to live separate from all, intermarry "lepers," and are thus allowed to propagate their miseries from one generation to another. The malady appears generally when they are about twelve or fourteen years old, and increases every year till they lose literally one limb after the other; as they grow older their sight fails, then throat and lungs become infected, till death ends their protracted sufferings. They live upon charity, which they receive from the pilgrims and others." *Kneeling down to him.* Mark alone describes this attitude of the leper. *If thou wilt, &c.* His speech is a very touching one. It *implies* a prayer, yet, in reality, nothing is *asked*. It is rather a profession of strong faith, and an humble "*Thy will be done.*"

*Jesus, moved with compassion, &c.* Our Evangelist is very assiduous in observing the holy movement of feelings, and hence even the gestures of Jesus. Whoever will carefully attend to this in reading his Gospel, will derive from it no little delight. *Put forth his hand, &c.* The Saviour's working by means in healing diseases was His most ordinary way, and is most adapted to the weakness of our faith and the dimness of our understanding. Yet it

is as easy for Him to work *without means*, and even *against means*, as with them. We ought never so to depend upon His will and power hidden, as to neglect His declared pleasure. He that neglects what he finds commanded, has little reason to expect what he finds not promised. Upon means it is fit we should depend, without means we may hope, against means we should not despair. (John ix. 39; Acts xii. 8, xxvii. 31).

*I will, &c.* Here Christ asserted that diseases are subject to His will. His power, of course, must be Divine. The leper acknowledged this, and Christ here claims that His will and command are all that is needed to make the incurable leper clean. And so the result showed. How readily does Christ grant every humble request. This is symbolical of His power over sin, and of His readiness to deliver from its curse. *He was cleansed*, by his being brought into contact with Him who was absolute purity. *He straitly, i. e., forthwith, charged him, &c.* This was done lest Jesus should seem to ignore the law. The man, when healed, was ready to remain with Christ, and away from his relatives. Adversity tends to transfer our affections from natural objects to the Saviour. *For a testimony unto them*—a palpable witness that the Great Healer had indeed come, and that "God had visited His people." (See on verse 45). How loathsome and inveterate soever the leprosy of our sins may be, let us not be ashamed to go to Christ.

See on Matt. viii. 1-4; Luke v. 12-14.

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.—Luke v. 15. ¶ Chap. ii. 13.

See on Luke v. 15.

*He went out, &c.* He was so full of his blessedness that he could not keep it a secret. Other persons whom our Saviour had in like manner cured, and commanded to keep silence, seem to have found it, in like manner, impossible to retain themselves. (See on Matt. ix. 30, 31.) *Insomuch that Jesus, &c.* Here we see one reason why our Lord may have enjoined silence on the leper, for it appears that, in consequence of his disobedience, the Son of Man could no longer appear openly in the city. Doubtless, He wished that men

should come to Him rather as an act of individual faith, than troop to Him in crowds, as to a physician with the reputation of more than human skill, whose very touch was health, and who had never been known to lay hands on any one in vain. "Our Lord's injunction," says one, "does, indeed, for the time appear to have been spoken in vain, yet His word shall

not return to Him void, but perform its purpose (Isa. iv. 11), and if in nothing else, yet in this, that even to this day it remains a witness to us, teaching us to avoid all vain-glory in acts of charity, although indeed it may be true that glory and honor will ever pursue those who flee from them, and flee from those who anxiously pursue them."

1. How is this Gospel introduced? 2. What is said of "the voice?" 3. Where did John baptize? 4. What did he preach? 5. What was the effect of his preaching? 6. What did he say of Jesus? 7. Explain the temptation of our Saviour. 8. What is said of Simon and Andrew? 9. What of James and John? 10. What did Christ do in Capernaum? 11. State the particulars of the cure of Simon's wife's mother. 12. What other miracle followed this?

## CHAPTER II.

1 *Christ healeth one sick of the palsy.* 14 *catcheth Matthew from the receipt of custom,* 15 *catcheth with publicans and sinners,* 18 *excuseth his disciples for not fasting,* 23 *and for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day.*

AND again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. 2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door, and he preached the word unto them.—<sup>a</sup>Matt. ix. 1; Luke v. 18.

Again he entered into Capernaum—after leaving Capernaum, as mentioned in the last chapter, on account of the crowds. *It was noised.* Although He came in a private and unostentatious manner, such was the general interest excited by His miracles and teaching, that His coming was soon known throughout the city. *In the house.* This means the house which Jesus occupied with His mother and His brethren, after His settlement there. (Chap. iii. 31.) His adopted sisters probably remained, as married, in Nazareth (see chap. vi. 3), when the family of Joseph passed over with Him to Capernaum.

*And straightway.* This is a favorite expression of Mark, the original Greek adverb occurring in the first chapter no less than ten times. *Insomuch that there was no room, &c.* The sense of the passage is, "So that there was no longer place for them in the vestibule—much less in the house itself." *And he preached the word unto them,* that is, the doctrine or instruc-

tion pertaining to the new dispensation. Jesus thus taught His ministers by His example, to embrace all opportunities, in season and out of season, on the Lord's day and on the week day, to edify their people by their ministry, by their public exhortations, by their private instructions, prudent admonitions, and holy examples.

3. And they came unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. 4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 5. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 6. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts. 7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8. And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9. Whether is it easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee,* or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?* 10. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy), 11. I say unto thee, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.* 12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, *We never saw it on this fashion.*  
<sup>b</sup>Job xiv. 4; Isa. xliii. 25. <sup>c</sup>Matt. ix. 4. <sup>d</sup>Matt. ix. 5.

See on Matt. ix. 1-8; Luke v. 18-26.

*Borne of four.* He was therefore full grown, though not old. Each held a corner of the litter. *For the press,* on account of the crowd. *Uncovered the roof.* The roofs of the houses in the East were flat, surrounded with a battlement (Deut. xxii. 8), and had a trap-door, for the convenience of persons who wished to walk on the

roof, or retire there for private devotion. (Matt. xxiv. 17.) This door, when shut, would of course be well fastened, to secure the house from thieves. The bearers of the paralytic were therefore obliged to break it open before they could get entrance; and they took off the tiles which covered the door as well as roof, and, forcing open the door, had nothing then to interrupt them from accomplishing their purpose. Difficulty of achievement stupefies the sluggard, advises the prudent, terrifies the fearful, animates the courageous. (x. 48, xvi. 2, 3.) Let us come to Christ, says an old writer, through the door or through the roof, that is, in a regular or irregular way.

*Saw their faith.* Faith is not idle; it works and is forcible; it breaks out like fire; it is always fruitful through love. Faith without works is no faith, it is dead and bringeth death. We should encourage ourselves from this and similar passages, to plead with the Saviour in behalf of those friends, neighbors, or relatives, who, from any cause, are yet strangers to His truth. *Son.* By thus addressing him, Jesus manifested His disposition to help the afflicted, even as a "father pitieth his own children." (Ps. ciii. 13; 1 John iii. 1.) *Perceived in his spirit,* &c. The scribes probably supposed that no one knew what was going on in their minds. But their malicious thought was publicly exposed. They were put to an open shame. Here is an important lesson for us. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv. 13). Nothing can be concealed from Christ. He knows, sees, records, even what we think, and will one day call us to give account. (Rom. ii. 16; Ps. xix. 14.)

*So reasoned.* We ought not to find fault with the use of human reason, in matters of Divine revelation, but rather with the abuse of it, when it becomes human reasoning. (Luke xxiv. 15, 25; 2 Cor. x. 5.) *Whether is it easier,* &c. It is impossible not to be struck with this narrative. Jesus not only shows His power here, but He shows an unrivalled, an infinite ease in the exertion of it. For He lets His enemies themselves, as it were,

choose the way, in which it should be manifested, signifying that with Him it made no difference. (Deut. xxxii. 31.) *But that ye may know,* &c. The propitiation for our sins was the great work for which He came; as Isaiah speaks (xxvii. 9): "This is all the fruit, to take away sin." That was His errand, on which He came; this He published and made known to the world. It was the end of all His miracles to seal up this truth to us. (Heb. ix. 26.) Though all the persons in the Trinity forgive sins, yet not in the same manner. The Father bestows, the Son merits, the Holy Ghost seals up and applies, remission of sins.

13. "And he went forth again by the sea-side, and all the multitudes resorted unto him, and he taught them. 14. "And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

"Matt. ix. 9. "Matt. ix. 9; Luke v. 27.

See on Matt. ix. 9; Luke v. 27, 28.

*By the sea-side,* the sea of Galilee. (Comp. Matt. ix. 9.) *All the multitudes,* who had gathered in and around the house where the paralytic was healed. *And he taught them.* How perpetually was the blessed Saviour employed in the labors of His calling, in the service of His Father, and for the good of mankind! He went about doing good, setting an example of laborious diligence for all His ministers to follow. *Levi the son of Alphaeus,* &c. We learn from the parallel passage in Matthew (ix. 9) that this Levi was Matthew himself. The Jews gave several names to the same person. If the Alphaeus here mentioned was the same Alphaeus as in Matt. x. 3, then Matthew was the cousin of Jesus, being brother of James the Less.

*Sitting at the receipt of custom,* as a publican, which Luke (v. 27) calls him. It means the place of receipt, the toll-house or booth in which the collector sat. Being, in this case, by the sea-side, it might be the ferry tax, for the transit of persons and goods across the lake, which he collected. *Follow me.* Witching words these, from the lips of Him who never employed them without giving them resistless efficacy in the hearts of those they were spoken to. *And he arose,* &c. Luke says (v. 28) he left all, rose up, and followed Him. "Christ found him, as he was *Levi*, the publican," says an old writer, "but

looked on him as he was *Matthew*, the Apostle. . . . . He called him to an office much more gainful. . . . . where he should still be a receiver, and a gainer, too, but not, as here, 10 or 15 per centum, but where one should bring forth thirty, one sixty, one an hundred fold." (i. 17; Hab. ii. 6; Job xx. 15-23; 1 Tim. ii. 6.)

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." *18.*

<sup>a</sup>Matt. ix. 10. <sup>b</sup>Matt. ix. 12, 13; Luke v. 31, 32; 1 Tim. i. 15.

See on Matt. ix. 10-12; Luke v. 29-32.

*In his house, i. e., Levi's house.* The pronoun can be easily referred to him from the preceding verse, and we have also the direct testimony of Luke (v. 29). Is the dining of Jesus with publicans and sinners, a precedent for us to go and dine with those to whom we entertain the strongest religious objection? We answer, when Jesus dined with these, He went not as a companion to share in their mere conviviality, but as an instructor of the ignorant, a physician for the sick, a Saviour to the sinful; and if we go with the same motive, and with the same design, we are warranted in going also; that is to say, if we go deliberately to do good, designedly to benefit those who are about us, and with whom we are associated, then we are warranted in doing so; but if we go where we have no call in Providence to be, but only to gratify our own passions, our own mere carnal appetites and desires, it is a question that will be very soon settled when looked at in the light of the sanctuary, whether we have any right to be there.

What can we hope to do, or say, that shall escape the censure and misinterpretation of man, when we see the Son of God could not avoid it?

*They that are whole, &c.*—think they are whole. The disease of sin is of a lethargic nature, and stupefies the unhappy creatures, so that they are not sensible of it. It renders them delirious, so that they think themselves well, when the symptoms of death are strong upon them. . . . We can weep and lament over the sick bed

of a dying friend, and we even drop our tears after him into the grave; but shall we drop no tears over dying souls? (Ps. cxix. 53; Hos. vii. 9; Jer. ix. 1, xiii. 17; Luke xix. 41.)

18. "And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come, and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? 19. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 21. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. 22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles." *23.*

<sup>a</sup>Matt. ix. 14; Luke v. 33.

See on Matt. ix. 14-17; Luke v. 33-39.

*Used to fast.* They were doubtless then in the act of fasting. It may be easily supposed that the imprisonment of John would give occasion to his disciples, and with them to many of the Pharisees, for an extraordinary fast. *And they come.* Of course only some, as representing the mind of all. *Why do the disciples of John, &c.* It has well been said, that the envious are more busied in censuring the conduct of others than in rectifying their own. This is one vice belonging to a Pharisee, and which is very common. It is another, to desire that every one should regulate his piety by ours, and embrace our particular customs and devotions. It is a third, to speak of others only that we may have an opportunity to speak of and to distinguish ourselves. It is very dangerous for a man to make himself remarkable by such devout practices as are external and singular, when he is not firmly settled and rooted in internal virtues, and, above all, in humility. *The bridegroom.* What the bridegroom is to the bride, the Lord Jesus is to the souls of all who believe in Him. He loves them with a deep and everlasting love; takes them into union with Himself, pays all their debts to God; supplies all their daily need; sympathizes with them in all their troubles; bears with them in their infirmities; regards those that persecute and injure them as persecuting Him, and will one day share with them the glory that He has received from His Father. They are the Lamb's wife. (Rev. xix. 7.)

*Can the children of the bridegroom fast?*

&c. The question amounts to this: Can

you expect there will be mourning on a nuptial occasion? Would mourning be congruous at a wedding? *The bridegroom shall be taken away, &c.* Continuing the language of the illustration drawn from the bridegroom, instead of adopting plain language, Jesus said, the bridegroom, that is, Himself, would be removed, and then, through sorrow of heart, in their changed circumstances, the friends of the bridegroom, His disciples, would fast. The *incongruities* mentioned in verses 21-2, were intended to illustrate the difference between the *genius* of the old and the new economies, and the danger of *mixing up* the one with the other. As, in the one case supposed, "the rent is made worse," and in the other, "the new wine is spoiled," so by a mongrel mixture of the ascetic ritualism of the old with the spiritual freedom of the new economy, both are disfigured and destroyed. Here 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.

23. ¶ And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day, and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? 25. And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? 26. How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew bread, 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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xii. 1; Luke vi. 1. <sup>2</sup>Deut. xxiii. 25. <sup>3</sup>1 Sam. xxi. 6. <sup>4</sup>Ex. xxix. 32, 33; Lev. xxiv. 9. <sup>5</sup>Matt. xii. 8.

See on Matt. xii. 1-8; Luke vi. 1-5; Mark ii. 27, 28.

*His disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.* "I walk many times in the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I pluck up the goodly herbs of sentences by pruning, eat them by reading, digest them by musing, and lay them up at length in the high seat of memory by gathering them together, that so, having tasted their sweetness, I may less perceive the bitterness of life. (Jer. xv. 10; Ps.

exix. 103)."—*Q. Elizabeth.* "If one single promise of the Gospel, like an ear of corn, rubbed in the hand of faith, and applied by the Spirit of Christ, can give such a full satisfying meal of joy to the hunger-bitten, pining soul, oh, what price can we set upon the whole field of Scripture, which 'stands so thick' with promises, every way as cordial as this? (Jer. xv. 16; Ps. lxxv. 14; 2 Peter i. 4)."—*Gurnall.*

*Abiathar the high priest.* It is found that Abiathar was not the high priest at this time. Abimelech was the high priest. Abiathar was his son, and Mark calls him the high priest by anticipation. Napoleon was called the first consul once, but historians would speak of him as the emperor. Thus Abiathar is called the high priest by one of those anticipatory expressions, which are common to all historians. It is not, therefore, a contradiction of fact, but one of the indirect and latent proofs of the genuineness of the narrative.

*The Sabbath was made for man, &c.* This is a most important lesson. The Sabbath was not made first, and man created in order to fit it, but man was made first, and the Sabbath was instituted in order to fit man. In other words, we are not for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath is for us, and any one who can comprehend this great truth in its length and its breadth, will not be likely to have a scrupulous conscience in reference to the Sabbath, which is bad one way, nor will he have a latitudinarian conscience, or tendency to profane it, which is as bad in the opposite direction.

This passage, beautiful, comforting, and instructive as it is, is often quoted by men who have no reverence for the Sabbath; or rather it is misquoted, for if their interpretation of it prevailed, the Sabbath would be displaced from its pure and lofty position, and degraded to be the slave of the passions, and to pander to the prejudices of mankind. The registers of eternity alone, it has truthfully been remarked, will show what a benefactress to mankind, what an ambassador from heaven, the holy Christian Sabbath has been. Even *Sir Walter Scott* has said: "If we believe the Divine commandment, the Sabbath was instituted for the express purpose of religion alone; the time set apart as the

Sabbath of the Lord; a day on which not to work our own works, nor to think our own thoughts. The precept is positive, the purpose is clear. For our eternal benefit, a certain space of every week is appointed, which is sacred from all other avocations, save those imposed by necessity and mercy, and is to be employed in religious duties and privileges alone."

We do not see the connection of the good with the Sabbath; but because unseen it is no less real. An influence goes forth from every Sabbath that tells upon the tone of our Congressional debates, that influences our judicial decisions, and that imparts to all classes of men—the exchange, the counting-house, the transactions of the world—a sublimer, holier, and loftier tone. It cannot be doubted that our national prosperity, with all its fruits, has a connection with the Sabbath. The great tree seems to stand alone, but its roots below the ground stretch within the jurisdiction of the Sabbath, and are refreshed and invigorated there. There is a public conscience as well as public opinion; and how much of all that is purest, and holiest, and best in public opinion, may be traced to the influence of the Sabbath and the exercises of the sanctuary, eternity, not time, will be able to unfold.

"There is one weapon (says Mr. *Barnes*) which the enemy has employed to destroy Christianity, and to drive it from the

world, which has never been employed but with signal success. It is the attempt to corrupt the Christian Sabbath; to make it a day of festivity; to cause Christians to feel that its sacred and rigid obligation has ceased; to induce them on that day to mingle in the scenes of pleasure, or the exciting plans of ambition; to make them feel that they may pursue their journeys by land and water, by the steamboat and the car, regardless of the command of God; and this has done, and will continue to do, what no argument, no sophistry, no imperial power has been able to accomplish. The 'Book of Sports' did more to destroy Christianity than all the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors; and the views of the second Charles and his court about the Lord's Day, tended more to drive religion from the British nation than all the fires that were enkindled by Mary. Paris has no Sabbath, and that fact has done more to banish Christianity than all the writing of Voltaire; and Vienna has no Sabbath, and that fact does more to annihilate religion than ever did the skepticism of Frederick. Turn the Sabbath into a day of sports and pastime, of military reviews, and of pantomines and theatrical exhibitions, and not an infidel anywhere would care a farthing about the tomes of Volney or Voltaire, about the skepticism of Hume, the sneers of Gibbon, or the scurrility of Paine."

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1. What miracle was wrought in Capernaum? 2. Explain verse 9. 3. How did Christ call Levi? 4. What was the result of this call? 5. In whose house did Jesus sit at meat? 6. By whom was this objected to? 7. On what ground? 8. How did Jesus reply to the objection? 9. How are we to understand verses 21 and 22? 10. What fault was found by the Pharisees with the disciples? 11. How did Jesus defend them? 12. What is said of the Sabbath?

## CHAPTER III.

1 *Christ healeth the withered hand, 10 and many other infirmities: 11 rebuketh the unclean spirits; 13 chooseth his twelve apostles: 22 convinceth the blasphemy of casting out devils by Beelzebub: 31 and sheweth who are his brother, sister, and mother.*

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.

<sup>a</sup>Matt. xii. 9; Luke vi. 6. <sup>b</sup>Ps. xxxvii. 32; Isa. xxix. 20, 21; Jer. xx. 10; Dan. vi. 4. <sup>c</sup>Hos. vi. 6.

On verses 1-5 see on Matt. xii. 9-13; Luke vi. 6-10.

And he entered, &c. He had now returned again to Galilee from Jerusalem, whither he had gone to keep the second passover after His entrance upon His public ministry. *The withered hand* is properly found in the *synagogue*; for where the gifts of Divine knowledge abound, there the greater danger attends the blame, which is without excuse. (Amos iii. 2; Matt. xi. 20-23; Luke xii. 48, xiii. 7; John ix. 41.)

Watched him, &c. They were now come to the length of dogging His steps to collect material for a charge of impiety against Him. There is no public action when the world is not ready to scan. *Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil?* &c. A similar manner of expression occurs in Mal. i. 2, 3, quoted in Rom. ix. 13: "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated," that is, Esau have I not loved, comparatively speaking. The form of the questions was, also, as might very naturally suggest to the minds of our Lord's opponents a comparison between themselves and Him. He was bestowing blessings on the afflicted, they were plotting His destruction. To their consciences, He might have intended to appeal, by presenting the inquiry whether He was pursuing a justifiable course on the Sabbath, or they. Not to "do good" is the same as to do evil. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Looked round about on them with anger. It is not necessary here to discuss, with commentators, the question, whether our Lord really felt anger or not, or what is

the true definition of anger, for the original word here does not denote *anger*, but (as sometimes in the classical writers) *indignation*, a view established by the phrase following, "being grieved," &c., which was, no doubt, meant to qualify the word rendered "anger," intimating that with the *indignation* was mingled *concern* and *grief* at the fate reserved for His adversaries. Such anger is not unlawful. (Eph. iv. 26.) Parents, masters and magistrates may sin in not expressing just displeasure; and anger is only sinful when it springs from selfishness and malevolence, when causeless, or above the cause, and when expressed by unhallowed words or actions. Even that anger which is lawful should, as in the present case, be tempered with grief or compassion for those who have offended. *Being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* Sorrow and pity for their wilfulness and their ruin mingles with the stern recognition that they deserve the ruin they incur. A Christian should sorrow not only for his own sins, but also be grieved for those of others. The expression, "hardness of their hearts," is metaphorically put for spiritual stupidity and dullness. The word literally signifies a *petrifying*, a *becoming hard like stone*, and then the state of hardness or petrification.

Stretch forth thine hand. "God willeth not that we should be supine, inasmuch as He worketh not the whole Himself, nor is it His will that we should be proud, inasmuch as He commits not the whole to us, but, subtracting from each the injurious tendency, He bestows on us what is for our advantage. (xvi. 20; John vi. 27; Phil. ii. 12, 13.)"—*Chrysostom.*

His hand was restored whole as the other. This was one of the cases in which our Lord may be said to have wrought a miracle of healing *without a word*. Unlike those occasions when the eyes of the blind were anointed by Him (John ix. 6, 14), and His hands were laid upon the sufferer, the present miracle followed upon the exercise of a mere act of Almighty will. Our Saviour only directed the man to assume a posture which should bring his withered limb under the distinct

observation of all present, and thus make the miracle which followed, a plain and palpable thing. How must the anger of His watchful enemies have been thereby aroused and inflamed! The man was healed; yet our Lord had *done* nothing; *less*, certainly, than each one of themselves was forced to do at every hour, throughout the Sabbath. (See on Luke vi. 11.)

6. <sup>a</sup>And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.—<sup>a</sup>Matt. xii. 14. <sup>c</sup>Matt. xxii. 16.

See on Matt. xii. 14; Luke vi. 11.

*Straightway.* Their hatred increased. (Comp. verse 2, at the end.) *Herodians.* The Pharisee, who was the great traditionalist of the age, and the Herodian, the great skeptic of the age, coalesced, when the Lord of glory was to be put down. How sad it is that skepticism does not so hate superstition, nor superstition so hate skepticism, as they both hate the truth as it is in Christ Jesus! This consultation with a view to the destruction of our Lord, demonstrates the desperate wickedness of the human heart. He had done no evil. Neither could any charge be brought against His teaching. He had proved it to be agreeable to Scripture and reason, and no reply had been made to His proofs. But it mattered little how perfectly He lived or taught, He was hated. This is human nature appearing in its true colors. The unconverted heart hates God, and will show its hatred whenever it dares, and has a favorable opportunity. It will persecute God's witnesses. It will dislike all who have anything of God's mind and are renewed after His image. (1 John iii. 13.)

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, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

<sup>a</sup>Luke vi. 17.

*To the sea*—to some distance, no doubt, from the scene of the miracle, the madness, and the plotting just recorded. The life on the sea, in the ship, which was now His chief place of instruction in opposition to the synagogue, and which more than once served Him for a transient retreat to the opposite bank, here had its commencement. *And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, &c.* There were

two multitudes; one followed Him from Galilee, the other, from most remote quarters, then for the first time came to Jesus. The former, in the Greek order, is a *great multitude*, the latter, a *multitude great*; force being added by the transposition of the noun. *Galilee. . . . Judea. . . . Jerusalem.* Jerusalem was in Judea. It is mentioned particularly, to show that not only the people of the surrounding *country* came, but also many from the capital, the place of wealth, honor, power. *Idumea.* This was the ancient Edom. *Beyond Jordan, i. e., Perea*—literally, *that beyond or the other side*—the name given to the region beyond Jordan. *They about Tyre and Sidon.* The persons here referred to were not the Tyrians and Sidonians, but the Jews who lived on the confines of those places. *When they had heard what great things he did, &c.* So, if Christ be persecuted and abandoned by the wicked, there are a multitude of pious souls who earnestly seek and follow Him. He who labors for God, will always *find* more than he *loses*, in the midst of all his contradictions and persecutions.

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. <sup>a</sup>And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, <sup>b</sup>Thou art the Son of God. 12. And <sup>c</sup>he straitly charged them that they should not make him known. 1. <sup>a</sup>Chap. i. 23, 24; Luke iv. 41. <sup>b</sup>Matt. xiv. 33; chap. i. 1. <sup>c</sup>Matt. xii. 16; chap. i. 25, 34.

*A small ship.* The vessels in use on the sea of Tiberias were all much smaller than what we now call ships. *Wait on him*—not merely at that time. *Lest.* He cares for due convenience. He who “measures the waters in the hollow of His hand,” and “commands” them, is ferried over in some boat or small vessel. Was it not richly laden with this inestimable Pearl, “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” “all fullness” dwelling in Him? (Matt. viii. 26; Ps. lxxvii. 19.) *Pressed upon*—illustrating the wonderful patience and benignity of our Lord. *Plagues, sicknesses, called plagues, or scourges,* as being sent in the righteous providence of God, in consequence of sin.

*Unclean spirits.* One reason why Providence may have suffered evil spirits to exert their malignant powers so much at that time, might be to give a check to Sadduceism among the Jews, and to Epi-

curean atheism among the Gentiles, and to remove, in some measure, these two great impediments to the reception of the Gospel. (i. 24; Acts xix. 15, xxiii. 8.)

*Thou art the Son of God.* The "Son of God" implies the *Messiah*—the long promised Deliverer of the nation, foretold in prophecy, foreshadowed in history. The Jews had learned—probably from Ps. ii. 7, 12 (comp. Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5, v. 5), by that name to speak of *Christ*, as we learn from Matt. xiv. 33, xvi. 16, xxvi. 63, xxvii. 54; Luke xxii. 70; John i. 49, ix. 35. xi. 27, &c. The very fallen angels knew *Messiah* by that name. (See Matt. viii. 29; Luke iv. 41, &c.)

It is a very solemn thought that all the ends of the earth shall yet acknowledge Jesus in this character, that all the lost in misery and the saved in glory shall equally admit that He is Lord of all. The one class shall admit it as a free-will offering joyously given; the other shall express it as a great and awful sacrifice irresistibly exacted. Heaven shall praise Him joyfully and with delight; hell shall praise Him reluctantly, but really. From height and depth, from east and west, from north and south, God shall be glorified, either in the joyful songs of the saved, or in the reluctant acknowledgments of those who would not be saved, and who have perished entirely because they rejected Him, the only Saviour.

*And he straitly charged them, &c.* Our Lord accepted not devils for preachers. They so mingled falsehood with their truth, that he who listens to them for the truth's sake will be led away by their lies. All the testimony Jesus would have from them was given by their disclosing their infernal presence and disappearing at His command.

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 Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19. And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into a house. †Matt. x. 1; Luke vi. 12, ix. 1. †John i. 42. †Isa. lviii. 1; Jer. xxlii. 9; Heb. iii. 12.

On verses 13-19 see on Matt. x. 1-4; Luke vi. 12-16.

*Into a mountain.* Luke says that He went to this mountain to pray, and that He continued all night in prayer. The Christian, like his Divine pattern, will have special seasons of retirement and prayer for his own good and also for the good of others. *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, or set apart; literally, made, appointed,* as the representatives of the spiritual Israel. (See Rev. xxi. 14.) This setting apart for the Apostolic office had been preceded by several calls extended to the men individually by our Lord 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).

*Twelve.* (See Ex. xv. 27; Josh. iv. 3.) *That they should be with him.* Constant attendance upon Christ's ministry was not required of the other disciples, but the Apostles were to be fitted for their office, by remaining with Him and enjoying private as well as public instruction. *And that he might send them forth to preach, &c.* The business of a minister of Christ is, 1. To preach the Gospel. 2. To be the physician of souls; and, 3. To wage war with the devil, and destroy his kingdom. *Matthew.* (See *Preface* to the Gospel of Matthew.) *Boanerges.* He who is enrolled among "the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God," must be a man "sound in the faith," "fervent in spirit," and also "a son of consolation." In this sense he must combine what is found in a *Cephas*, a *Boanerges*, and a *Barnabas*. (John i. 42; Acts iv. 36.) For the history of the "twelve" see *Historical Index*.

*And they went into a house.* This clause properly belongs to the next verse, and

opens the next paragraph. It is to this house that "the multitude cometh together." In this record of the first ordination which ever took place in the Church of Christ, three lessons stand out prominently. 1. All ministers are not necessarily good men. Judas Iscariot was one of the Apostles. Ordained men are not necessarily converted. We are not to regard them as infallible, either in doctrine or in practice. We are not to make popes or idols of them, and insensibly put them in Christ's place. 2. The great work of a minister of Christ is to do good. He is to proclaim glad tidings, to relieve those who are suffering, to diminish sorrow, and to increase joy. 3. It is a most dangerous thing to neglect the offers of the Gospel. It shall prove "more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah" in the judgment day, than for those who have heard Christ's truth, and not received it. (John xvi. 9.)

20. † And the multitude cometh together again, <sup>so</sup> 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: <sup>for</sup> they said, He is beside himself.

<sup>20</sup>Chap. vi. 31. <sup>21</sup>John vii. 5, x. 20.

And the multitude, &c. Wherever Jesus went, so anxious were the people to hear Him, that they came together in great numbers. It appears from what follows, that the multitude at this time was unusually great. *Could not so much as eat bread.* Had neither room nor opportunity to get food. Their time and attention were so occupied, that they were obliged to forego their regular meals. *His friends*—evidently His relatives according to the flesh. *Heard of it.* The words "of it," are not in the original, and the reference is therefore in general to His acts and doings, His preaching, calling the Apostles, denunciations of the Pharisees, miraculous powers, &c. *They went out, &c.*—went from their homes, to lay hold on him, not violently, but in a suitable manner, to rescue Him from the danger that might result from the excitement He was producing. *Beside Himself.* They thus attributed to Him excess of zeal overpowering judgment, but falsely, as Festus to Paul. (Acts xxvi. 24.) Only in this way could they explain the fact, that He, who, in all probability, when under thirty years of age, made no

pretensions to teach or preach, was now going forth preaching and teaching, and doing many wonderful works.

Note, 1. Those who show much zeal and diligence in the service of God, must expect to be misunderstood and censured by the world. Let a man show that he is in earnest about his soul, that he is in earnest in teaching others the way to heaven, and in speaking that blessed Gospel, that is the savour of life unto life in all that believe it, and many will say, "much religion has made him mad." But he may say with the Apostle, "If we be beside ourselves it is to God." (2 Cor. v. 13.) Note, 2. That often the servants of God meet with the strongest temptations from, and are most discouraged and molested by, such as are their nearest relations by blood or alliance. It is a great trial to find our kinsmen hindering, instead of helping us forward in the ways of religion; but we must bear it patiently, knowing that not only others of God's children, but Jesus Christ His own and only Son experienced this trial.

22. † And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. 23. † And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27. † No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house.

<sup>22</sup>Matt. ix. 34, x. 25, xii. 24; Luke xi. 15; John vii. 20, viii. 48, 52, x. 20. <sup>23</sup>Matt. xii. 25. <sup>24</sup>Judges xii. 1; 2 Sam. xx. 1, 6. <sup>25</sup>Gen. xiii. 7, xxxvii. 4; Gal. v. 15. <sup>26</sup>Isa. xlix. 24; Matt. xii. 29.

And the scribes . . . . . said, &c. What could they say? Not that He never performed any miracles. Not that His miracles were ever contrary to mercy, benevolence, peace, and every divine virtue. And yet they ascribed the whole system of miraculous works to Satan, as if they did not know that all devilish manifestations are ever malignant, base, and sensual. Consummate malice! Envy makes those whose hearts are possessed of this vice, speak the language of the devil. Calumny is but at a little distance from envy. *How can Satan cast out Satan?* Can we suppose these wicked and malignant spirits, whose business it is to seduce men to ruin, would be willing to exert their power to work miracles, to confirm so holy a religion—a religion so contrary to their design,

and so subversive of their kingdom and interest? This would be wretched policy indeed. Or, if we should suppose them willing, yet, can we think that God, who has them all at His control, would suffer them to counterfeit the great seal of heaven, and annex it to an imposture? (Ex. viii. 18, 19; 2 Thes. ii. 7-12; Rev. xx. 2, 3.)

On verses 22-27 see on Matt. xii. 24-29; Luke xi. 21, 22.

28. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme: 29. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: 30. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit. <sup>1</sup>Matt. xii. 31; Luke xii. 30; Heb. x. 26; 1 John v. 16. <sup>2</sup>John x. 20.

See on Matt. xii. 31, 32; Luke xii. 10.

As there is but one Godhead, so there is no sin against God—and all sin is so—but it is also against the whole Trinity. But, as there are certain attributes proper to every person of the Trinity, so there are certain sins, more directly against the several properties and attributes of those persons, and consequently against the persons themselves. Sins against the Holy Spirit are eminently against goodness and love. (Luke xxii. 69; Col. ii. 3; Rom. xv. 30.) *Is in danger, &c.* This does not imply uncertainty. A better translation would be, *is exposed to, or under sentence of eternal condemnation*, to be pronounced by Christ the Judge, at the last day. (See Matt. xxiii. 33.) “Dreadful truths,” says *Bishop Wilson*, “are not to be forborne, for fear of casting men into despair. They are rather to be often inculcated to force sinners, by the sight of their dangers, to throw themselves into His arms, who is the only refuge of all sinners.” (Jer. vi. 14; 2 Cor. v. 11; Phil.

iii. 18, 19.) *An unclean spirit.* Characterization of Beelzebub, in opposition to the Holy Spirit.

31. <sup>1</sup>There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him. 32. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. 33. And he answered them, saying, <sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xii. 46; Luke viii. 19. <sup>2</sup>2 Cor. v. 16. <sup>3</sup>Matt. vii. 21; John vii. 17; James i. 25; 1 John ii. 17.

On verses 31-35 see on Matt. xii. 46-50; Luke viii. 19-21.

His friends had now arrived, and perhaps were listeners to the remarks just made. *Seek for thee.* As we learn by Matt. xiii. 54, that He soon visited Nazareth, it is very probable that the object of this visit was to prevail on Him to come to the home of His childhood. *And he looked round about.* Mark often gives prominence to the Lord's glance around. Here it is in contrast with the indignant looking around of iii. 5.

*Behold my mother and my brethren*—those toward whom I cherish affection similar to that which is usually cherished toward parents and brothers. *The same is my brother, &c.*—is regarded by me with peculiar affection, an affection similar, as to the interest which it leads me to feel in him, to that which one feels for the nearest relatives. “There stand here the members of a family transcending and surviving this of earth. Filial subjection to the will of my Father in heaven is the indissoluble bond of union between me and all its members, and whosoever enters this hallowed circle becomes to me brother, and sister, and mother.”

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1. What man was found by Jesus in the synagogue? 2. What did He say to him? 3. What did He say to them that watched Him? 4. How was He affected by the hardness of their hearts? 5. How was the withered hand restored? 6. Where did Jesus go? 7. What did He say to His disciples? 8. What is said of the unclean spirits? 9. How many disciples did He ordain? 10. For what purpose? 11. Name them. 12. What did the scribes say about our Saviour? 13. How did He answer them? 14. Explain verses 28 and 29. 15. How are we to understand the words, “Behold my mother and my brethren!”

## CHAPTER IV.

1 *The parable of the sower, 14 and the meaning thereof.*  
 21 *We must communicate the light of our knowledge to others.* 26 *The parable of the seed growing secretly,*  
 30 *and of the mustard seed.* 33 *Christ stilleth the tempest on the sea.*

AND he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea, and the whole multitude was by the sea, on the land. 2. And he taught them many things by parables, band said unto them in his doctrine.  
 \*Matt. xiii. 1: Luke viii. 4. †Chap. xii. 33.

*And he began again to teach by the sea side.*

Another emphatic reference to the contrast of this with His customary course of teaching, and as an expression of His decided breach with the Pharisees. *A great multitude*; or, according to another well-supported reading, "a mighty," or "immense multitude." *So that he entered into a ship*—rather, "into the ship," meaning the one mentioned in iii. 9. *Sat in the sea*, that is, He sat in the boat, and the boat was in the sea. Here is a representation of those peculiar tossings and trials to which ministers are exposed, while it is the more easy lot of others to sit, comparatively at ease, on the shore. (Matt. xxvi. 36; 1 Cor. iv. 9.)

*By parables.* The word *parable* is derived from a Greek word signifying "to compare together," and denotes a similitude taken from a natural object, to illustrate a spiritual or moral subject. The parabolical, enigmatical, figurative and sententious way of speaking, was the language of the Eastern sages and learned men. The *origin* of parables, so far as can be traced, appears to have been with the Hebrews. *In his doctrine, i. e.*, in His teaching.

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 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.  
 \*John xv. 5; Col. i. 6.

Verses 3-9: see on Matt. xiii. 1-9, and Luke viii. 4-8, 15.

*Hearken.* Pronounced loudly to show the importance of what He was about to say, and to quiet the people, so that the very beginning of His discourse might not

be lost. *A sower*—the Divine speaker Himself. The soil "by the way-side" is hard and unbroken, wholly unfit, therefore, to receive the seed. The plow must first open the furrows. And yet, observe, that this is not *all* the evil. There is danger from without also. "The fowls of the air" are on the watch to carry away the seed as soon as it has fallen. *Stony ground.* Not a hard, hopeless surface, on which it would have been mere mockery to cast the seed. There is earth, but it has no *depth*, and consequently no *moisture*. (Luke viii. 6.) *Some fell among thorns, &c.*, for in this fallen world weeds grow faster than wheat, and wicked things prosper more, unfortunately we may say, than holy, pure and just things, and the result was, that the nettles, thorns and thistles overshadowed and choked the good seed. *Other fell on good ground, &c.* Observe the gradation. The seed sown in the highway comes not up at all; the seed sown upon stony ground comes up, but increaseth not; the seed sown among thorns increaseth, but bears no fruit; the seed sown on good ground brings forth fruit, *in some thirty, &c.* Here only the last of the four sorts of ground on which the seed was sown proved faithful, but among the servants two improved their talents or pounds, and one only buried them (Matt. xxv. 18; Luke xix. 20), and of the virgins, the wise and the foolish were equal. (Matt. xxv. 2.) So that nothing certain can be inferred from the relative proportions.

This version of the parable of the sower slightly differs, in some of the details, from Matthew's, but those deviations teach us that the Evangelists did not copy from each other. We find that people's education, business, station in life, and habits of thought, will all very much give tone, shape, peculiarity and distinctiveness to their respective narratives of any particular event. Matthew was a publican, Luke was a learned physician, John was an illiterate Hebrew, and Mark is supposed to have been a more learned man. Each, therefore, gives a varied verbal narrative of the same great transaction, but all were

guided and inspired by the overruling Spirit to record, in all their fullness, the wonderful words of Him who spake as never man spake.

10. ¶ 4 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. 11. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12. ¶ That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. 13. And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

¶ Matt. xlii. 10. ¶ 1 Cor. v. 12; Col. iv. 5; 1 Thes. iv. 12; 1 Tim. iii. 7. ¶ Isa. vi. 9; Matt. xlii. 14; Acts xxviii. 26; Rom. xi. 8. ¶ Matt. xlii. 19.

When he was alone, in respect to the multitude whom He had been teaching. His disciples were with Him. *Asked of him the parable*—the explanation of the parable. *Asked him of the parable*. Parables were used for a double, and even an opposite, purpose. They serve as a cloak and covering, and they moreover serve as a light and illustration. (Ex. xiv. 20; Hos. xiv. 9.) *Unto you it is given*, &c. (See on Matt. xlii. 11.) *Them 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*, &c. (See on Matt. xlii. 14, 15.) The conjunction *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 presents the truth to them in parables, which only the sincere inquirer after truth can understand. *Lest*. This *lest* depends upon their active ignoring of the truth. They ignore *lest* they should be converted. *Know ye not this parable?* The first parable of the kingdom is the basis of all the rest. If they understood not this, they could not understand any that followed. If they had the explanation of this, they had the key for the

understanding of all others. There is evidently here an intimation of the connection of all the parables in the idea of the kingdom of heaven, so that with the explanation of this one, all were explained.

14. ¶ The sower soweth the word. 15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground: who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness: 17. And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

Verses 14–20: see on Matt. xlii. 18–23; Luke viii. 4, 8, 15.

*By the way side*. They who walk by the way side, must needs suffer from a multitude of distractions. Their minds must wander in proportion to the numerous and various objects which pass before them. The marked antithesis between the *immediate* reception and the *immediate* rejection is to be much observed. Grace, in almost every case, is slow and progressive; for, in the human heart it has much to contend against. *Deceitfulness of riches*. Consider avarice in itself, and nothing appears more base and contemptible, yet dragging along with it the ideas of power, place and security, it changes its nature, and becomes a provident provision. . . . This is one species of that *deceit*, which sin obtrudes upon its votaries, in which it is assisted by the very nature of sin itself. (See xiv. 4.) Every *care* must be considered as *worldly*, which has not some tendency to piety and the worship of God, even though it be not mixed up with what is positively prohibited. (Luke xiv. 19, 20, 30.)

*Sown on good ground*. "Now, that you may be fruitful," says *Leighton*, "examine well your own hearts. Pluck up, weed out, for there are still thorns. Some will grow, but he is the happiest man who hath the sharpest eye and the busiest hand, spying them out, and plucking them up. And above all, pray, pray before, after, and in hearing. Dart up desires to God. He is the Lord of the harvest, whose influence doeth all. The difference of the soil

makes, indeed, the difference of success; but the Lord hath the privilege of bettering the soil. He who framed the heart, changes it when and how He will. There is a curse on all grounds, naturally, which fell on the earth for man's sake, but fell more on the ground of man's own heart within him. 'Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth.' (Gen. iii. 18.) Now it is He that denounceth that curse, who alone hath power to remove it. He is both the sovereign owner of the seed, and the changer of the soil; He turns a wilderness into Carmel by His Spirit, and no ground, no heart, can be good, till He changes it."

21. ¶ And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? 22. ¶ For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested, neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. 23. ¶ If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear. ¶ With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you, and unto you that hear shall more be given. 25. ¶ For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. 1. Matt. v. 15; Luke viii. 16, xi. 32. 2. Matt. x. 26; Luke xii. 2. 3. Matt. xi. 15, verse 9. 4. Matt. vii. 2; Luke vi. 38. 5. Matt. xiii. 12, xxv. 29; Luke viii. 18, xix. 26. See notes on all these verses.

Is a candle, &c. The general connection is this: I explain to you these parables, and give you instruction in all things pertaining to the Gospel of salvation. You are to consider yourselves depositaries of truth; and as men do not light a candle or lamp to conceal its rays by placing it under a bushel, neither are you to withhold from others the knowledge of the truths, which I am now imparting to you. *Under a bed.* This is referred by some to a sort of couch or sofa, having a cavity beneath it, in which a candlestick might be placed. Others, more correctly, refer it to the couch or triclinalium, on which they reclined at meals, the idea being that a lighted candle is not placed *under*, but *upon* the table. Compare vii. 4, where the word has this meaning. *Manifested.* No part of the Saviour's instructions was intended to be always kept in obscurity; His design was, that in due time the truths which He was communicating should be distinctly and fully apprehended. When that time should arrive, His disciples were to be employed in the work of announcing and explaining His doctrines to the world. *If any man have ears to hear, &c.* For this reason we have two ears, and one tongue, that we should hear much, and speak little. (James i. 19.)

*Take heed what ye hear.* Sight, the nobler sense, governs hearing; the eye, not the ear, moves. *What—ye hear the Word of God, value this highly.* *More be given,* that ye may be not merely hearers, but more and more partakers. *For he that hath, &c.* (See on Matt. xiii. 12, xxv. 29; Luke viii. 18, xix. 26.) "God therefore gives, because He has given, making His former favors arguments for more. Man, therefore, shuts his hand, because He hath opened it. There is no such way to procure more from God, as to urge Him with what He hath done. All God's blessings are profitable and excellent, not so much in themselves as that they are inducements to greater."—*Bishop Hall.*

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. 1. Matt. xiii. 24. 2. Rev. xiv. 15.

*And he said, &c.* This parable is peculiar to Mark. The position which it occupies throws some light upon its design. The impression which the parable of the sower produced upon the hearts of the hearers, and especially of the Apostles, could scarcely be otherwise than sad and discouraging, for if a sower, with all diligence and fidelity, had yet to find that so much seed should fail to bring forth fruit to perfection, therefore his labor had been in vain, he was bound to a heartless task. But in order to prevent such an effect, and strengthen His Apostles, as well as all teachers of the Gospel, with joyful hopes, stimulate them to continued fidelity, and direct their eye to the happy result in which their labors were certain to issue, the Lord delivered this parable.

*So is the kingdom of God, &c.* In the parable of the sower, it is said that the sower sows *his seed*, but here the word is only named *seed*, in general; we must, therefore, by the *sower* understand Christ, Himself, the author and proprietor of the word, while here Christ cannot be represented under the *man* spoken of; what is said of Him can only be understood of the human teachers of the Divine word. It cannot 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.

*As if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, &c.* At this point the likeness between the natural and the spiritual is exact and obvious. When we have made the Gospel of Christ known to some in whom we are interested, we are precisely in the condition of the agriculturist who has committed his seed to the ground. If we think of the matter when we lie down, or when we awake, we discover, perhaps with pain, that we do not know whether the seed is swelling and springing or not; and that though we knew its condition we could not reach it to stimulate the process. It is out of our hands and out of our sight. It is not, however, out of mind when it is out of sight, and our own helplessness may draw forth a more eager prayer to the Almighty Helper. In this way it is when we are weak that we become strong; it is when we are made most keenly sensible of our own weakness, that we cast our care most fully on the Lord. The law that shuts the sown seed out from us, shuts it in with God. One door closes, but the closing which hides the seed in its seed-bed from our eyes and separates it from our hands, leaves it open to His sight, and pliant to His power. The moment that the seed is sown, He takes it out of our sight, but then and thereby He brings it into His own. It is away from us and with God. *For the earth, &c.* This explains and illustrates the closing remark of the preceding verse. *Of herself, i. e., self-moved, spon-*

aneously. Man's agency is limited to the preparation of the soil and sowing of the seed. The quickening and energizing power resides in the earth itself according to the great and immutable laws of the Author of nature.

*First the blade, &c.* How beautiful does the green blade appear in the midst of the melting snow, and after the winter's storms are hushed into quiet and repose! And how beautiful does the green blade of godly fear appear as it springs forth in the life of one whose whole life has been one continued storm of reckless pride and passion! How silently does the green blade come forth from the bosom of the earth! And with what noiseless steps does Divine mercy come to the sinner's heart to make way for the sinner's Friend! How gradually does the green blade show itself! Though the eye were fixed upon the earth both night and day, the exact moment when it appeared could not be ascertained. And how hard is it for the Christian to tell the precise hour when the Omnipotent finger of God's Spirit first touched his heart, the first dew drop of heaven's mercy distilled upon his spirit! With what a mysterious yet invincible power does the green blade force its way through the heavy clods which cover it and hide it from view! So the plants of righteousness, though they may be heavily weighed by a body of sin and death, by manifold sorrows, temptations and fears, will nevertheless grow upward toward the great Source of eternal day.

*Then the ear.* After the blade, comes the ear pregnant with hope. On the first appearance of the blade, its true character might have been doubted by the uneducated eye, but now the rounded bulbs at once declare its worth to man, and wherever the green blade of earnest prayer shows itself with sorrow for sin, there, sooner or later, the other Christian graces will come forth, the knowledge imparted will become clearer, the character will become consolidated, and the man in Christ will appear strong to bear and do the will of God. *After that the full corn in the ear.* The process of development in the kingdom of grace is one and the same with the kingdom of nature—slow, gradual

and progressive; hence in knowledge, holiness, humility, and all the graces of the Christian life, there are many degrees. (1 John ii. 13, 14; Rom. xv. 1; Eph. iv. 13.) Consider the lovely picture of progressive growth in goodness which Peter supplies in his second epistle, i. 5-8, where it will be observed, Faith is the root, and charity the full corn in the ear.

*But when the fruit is brought forth, &c.*—literally, *yields or presents itself* for the harvest, *i. e.*, is ripe for the sickle. *He putteth in the sickle, &c.* In some cases the harvest and the reaping point to the end of the world and the awards of the judgment, as for example, in Matt. xiii. 39. But in other cases, the reaping of the ripened grain is employed to represent that success in the winning of souls, which human ministers of the word may obtain and enjoy. (See Ps. cxvii. 6; John iv. 35, 36; Matt. ix. 37, 38.)

*The harvest is come.* It is not the end of the world, it is not even the close of a Christian life in the world. There is a ripening and a fruit-bearing while life in the body lasts. There is also a reaping and an enjoying of the harvest by those who sow the seed, or their successors. The announcement, "One soweth and another reapeth," clearly implies that the same one who sows may also, to some extent, reap. There is part of both: a sower gathers some of the fruit of his labor in his own life-time, and some of it is gathered by others after he has departed. Here is a lesson for ministers and teachers. The Lord, who sends them out to sow, expects that they will look and long for fruit, and be disappointed if it does not appear.

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 so vñ 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.*"  
 ¶ Matt. xiii. 31; Luke xiii. 18; Acts ii. 41, iv. 4, v. 14, xix. 20.

*It is like a grain of mustard seed, &c.* In the parable of the sower, the seed scattered yielded a return to the husbandman in only one of the four kinds of soil on which it fell. This itself might have left an impression on the minds of Christ's hearers, that His Gospel must be deficient in

power, if it proved successful in only one out of four classes of mankind. Our Lord, therefore, in this parable, sets before the people the inherent power of "the kingdom of God." It may seem at first to find little acceptance with man, but it will finally prevail throughout the earth. The words *less than all the seeds, &c.*, 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. The Lord, in His popular teaching, adhered to the popular language. The train of thought in the parable is, the progressive development of Christianity: 1. In it is a small beginning, (the birth of the Son of man in Bethlehem.) 2. Gradual in its progress. 3. Great and glorious in its termination. Great—at last one flock, the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord, no people any more in darkness and the shadow of death, the unbelieving Israel converted, and the vain idols, with their altars connected therewith, completely and forever cast away.

Verses 30-32: see on Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Luke xiii. 18, 19.

33. ¶ And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.  
 ¶ Matt. xiii. 34; John xvi. 12.

Had this been said in the corresponding passage of Matthew (on which see Notes), we should have concluded that what that Evangelist recorded, was but a specimen of other parables spoken on the same occasion. But Matthew (xiii. 34) says, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables," and as Mark records only some of the parables which Matthew gives, we are warranted to infer that the "many such parables" alluded to here, mean no more than the full complement of them which we find in Matthew.

*As they were able to hear it.* Jesus accommodated Himself in His teaching, to the ability of the people. He knew their ignorance and their prepossessions, and like a wise, affectionate teacher, He adapted His instructions to their necessities and their capacities. This remark of the Evangelist confirms the view presented in verse

12, and shows that the Saviour was not harsh, and did not deal in vengeance with the ignorant, misjudging multitude, but in a patient and condescending manner sought to gain a lodgment in their hearts for the great principles of His religion. How worthy an example for ministers of the Gospel, for parents, and for all who are engaged in the work of religious instruction!

34. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

*He expounded all things to his disciples.* That they might be capable of instructing others. *Outside hearers*, those who do not come into *close fellowship* with the true disciples of Christ, have seldom more than a *superficial* knowledge of Divine things. In the fellowship of the saints, where Jesus the teacher is always to be found, everything is made *plain*, for the secret of the Lord is with them who fear Him.

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?

\*Matt. viii. 18, 23; Luke viii. 22. †Jonah i. 6. ‡Ps. xlv. 1, 3; Isa. xliii. 2.

Verses 35-41: see on Matt. viii. 23-27; Luke viii. 22-5.

*The same day, &c.* This was the evening of the day in which He spake the preceding parables. *Let us pass over, &c.* When Jesus passes over the sea, the Psalm is fulfilled, "The Lord is upon many waters." (Ps. xxix. 3.) When He scatters the waves before Him, Habakkuk is accomplished: "Thou didst walk through the sea, through the heap of great waters." (Hab. iii. 15.) When the sea is cut off at His threatening voice, Nahum also is found true: "He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry." (Nah. i. 4.) *They took him even as he was in the ship*, just as He then was, without waiting to make any particular preparation for the tour, and without any intermission of His labors. *With him—* with Jesus. *Little ships*—and in them men. *A great storm of wind*, a tempest of wind.

*So that it was now full*, rather, "so that it was already filling."

If the Lord were always to indulge us with prosperity and abundance of the good things of this life, and if we were, in this mortal state, to suffer no tribulations, no straits and difficulties, would we not be ready to pronounce temporal advantages our chief good, so as to desire nothing better at the hands of God? Wherefore God infuses the bitterness of afflictions into this life, the joys of which are intermixed with evil, that He might put us upon seeking after another life, which has joys free from all danger. (Deut. xxxii. 11; Job ii. 10; Eccl. vii. 14; 2 Thes. i. 5-7.)

*The hinder part*, where the helm is. *A pillow*, probably a part of the ship. *Carest thou not, &c.* Unbelief and fear made them sadly forget their place, to speak so. When those accustomed to fish upon that deep thus spake, the danger must have been imminent. They say nothing of what would become of *Him*, if they perished, nor think whether, if He could not perish, it was likely He would let this happen to them; but they hardly knew what they said.

*And he arose, and rebuked the wind, &c.* "Creation's Sealord, and creation's Landlord," says an eminent divine, "was there, and the winds and waves recognized the voice that said, 'Let them be,' and they that became calm when He so willed it. And this He did, not as a mere fact, but as an earnest of that day when nature shall be restored to her pristine peace, order and harmony; when the groans and travails of creation shall cease, and that which is nature's normal condition—a condition of quiet and calm—shall be nature's enjoyment again, and we shall not only recognize Him as One who rebukes the winds and waves, and both obeying Him, but we shall recognize Him who has made and remade the sea and the dry land, and restored all nature by a genesis more glorious than its first genesis, to that order, beauty and harmony which it lost by sin. I believe that this earth is not to be given up to Satan. It is a deranged world, it is grievously disturbed, there is fever in its organ-

ization, because sin has smitten it, but the great Lord who made it will come to it again, and He will expunge from it all its ills, its poison and its fever, and make this orb, which has so many magnificent traces of its primeval grandeur, one of the brightest and most beautiful in the whole celestial firmament, reflecting not only as other orbs do the God who made it, but the

Christ that also redeemed it." *What manner of man is this, &c.* We may exclaim of an inner work, "What manner of man is this, that the winds of human prejudice and the waves of human passion obey Him?" Whosoever is able to change the course of nature is the Lord of nature, and He that is so made it, and He that created it is God. (See Ps. lxxii. 18, civ. 6-9.)

1. Where did Christ again teach? 2. What parable did He speak to the multitude by the sea-side? 3. Repeat this parable. 4. Explain verses 11 and 12. 5. Who is the "sower?" 6. State the various kinds of hearers of the Word which are described. 7. What direction is given in reference to hearing? 8. What parable was next spoken? 9. To what is "the kingdom of God" compared? 10. When and where did the storm occur? 11. What course did the disciples pursue? 12. What did Jesus do and say?

## CHAPTER V.

1 *Christ delivering the possessed of the legion of devils, 13 they enter into the swine. 25 He healeth the woman of the bloody issue, 35 and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.*

**A**ND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.  
\*Matt. viii. 26; Luke viii. 26.

*Gadarenes.* Gadara was the principal city of the district. *Josephus*, in his Wars of the Jews, calls Gadara the metropolis of Perea; by this name well known to the Gentiles.

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 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.

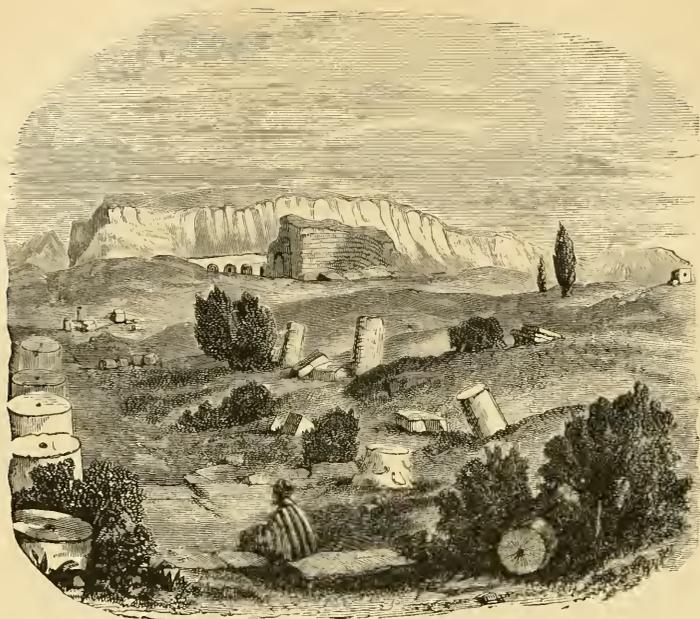
*With an unclean spirit.* Before the fall the unclean spirit was incorporated with the serpent, but now with man himself. He seizes on the external organs and internal faculties, and rules them at his pleasure. *Dwelling among the tombs.* In the East, the receptacles of the dead are always situated at some distance from the abodes of the living. *Captain Light*, who traveled over the scene of our Lord's interview with the two demoniacs, describes the tombs as still existing in the form of caverns cut in the live rock, like those at Petra—as wild and sequestered

solitudes, divided into a number of bare and open niches, well suited to be places of refuge to those unhappy lunatics, for whom the benevolence of antiquity had not provided a better asylum. An inveterate habit of uncleanness frequently extinguishes all the principles of the Christian life, and an unchaste soul dwells in its body as in a loathsome sepulchre, where there is nothing but the remains of worms and corruption. This is but too often literally true. *Fetters*, for the hands; *chains*, for the feet or ankles. *Tame him*, overpower or subdue him, so as to prevent his inflicting injuries upon himself and others. *Crying, and cutting himself, &c.* Fearful picture of a demoniac terror—having reached the extreme point of madness, down to rending his own flesh. After all, nothing can work us mischief except ourselves. The harm that we sustain, we carry about with us, and never are real sufferers but by our own fault. (Acts xvi. 28.)

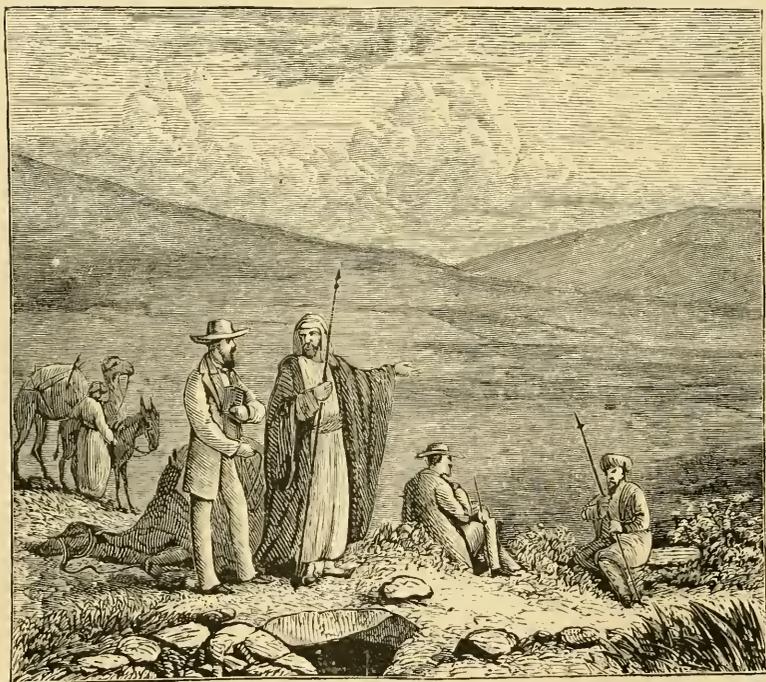
6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, 7. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8. (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.) 9. And he asked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

*Saw Jesus . . . ran.* A traveler not far





GADARA.



JACOB'S WELL.

from this region describes a similar scene near Lebanon: "The silence of night was now broken by fierce yells and howlings, which I discovered proceeded from a naked maniac, who was fighting with some wild dogs for a bone. The moment he perceived me he left his canine comrades, and, bounding along with rapid strides, seized my horse's bridle, and almost forced him backward over the cliff."—*Warburton's Crescent and the Cross. Worshipped Him.* The spirit recognized with a supernatural discernment our Lord's superior nature, and did him a reverence.

*Jesus, thou Son, &c.* The truth which had only been testified in Matthew's Gospel by the Father from heaven (iii. 17), and which Satan had in vain endeavored to assail, viz.: that Jesus, the virgin's son, Emmanuel, is truly the *Son of the most high God*—the devils have since understood, earlier and better than men. But while they know it they tremble before Him! *I adjure thee, &c.*—a strong expression of entreaty or adjuration. *Torment me not.* Behold the *tormentor* anticipating, dreading, and entreating exemption from *torment!* (*For he said unto him, i. e., before the unclean spirit cried out, Come out of the man, unclean spirit!*) Ordinarily, the obedience to a command of this nature was immediate. But here a certain delay is permitted, the more signally to manifest the power of Christ, and accomplish His purposes.

*What is thy name?* This is the only instance in which the Lord asked an unclean spirit concerning his distinctive name. The object of this question was to extort an acknowledgment of the virulence of demoniacal power, by which this victim was enthralled. *My name, &c. My name* (not *our* name). *Legion* was the name of a division in the Roman armies, comprising a few thousands of men. Hence the word came to be used indefinitely for a *multitude*. They are *many*, and yet *one* spirit of wickedness among them all. Every man may find in himself sin wrapped up in sin, "a body of sin." (Rom. vi. 6, vii. 8.) As the Apostle says of the natural body, "there are many members, but one body" (1 Cor. xii. 20), so we may say of our sin, it has a wanton eye, a

gripping hand, an itching ear, an insatiable heart, and feet swift to shed blood, and yet it is but "one body" of sin. (vii. 20-23; Gal. v. 19-22.)

"These Gadarenes or Gergesenes (says *Stier*) disclose to us a dark and awful province of humanity, as lying under the ravages of the devil, the counterpart of which, at least in moral life, if not in such horrible manifestations of bodily possession, may be found in Christendom to the present day—to say nothing of its full analogies in heathenism. But over this region, also, *Jesus rules, the Son of God!* To believe and to understand this is the main concern, and we would not bury or obscure this fundamental truth by any irrelevant discussions!"

11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea. 14. And they that fed the swine fled and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15. And they came 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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. viii. 34; Acts xvi. 39. <sup>2</sup>Luke viii. 33.

On verses 1-20: see on Matt. viii. 28-34; Luke viii. 26, &c.

*And forthwith Jesus gave them leave.* Such ingenious reasons as the following have been assigned for this: That the Lord would hereby give the most convincing evidence of the entire dependence of all spirits upon His word, and with this give palpable assurance to all Sadducees of the existence of such spirits, so also punish the probably Jewish owners of these swine; further, test the Gadarenes, how they would receive the destruction of their property; finally, teach the value of the spirit of man, his healing being well worth some two thousand swine. We have no need, however, of any of these reasons, true or otherwise, of this sublime transaction. The deed itself is its own justification. They did not then sue our Lord for any loss they suffered in the de-

struction of the swine, no more will we; we will not, indeed, dare to speak boldly concerning it. Far more fearful than the hearing of this devilish request, is the Lord granting to the Gergesenes *their* supplication.

*And they began to pray him to depart, &c.* The devil would seem to have entered into the hearts of the Gadarenes, as well as into the bodies of the swine. (John xiii. 27.) The Gadarenes, moreover, now take the place of the demoniac, only with this wretched aggravation of their misery, that, whereas he avoided the company of man, they shun and deprecate the presence of the Lord. Oh! the accursed power of covetousness, in making men mad! (Job xxi. 14; Matt. xiii. 58; John iii. 18-22; 1 Tim. vi. 1-12.)

*And when he was come into the ship.* He who does not desire Jesus, as He is and as He acts, the Ruler of hell, the Lord of nature, the Physician and Healer of men, may beseech Him to depart, whether courteously or ungraciously, and have his request granted. *Prayed him that he might be with him.* What a contrast does this restored man's desire to be *with* Christ, and Christ with him, offer to the stupid and swinish prayer of the Gadarenes, that He should *depart out of their coasts!* Like Mary, he chose "the good part." Here was proof indeed of his restoration to a *right mind* (Ps. cxi. 10, cvii. 43.) For to be *with* Christ is the sum and substance of happiness in this life and in heavenly glory. While Christ is with us, in this life, He "keeps us from evil" (John xvii. 12), and "gives us peace" (Matt. xi. 28). After death, in heaven, we shall "ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes. iv. 17, 18). "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me, where I am, that they may see my glory!" (John xvii. 24.) Who does not desire and *pray that he might be with Jesus?* (Ps. lxxiii. 21-25; Ruth i. 16, 17; Acts iii. 11; Phil. i. 23.)

*Go home to thy friends,* from whom thou hast been so long estranged. Not, indeed, with a prudent care against relapse, and in order to his full recovery, which would be prevented by his being alone, for he wished to go with Jesus, and the devils were clean gone from him. Here we see the gentle

graciousness of our Lord, which desires the return home of this man, thus restored to his family. *Tell them how great things, &c.* It is not now, as sometimes, when it was forbidden to make it known; here, upon the outskirts of the Jewish land, there was no danger to be obviated. The poor people of Decapolis shall have, though against their will, a testimony and living monument of His power—one who had lived among themselves. The first act God requires of a convert is, "Be fruitful." The good man's goodness lies not hidden in himself alone; he is still strengthening his weaker brother. How soon would the world and Christianity fail, if there were not propagation both of it and man? Good works and good instructions are the generative acts of the soul; out of which spring new prosperity to the Church and Gospel. (Luke xxii. 32; John i. 40, 41, 45; xv. 16; Rom. i. 11; James v. 19, 20.)

*How great things Jesus had done for him.* The great graces he had received of Jesus. A thankful heart can, with difficulty, confine itself within the narrow bounds of gratitude prescribed to it. It is just to publish those graces, which, being preceded by heinous sins, cannot be ascribed to anything but the pure mercy of God, and which are visibly counterbalanced by our demerits. It is the safer way to conceal such as may be looked on as the reward of great fidelity, in making a good use of those which a man has received before.

21. <sup>a</sup>And when Jesus was passing over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; and he was nigh unto the sea. 22. <sup>b</sup>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. <sup>c</sup>And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed: and she shall live.* 24. <sup>d</sup>And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

<sup>a</sup>Matt. ix. 1; Luke viii. 40. <sup>b</sup>Matt. ix. 18; Luke viii. 41.

*Passed over again, &c.* Though Christ, despised by the Gergesenes, did, in His justice, depart from them, yet, as the sea gains in one place what it loses in another, His abundant mercy builds up more in Capernaum than His justice throws down amongst the Gergesenes. Because they drove Him away, in judgment He went from them; but in mercy He went to others, who had not entreated Him to come. (Isa. lxxv. 1; Acts xiii. 46; Rom.

xi. 19-29.) *Jairus*. The insertion of proper names in the Gospel history is a great proof of its veracity. (Acts xxvi. 26.) *My little daughter*, &c. We do not regret the fall of the sweet and delightful blossoms of our plants and trees, though they soon drop off in such multitudes, because the fruit which succeeds is attended with more substantial enjoyment. (2 Sam. xii. 23.) This descending to the grave is the lot of all men; neither doth God respect the person of any man. (2 Sam. xiv. 14.) The rich is not protected for favor, nor the poor for pity; the old man is not revered for his age, nor the infant regarded for his tenderness. Youth and beauty, learning and prudence, wit and strength, lie down equally in the dishonour of the grave. (Isa. lvii. 1, 2; Rom. v. 12-21; Heb. ix. 27.)

25. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood for twelve years, 26. And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27. When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. 28. For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. 29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. 30. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? 31. And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. Lev. xv. 25; Matt. ix. 20. <sup>a</sup>Luke vi. 19, viii. 46. <sup>b</sup>Matt. ix. 22; chap. x. 52; Acts xiv. 9.

*A certain woman*. She intercepts Him as He passes on, followed by a pressing crowd, to the house of Jairus. *Nothing bettered*. The sciences produce no consolation in the time of affliction; but the knowledge of Christianity is a comfort, both in adversity and in the defect of all other knowledge. (Job xvi. 2; John vi. 68.) Though indirectly, yet how repeatedly and forcibly are we reminded of our own spiritual helplessness, and of the vanity of trusting in others! The demoniac—none could *bind* him, none could *take* him. This hemorrhousa—none could *cure* her. Man's treatment rather made her worse, and so she came to feel her need of a Divine Physician, the simple touch of whose clothes could at once "make her whole." (ii. 17; Phil. iii. 7-12.)

*Came in the press behind*. Let nothing keep you back from the throne of Grace.

If you doubt whether the work is yet begun in you, pray that it may be begun. If you cannot go to God *with* a broken heart, go to Him *for* a broken heart. (Gen. xxxii. 26; Job xv. 4.) *Touched his garment*. She seemed to consider His body entirely charged with healing power. *Virtue*—power. This is a remarkable expression. It seems to imply that faith would draw the healing power from Jesus almost without His volition! How unlike the unbelief of His own countrymen, which compelled the "virtue" to stay within Him, so that He could scarce do a miracle among them. But in both cases the operation was really *through* the consent of His will. *Who touched my clothes?* The judge who asks the prisoner whether he is guilty or not guilty, really knows, perhaps, but he will none the less put him to the answer. The Lord knew, but he must make her reveal herself.

*And he looked round about to see her*, &c. Jesus Christ takes more notice of a soul which seeks him in silence, in the spirit of faith, and by humble and secret ways, than of a multitude of mere professors of religion, who do nothing but through custom, and in the way of external devotion. He seeks those in His turn who have sought Him, and who could not have done it but by His grace; that is to say, second graces crown the first. He hides the operations of His grace under appearances altogether human, because this is the time to establish the belief of it, not to unfold its mysteries, and to manifest its glory.

*The woman fearing and trembling*, as a poor and timid woman would do, who had been the subject of such a sudden and wondrous cure, and dreaded His displeasure for such presumption on her part, and *knowing what was done* in her, was thereby inspired with awe. *Fell down before Him*. Afflictions are intended to humble us. All is humility in that kingdom, wherein God dwells. Here, in this fallen world, the meanest sinner lifts up himself against Him; but there the loftiest archangels cast down their crowns, and prostrate themselves before His footstool. (Ex. x. 3; Job xlii. 5, 6; Isa. ii. 10, 11, 17.) *All the truth*, respecting the affair in question. (See Luke viii. 47.) *Thy faith*, &c. The phrase "*hath*

made thee whole," as followed by "Be whole of thy plague," may point to the continued effect of faith and justification, as witnessed in the sanctification of the hearts and lives of God's people. Something like this may be gathered from the 43rd verse of this chapter, and from i. 42. (Rom. viii. 30; Ps. li. 9, 10, ciii. 3.) *Go into peace, literally, go away into peace, i. e., into the enjoyment of every kind of good. What a glorious dismissal from the lips of Him who is "our Peace!"*

35. i. While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further? 36. As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 40. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha-cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise. 42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked, for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. 43. And when he charged them straitly that no man should know it, and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

<sup>a</sup>Luke viii. 49. <sup>b</sup>John xi. 11. <sup>c</sup>Acts ix. 40. <sup>d</sup>Matt. viii. 47; ix. 39; xii. 10; xvii. 9; chap. iii. 12; Luke v. 14.

*Why troublest thou the Master*—the Teacher, any further? Jesus, knowing how the heart of the agonized father would sink at the tidings, and the reflections at the delay which would be apt to rise in his mind, hastens to reassure him, and in His accustomed style—*Be not afraid, only believe*—words of unchanging preciousness and power! *John the brother of James.* Mark wrote his Gospel not long after our Lord's ascension, at a time, when the remembrance of the martyrdom of James was fresh in men's minds, so as to render James more generally known than John. (vi. 3; Acts xii. 2.)

*Then that wept and wailed greatly.* "Death at hand," says Cecil, "should be death in view. Let us consider our prospects from this house of sorrow, as the inhabitants of a present and future world. Many suppose that they can best contemplate the present world by crowding the house of mirth: their whole conduct however shows that it makes them too giddy for serious observation. But look at the *deceased*, and contemplate present things; his day, a hand-breadth; his

beauty, 'consumed like a moth-eaten garment;' his cares and pleasures, 'a dream;' his years, 'a tale;' his strength, 'labor and sorrow.' So soon is the whole cut off and fled, that we cannot help repeating with the Psalmist the 39th and 90th Psalms, and with the Apostle James, 'What is your life, &c.' (iv. 14; Eccl. ii. 4; xii. 1-9)."

*Laughed*—sadly and without insolence. *Put out*—wonderful authority in the house of an apparent stranger. *The father*—therefore there were present three disciples, and three of the family; no more. (comp. verse 43.)

*Talitha-cumi.* An Aramean or Syro-Chaldaic word, the ordinary dialect of the people; *talitha* a term of endearment, *my little girl, "come, my child;" cumi, arise, rise up.* *Damsel (I say unto thee), arise,* was the simple language in which Jesus performed a deed which, in dignity and power, might rival the creation of a universe. And often thus calmly, and quietly, and unobtrusively, He still acts, by His Divine Spirit, when the yet greater work of the spiritual resurrection of a soul, dead in trespasses and sins, is to be effected. Oftentimes—how often none can tell—a single discourse, a sentence, yea, even a word, has been blessed to this great and wonderful end; no effort visible, no display of majesty and power, except to the happy soul thus raised to spiritual life. As in the miracle before us, Jesus took the damsel by the hand, when He said unto her, *Arise,* so now, the word of Christ's power must be accompanied by the hand of His grace, ere the miracle of mercy can be wrought.

*And straightway, the damsel arose, &c.* The damsel lying in the house, rises in the presence of few witnesses, to whom it is earnestly given in charge not to divulge it. (Luke viii. 56.) The *young man*, carried *beyond the gate*, is raised in the presence of a large company of persons looking on. (Luke vii. 12.) Lazarus *called out of his grave*, appeared to such vast multitudes, that on account of the report of those who had seen him, many went to meet the Lord with palms in their hands, and because of Lazarus, believed on Him. (Acts x. 40, 41.) These three

examples (1 Kings xvii. 22; 2 Kings iv. 35; xiii. 21) were so many confirmations, under the Law, of a resurrection to life after death; and we have three to equal them under the Gospel. (Luke vii; John xi.) . . . But the three former, and these also, came far short of the resurrection of Him who raised them. *That no man should know it.* This injunction was doubtless merely a temporary one, on account of some existing circumstances. Jesus was not anxious that all His deeds of benevolence should be publicly known and celebrated; and the current of popular favor, which would be increased by His miracles, needed to be regulated with much prudence.

1. Into what country did Jesus and His disciples come? 2. Who met them? 3. What did this man do? 4. How did Jesus deliver him? 5. What did the devils ask? 6. What became of the unclean spirits? 7. What was the effect of this miracle? 8. What account is given of Jairus? 9. What of the woman with "an issue of blood?" 10. What are the particulars of the restoration of Jairus' daughter to life? 11. Why was there a command given "that no man should know it?"

## CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ is contemned of his countrymen.* 7 *He giveth the twelve power over unclean spirits.* 14. *Divers opinions of Christ.* 27 *John Baptist is beheaded,* 29 *and buried.* 30 *The apostles return from preaching.* 31 *The miracle of five loaves and two fishes.* 48 *Christ walketh on the sea;* 53 *and healeth all that touch him.*  
AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.  
\*Matt. xiii. 54; Luke iv. 16.

From thence—from the city of Capernaum. His own country, that is, into Nazareth, the place of His conception and education, in opposition to Capernaum, where He usually abode after the commencement of His public ministry.

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?"—John vi. 42.

This is the *second* visit that we read of Jesus making to Nazareth after He had begun His ministry. Resolved not to lose a single opportunity of usefulness, He taught the great lessons that He came to seal by His blood, in the synagogue, where the Jews permitted a stranger Jew to unfold any lessons that he might desire to teach them. *Astonished, &c.* Those who should know Christ best, are very often most ignorant of Him. People are apt to consider, *not so much what is spoken as by whom it is said.*

3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joseph, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

\*See Matt. xii. 46; Gal. i. 19. \*Matt. xi. 6.

*The carpenter.* That our Lord should have been taught *some* handicraft occupation, the Jewish law required. And what was so likely as that He should be brought up to the trade of His reputed father, which, though lowly, was not degrading? As the curse was pronounced on our first parents and their seed, that "in the sweat of their brow they should eat bread" (Gen. iii. 49), our Saviour must undergo this curse too. *Offended at him*—accomplishing the prediction of Simeon, "Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." (Luke ii. 34.)

4. And Jesus said unto them, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."  
\*Matt. xiii. 57; John iv. 44.

*A prophet, &c.* Here a melancholy page of human nature is unfolded to our view. We are all apt to despise mercies, if we are accustomed to them and have them cheap. It is mournfully true that in religion, more than in anything else, "familiarity breeds contempt." *Among his own kin, &c.* If a minister have faults, they are known there, and he is censured; if he have great talents, they excite envy, and he is opposed; if he make himself familiar, he loses respect, and his influence is thus impaired; if he do not, he is counted proud, and avoided.

5. "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them."

8. And she marvelled because of their unbelief. <sup>b</sup>And he went round about the villages, teaching.  
<sup>a</sup>See Gen. xlx. 22; xxxii. 25; Matt. xlii. 58; chap. ix. 23. <sup>c</sup>Isa. lix. 16. <sup>d</sup>Matt. ix. 35; Luke xlii. 22.

*Save that he laid, &c.* Our Lord's wonderful miracles are recorded with an ease and noble simplicity of style, such as beautifully harmonizes with the unpretending manner in which those miracles were performed. What more stupendous than the starry firmament? Yet what more concise, brief and superhumanly simple, than the record: "He made the stars also." (Gen. i. 3-16; Ps. xxiii. 6, 9.) These verses contain two remarkable instances, in a short space, of the manner in which the feelings and circumstances of men are ascribed to God in the Scriptures. (Conf. iii. 5.) It is said of Him, who is Almighty, that He "*could* do there no mighty work;" it is said of Him, to whom all things were known, that He *marvelled because of their unbelief*. In the single word "unbelief," we have the secret of the everlasting ruin of multitudes of souls. They perish forever, because they *will not* believe. There is nothing beside in earth or heaven that prevents their salvation. Their sins, however many, might all be forgiven. The Father's love is ready to receive them, the blood of Christ to cleanse them, the power of the Spirit to renew them; but a great barrier interposes: they will not believe. (John v. 40.)

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;  
<sup>1</sup>Matt. x. 1; chap. iii. 13, 14; Luke ix. 1.

*The twelve.* Moses sent twelve men of the twelve tribes of Israel, to search the land, and to bring of the fruits thereof. (Num. xiii. 1-20; compare Rev. xxi. 12.) *Send them forth.* None ought to take upon them the office of preaching, till called to it by Christ Himself. *By two and two.* That they might encourage and support each other, and to show that union among the ministers of the Gospel is essential to the promotion of the cause of truth. Reformers in different ages seem to have come in pairs, as Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, Huss and Jerome, Luther and Melancthon, Wesley and Fletcher. (See Eccl. iv. 9, 10; John viii. 17; 1 Cor. xiv. 27.) *Gave them power, &c.* Here, as elsewhere, Mark places the casting out of

demons at the head of the miraculous cures. If Jesus had not been perfectly sure that He could communicate such power, in the free and ample manner in which His disciples were commanded to use it, He must have been lost to all His own designs to send them on such an errand. No impostor would ever have acted a part, such as this, nor is it possible for man to contrive a more certain method of ruining his own credit.

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.

*A staff only.* The caution in Matthew against *two staves*, is part of the prohibition against extra provision. Some have ridiculed this mode of reconciliation, as if contradictions in Scripture might be allowed in such minutiae. They might as well say it was ridiculous for our Lord to allow one coat and forbid two. *No scrip.* This was a kind of leathern pouch or wallet which travelers in the Eastern countries usually hung about their necks, and in which they carried their victuals. *In their purse, i. e.,* for traveling purposes.

9. But <sup>b</sup>be shod with sandals, and not put on two coats.—<sup>c</sup>Acts xii. 8.

*Sandals.* They were to take no *shoes*, as being a special and more costly provision. *Two coats*, or tunics, worn next the skin. The meaning is: Take no change of dress, no additional articles.

10. ¶ And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart from that place.—<sup>d</sup>Matt. x. 11; Luke ix. 4, x. 7, 8.

*There abide.* As Luke more fully expresses it: "Go not from house to house." On this *Dr. Thomson* remarks: "The reason is very obvious to one acquainted with Oriental customs. When a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment, the neighbors, one after another, must invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure in the due observance of this system of hospitality is violently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds among neighbors. It also consumes much time, causes unusual distraction of mind, leads to levity, and every way counteracts the success of a spiritual mission."

11. ¶ And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say

unto you. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and 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. <sup>a</sup>Matt. x. 11, 15; Luke x. 10-12. <sup>b</sup>Acts xiii. 51; xviii. 6. <sup>c</sup>James v. 14.

Not receive you, &c. The Lord prepared His Apostles to find some who would refuse to bear their message. It would be their duty solemnly to warn these despisers of the awful guilt they incurred. The sin of rejecting the Gospel is far greater than any sin that the heathen can commit. The Saviour neither enjoins nor permits His Apostles to employ their Apostolical power to avenge themselves, nor even to desire that He should do it. It is the part of a minister of truth and charity to labor without ceasing, to suffer without resentment, and to leave his cause to God, with a full trust and confidence in Him.

*Preached that men should repent.* So John the Baptist preached (Matt. iii. 2, 8, 11), and thus also preached Jesus Himself (Matt. iv. 17). Luke expresses it (v. 6), *preaching the gospel*, which implies the preaching of repentance, since the promises and blessings of the Gospel can be secured, only by such as truly repent of their sins. *Anointed with oil.* Among the Jews, oil was very frequently used as a medical application. Some of the cases of sickness cured during this tour, perhaps, did not need miraculous power; and even when the oil was used as a means of restoring health, special Divine power might have accompanied the application.

11. <sup>a</sup>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. <sup>b</sup>Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16. <sup>c</sup>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, <sup>d</sup>It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: 20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. <sup>e</sup>Matt. xiv. 1, &c., on which see notes: Luke ix. 7. <sup>f</sup>Matt. xvi. 14; chap. viii. 23. <sup>g</sup>Matt. xiv. 2. Luke iii. 19. <sup>h</sup>Lev. xviii. 16, xx. 21. <sup>i</sup>Matt. xiv. 5, xxi. 26.

*For his name was spread abroad.* Heavenly tidings tardily reach kings' palaces. (1 Cor. ii. 6-8; Acts xxi. 38.) *It is John, whom I beheaded, &c.* Observe the mighty power of conscience, how it speaks aloud, how it has the mastery in the sinner's

heart. It rules over kings and princes; it makes a Sadducee (xii. 18) believe in a resurrection; it hearkens not to the voice, of friends and courtiers, who say, *This is Elias, or this is that prophet*; it silences every note of peace and comfort; it fixes this on the wretched man's innermost soul—"It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen even from the dead, to confront me, and to pronounce my doom." "Such a conscience," writes Flavel, "is the devil's anvil, on which he fabricates all those swords and spears on which the guilty sinner pierces and wounds himself." (Gen. iv. 14; Job xv. 20-25; 1 Sam. xxviii. 14; 1 Kings xxi. 20.)

*It is not lawful, &c.* It is difficult to rebuke well; that is, at a right time, in a right spirit, and in a right manner. The holy Baptist rebuked Herod, without making him angry; therefore, he must have rebuked him with gravity, temper, sincerity, and an evident good-will towards him. On the other hand, he spoke so firmly, sharply and faithfully, that his rebuke cost him his life. . . . He reprov'd him, under the prospect of suffering for his faithfulness; and we should never use a strong word, however true it be, without being willing to acquiesce in some penalty or other, should it so happen, as the seal of our earnestness. (Acts xxiv. 25; 2 Tim. iv. 1-6.)

*Fear'd.* Holiness brings reverence. John did not fear Herod. *Knowing*—a proof of true religion; the fear of the bad, and their reverence for piety. He did not, however, acknowledge him as a prophet. Worldly men overlook the essential element of truth. Judas himself, when in utter despair, did not call Jesus the *Christ*, but the *innocent blood*. *Observed him, i. e.*, kept him in close custody, in order to preserve him from the machinations of Herodias. This shows why Herod first imprisoned John. *Did many things* which John commanded. He began externally to reform his manners. *Heard him gladly*, literally, *with the relish* with which one eats. He enjoyed his instruction. He was of the class of stony ground hearers, "who receive the word with joy." (Matt. xiii. 20; Luke viii. 13.) But he did not put away Herodias, as he was directed, nor refuse the head of his religious teacher

when it was demanded as the price for the paltry gratification which he and his courtiers had received from a dancing girl. This shows how shallow was the soil into which the word had fallen.

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.

†Matt. xiv. 6. †Gen. xl. 20. †Esth. v. 3, vi. 7. †Prov. i. 16. †Rom. iii. 15. †Matt. xiv. 9. †1 Kings xlii. 29, 30; 2 Chron. xxiv. 16.

*Chief estates, &c.* The other most distinguished men in Galilee. *Convenient day*, for the cherished purpose of Herodias. *Danced, and pleased Herod, &c.* The diversions of the world, feasting and dancing, are but too commonly the occasions of sin. After so fatal an example as this before us, can we in the least doubt, whether balls are not snares for souls, destructive of chastity and modesty, and a pernicious invention to awake and excite the passions? Unhappy mother! who exposes her daughter to the shipwreck which herself has suffered, and makes her the instrument of her passion and revenge, and the murderer of a saint! *The king said unto the damsel.* The antithesis between "king and damsel" gives emphasis to his wicked folly. *Unto the half of my kingdom.* This was a grand imitation of the great Ahasuerus, but in one without the supreme power, it was idle and boastful enough. *Give me by and by in a charger.* It was and is customary with princes in Eastern countries, to require the head of those they order to be executed to be brought to them, that they may be assured of their death.

*Exceeding sorry, &c.* Observe in Herod, hypocrisy, superstition, and a too great regard to men. His sorrow is the sign of the remorse of his conscience, and his conscience is his accuser, and a witness of his crime. It is a penal blindness, justly due to the abuse of light and instruction, for a

man to make a scruple of not performing an unjust oath, and to make none of delivering up an innocent person and a saint at the request of a dancer, to the revenge of an incensed adulteress. An oath is criminal, and by consequence void, when it cannot be performed without sin and injustice. How dangerous is it to take but one step in the paths of sin, since it is so very difficult to go back and retreat from it! Nothing does or can darken the mind or conscience of man more than the false and fallacious pleasures of lust and intemperance. Could Herod have ever thought himself obliged by the religion of an oath to murder the Baptist, had not his lust and his Herodias imprisoned and murdered his conscience first? . It seems his besotted conscience, having broken through the seventh commandment, the sixth stood too near it to be safe long. . . So that it was his lust, obstinately continued in, which thus darkened and deluded his conscience; and the same will no doubt darken, and delude, and in the end extinguish the conscience of any man breathing, who shall surrender himself up to it. (James i. 14, 15; 2 Peter iii. 3; Jude 16, 18.)

*And he went out and beheaded him, &c.* Behold him, that was the prophet of the Highest, and greater than any born of woman, imprisoned like a malefactor! Behold him cut off by a violent death, before the age of thirty-four—the burning light quenched—the faithful preacher murdered for doing his duty—and this to gratify the hatred of an adulterous woman, and at the command of a capricious tyrant! Truly there was an event here, if there ever was one in the world, which might make an ignorant man say, "What profit is it to serve God?" But these are the sort of things which show us that there will one day be a judgment. The God of the spirits of all flesh shall at last set up an assize, and reward every one according to his works. The blood of John the Baptist, and James the Apostle, and Stephen; the blood of Polycarp, and Huss, and Ridley, and Latimer, shall yet be required. It is all written in God's book. "The earth shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain." (Isa. xxvi. 21.)

*The damsel gave it to her mother.* See here the fruit of a bad education, a wicked daughter of a wicked mother; they are serviceable to one another in order only to sin and damnation. Revenge causes a person to take pleasure and delight in that which, if passion were absent, would raise the greatest horror. This is a dreadful example for this sex, which is naturally so soft, timorous and bashful. But one is capable of every wickedness when one is capable of forgetting God. *Laid it in a tomb.* We deposit our departed Christian friends calmly and thoughtfully in faith—not ceasing to love and remember that which once lived among us, but marking the place where it lies, as believing that God has set His seal upon it, and that His angels guard it. (John xi. 24; Jude 9.)

30. \*And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.—Luke ix. 10.

The Twelve, having completed their ministerial journey, returned to Capernaum, where they found their Lord. *And told him all things, &c.* Solemn and touching picture! This is what every minister of the Gospel has yet to do—when his work is done, when his mission is over, and he crosses to meet his Lord in the deep solitudes of eternity. What an incentive this for every steward of the mysteries of grace to be earnest, faithful, self-denying, instant in season and out of season—“warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

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. 22. \*And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

<sup>b</sup>Matt. xiv. 13. <sup>c</sup>Chap. iii. 20. <sup>d</sup>Matt. xiv. 13.

This *desert place* is more definitely described by Luke (ix. 10). *There were many coming, &c.* No reason is assigned for the multitude, on account of whom Jesus retired from Capernaum, where He labored at this time, but John (vi. 4) accounts for it—the passover was nigh at hand, when we know, great crowds passed through the city to go up to Jerusalem.

*Rest awhile.* “This lesson,” says an old writer, “is gladly learned and too much practiced. *Rest ye* pleaseth every man. The truth is, that the body and mind of

man must after labor be refreshed with rest. But he which laboreth not is altogether as unworthy to rest, as to eat. (2 Thes. iii. 6-12.) Again, such as will take rest and ease after labors, must learn of Christ, as well to measure their ease as their pains. He permitteth His disciples to take their rest; but He limiteth and restraineth His permission, saying, ‘*Rest awhile.*’ For by too much rest men are not made the more fit, but the less willing to take pain.”

33. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. 34. \*And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

<sup>e</sup>Matt. ix. 31, xiv. 14. <sup>f</sup>Luke ix. 11.

Although Jesus longed to rest awhile with His disciples and to hear them relate the things that had befallen them during their travels; yet the multitude, who saw Him embark, ran round the lake and were waiting to receive Him at the place where He landed. Was He provoked by this interruption? No; He was *moved with compassion* for the destitute state of their souls. He regarded them as sheep without a shepherd, because their public teachers were ignorant of God. There is no outward deprivation which He pities so much as the want of a faithful ministry, and there is none which *we* should lament so much. A famine of the word of the Lord is far worse than a famine of bread.

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.

<sup>g</sup>Matt. xiv. 15; Luke ix. 12. <sup>h</sup>Num. xi. 13, 22; 2 Kings iv. 43. <sup>i</sup>Matt. xiv. 17; chap. viii. 5; Luke ix. 13; John vi. 5, &c. See Matt. xv. 31; chap. viii. 5.

*When the day was now far spent*—began to decline. *Two hundred pennyworth.* The coin expressed by the word *penny* was equal, according to some computations, to nine, according to others, to fourteen cents of our money. *Five, and two fishes.* Probably this was the whole stock of provisions then at the command of the disciples—no more than enough for one meal to them.

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 they 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.

11 Sam. ix. 13. Matt. xxvi. 26. Deut. viii. 3. 2 Kings iv. 42.

By companies. "So that," says *Starke*, "there were on each side 50, and 100 always together. Fifty such tables full made them just 5,000. Or, there were 50 seats in breadth and 100 in length." *He looked up to heaven*. Even the most necessary actions of our lives, though lawful, yet must be offered up with a true intention unto God, in union with the most holy works and blessed merits of Christ. (Col. iii. 17.) *They did all eat and were filled*. In relation to the food of the *soul*, those eat without being filled who make a considerable progress in the knowledge of Christ, and little or none at all in His love; who read His word without profiting thereby, who partake frequently of His representative body, without partaking of His spirit, and are very exact in outward performances, without any inward piety. *They took up, &c.* But if earthly bread is too precious to be wantonly trampled under foot, how inestimably precious must heavenly bread be! Every word that cometh out of the mouth of God is bread for the soul. Yet how much is suffered to fall to the ground! How carelessly we sometimes read the Scriptures! How many heart-stirring sermons have we heard, and then immediately forgotten! It is not that our *memories* are too weak to retain them (for we can recollect the news of the town, or the village), but it is that our *hearts* are too indifferent. It would be a blessed custom, after reading or hearing, to gather up the fragments; that is, to recall to our minds what we have heard, and to apply them to our consciences, "that nothing be lost."

*Twelve baskets, &c.* Beautiful type of true benevolence, and its invariable results. The Apostles had given their little all with an ungrudging spirit—but they were no losers. The loaves expanded in the hands of giver and receiver, and when the donors came to count their loss, lo, it was a mys-

terious gain! "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." These overflowing baskets have their deep significance. They point to the inexhaustible affluence and fullness of the Divine riches. They teach us that, though thousands on thousands have been ministered to, yet the table in the wilderness is still as full as ever. Millions of hungry souls have been fed, and still the promise is as ample as ever, "*He satisfieth the longing soul with good things.*" Still the command of Jesus to His servants is, "Give ye them to eat"—proclaim, "He that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

This miracle of the loaves and fishes, great as it was, was not a greater miracle than a beautiful harvest. Marvelous as is the creation of a hundred loaves out of two, it is not one whit less a miracle that a seed cast into the soil should germinate, bud, and grow up into a stalk, and then into an ear, and then into the full corn in the ear, and finally the glad and beneficent harvest. But we are so accustomed to the spring and the harvest, the sowing and the reaping, that we call that the natural thing; and we are so unaccustomed to one loaf being transformed or multiplied into a hundred, that we call that the miraculous thing. The fact is, miracles are suspensions or interruptions of the existing order of things; but the existing order of things might have been different, and all that a miracle proves is, that God who made the machinery has chosen to suspend or alter its action.

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. Matt. xiv. 22-24; John vi. 17-21.

The word *constrained* implies reluctance on the part of the disciples, perhaps from unwillingness to part with their Master and embark at night. *The other side, &c.* Jesus was still in the desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida, on the eastern side of the sea, and He dismissed His disciples unto the other side, *i. e.*, to Bethsaida in Galilee, the site of which

was in the region of Gennesaret, between Capernaum and the southern extremity of the lake. *Sent away the people.* His object in this was to put an end to the misdirected excitement in his favor (John vi. 15), into which the disciples themselves may have been somewhat drawn.

46. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

Oh, how salutary is it, how pleasant, how delightful, to sit alone and in silence to converse with God, and so enjoy the only chief Good, in whom all good things are found. (Ps. lxxiii. 24; Hos. ii. 14) Our Saviour *lived* in prayer. His heart ever spoke to God. In the city or in the wilderness, by the seaside or on the mountain-top, in the midst of the multitude in public, or with His disciples in private—still, in the deep recesses of His soul, He prayed. Yet did He select special seasons for prayer—times when He poured forth all His strength, concentrated all His energy at the footstool of mercy, and strove, if possible, to get a closer audience with His father in Heaven. O! how sweet and how important is solitude to the Christian!

"The calm retreat, the peaceful shade  
With prayer and praise agree,  
And seem by Thy kind bounty made  
For those who follow Thee."

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.

13. <sup>a</sup>Matt. xiv. 23; John vi. 16, 17. <sup>b</sup>Isa. liv. 11; Jonah 1. 13. <sup>c</sup>Luke xxiv. 23.

*Toiling in rowing.* The disciples had struggled and toiled to bring the vessel to land, but all in vain. And thus it is that we often labor and toil with our own troubles, and those of others, our eyes fixed exclusively upon them, as the disciples looked upon the waves which threatened to swallow them up, instead of looking to Jesus. From the heights of one of the mountains that girdled the north-east corner of the lake, where Jesus was, alone with His God, He *saw* His disciples toiling in rowing. He *seemed* to have hid his face from them, but it was in appearance only, not in reality. Storms and tumults may be raging without, temptations may be assailing within, God may seem to be hiding his face, and we are troubled. But behind these temporary clouds there sits a Saviour

of unchanging faithfulness, who, though we may have forgotten *Him*, has not forgotten *us*. *For the wind was contrary to them.* While engaged in doing the will of God, storms may overtake us. "Many are the storms which blow upon God's trees," says an old writer, "to keep them from becoming earth-bound."

*He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea.*

Wonderful spectacle! The tossing wave sustains His foot, as if it were the solid ground, the insurgent billows acknowledge, amazed, their mighty sovereign, Him who once bade them "be still," and they were still. With a firm and sure step, He walks there upon the flowing element, toward the distressed boat. The towering waves may sometimes, indeed, for a moment, hide Him from the eyes of His disciples, but they cannot block His path to the goal. What then took place is continually repeated. Over the foaming waves of agitated thought and feeling, which make us fearful, Jesus walks calmly as their Lord and Sovereign. They may rise against, but they cannot over-master, Him. They may sometimes conceal Him from the sight of His disciples, but they cannot check His course. Storms often prepare the way for Jesus to visit His people, with glory to Himself, and permanent profit to them. The *cause* of the trouble of the disciples at this time was beneath His feet! Glorious sight! that which is beneath the feet of Christ can never drown His Church. But if the storm had not come, the disciples would not have seen *this*. Were it not for the storms we have to pass through, what should we know of Jesus? *And would have passed by them.* They were to follow Him in a westerly direction; no longer fruitlessly rowing eastward against the wind. He went before them, as it were, to show the way.

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, <sup>a</sup>Be of good cheer: it is I, be not afraid. <sup>b</sup>Isa. xl. 31; John xx. 19, 21.

Alas! how sad often is the contrast between the faithfulness of a Saviour God and the faithlessness and unbelief of *man*. The sudden appearance of the Lord with His radiant form, near the vessel, makes an entirely different impres-

sion from what would have been expected. The circumstance so miraculous and supernatural appears to them, in the grey twilight, as something strange and fearful. As they see the form advancing toward them upon the waves, they are filled with terror, under the supposition that it is a spirit, and anticipate with fright the sinking of their vessel at its approach. *It is I.* There is something in these three little words, which, from the mouth that spake them and the circumstances in which they were uttered, passes the power of language to express. Here were the disciples in the midst of a raging sea, their little bark the sport of the elements, and with just enough of light to desery an object on the waters, which only aggravated their fears. But Jesus deems it enough to dispel all apprehensions to let them know that *He was there.* From other lips that "It is I" would have merely meant that the person speaking was such a one and not another person. That, surely, would have done little to calm the fears of men expecting every minute, it may be, to go to the bottom. But spoken by One who at that moment was "treading upon the waves of the sea," and was about to hush the raging elements with His word, what was it but the Voice which cried of old in the ears of Israel, even from the days of Moses, "I AM," "I, EVEN I, AM HE!"

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.—4Chap. viii. 17, 18. 3Chap. iii. 5, xvi. 14.

*Were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.* The latter feeling found expression in exclamations; the whole strength of their internal amazement they did not express. *For they considered not, &c.* They did not recognize the power of Christ in the multiplying of the bread; it seems that He therefore caused the tempest that, by this further means, they might be brought to know Him. So it happens now, that many persons in a time of prosperity fail to notice God's bounty toward them, who, afterward and at length, when worn down with suffering, confess His name. (Ps. ci. 1; Jer. xxii. 21; Isa. xlvi. 10.) *Their heart*

*was hardened,* a common phrase for unbelief. It is here equivalent to little faith, as in the parallel passage in Matt. xiv. 31.

From this narrative we learn, 1. That while engaged in doing the will of Christ, storms may overtake us. 2. That storms often prepare the way for Jesus to visit His people with glory to Himself, and permanent profit to them. 3. That when Jesus comes to His disciples, He comes at the *right time.* 4. Believers often fear the approach of their greatest mercies. 5. That wherever Christ is, there is safety. 6. Jesus will travel to the extremity of His people's misery, and save them. 7. That no storms can overtake His disciples which He cannot control. 8. That apart from Christ, His people can do nothing.

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. 57. Matt. xiv. 31. 1Matt. ix. 20; chap. v. 27, 28. Acts xix. 12.

*Ran, &c.* Afflictions, like goads in our side, as troublesome as they are, yet serve to quicken us in our work, and make us mend our pace to heaven. And therefore, O Christian, whatsoever thy present troubles be, know that God brings them upon thee only to make thy graces the more healthful and vigorous. (Deut. iv. 20, 30; Hos. v. 15; Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.) *Whithersoever he entered, &c.* The fame of the singular cure of the woman which had an issue of blood (v. 27, 28), had now probably reached them. It had spread through that entire neighborhood. (Acts xviii. 8, 9.)

*They laid the sick, &c.* Happy that sick person, who, following the example of these people, is never weary in seeking out the true Physician, by a faith and confidence accompanied with good works! Let us learn to profit by the presence of Christ, who comes to us so many different ways. To assist the sick, to give or to procure them remedies, is a work of charity very acceptable to Christ; but how much more so is it to be instrumental in restoring to them the health of the soul! *The border of his garment.* The high

priest of the Jews was not sprinkled with a few scanty drops of the perfume of the sanctuary, but his person was so bedewed with it, that it literally ran down from his beard to the skirts of his garment. (Ex. xxx. 25-30; Ps. cxxxii.) The high priest was in this, as in every circumstance, the living type of our great High Priest. The perfumed garments were typical, first, of the graces and virtues of the Redeemer Himself, in His human character; secondly, of whatever is refreshing, encouraging, consoling and cheering in the external administration of His Word; and, thirdly, of the internal comforts of the Holy Spirit. (Cant. v. 10, 16; Ps. xlv. 9; 1 Peter ii. 7-9.)

1. What did Jesus do on the Sabbath day? 2. What impression was made by His teaching? 3. At what did Christ marvel? 4. What commission was given to "the Twelve?" 5. What is recorded of their mission? 6. What did Herod say? 7. What did Herod do? 8. What part had the daughter of Herodias in this matter? 9. What was done with John the Baptist? 10. What miracle did our Lord perform? 11. In what circumstances of trial did He come to His disciples? 12. What took place in "the land of Gennesaret?"

## CHAPTER VII.

1 *The Pharisees find fault at the disciples for eating with unwashed hands.* 5 *They break the commandment of God by the traditions of men.* 14 *Heal desileth not the man.* 21 *He healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter of an unclean spirit,* 31 *and one that was deaf, and stammered in his speech.*

THESE 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 unwashed hands, they found fault. 3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. 4. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.—Matt. xv. 1, &c., on which see Notes.

*Certain of the scribes, &c.* Whether these doctors of the law, whose ordinary residence was Jerusalem, were deputed by some public body, or, of their own accord, came expressly for the purpose of hearing the discourses and witnessing the miracles of Jesus, or, being in that remote district of the country at any rate, took the opportunity of obtaining personal information respecting an individual whose character and claims had become a subject of general interest, cannot be determined. *That is to say.* The Evangelist adds an interpretation, as in verse 11, chapter v. 41, himself not regarding unwashed hands as defiled.

*All the Jews*—the Jews in general. *Oft.* The meaning of the original word, thus rendered, is not perfectly clear. The primary signification of the word was, probably, *fist.* To do a thing *with the fist* was

probably equivalent to the expression, to do a thing *diligently, carefully.* The signification *carefully* is recommended by sufficient reasons. *From the market,* literally, *from market.* *Have received* (from the tradition of the elders) *to hold, i. e., to observe.* *Tables.* The Greek word thus translated should be rendered *couches*; meaning the *couches* upon which they used to recline at meals. It is the heart which a man must wash, it is the inward part which he must examine, when he has been busied about worldly affairs, and which he must cleanse in the presence of God from the filth which it may have thereby contracted.

5. <sup>1</sup>Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? 6. He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, *These people honour-eth 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.*

<sup>2</sup>Matt. xv. 2. <sup>1</sup>Isa. xxix. 13; Matt. xv. 8.

*Why walk not, &c.* Grafting their traditional precepts upon the letter of such commands as are found in Isaiah (i. 16), "Wash you, make you clean," unmindful of those words which immediately follow: "Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes," or those of Jeremiah: "*Wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.*" (Jer. iv. 14.) The teachers of religion among the Jews

had invented a purely human system which entirely supplanted, and even subverted the Divine law, "making the word of God of none effect." Unhappily, we see only too much of the spirit of the Pharisees now. There are thousands of professing Christians, who seem to care nothing about the religion of their neighbors, provided that it agrees in outward matters with their own. Does their neighbor worship according to their particular form? Can he repeat their shibboleth, and talk a little about their favorite doctrines? If he can, they are satisfied, though there is no evidence that he is converted. If he cannot, they are always finding fault, and cannot speak peaceably of him, though he may be serving Christ better than themselves. Let us beware of this spirit. It is the very essence of hypocrisy. Let our principle be, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

*Well hath Esaias, &c.* It is as if Jesus had said, "Ye are hypocrites, *i. e.*, you assume a character that does not belong to you. While insisting on observances, as necessary parts of religious duty, which Jehovah has never required, and in conforming to which, not His honor, but the honor of you and your rabbis is involved, at the same time you dispense with what His law has rendered absolutely obligatory; and in making that a duty which He has not made a duty, and superseding the obligation of that which He has made a duty, Esaias has accurately described your character, and strongly condemned your conduct." *In vain do they worship me, &c.* "It cannot serve the purpose of worship. It cannot be acceptable to me. It cannot be useful to them." No religious service can be acceptable to God if He has not enjoined it, and even a religious service which He has enjoined, can be acceptable to Him only if it be performed out of regard to His authority, and not from any other motive.

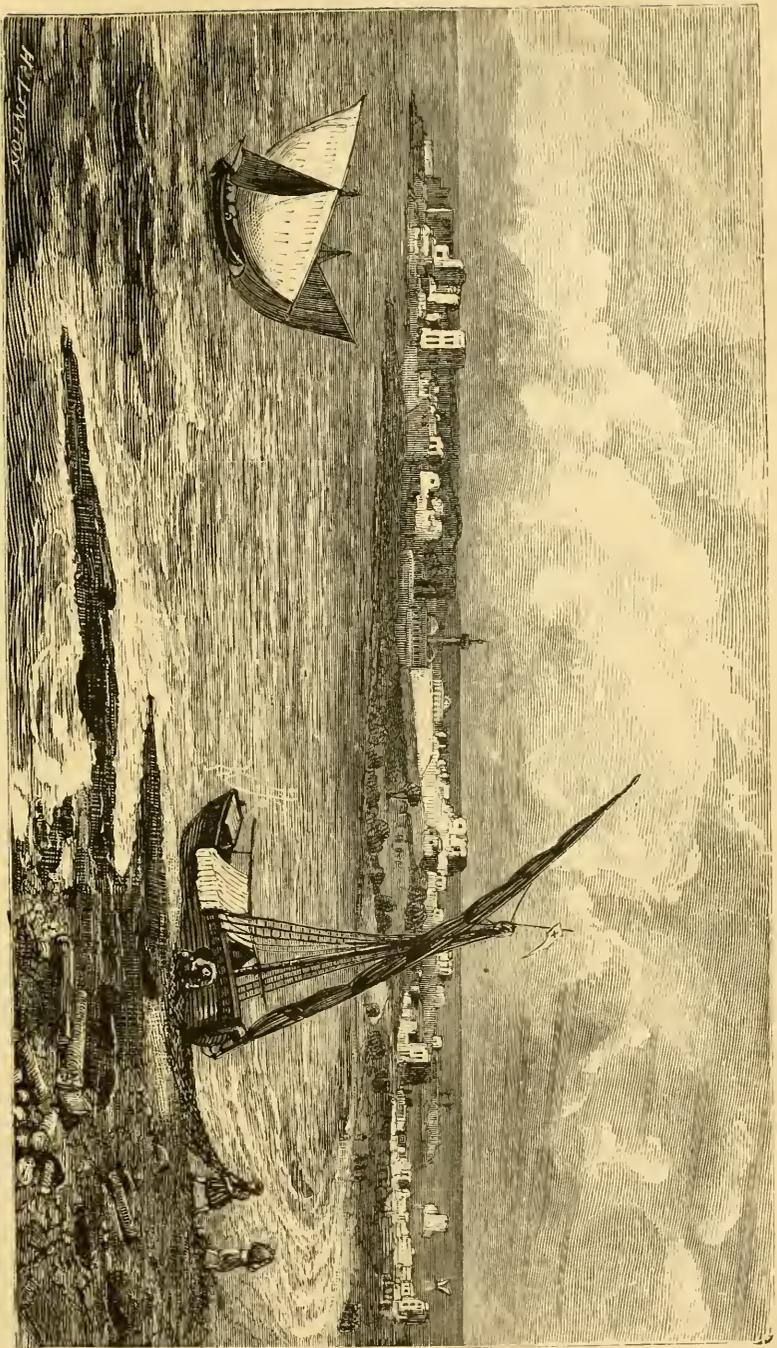
9. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. 12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for

his father or his mother; 13. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered; and many such like things do ye. 14. ¶ And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, 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, these are they that defile the man. 16. ¶ If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17. ¶ Ex. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16; Matt. xv. 4. ¶ Ex. xxi. 17; Lev. xx. 9; Ps. xx. 20. ¶ Matt. xv. 5. ¶ Matt. xv. 10. ¶ Matt. xi. 15.

See on Matt. xv.

*Full well ye reject the commandment of God, &c.* Religion often serves as a cloak for impiety, hard-heartedness to the poor, and indifference toward parents. We cannot possibly please God by gifts offered contrary to His law or His Spirit; it is sacrilege to dedicate that to Him which is taken away from the piety which nature inspires, and the Divine law enjoins. This is, as much as in us lies, to invalidate our Saviour's declaration, that He accepts as done to Himself the good which is done to the least of His disciples. *Die the death.* The law is "the ministration of condemnation"—death and death; but the Gospel is "the ministration of the Spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 8.) "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 2.) For *die the death*, we have "grace for grace." (John i. 16.) *But ye say, &c.* If the language of sermons be vague and general, if it do not apply clearly and directly to our own times, our own ways of life, and habits of thought and action, men elude its hold upon their consciences with a wonderful dexterity; and, keeping their common practices safe out of the reach of its influence, they deceive themselves by their willingness to hear it (vi. 20), and by their acquiescence and even delight in it. (Ezek. xxxiii. 3-6; Rom. vii. 22.)

*It is Corban, or,* "let it be CORBAN—by whatsoever, &c. *Corban* signifies what is dedicated to God, and what cannot be turned to any other purpose without sacrilege. The vow before us is, "Let everything by which I may be profitable to my parents be *Corban*. I vow that I will not do anything for the support of my parents, and if I do, may I draw down on myself the punishment due to a violation of sacred property." Such a vow, in ordinary circumstances, could only be made in a moment of passion. No man could approve of such a vow. We have no reason to think the scribes and Pharisees did so.



TYRE, FROM THE SOUTH.



They would readily, doubtless, have condemned it, but still, according to their doctrine, the vow, though a rash one, was an obligatory one. To the man who had made such a vow, they would have said, "You should not have made it, but, having made it, you must keep it. By keeping your vow, you no doubt expose yourself to the penalty connected with the breach of the fifth commandment, but by breaking it, you will expose yourself to the punishment you have invoked on yourself—the punishment due to the violation of sacred property, a much greater punishment than that due for filial undutifulness. There is only a choice of evils, but there is, in this case, a greater evil in breaking the vow than in keeping the vow." Such were the absurd refinements of rabbinical casuistry, by which they confounded the plainest moral distinctions, and made sin duty, and duty sin. *Many such like things do ye.* "This is but a specimen of your traditions; and are my disciples to be censured for disregarding such traditions, which can be of no use—which are so mischievous?"

*Hearken.* Give close attention; I am about to make a statement, which at once deserves and requires attention. *There is nothing from without a man, &c.* "It is not anything extrinsic and material, anything which affects merely the outer man—the animal frame—that, properly speaking, makes a man morally impure: whatever does so must be something residing within, proceeding from the inner man—the spiritual, the intellectual, the moral nature."

*If any man have ears, &c.* The rule (verse 15) must be of very great importance to Christians. For our Lord, 1. calls all the people unto Him, on purpose to tell them only this (verse 14). 2. He requires of them a particular attention. 3. He requires it of every one, without exception. 4. He exhorts them to endeavor thoroughly to understand it. And 5. He here lets them know that in order to do it they have need of a singular grace, and a particular gift of understanding.

17. <sup>1</sup>And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. 18. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; 19. Because it entereth not into his

heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught purging all meats? 20. And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21. <sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xv. 15. <sup>2</sup>Gen. vi. 5, and viii. 21; Matt. xv. 19.

*Are ye so without understanding also?* The true knowledge of the spirit of the Gospel is a thing more rare and uncommon than we imagine among the generality of Christians, and even of the learned. *Whosoever thing from without, &c.* (See on Matt. xv. 17, 18.) *Out of the heart of men, proceed, &c.* What an awful picture we have here of human nature, and drawn, too, by One who knew what was in man! What can the proud and self-righteous say when they read such a passage as this? (Prov. iv. 23, xxviii. 26.) This is no sketch of the heart of a robber or murderer. It is the true and faithful account of the hearts of all mankind. Let it be a settled resolution with us, that in all our religion the state of our hearts shall be the main thing. Let it not content us to go to church and observe the forms of religion. (Acts viii. 21.) Never let us rest till we find within the witness of the Spirit that God has created in us a clean heart, and made all things new. (Ps. li. 10; 2 Cor. v. 17.)

21. <sup>1</sup>And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.—Matt. xv. 21.

*Tyre*, called by the Hebrews, *Tor*, now *Soor*, a colony of Sidon (see Isa. xxiii. 12), built about 1700 years B. C. It was celebrated for wealth, manufactures, commerce, and purple dye. *Sidon*, now *Saida*, the most ancient and important maritime place in the old world; it is thought to have taken its name from Sidon, the first-born of Canaan. It is about twenty-five miles north of Tyre. *No man*. For He was still within the borders of Israel. *He could not be hid*. Christ's fame had early spread from Galilee to this very region. (Chap. iii. 8; Luke vi. 17.) Happy is that person who is made manifest, not because he will not, but because he cannot be hid!

25. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, 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.

*A certain woman.* "The antiquity of oblivion," says an old writer, "blindly scat-

tereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. . . . But to be nameless in worthy deeds exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman lives more happily without a name than Herodias with one. And who had not rather have been the good thief, than Pilate?" (2 Cor. vi. 9.) *Whose young daughter, &c.* Youth enters upon the journey of life headstrong and inexperienced, with a bias of original corruption, and all the passions awake. In such circumstances, how shall a young man direct his steps, so as to "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust?" (2 Peter i. 4.) He must, for this purpose, take with him the directions to be found in the Scriptures of truth. "I have written unto you, young men," says the beloved disciple, "because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." He, who became man for our salvation, passed through this state of youth undefiled, that He might, as it were, reclaim and consecrate it anew to God. Let every young person often meditate on this. (Ecl. xi. 9, 10, xii. 1; Ps. cxix. 9.)

*Was a Greek.* Some refer this, not to her country, but religion, as though it were said, she belonged to the Greek or heathen people. *A Syrophenician, i. e.,* a Phœnician of Syria, in contradistinction to the Lybo-Phœnicians or Phœnicians of Libya, viz.: the Carthaginians. *The devil*—that unclean spirit which had possessed the girl. Every sin is an unclean spirit which possesses the sinner. It is at the feet of Jesus that he must seek a remedy for it. How great this woman's zeal and earnestness! Few mothers are as much concerned about the spiritual welfare of their children. The generality, alas! instead of shutting the heart of their daughters against the evil spirit of vanity, of impurity, and of the love of the world, or of endeavoring to cast him out thence, rather set it open to him a thousand different ways.

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.

*It is not meet*—not fitting. It is not in the order which God has established. *Children's bread.* This our Saviour said to test the woman's faith. The Jews were

the children of the kingdom; this woman was of the Gentiles, whom the Jews denominated heathen and dogs. *Dogs.* The original is *little dogs*, so that with the contempt, there is a tenderness in the epithet. It is interesting to observe the various ways in which Jesus behaved to afflicted persons. Some He *offered* to relieve, saying to one at the pool of Bethesda, "Wilt thou be made whole?" and to another, with a withered hand, at the synagogue, "Stretch forth thy hand." Others He restored on their *first* application to Him; while He suffered this woman to plead long and earnestly before He showed her mercy. Before He exposed her to this test, He knew that she could endure it.

28. And she answered and said unto him, yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

Jesus could not cast her lower than she was content to cast herself. Even the very depth of her degradation only forms a strong plea for the extension of His love. *Yes, Lord*—she cannot be overcome, because she will not doubt. The humiliating comparison to which she has been subjected, becomes the occasion for a bolder flight of the eagle wing, and a keener glance of the eagle eye of faith. She springs from the supreme control to the ben-volent equity of Providence. She rises above the clouds of the Divine power, often to us, who can only see them from below, dark, disturbed and stormy, into the holy serenity beyond them. She sees the calm Sovereign of the universe, partial, yet impartial too, preferring some, yet forgetting none. She knows that "His care is over all His works," and—deepest wonder of her heaven—sent enlightenment! She can see that He loves *her*, and yet accord His unquestionable right to love, if He please it, others more—allows she can ask but little, yet believingly dares to pronounce that little certain! She will permit (would to God we could always follow her in our speculations) no mystery of dispensation to contradict the truth of the Divine character. *Yet the dogs, &c.* Everything is here. All Christianity is concentrated in one happy sentence. She believes in her own lowliness; she believes in God's absolute supremacy; she believes in the secret propriety of the

apparent inequalities of Providence; she believes that those inequalities can never affect the true universality of His love. God is all, yet she is something, too, for she is God's creature. Men from deep places can see the stars at noon-day, and from the utter depths of self-abasement, she catches the whole blessed mystery of heaven, like the Apostle's Christian, "in possessing nothing, she possesses all things."

29. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

*For this saying, &c.* Often have we admired the efficacy of the words of *God*; here we are called to admire the efficacy of the words of *man*. The words of the Syro-Phœnician woman open the heavens, triumph over the Lord, drive away the devil, and accomplish whatever she wishes.

30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

The child lying on the bed is completely freed from the power of the wicked spirit, and is now taking that quiet rest which hitherto the evil spirit had not allowed. The color is returned to those pallid cheeks, the blood no longer streams from those lacerated limbs. The sepulchre and the desert are no more the haunts of the rescued maniac; the mother's love is triumphant through faith.

Let us see to it that our afflictions lead us to Jesus. Every cross is a message from God, and intended to do us good in the end. The plea which this woman urged is now as good as ever—indeed better than ever. Weak faith has no longer to pursue a departing Saviour; distress has not to address itself in piteous accents to an ear that seems deaf. Jesus is not now passing by silent, reserved, and wrapt in thought of other objects than us. He looks on us, He pities us, He loves us, with open arms He invites us to His bosom.

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.—Matt. xv. 23.

*Departing, &c.* The direction of the journey was first northward toward Lebanon; thence from the foot of Lebanon north-easterly, and back through the district of Decapolis, that is, back through the region which lay to the east, or the farther side of the sources of the Jordan,

to the eastern bank of the Sea of Galilee. *Decapolis.* This word denotes a district containing ten cities—the word *deka* in the Greek language meaning *ten*, and *polis*, a city.

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.  
¶ Matt. ix. 32; Luke xi. 14.

*They, i. e.,* the friends of the diseased man. *Had an impediment.* He was not wholly dumb, but a *stammerer*, as is the case with one who becomes deaf after having learned to talk. They gradually lose their use of speech entirely, or speak with great difficulty. *Beseech him to put his hand, &c.* In their eagerness they appear to have been somewhat too officious. Though usually doing as here suggested, He will deal with this case in His own way. How thankful we should be for the gifts of speech, hearing, and other senses. To God's mercy it is owing that we are not deaf and dumb, blind, or otherwise defective. How compassionate should we be to those who are thus afflicted, how anxious to use these talents to God's glory, as being His gifts, and such as must be accounted for!

33. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;—Chap. viii. 23; John ix. 6.

*Took him aside, &c.* Jesus can heal us anywhere. He can un-top the ear and loosen the tongue whilst we are in the hurry of the crowd, or when we have sought the secrecy of the closet. But He loves the solitude; if we wish Him to work a miracle, a spiritual cure, let us prove that we wish it, by going aside from the multitude, detaching ourselves from a world that "lieth in wickedness," breaking away from the company of His enemies, and then may we hope that He will meet us, and say unto us, with as much of power as of graciousness, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." *Put his fingers, &c.* In the adaptation by Christ, of the *mode* of cure to the *circumstances* of this dumb and deaf man, we learn by what *various* means He now cures the *spiritual* infirmities of men. He knows how to treat each case in the most *suitable* manner. There are many different states of mind to be found among the unconverted, and all seem to us cases very hard to cure. The wisdom of Jesus

enables Him to meet the difficulties of each case that He undertakes to relieve. He knows how to solemnize the light mind of one, and how to abase the proud spirit of another—how to tame the violent temper, and to enlarge the selfish heart.

31. And looking up to heaven, she sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened  
John xi. 4 and xvii 1    John xi. 33, 38.

Looking up to heaven, as seeking God's help and blessing. If ever any child of man might have dispensed with prayer, it was surely He who being God as well as man, had but to speak the word, as here with so Divine an authority He spoke it, "Ephphatha, Be opened!" Yet we see how He ever addressed Himself in prayer to the Father, "His Father and our Father," so that He is not more an example of every other grace than of this grace of prayer, of which we might least have expected to find Him an instance. *He sighed.* The fact that Jesus sighed before He could bring Himself to say to the deaf and dumb man, "Be opened," even though He knew that he would not join himself to His enemies, is the most affecting of all testimonies, that the tongue cannot be used without peril. And it might do more than whole sermons on the guilt of idle words, to make us watchful in keeping "the door of our lips," were we only to have in mind this sigh of the Redeemer. When tempted to the light jest, and, yet more, to the profane allusion; when inclined to employ on what is frivolous, or malicious, or impure, that high faculty which God bestowed that we might make creation vocal with His praise—then, if we cannot recollect any elaborate arguments which establish the special sinfulness of sins of the tongue at least we may recall the simple narrative of this miracle, and it may tend to make and keep us fearful of misusing and desecrating the power of speech, to remember that the Saviour could not impart this power, without betokening His consciousness how perilous it was.

*Ephphatha.* In the preservation of the actual Aramaic which Christ spoke, we recognize the narrative of an eye and ear witness, from whom the Evangelist had this account, and in whose soul the words of power, which were followed with such

mighty consequences, which opened the ears, and loosed the tongue, and raised the dead, had indelibly impressed themselves. We should call on Christ to open our ears, that we may hear His word meekly; to open our lips, which are sealed by backwardness and lukewarmness, that our mouth may show forth His praise; and to open our hearts, as He did that of Lydia, to receive thankfully the gracious offers of salvation.

35. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain  
Isa. xxxv. 5, 6; Matt. xi. 5.

Christ first opened his ears, then untied his tongue, because we must hear well before we can speak well. (Job. xxxii. 6, 7; Prov. xv. 2; James i. 19.) *Straightway, &c.* Those whom Jesus healed were endowed with the power of using their restored faculties *immediately*. The dumb man *spoke plain*. Thus the prophecy of Isaiah was in one instance fulfilled, "The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly."

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:—Chap. v. 43.

*He charged them, &c.* The palace of Herod, at Cesarea Philippi, was not distant, and mercy and miracle must in this guilty world work in secret. From our Lord's command, we may learn that we must not do kindness in an ostentatious manner (Matt. vi. 3), that we should never needlessly attract attention to it, but rather conceal it, and especially that, when it would hurt the feelings of those who have received kindness to have the matter published to others, we should take pains to prevent such a fact from transpiring or getting abroad.

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.

*He hath done, &c.* This exclamation, in which the surprise and admiration of the beholders find utterance, reminds us of the words of the first creation (Gen. i. 31), upon which we are not unsuitably thrown back, for Christ's work is in the true sense a "new creation." It is a very great commendation of a minister, to say that he does all things well, that is, with gravity, modesty and external becomingness, and

with application, piety and internal religion. This is the way to make even the deaf to hear the truth, and to draw from sinners an acknowledgment and confession of their miseries.

"He hath done," &c. They did not say, as modern Christians are too prone to say, "It was the medicine that healed," but they traced the links along the chain of beneficence, and saw that they were all held in the hand of Him who then did, and now does, all things well. When we are healed of a disease, it is as much a miracle as it was when this deaf ear was opened. Why is there virtue in the medicine? Who gave it its mysterious power? The difference is only this, that now God

works with means, then He worked without them; we should look above the medicine, and beyond the physician, to the Lord Jehovah who healeth all our diseases.

If no human voice in that crowd had been raised to acknowledge Jesus as the healer of diseases, the blind, who saw the stars of the sky and the flowers of the earth for the first time, the deaf, who heard the sweet sounds of an affectionate voice they never heard before, the withered limbs, that were restored to more than pristine vigor, the empty graves, the dead who mingled again with the company of the living, could have all stood forth and proclaimed, "We are witnesses that He hath done all things well."

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1. What objection was made to the disciples in their eating bread? 2. How was it answered? 3. How are we to understand verse 11? 4. What explanation did Christ give to His disciple of "the parable?" 5. Where did He go? 6. Who came to Him? 7. State the particulars of the interview? 8. What was the result of it? 9. Who was brought to Jesus in the coasts of Decapolis? 10. How was he cured? 11. What charge was given to the multitude? 12. What did they say?

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## CHAPTER VIII.

1 Christ feedeth the people miraculously: 10 refuseth to give a sign to the Pharisees: 14 admonisheth his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod: 22 giveth a blind man his sight: 27 acknowledgeth that he is the Christ, who should suffer and rise again: 31 and exhorteth to patience in persecution for the profession of the gospel.

IN those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

This narrative is not a repetition of the miracle of feeding the five thousand, recorded in chap. xiv. 15-21. This is plain from xvi. 9, 10, where both accounts are alluded to in connection. Besides, there are important differences apparent between the two miracles. The time is decidedly different. The guests this time remained three days with Jesus, the first time only one day. This time the supply of bread which Jesus and His disciples had, was greater than at the first time—seven loaves and a few fishes, whilst the first time the number of the loaves was five. On the other hand, the number of the guests is smaller, namely, four thousand besides

women and children; the former time there were a thousand men more. In the one case the people, in a frenzy of enthusiasm, would have taken Jesus by force to make Him a king, in the other case no such excitement is recorded. And whilst then twelve baskets were filled with the fragments that were left, now there were only seven. The baskets, moreover, in which the fragments were collected on the other occasion, are called by all four Evangelists, *cophini*; those used for that purpose after this miracle are, in both Matthew and Mark, *spurides*.

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.

See notes on Matt. xiv. 19, &c.; Mark vi. 41, &c.

*I have compassion, &c.* "Thou who hadst such pity on the bodies of men, that Thou wouldst not send them away fasting, oh, let not our souls be unfed, when with humble

faith we wait upon Thee for our spiritual nourishment, lest we faint in the way of our pilgrim-age."—*Austin*. He has very little of his Lord's compassion in him, and holy zeal for the kingdom of God, and love to those who have the same hopes and fears with himself, who thinks it much to suffer repeated inconveniences and debar himself of what otherwise he might enjoy not only with innocence, but great advantage, when he may be the happy instrument of relieving the greatest necessities and promoting the salvation of those for whom Christ died. (vi. 34; John iii. 17–19; 2 Tim. ii. 10.)

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.

<sup>b</sup>Matt. xv. 34; see chap. vi. 33.

Admire in the Apostles their love of truth. Though they themselves are the writers, they do not conceal their own great faults, and it is no light accusation to have so soon forgotten the similar miracle previously performed. Observe, also, their wisdom in another respect; how they had overcome their appetite, taking so little care of their meals that though they had been three days in the desert, yet they had with them only seven loaves.

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.

<sup>c</sup>Matt. xiv. 19; chap. vi. 41.

*Gave thanks.* What a scandalous thing it is to take our food without being mindful who bestows it on us! Paul "gave thanks" in the presence of the heathen (Acts xxvii. 35), yet Christians are often ashamed to do it before Christians. *And gave to his disciples,* &c. Observe, it was the disciples, and not our Lord, who distributed to the multitude. We are here reminded of the office of the ministry, which is, to distribute spiritual gifts out of the store which the Lord hath first created and blessed: from a source of His providing "to feed the Church of God," like "faithful and wise stewards" to "give them their portion of meat in due season." (Luke xii. 42.) For, doubtless, as "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

the Lord" (Deut. viii. 3), we have in this timely supply of mere temporal want, a type of that heavenly bounty which sends us all things that are needful for our souls.

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.

*They did eat and were filled.* The same statement with regard to the former miracle is given by all the Evangelists. (Matt. xiv. 20; Mark vi. 42; Luke ix. 17; John vi. 11.) *Took up,* &c. Jesus had in the former instance directed that this should be done, "that nothing be lost." (John vi. 12.) *And he sent them away.* This concludes the account of one of those stupendous miracles that are so simply told, that we are apt to lose sight of some portion of their sublimity. If a mere human historian had been recording such a prodigy as this, he would have exhausted, if his taste had not been very good, language of bombast, he would have called into aid expressions of admiration and wonder, and he would have been exuberant in poetical and grand descriptions of a miracle which would have overwhelmed him with its magnitude and greatness. But the sacred historian, as if he had dipped his pen in the light of Him who did the miracle—as if he were writing under the inspiration, as he was, of Him whose deeds of beneficence he was recording—tells the story with that artless simplicity which proves how true it is, and which shows indirectly how the penman was guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

10. † And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11. † And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. 12. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily, I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. 13. And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

<sup>e</sup>Matt. xv. 33. <sup>f</sup>Matt. xii. 33; John vi. 30.

*Dalmanutha* was west of the sea of Tiberias, in the district of *Magdala*. These were either different denominations for the same region, or separate denominations for distinct, but contiguous regions. *The Pharisees came forth,* &c.—came out of their dwellings in that country. People generally come out of their dwellings, but these men came forth as spies out of a hiding-place; and their coming was proof that the most extreme care as to the circum-

ances of the landing of Jesus, in a quiet place and in the dead of night, could no longer protect the Lord from their eyes.

*Seeking from him, &c.* They wanted a sign from heaven, not because they desired to be convinced, but because they wanted to tempt, grieve, ensnare, or provoke Jesus. The fact is, when men have once made up their minds not to be persuaded, they are unconvinceable. *Sighed deeply, as we say, fetching a deep sigh.* In his spirit—from his very heart. He sighed so deeply, not merely in general sorrow for the hardened unbelief of these men, but also in the feeling that the decisive crisis of severance from the predominant party had come. For the demand of a sign from heaven was a demand that He should, as the Messiah of their expectation, accredit Himself by a great miracle. *There shall be no sign,* such as they seek after. *To the other side, i. e.,* to the northern Bethsaida, or Bethsaida-Julias.

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?

¶ Matt. xvi. 5. ¶ Matt. xvi. 6. ¶ Matt. xvi. 7. ¶ Chap. vi. 52. ¶ Matt. xiv. 21; John vi. 13. ¶ Matt. xv. 37, verse 8. ¶ Chap. i. 52, verse 7.

See on Matt. xvi. 6, &c.

*More than one loaf.* It is asked, how they had no bread, when they had just filled the seven baskets. Their answer is that they had forgotten to take them with them, a proof how little care they had for the flesh in other things, since, in their eagerness to follow the Lord, even the necessity of refreshing their bodies had escaped from their minds. (John iv. 28.) *Take heed, &c.* The teaching or doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees was quite different, but both were equally pernicious; and the Herodians, though rather a political party, were equally envenomed against our Lord's spiritual teaching. The false doctrines against which Jesus cautions His disciples, as *leaven*, might seem a small thing compared to the whole body of

truth—once admitted they would work secretly and noiselessly—and they would gradually change the whole character of the religion with which they were mixed.

Were the *disciples* in danger of being tainted by bad doctrine? Ought we not to fear its evil influence? Error in *principle* is the parent of vice in *practice*. Our constant prayer ought to be, "Hold Thou me up, that my footsteps slide not." This saying of our Lord (verse 15), was intended for all time. There will always be Pharisees and Sadducees in the ranks of professing Christians. Their name may change, but their spirit will always remain.

*Why reason ye, &c.* The discourse proceeds by distinct questions to the verb *remember*, verse 18. "Yet hardened"—as on that former occasion (the walking on the sea), when it is expressly recorded by Mark of the disciples, that "they considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened." (vi. 52.) Hardening flows from the *heart* to the sight, the hearing, and the memory. (verse 18.) *How is it that ye do not understand?* The word "understand" literally signifies to *bring together in the mind, to comprehend*, and is an advance on the word "perceive" in verse 18. The little use we make of God's gifts, our forgetfulness of His particular benefits, and our not taking sufficient notice of the visible wonders which He works every day for us in the world, make it evident that sin has spread its darkness over the understanding of man, as well as over his heart. There is need of somewhat more than miracles to establish faith and Christian influence.

22. ¶ And he cometh to Bethsaida, and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

*Bethsaida.* Bethsaida-Julias, which lay upon the north-eastern coast of the sea of Tiberias. *Josephus* tells us that the tetrarch Philip, who ruled only in the eastern part of Galilee, made the village of Bethsaida into a town, and named it Julias, after the daughter of Augustus. *They bring a blind man, &c.* Christ went about to do good, and wherever He came He found some good to be done; and so should we, if we had a proper measure of the same zeal and love for the welfare of the bodies and souls of men.

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.—Chap. vii. 33.

How sad this man's condition! Art may exhibit her stores, and nature her charms, but they affect him not. Spring throws her flowers beneath his feet, summer spreads her varied glories, and autumn her richest tints, but he heeds them not. The sun falls upon his path, but nature is ever clothed in sackcloth to him; the ebon curtains of a perpetual night enfold him in their embrace, without one solitary star to relieve the gloom. He sleeps, but it is night; he awakes, but there is no morning. Still sadder is that condition of which this is but a faint type, the condition of men enveloped in the darkness of sin, and not seeing the realities of the spiritual world. *He took the blind man by the hand.* Did He forget He was the Son of God? Oh, no! nor was it needful he should, for never are the great so exalted as when they stoop to the help of misery, and endeavor to raise those who, but for their aid, must be forever fallen. He was not ashamed to do good, or too great to be useful. Are we ashamed to grasp the hand of honest, poverty, or to be seen identified with misery? Jesus did not say to this man, "Do you take hold of my hand," or, "Keep by my side and I will conduct you out of the city," but He took *him* by the hand. Neither does He say to the dark, the guilty and the self-condemned, "Do you do such and such things, and then I will help you," but He shines upon the soul freely, reveals His glory, and *gives* faith to the soul, while He exclaims, "Believe, and live."

*And led him.* He did not forget He was leading a blind man, and accommodated His pace to the condition of His patient. *Out of the town,* where the man was exposed to great danger. Jesus always leads *from* danger. Oh, what numberless dangers we should escape if we were always willing for Him to lead us! Our Lord meant to cure the blind man, but He did not want fame—the applause of the multitude—hence he conducted him into privacy. *And when he had spit on his eyes, &c.* Very unlikely instrumentality, many would have thought, to open the eyes; but thus it is

that Jesus is pleased to work, that He may have the glory due to His name. (1 Cor. i. 27, 28.)

24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking. 25. After that, he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up, and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

The blind man, it appears, had not been *born* blind, for he knew the names of surrounding objects. His sight was so imperfectly restored at first, that it was only by their movements that he could distinguish men from trees; he knew that those were men that he beheld, because they walked. We find but one example, in all Scripture, of any bodily cure which our Saviour wrought by degrees: only the blind man, whose weak faith craved help by others, not by himself, *saw men first like trees*; then in their true shape; all other miraculous cures of Christ were done at once and perfect at first. Contrarily, we find but one example of a soul fully healed, that is, sanctified and glorified, both in a day; all others, by degrees and leisure. The steps of grace are soft and short. Those external miracles He wrought immediately, by Himself; and, therefore, no marvel if they were absolute, like their Author. The miraculous work of our regeneration He works together with us: He giveth it efficacy; we give it imperfection. (iv. 28; Phil. ii. 12, 13; Eph. iv. 30.)

The cure of our blindness is only begun here on earth, for our understanding has some degrees of darkness which will not be dispersed until we come to heaven. This cure requires abundance of patience, because the light of truth does not often enter all at once into the soul. God would have men learn the greatness of the evil, the necessity of His grace, and the difficulty of the cure, from the delay of His light, and the several degrees thereof through which they must pass. When the Apostle wrote to the Ephesians, though he knew they were converted, yet he told them that he constantly prayed that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might know the hope of their calling, and the riches of their glorious inheritance. (Eph. i. 18.) These are the things that we so dimly discern. We do not behold the excellency of

heaven with sufficient clearness. But the day will come when those who now see imperfectly shall see face to face, shall know even as they are known.

*He put his hands again, &c.* If, as it would seem, the miracle was wrought gradually only for the sake of the effect which would thus be produced on the bystanders, it is probable that the effect intended was, that the disciples should understand that the working of the Lord was often gradual. Certain it is, that such is the freeness of God's grace, that it is linked to no single way of manifestation, but works in divers manners, sometimes accomplishing in a moment what at other times it brings about only little by little.

26. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town. <sup>27</sup>Matt. viii. 4; chap. v. 43.

Besides the usual reasons against going about blazing the matter, retirement in this case would be salutary to the man. The question arises in some minds, how could he tell it to any one in the town, if he did not enter into it, according to the first clause of the command? But this difficulty arises from overlooking the Greek idiom, which answers here to the idea, *go not into the town and tell it to any there*. Solitude and silence after conversion is much safer than much talk and running about. We should let the truth take firm root in us before we speak much about it. The converted man must take care not to turn around again to the world. Fearful judgment, when God reckons a man, or a city, or a land no longer worthy of the knowledge of His word and works!

27. † And Jesus went out, and his disciples into the town of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?—<sup>28</sup>Matt. xvi. 13; Luke ix. 18.

On verses 27–33 see on Matt. xvi. 13, &c.

Our Lord and His disciples now proceeded to the neighborhood of Cesarea Philippi, probably avoiding the city itself, and only touching its suburbs or towns of its vicinity. *Whom do men, &c.* It is neither out of ignorance, nor curiosity, nor want of other discourse, that Christ speaks on this subject, but, on the contrary, from a knowledge of the different opinions men had concerning Him, and from a desire to satisfy their curiosity by the truth, and to avoid, by means of holy instruction, the

loss of time which usually attends traveling.

23. And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say Elias; and others, One of the prophets. <sup>24</sup>Matt. xiv. 2.

This answer of the disciples of Christ proves two things: 1. That the general public opinion in respect to the person of Jesus had been for the moment considerably lowered by the efforts of His opponents, since people now no longer ventured to designate Him decidedly as the Messiah, and that they rather agreed to hold Him for a forerunner of the Messiah: 2. That their opinions concerning Him were various, according to their various dispositions of mind. *John the Baptist*. Some shared the superstitious opinion of Herod Antipas, connected with the theory of the metempsychosis, and which was designed perhaps to quiet the prince's distress of conscience for the murder he had committed on John. *Elias*. Others, who rated Him highest, and admired His holy zeal, were inclined to see in Him the second Elijah, the most definite forerunner of the Messiah. *One of the prophets*. Others only made a general acknowledgment of something higher in Him, and were willing to let Him pass for 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.—<sup>30</sup>Matt. xvi. 6; John vi. 69 and xi. 27.

The disciples were now to give a distinct confession in opposition to those erroneous and divergent opinions; therefore Christ asked further, *But whom say ye that I am?* To this Peter replied in his own name, and in that of his brethren, *Thou art the Christ*. He does not say, "Scribes and Pharisees, rulers and people, are all perplexed, and shall we, unlettered fishermen, presume to decide?" But feeling the light of his Master's glory shining in his soul, he breaks forth, not in a tame, prosaic acknowledgment, "I believe that thou art," &c., but in the language of adoration, such as one uses in worship, *Thou art the Christ*, the anointed of the Father, through whom alone His people can come into blessing. The true knowledge of the mysteries of Christ is not to be found, but only among the disciples of the truth and the light. Out of this school there is nothing but uncertainty or falsehood.

30. \*And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.—\*Matt. xvi. 20.

There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent, concerning the Divine mysteries. Man is both unworthy and incapable of hearing them before Christ has, by His sufferings and death, merited for him the grace requisite thereto.

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.—\*Matt. xvi. 21, Luke ix. 22.

Jesus then predicted His own approaching death and resurrection, and this was a very important prediction, because it showed that His death did not come upon Him unawares, that He clearly foresaw it, that He was not surprised into Calvary, but that He anticipated a cross as the conclusion of His painful and sorrowing pilgrimage upon earth. *After three days.* 1. It is ten times expressly said, that our Lord rose, or was to rise again the *third day* (Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 23, xx. 19; Mark ix. 31, x. 34; Luke ix. 22, xviii. 33, xxiv. 7, 46; Acts x. 40); and so the expression, which is most used, both in our Lord's predictions before His death, and in His and His Apostles' language after His resurrection, being this; these other forms of speech, which are but once or twice found in Scripture, must be interpreted to accord with it. 2. According to the language both of the Hebrew and the Greek, that is said to be done after so many days, months or years, which is done in the last of them. (Deut. xiv. 28, xv. 1, xxvi. 12, xxxi. 10; 2 Chron. x. 5, 12.) "After three days they found Him in the temple" (Luke ii. 46), that is, on the third day. 3. The Jews understood "after three days" to signify no more than *on the third day*, for having told Pilate that Christ had said "after three days I will rise again," they desire only that a watch might be kept "till the third day." (Matt. xxvii. 63, 64.)

32. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

When Christ had proclaimed His death, the great cardinal truth of Christianity, Peter, ever rash to speak and often to do what was wrong, began to rebuke Him, as if it were not meet that He should die, as if there could be a crown without a cross. We all sympathize too much with Peter; we would rather avoid the cross; and

snatch prematurely at the crown, we should like to get to heaven without trials, to reach the goal without trouble, to arrive at the end of the journey without the travel that is requisite before it, and we would rebuke those who should say that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven.

33. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Notice how particularly our Saviour's gesture is here stated: His "turning about" (the act, by the way, of one who walks *in advance*), His "looking on His disciples," and lastly, the awful rebuke which He addressed to Peter. Concerning this last, it will, of course, be understood that our Saviour's words point out *Satan* as the adversary who, availing himself of human weakness and human sinfulness, is in reality the one who, all along, opposes himself to God. Whoever opposes the love of the cross is a Satan. How dangerous a counselor is natural tenderness in the affairs of salvation! Men think to preserve nature, to please a friend and to use a penitent gently by sparing them in what is troublesome and grievous, and so they ruin them by a fatal kindness.

On verses 31-33: see on Matt. xvi. 21-23; Luke ix. 22.

34. † And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, †Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.—\*Matt. x. 38.

*Whosoever will come after me*—that is, obey me, be my disciple—let him *deny himself* much that he would like, much that he would prefer, and *take up his cross*. Whatever cross God may assign us in His providence, we are to take up, and seek that it may be sanctified by His grace, and thus, bearing our cross, we are to follow Him.

35. For whoever will save his life, shall lose it, but whoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, the same shall save it.—\*John xii. 25.

*Whosoever will save his life shall lose it*—in the deeper sense of losing himself—his soul, which is his true life. *But whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it*, in the higher sense of the everlasting security of his soul. O, the gain of godliness. Though a man should lose his life for Christ, he finds it in the

spiritual life which shall feed all the strength of holiness, and all the joy of salvation forever. He finds it in the communion of deathless saints, in the noblest employments, in the elevations of intellect, in the exercise of the sweetest affections, and, above all, in and with God, who is the fountain of life and blessedness forevermore.

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?

On these verses *Stier* observes: "If, in a general raging fire around thee, thou wert to save and preserve thy great and well-filled palace, and yet be destroyed thyself by the fire, what wouldst 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."

See on Matt. xvi. 21-8.

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.

†Matt. x. 33. †See Rom. i. 16; 2 Tim. i. 8.

*Whosoever, &c.* Whosoever shall deny or disown me, either in my person, my Gospel, or my members, for any fear or favor of man, he shall with shame be disowned and eternally rejected by me at the great day. (Matt. x. 33.) Both fear and shame make persons disown Christ and religion in the day of temptation. Many good men have been overcome by the former passion, as Peter and others, but we find not any good man in Scripture guilty of the latter, namely, that denied Christ out of shame. This argues a rotten, unsound and corrupt heart. It is not sufficient that we own Christ by believing in Him, we must honor Him by an outward profession also.

Men are ashamed of Christ and His Gospel: 1. Because it is not always a profitable cause. 2. Because not many mighty, wise or noble of this world, are called. 3. Because of the afflictions that accompany a profession of faith. 4. Because loud Christian professors have very often acted most unworthily of it. While we do not parade our religion, or make a display of our principles, we ought not to be silent when they are assailed, or to connive when they are sacrificed; but everywhere and always not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. When Jesus shall come in the glory of His Father, there will be but two classes: they that have not been ashamed of Him, and they who have. To which class shall we belong?

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1. What did Jesus say to His disciples? 2. What miracle did He perform? 3. What is said about this miracle? 4. Where did Christ next go? 5. How did the Pharisees "tempt" Him? 6. What charge did He give to His disciples? 7. How did He rebuke their reasoning among themselves? 8. Who was brought to Him? 9. What did Jesus do to this man? 10. What did He ask His disciples? 11. What did Peter say to our Lord? 12. How did he rebuke Peter? 13. What was said by Him to the people and the disciples? 14. Explain verses 37 and 38.

## CHAPTER IX.

2 *Jesus is transfigured.* 11 *He instructeth his disciples concerning the coming of Elias:* 14 *casteth forth a dumb and deaf spirit:* 30 *foretelleth his death and resurrection:* 33 *exhorteth his disciples to humility:* 38 *bidding them not to prohibit such as be not against them, nor to give offense to any of the faithful.*

AND he said unto them, <sup>a</sup>Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen <sup>b</sup>the kingdom of God come with power.  
<sup>a</sup>Matt. xvi. 28; Luke ix. 27. <sup>b</sup>Matt. xxiv. 30, xxv. 31; Luke xxii. 18.

*Taste of death.* Death, the mighty tyrant (Rom. v. 17) who held men in the bondage of fear all their life long (Heb ii. 14) is dethroned, his charter is made null, his authority is brought to naught by the death of the Son of God. A voice from heaven now says, "Blessed are the dead." (Rev. xiv. 13.) To those who "die in the Lord," death is a shadow, where the substance is gone, a taste, the body suffering only for a moment, the soul feasted in all abundance forevermore. "As for the ungodly, it is not so with them." (Ps. xxiii. 4; Acts vii. 60; Ps. lxxiii. 15-19; 1 Cor. xv. 55-57.) *The kingdom of God, &c.* The kingdom of God had already *come*. It came, its foundation was laid, when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." This kingdom proceeded further, when Jesus chose His twelve Apostles. But our Lord's prophecy that the kingdom should come *with power*, was fulfilled when the guilty nation which had rejected their heavenly King, suffered the penalty of their iniquities. And some were at that time standing by our Lord, who *did not taste of death* till this was done. In another, and an important sense, they all saw the *kingdom of God come with power*, on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand persons "gladly received the Word" of truth, as preached by Peter, and were baptized in the name of Him, whom shortly before they had joined in crucifying.

2. <sup>a</sup>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.—<sup>c</sup>Matt. xvii. 1; Luke ix. 28.

Transfiguration—verses 1-10. See on Matt. xvii. 1-13; Luke ix. 27-36.

As the law required no more than two or three witnesses to constitute a regular and judicial proof, our Saviour frequently chose to have only this number present at

some of the most important and interesting scenes of His life. The three disciples whom He now selected, were those that generally attended Him on such occasions, and who seem to have been distinguished as His most intimate and confidential friends. John, we know, was so in an eminent degree. James, his brother, would, from that near connection, probably be brought more frequently under his Master's notice; and as Peter was the very person who had expressed himself with so much indignation on the subject of our Saviour's sufferings, it was highly proper and necessary that he should be admitted to a spectacle which was purposely calculated to calm those emotions, and remove that disgust which the first mention of them had produced in his mind.

*Into a high mountain.* Some think that Tabor was the scene of the transfiguration. But there seems to be validity in the objection to this, that our Lord can hardly be supposed to have taken a journey into Galilee, to be transfigured on Mount Tabor, and then to have returned to the region of Cesarea Philippi, as it is evident he must have done from Mark ix. 30. It appears also that He rejoined His disciples the next day (Luke ix. 37) after the transfiguration, which would have been impossible had He been transfigured on Mount Tabor and His disciples remained at Cesarea Philippi. It is better, therefore, to understand it of some mountain in the immediate neighborhood, although its identification now is out of the question.

*Transfigured*—changed in appearance. *Before them.* As they stood lost in wonder at the phenomenon. It was a full, steady splendor.

3. And his raiment became shining, exceeding <sup>a</sup>white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.  
<sup>b</sup>Dan. vii. 9; Matt. xxviii. 3.

*His raiment, &c.* The fullness of the Spirit which was in Christ cast its splendor over His whole being, yea, the heavenly luminosity of His inner man, which else was still bound by the obscurity of His earthly appearance, now broke forth, and poured even upon His apparel a white glistering of light, which was wholly new

to the astonished disciples. This was a mightier reappearance of that phenomenon which the Baptist saw when the Spirit descended upon Him, a foreshining of the perpetual glorification to be afterward realized. When Moses talked with God "the skin of his face shone;" but Moses was arrayed with a glory which came from without: our Lord, with that which proceeded from the inherent brightness of Divine glory. He was transfigured, not as receiving what He was not, but as manifesting to His disciples what He was. The resurrection-bodies of the saints will resemble that of their Lord. They too shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

Moses and Elias, as servants, stand by their Lord in His glory. Heaven, as it were, comes down to earth, and glorified humanity is made visible to the eyes of flesh. In Moses were represented the generations of the dead: and in Elijah, who died not, those who shall be alive at the last day. *Appeared . . . talking.* They were not only *seen* by the disciples, but they were *heard* also conversing with Jesus. This is a circumstance of great importance, especially when we are told what the subject of their conversation was. Luke gives us this useful piece of information; he says, that "they spake of our Lord's decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." The very *mention* of Christ's sufferings and death by such men as Moses and Elias, without any marks of surprise or dissatisfaction, was of itself sufficient to occasion a great change in the sentiment of the disciples respecting those sufferings, and to soften those prejudices of their's against them, the removal of which seems to have been one of the more immediate objects of the transfiguration. But if we suppose further (what is far from being improbable) that in the course of the conversation several interesting particulars respecting our Saviour's crucifixion were brought under discussion; if they entered at any length into that important subject, *the great work of our redemption*; if they touched upon the nature, the causes, and the consequences of it; the pardon of sin,

the restitution to God's favor, the triumph over death, and the gift of eternal life; if they showed that the sufferings of Christ were prefigured in the law, and foretold by the prophets; it is easy to see, that topics such as these must tend still further to open the eyes, and remove the pre-possessions of His disciples; and the more so, because they would seem to arise incidentally in a discourse between other persons casually overheard; which having no appearance of design or professed opposition in it, would be apt to make a deeper impression on their minds than a direct and open attack upon their prejudices.

In this scene there was displayed to the disciples the oneness of the Old Covenant with the New, and the superiority of the New to the Old. The essential import, indeed, of this incident seems to be, that it was the formal resignation of those who had hitherto been mediators (typical) between God and man in favor of the "One Mediator," whom God now also definitely proclaimed as such by His own choice. Moses and Elias, law and prophets, found their fulfillment and were merged in Jesus, and mainly in His death of which they spoke.

5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 6. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

"Love will stumble rather than be dumb." Peter knew not what he ought to say, but he knew what he felt, and out of the abundance of the heart his mouth spake, *it is good for us to be here.* He loved the presence of his Lord at all times; now he specially desired it, when he saw it surrounded with honor and glory; he wished to detain Him on the mount, and there to abide with Him, and so to return to the trials and temptations of the world no more. He desired, at the same time, the communion of saints, in their union with the Lord of life and glory—of saints departed, as Moses and Elias, of saints still in the same mortal body with himself, as James and John. "It is good for us to be here." Though, in the trouble of his thoughts he *wist* (or knew) *not what to say*, or rather spake inconsiderately, yet afterward, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, he saw clearly into the mystery of Christ's

transfiguration, he recorded, for our benefit, the glorious truth of the "majesty, honor and glory" of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of His "power and coming" hereafter in that glory. (viii. 24, 25; 2 Peter i. 16-18; John xiii. 6, 7, xiv. 26.)

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.

The summit of the mountain, or at least that portion on which they stood was covered with ineffable splendor like that of the Shechinah, and it *overshadowed them* with its glorious refulgence. This refers, of course, to our Lord, Moses and Elias. That the disciples did not enter into the cloud (Luke ix. 34) is evident, because the voice which they heard issued from it. This *voice* was none other than that of God. (2 Peter i. 17.) *This is my beloved Son.* Once before, at His baptism, and once afterward (John xii. 18), did God, in an audible voice, bear testimony in favor of His Son. *Hear him.* An emphatic declaration that the teachings of Jesus were to take pre-eminence over those of Moses and the prophets. (Comp. Deut. xvii. 15; Heb. i. 1, 2.) As Christ's future glory was to be witnessed by three in heaven, and three in earth (Luke ix. 34), so was it right that this, the foretaste of His coming kingdom, besides its three earthly witnesses (Peter, James and John), should have its three heavenly witnesses (the Father, Moses and Elias) also.

8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man anymore, save Jesus only with themselves.

*Saw no man, &c.* One great purpose of the transfiguration was to represent the cessation of the Jewish, and the commencement of the Christian dispensation. Moses and Elias disappear—the former objects of the disciples' veneration are no more. Christ remains alone "*the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*" No man can come unto the Father but through Him.

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.—*Mt. xvii. 9.*

The command which Jesus gave to His disciples, they kept and obeyed; they maintained the most profound silence respecting the occurrence. Unquestionably the secret must have proved suffi-

ciently oppressive to them, since they did not know how they were to understand the words *till the Son of man were risen from the dead.* This expression was to them, at present, in two respects inexplicable: First, in itself, for they knew not in what sense it was to be taken; and then again, because not knowing its meaning, they knew not either the period when their tongues should be loosed respecting this great secret. If, for example, Jesus had spoken of the general resurrection of the dead at the last day (see John xi. 24), He would then have imposed upon them in that command almost an everlasting silence on the great event which they had witnessed. They had eager discussion therefore with each other as to the meaning of that announcement. The reason for the secrecy which Christ enjoined, is probably to be found in the facts, that for the larger circle of disciples the transaction could only be made intelligible through the medium of Christ's resurrection, and, that even those His most confidential disciples themselves could only then properly apprehend it, when they viewed it in connection with the expectation of their Lord being raised from the dead, since in its very nature it was a prophetic prelibation of His resurrection.

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 show it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. 13. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

<sup>1</sup>Mal. iv. 5; <sup>2</sup>Matt. xvii. 10. <sup>3</sup>Ps. xxii. 6; <sup>4</sup>Isa. liii. 2, &c.; <sup>5</sup>Dan. ix. 24. <sup>6</sup>Luke xxiii. 11; <sup>7</sup>Phil. ii. 7. <sup>8</sup>Matt. xi. 14, xvii. 12. <sup>9</sup>Luke i. 17.

On verses 11-13 see on Matt. xvii. 10-12.

*Why say, &c.* The original is, *that say the scribes*, where must be supplied the ellipsis, found not infrequently in such indirect questions: (why is it) *that the scribes say, &c. Elias verily cometh first.* Our Lord replies by affirming the truth of what the scribes taught, and then proposes in His turn a question: *And how is it (also) written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be set at nought?* By taking these words as an interrogation, which in the original is admissible, the way is prepared for the conclusion in verse 13, that Elias has indeed come and suffered, as was prophesied of him; and in like manner

also will prophecy be fulfilled as to the sufferings and death of the Son of man. Thus the parts of our Lord's reply are made to cohere and correspond. *Set at naught, i. e.*, made nothing of, despised.

*Elias is indeed come, &c.* The treatment which he was to experience at the hands of men, was not the subject of prophecy. *Listed*—chose.

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?—Matt. xvii. 14; Luke ix. 37.

*A great multitude, &c.* At the foot of the mountain, probably in an inhabited valley. The group was evidently in a state of great excitement. *Greatly amazed.* This word implies admiration, as well as awe and veneration. Somethink that our Lord's countenance retained traces of His glory on the mount. (Ex. xxiv. 29, 30.) Jesus observed, probably with displeasure, that the doctors of the law, as adepts in disputation, had with their questions pressed His disciples very closely, perhaps to some degree of embarrassment. He immediately steps up to them with the inquiry, "What are ye disputing with them about?" They gave Him no answer—a proof how much they were afraid of Him.

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 tearth 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. <sup>1</sup>Matt. xvii. 17; Luke ix. 38.

On verses 17–29 see on Matt. xvii. 14, &c.

How unlike was this scene to that which the three Apostles had just witnessed on the top of the mountain! *There* all was light, love, bliss and joy; here, sin, and sorrow, and suffering. *A dumb spirit.* This statement 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, nor one under which he had always labored, but the consequence of demoniacal possession. *And wheresoever, &c.* The hint here supplied as to what befel the youthful sufferer, leads to the supposition that he was subject to the repeated assaults of his foul enemy, who, in some mysterious way, was able to go away and come back again, as

the inmate of a house does to his dwelling. Who does not feel for the pitiable condition of the father? And yet who knows what is good for man in this vain life? But for this calamity, perhaps, this suppliant had never known or addressed the Saviour. How many can say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted?" *I spake to thy disciples, &c.* Observe the man's mistake. He first goes and applies to the servants instead of the master. And do not we often err in the same way? Do not our ignorance, carnality and impatience lead us to stop at instruments? But they are nothing without God, and the sooner we are convinced of this the better, that we may not weary ourselves for very vanity.

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. <sup>2</sup>Deut. xxxii. 20; Ps. lxxviii. 6, 8, 22; John xx. 27; Heb. iii. 10, 12.

Our Lord replies to the father by a severe rebuke to the disciples. As if wounded at the exposure before such a multitude, of the weakness of His disciples' faith, which doubtless He felt as a reflection on Himself, He puts them to the blush before all, but in language fitted only to raise expectation of what Himself would do. *O faithless generation, &c.* It is no great matter to live lovingly with good-natured, with humble and meek persons, but he that can do so with the froward, the wilful, the ignorant, the peevish and "perverse" (Luke ix. 41), he only has true charity, always remembering that our true solid peace, the peace of God, consists rather in compliance with others, than in being complied with, in suffering and forbearing, rather than in contention and victory. (Ps. cx. 5–7; Acts xiii. 18; Rom. xv. 1–3; 1 Cor. xiii. 4–8; 1 Peter ii. 18–21.)

20. And they brought him unto him; and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and swallowed foaming. 21. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. <sup>3</sup>Chap. i. 26; Luke ix. 42.

The moment when the boy beholds Jesus, the evil spirit that possesses him raises a fearful paroxysm. But, 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 the poor boy. Satan does all he can to prevent the young coming to Jesus. *Of a child.* The case was a very inveterate one. It was one of long standing and great malignity, therefore it was the better suited to display the almighty power of Jesus. He loves to save where it is *most* evident that no *other* hand but *His* can afford help.

22. And oftentimes it has 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.

The father begins 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 unbelievably the bold words: *But if thou canst, &c.* 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.

23. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

<sup>o</sup>Matt. xvii. 20; chap. xi. 23; Luke xvii. 6; John xi. 40.

A severe master would have rejected such a prayer as the father offered. (Verse 22.) But Jesus cherished the tenderest bud of faith. *If thou canst, &c.* The poor man was encouraged by this assurance to offer up a still more earnest prayer than before. When our Lord says, "All things are possible to him that believeth," we are to understand what classes of things He is speaking of, in which He includes all. And the condition (to him that believeth) belongs not to every rash and presumptuous belief that the mind, not in communion with God, may conjure up. The belief of which He speaks is that faith of which God grants the power.

24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

<sup>e</sup>Ph. ii. 8; Phil. i. 29; 2 Thes. i. 3, 11; Heb. xii. 2.

*With tears.* It is pleasing to see sensibility in religion. *Lord, I believe, &c.* Did not the Holy Spirit dictate this prayer? "We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. viii. 26.) Have our hearts ever been so full of good desires that we could only speak a few words? And were these words half choked with tears and sobs? God has heard those prayers. He never despises the broken and contrite heart. *Help thou mine unbelief,* help me, though I am conscious that my faith is weak, I have confidence in no one else but thee, and though I might justly be required to have more faith, yet, O pity my distressed situation, and let not my lack of faith prevent the exercise of thy power. "Our justification," says an old writer, "does not depend upon the degree of our faith, but on the reality of it." (Matt. xiii. 23, xxv. 22, 23.) Strength of grace is seen in holy joys, but truth of grace may be seen in sighs and groans. (Matt. v. 3, 4; Rom. viii. 23, 1 Peter i. 6.) "*Help thou mine unbelief.*" Had this prayer been improper, the receiver ought to have rebuked it, but He encouraged it. Let us not be afraid, with all the first Christians, and immensely the majority ever since, to call upon His name. Let us bring all our complaints to Him. He is the author and finisher of faith. In Him all fullness dwells.

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.

When the Saviour dispossessed this boy of a devil, He enjoined the evil spirit to *enter no more into him.* But when He Himself was tempted of Satan, the devil "departed from him for a season." (Luke iv. 13.) Thus we see that Jesus was pleased to show Himself a God in other men's matters, and but a man in such cases as He Himself was concerned, being contented still to be tempted by Satan, that His sufferings for us might cause our conquering through Him. (x. 45; Rom. xv. 3.)

26. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; inasmuch that many said, He is dead. 27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

When a soul is willing to be converted,

the devil makes his last efforts, but Christ renders them ineffectual by His grace. Whatever He permits the devil to do against those whom He designs to save is only for the glory of His own grace, and to the confusion of the tempter. It is by His almighty power that He casts the devil out of the body and the soul, and puts His Spirit into possession of the heart of man. It was this *father's* faith that obtained the restoration of his son. Here is an encouragement for parents. If Jesus showed so much compassion to one who prayed for a *bodily* cure for his son, how much more must He feel for those who implore *spiritual* blessings for their children!

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.

†Matt. xvii. 19.

*This kind can come forth by nothing, &c.* That is, in order to work miracles, to cast out devils, faith of the highest kind is necessary. That faith is produced and kept vigorous by much prayer, and by such abstinence from food as fits the mind for the highest exercises of religion, and leaves it free to hold communion with God. Learn hence, 1. That in extraordinary cases, where the necessities either of soul or body require it, recourse must be had to the use of extraordinary means, one of which is an importunate application unto God by solemn prayer. 2. That fasting and prayer are two special means of Christ's own appointment, for the enabling of His people victoriously to overcome Satan, and cast him out of ourselves or others. We must set an edge upon our faith by prayer, and upon our prayer by fasting.

30. † And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee, and he would not that any man should know it. 31. † For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. 32. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

†Matt. xvii. 22; Luke ix. 44.

Verses 30-32: see on Matt. xvii. 22-3; Luke ix. 44-5.

Now, for the first time, there is a distinct notice of our Lord's leaving the coasts of Cesarea Philippi. *Is delivered, &c.* Using the present tense, He signifies that the thing shall be shortly, for so did He hasten to death, and so seriously did

He think of it, that *that* might seem present to Him, which was to come. (Luke x. 18, xii. 50; John xiii. 27.) *Rise the third day.* Jesus knew beforehand the whole amount of His sufferings, in all their connections and bearings, and therefore never foretold them without likewise foretelling His resurrection; neither did He foretell this, without foretelling His sufferings. Thus does true faith apprehend the latter and the former, as one entire matter, and makes very much of everything pertaining to either. Here is something for exercising the heart, something which must never be lost sight of in the darkest night of affliction, or in the clearest blaze of the terrestrial noon, for it is to "guide our feet in the way of peace." As we hold a candle to the flame, until it is fully lighted, so we must hold ourselves to this subject, with affecting meditation. (Luke xxiv. 26; 1 Peter v. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 4.)

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 she 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.

†Matt. xviii. 1; Luke ix. 46, xxii. 24. †Matt. xx. 26, 27; chap. x. 43. †Matt. xviii. 2; chap. x. 16. †Matt. x. 49; Luke ix. 48, x. 16; John xii. 44, xiii. 20.

*Disputed among yourselves, &c.* If there was to be any *primacy* among the Apostles, why was Christ on this occasion silent concerning it? Or, if He had, in the hearing of the others, conferred it on Peter, what occasion would there have been for the Apostles to dispute about it? *If any man desire, &c.* The whole manner in which our Lord treats the question shows that the kingdom of God is designed, in its official relations, to form the direct opposite to official relations in the world. The fundamental impulse of the world is for all to struggle upward, toward power and distinction, in order to overtop and to rule each other. On the other hand, the fundamental impulse of the kingdom of God is this, that all shall stoop down in humility and serving love in order to draw each other up. And it is just by the might of this disposition to stoop that we are to measure a man's greatness in the kingdom of God. (See Phil. ii. 6, &c.)

*And he took a child, &c.* Here Jesus teaches by action. His object was, not only to recommend children to the care of His disciples, but to teach the disciples themselves an affectionate, humble, docile temper. The action was one which accorded with the holiness of His nature, and affecting characterized it. Never was dignity so sweetly tempered by benevolence, never did the condescending tenderness of an elevated nature issue in a current at once so gentle and so copious. Children are entitled to our warmest interest. Think of their destiny! Yesterday that child was nothing, but when will it cease to be? Never! Immortality is written upon it, and the inscription is indelible, for it was traced by the finger of God. *Whosoever shall receive one of such, &c.* Here is precious encouragement for the Sabbath-school teacher. To receive children to instruct them merely in human learning, would not certainly be receiving them in Christ's name. But when we receive them to instruct them in His religion, to lead them to Him as their Saviour, to train them up in His nurture and admonition, we receive them in His name, and in so doing we "receive Him." *Receiveth not me (only), but him that sent me.* The service rendered to the lowest and humblest of our race, if done with proper motive, is virtually rendered to the supreme Lord of the universe, and as such shall be rewarded with life everlasting.

On verses 33-37 see on Matt. xviii. 1, &c.

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."—Num. xi. 28; Luke ix. 49.

See on Luke ix. 49.

*Master, we saw, &c.* Although only the disciples who followed Christ had a commission to work miracles, yet there were others, no enemies to Christ, who, in imitation of His disciples, attempted to cast out devils, and God was pleased, for the honor of His Son, sometimes to give them success. *We forbade him.* Here is an evidence of their rashness in forbidding him, under their own impulse, before they had consulted Jesus about it, and of their envy and emulation, in that they were dissatisfied and grieved that good was done,

because *they* did not do it. It is as hard a matter to look upon the gifts of others without envy, as it is upon our own without pride. "Followeth not us." "A preacher," says one, "sometimes imagines that his only desire is that men should follow Christ, and adhere to His Word, and it is himself whom he desires they should follow, and to whom he is very glad to find them adhere. John has fewer imitators of that perfect freedom from self-interest, which he had after the descent of the Holy Ghost, than he has of this defect in his state of imperfection. A man willingly approves the good which is done by others, when he loves good for its own sake, and God for His."

39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: \*for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.—1 Cor. xii. 3.

*Forbid him not.* Our Saviour thus replied, because He knew that this action of casting out devils in His name, would in some way redound to His glory, although He undertook the matter without direction from Christ. We ought not to censure and condemn those who do that which is good in itself, though they fail in the manner of their doing it. *That can lightly speak evil of me.* Two principles of immense importance are here laid down: First, "no one will 'lightly' or 'soon,' *i. e.*, readily speak evil of me, who has the faith to do a miracle in my name, inasmuch as the outstreaming of the power to work in my name, cannot be greater than the inward recognition of that name; and second, If such a person cannot be supposed to be *against* us, ye are to hold him *for* us." Let it be carefully observed that our Lord does not say this man should *not* have "followed them," nor yet that it was indifferent whether he did or not, but simply teaches how such a person was to be regarded, *although he did not*, viz.: as a reverer of His name, and a promoter of His cause. (See on Luke ix. 50.)

The disciples were thus taught to see, in all men who had not declared themselves in opposition to them, furtherers of their cause, because not only all beginnings, but also all preparations of faith, even the smallest, should likewise be accounted component parts of Christ's Divine harvest; and further, for this cause also, because

those who are enemies of the disciples of Jesus are generally quick enough in making it known.

40. For *ye* that is not against us is on our part. 7See Matt. xii. 30.

It has justly been observed that religion does not consist in mere negatives. Yet it here appears that if true religion does not consist in mere negatives, it may be inferred from what is negative, or that where there is no enmity, there is real friendship for Christ. There can be no neutrality; all men are either the friends or the enemies of Jesus. Men's hostility to Christ manifests itself, 1. By a dislike to draw near to God in the exercise of devotion. 2. In a dislike to think and speak about God and the Redeemer. 3. In a dislike of the followers of Christ, and those who bear His image. Some persons, from situation, connection, or other unavoidable causes, are kept from associating with the godly, yet they drink in the spirit of the Gospel and are concerned to honor it. Others, who frequent the assemblies of the saints, have but little to say on behalf of Christ, either from weakness or natural timidity, and so are unnoticed and unknown; yet there are some of this description who, though they cannot speak much for Jesus, could even die for Him. Many are deterred from making a public profession of religion through fear that all is not right with them, that they need higher attainments, and a more enlarged experience of the truth to justify their pretensions of love to Christ; yet He will own them as His friends amidst all their weaknesses and infirmities. (Matt. xxii. 20.) Some by their backslidings from peculiar temptations may have rendered their religion doubtful, yet their hearts mourn in secret for their folly and guilt, and they are far from being against Christ, or indifferent to His cause. (John xxi. 15.)

It becomes us, from Christ's example, to give encouragement wherever there are the least appearances of love to Him—to make that the test of true religion, rather than the existence of any other principle, and without respect to party distinctions. An old writer observes: "Moses, when he saw the Israelite and the Egyptian fight, did not say, 'Why strive you?' but drew

his sword and slew the Egyptian; but when he saw the two Israelites fight, he said, 'You are brethren, why strive you?' If the point of doctrine be an Egyptian (*i. e.*, fundamentally opposed to the faith), it must be slain 'by the sword of the Spirit,' and not reconciled, but if it be an Israelite (*i. e.*, if it concerns points not fundamental), though in the wrong, then, 'Why strive you?' (Gal. ii. 5; Rom. xiv.)

41. \*For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. \*Matt. x. 42.

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! (See on Matt. x. 42.)

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. —\*Matt. xviii. 6; Luke xvii. 1.

*Offend*—be a stumbling-block to, or furnish occasion to sin. *That a millstone, &c.* This was common punishment in ancient times. It was frequently resorted to in the case of rebels, and other malefactors, in the times of the later emperors of Rome. It was inflicted on many of the first Christians, and it is still used in the East to punish a variety of crimes.

43. <sup>b</sup>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. <sup>c</sup>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. <sup>d</sup>Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? <sup>e</sup>Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another. <sup>b</sup>Deut. xiii. 6. <sup>c</sup>Matt. v. 29, xviii. 8. <sup>d</sup>Isa. lxxvi. 4. <sup>e</sup>Lev. ii. 13; Ezek. xliiii. 24. <sup>f</sup>Matt. v. 13; Luke xiv. 34. <sup>g</sup>Eph. iv. 29; Col. iv. 6. <sup>h</sup>Rom. xii. 18, xiv. 19; <sup>i</sup>2 Cor. xiii. 11; Heb. xii. 14.

See on Matt. xvii. 7, &c.

*Offend thee, or cause thee to offend, or sin. Cut it off.* We are not to understand this, or the similar expression in the following verses, literally. The obvious meaning is, if an object, dear as a hand, foot, or eye, stand between us and our progress to heaven, and our complete surrender to Christ Jesus, that object, however dear, and the sacrifice of it, however

painful, we are to part with, renounce and resign, counting all but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. God denies us nothing, but with a design to give us something better. If He forbids a lust, it is to give us Himself. O wretched man! that ever thy heart should be so blind, so hard, so long in choosing. (Acts vii. 5; Heb. x. 34.) *Into hell*—the place of future punishment, the word being here contrasted with *going into life*, that is, future bliss. For a similar contrast see Matt. xxv. 46. *The fire that never shall be quenched*. On reading this expression, how can any one doubt that the misery of the lost is perpetual and ever-enduring? Universalists, instead of preaching down hell, would do much better if they would preach up Christ and heaven. If we show that whatever be the intensity of the misery of the lost, there is no reason why one sinner on earth should perish, we do better than by encouraging them in the path of ruin to plunge into the place of misery, in the wretched and vain anticipation that hell is only a sort of purgatory that has a happy and prosperous end. (See on Matt. iii. 12.)

*Where their worm, &c.* The *worm* and the *fire* are severally two-fold, each internal and external: the internal both burns and gnaws the heart; the external both gnaws and burns the body. (Ps. xxxix. 11.) There is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these apprehensions. (Eph. v. 14; Jude 23.)

*For every one shall be salted, &c.* The causal particle "for" evidently shows that our Saviour is assigning a reason of what He had said before. (Verses 43, 45, 47.) Some of His hearers might perhaps think it strange that *their worm should never die*, that *their fire should never be quenched*, and hardly believe it possible for them to exist forever in such a state of torment, and therefore He now assigns a reason for what

He had said, viz.: that the *fire* shall be to them as *salt*, it shall not *consume*, but preserve them, and so make them capable of existing forever in everlasting burnings. *And every sacrifice, &c.* The word here translated "and" is sometimes used for "as" by way of similitude. The meaning is, the wicked shall in that torment of fire be made a sacrifice of everlasting holocaust to the Divine justice, of which God has given a proof and illustration in the typical law, having therein commanded that all sacrifices which were offered by fire, should be salted to preserve them from corruption. (Lev. ii. 13.) "It seems probable from this passage," says *Bishop Newton*, "as well as from other places of Scripture, that the fire of hell is not *metaphorical* but *real*. . . . The wicked having offended both in body and soul, they shall be punished in the one as well as in the other: and as the worm of guilt, the sense and consciousness of their evil doings, will torment their souls, so the fire will forever excruciate their bodies." (See Luke xvi. 24; Matt. xiii. 40, &c., xxv. 41.)

*Salt is good, &c.* Our Lord reminded the disciples, that as salt, though valuable in itself to season other bodies, was yet worthless and irrecoverable when it had lost its saltiness, so they would become more vile than others, if they were not truly sanctified; for they would be employed in converting and preserving others, and would have none to season them should they turn aside. It would therefore be incumbent on them to watch over their own hearts, to mortify their lusts, and laying aside ambition, the parent of contention, to live at peace with each other. "If the teachers themselves to whom is committed the Divine Word, with which men must be seasoned as with salt . . . do themselves become insipid" (not savoring of that holy word, in doctrine, spirit and practice), "what remaineth, but either, that the hearers perish, or that God should send other teachers."

1. What did our Lord say about "the kingdom of God"? 2. Where did he take Peter, James and John? 3. What is said of His Transfiguration? 4. Who appeared, and talked with Jesus? 5. What did Peter propose? 6. What did the voice say from the cloud? 7. Who was brought to Jesus? 8. What did He ask his father? 9. Did Jesus cast out the dumb and deaf spirit? 10. What did His disciples ask? 11. What reply was made. 12. What did Christ do when the disciples disputed who should be the greatest? 13. What did John say to our Saviour? 14. Explain the answer he received. 15. Explain also verses 43-50.

## CHAPTER X.

2 *Christ disputeth with the Pharisees touching divorce-ment: 13 blesseth the children that are brought unto him: 17 reproveth a rich man how he may inherit life everlasting: 23 telleth his disciples of the danger of riches: 28 promisseth rewards to them that forsake anything for the gospel: 32 foretelleth his death and resurrection: 35 biddeth the two ambitious suitors to think rather of suffering with him: 46 and restoreth to Bartimeus his sight.*

AND <sup>he</sup> arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again: and, as he was wont, he taught them again.—Matt. xix. 1.

*From thence.* The last locality mentioned by Mark was Capernaum. (ix. 33.) *By the farther side of Jordan.* From this, as well as from Matt. xix. 1, it is evident that Jesus did not merely come to Peræa, but traveled through Peræa to the borders of Judea, that is, to the most eastern limits of Peræa. *As he was wont, &c.* How thick and close does this heavenly Sower scatter His seed! Every line is a new lesson, and every lesson a rule of perfection. Oh, the magnificent bounty of our God! He gives not barely the measure we give others, but pressed down, and shaken together, and running over into our bosoms. Why are we then so slow and dull to learn these Divine instructions? Why so remiss to practice them? Are they not sweet and excellent in themselves? Are they not infinitely profitable to us? Oh, make us greedy to learn what Thy love makes Thee so earnest to teach! (Job xxxiii. 14; Phil. iii. 1, 18; 1 Sam. iii. 9.)

2. ¶ <sup>And</sup> 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, <sup>Moses</sup> 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 <sup>God</sup> made them male and female. 7. <sup>For</sup> 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, <sup>Whosoever</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xix. 3. <sup>2</sup>Deut. xxiv. 1; Matt. v. 31. <sup>3</sup>Gen. i. 27. <sup>4</sup>Gen. ii. 24; 1 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. v. 31. <sup>5</sup>Matt. v. 32; Rom. vii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

Verses 2–12: see on Matt. xix. 3–9, v. 31.

*Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.* Is it asked, how could this be tempting Jesus? It was a very plain and Scriptural question, and the answer, one would suppose, must be free from any

risk, and a very easy one. The secret of the difficulty in answering was this. Jesus was still in the dominion of Herod Antipas, who had put away his wife, and was living with a woman who was not his wife, and therefore, they thought that Jesus by their question would be put in a great dilemma, and either way get into trouble. If He had said it was lawful, He would have been sanctioning sin, and if He said it was not lawful, He would be put in prison for offending Herod, as John was. Jesus answered them, however, evidently irrespective of any governing power, and fearless of any snare. He ever showed, what we should ever feel, that the path of truth, and right, and duty, and principle, is always, in the long run, the path that leads to safety.

*What did Moses command you?* The account given by Matthew (xix. 3) and Mark are not contradictory. Matthew records what was said in one part of the conversation, and Mark what was said in another. *For the hardness of your heart, &c.* Moses, as a civil lawgiver, “for,” because of, or having respect to, the hardness of your hearts—looking to your low moral state, and your inability to endure the strictness of the original law, suffered you to put away your wives; tolerated relaxation of the strictness of the marriage bond—not as approving of it, but to prevent still greater evils. *From the beginning of the creation—* therefore there was no creation before the creation described in the beginning of Genesis. *For this cause—* to correspond with this Divine law in the creation. For whose sake then may they part, if not for that of *father and mother?*

*Cleave to his wife, &c.* Woman was not made of an outward, but of an inward part of man, says an old writer, that she might be dear to him, even as his inwards; not of the hand of man, lest she should be proud, and look for superiority; not of the foot of man, lest she should be contemned, as far his inferior; but of his side, that she might be used as his fellow, cleaving to his inside, as an inseparable companion of all his haps, whilst they two live. And, as the rib receiveth strength from the breast of

man, so doth the woman from her husband, from whom cometh all her strength, counsel, and good comfort at all times. No creature had his mate made of his own flesh but man; therefore, no creature under heaven should be like man in the love of his mate; but man above them all. (1 Peter iii. 7.)

*What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* The relation of marriage ought to be highly revered and honored. Nothing but death ought to terminate it. "The Prussian laws on marriage, dating from the infidel reign of Frederic II., are scandalously lax and demoralizing, by increasing the causes, and facilitating the accomplishment of divorce. With the revival of true Christianity in Prussia, a reform movement commenced, which aims at a return to the law of Christ."—*Dr. Schaff.* Similar laxness has marked and disgraced legislation in many of the States of our own country. The evils proceeding from the multiplication of divorcees and from the marriage of persons divorced for some other reason than the one specified by our Lord, are so alarming that we hesitate not to say, that both churches and ministers should clear themselves of all responsibility in the matter. The churches should discipline members who become divorced for any other than the Scriptural reason, members who marry with parties so divorced, and ministers who marry them. *Whosoever shall put away his wife, &c. And if a woman shall put away her husband, &c.* Jesus here puts both sexes on a level. Neither has a right to divorce for other cause than unchasteness, and neither, so divorced, has a right to marry again.

13. ¶ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.—*Matt. xix. 13; Luke xviii. 15.*

*Touch them*—in accordance with the Old Testament custom. (Gen. xlvii. 14.) He should lay His right hand on them and pray the Divine benediction upon them. Children are the fruit of marriage; their Christian education, and the care of presenting them to Christ, that they may become members of His body, is the end thereof. They are an unhappy fruit if they are not presented to our blessed Saviour, and if He does not touch them by

blessing them and uniting them to Himself by His Spirit of adoption.

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.—*1 Cor. xiv. 20; 1 Peter ii. 2.*

*He was much displeased.* As Christ was not often "much displeased" with His disciples, there must have been some *great* offense to excite this *great* displeasure. It was a great offense to attempt to drive away these infants from their Saviour. How could the disciples take so much upon them, as to forbid the mothers thus to bring their precious little ones? Pride lurked in their hearts, and suggested many harsh and ungenerous measures. Before Jesus left this world He charged Peter to feed His lambs—those lambs whom He carried in His bosom. Faithful ministers love little children, and are ready to instruct them. *Suffer the little children to come unto me, &c.* How many dying children have lisped these words in their last moments! When Jesus uttered them, He knew what comfort they would afford to the lambs of His flock for many ages to come. And how full of comfort are they also to all who love the dear children! We know who it is who here took such notice of infants. It was the eternal Son of God, the great High Priest, the King of kings, by whom all things consist, "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." *For of such is the kingdom of God.* It has been thought by some that this expression means that of persons of a child-like disposition is the kingdom, and this is true; but the expression really means, of such very children is the kingdom of God, or, heaven, chiefly made up. There is no reason to doubt that infants dying before the years of responsibility, are admitted into everlasting joy.

15. Verily I say unto you, *Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*—*Matt. xviii. 3.*

Verses 13-16: see on *Matt. xix. 13-15, xviii. 3; Luke xviii. 15-17.*

*Whosoever, &c.* This indicates, 1. That children enter into the kingdom of heaven, and, 2. that in the case of adults there is required childlike character, as a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of

heaven. That character is teachable, confiding, trustful, obedient. (See Luke xviii. 17.)

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?

‡ Matt. xix. 16; Luke xviii. 18, on which see Notes.

*Running.* This man was surely impelled by a remarkable earnestness. He seems to have been eagerly waiting. *Kneeled*—he therefore felt a great zeal. *What shall I do, &c.* This inquiry, far from being unreasonable, is the first and chief question which ought to be found upon the lips of every man. For what avails to us the adjustment of every other point, if the question of our eternal state is still undecided?

18. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good, but one, that is God.

*Why callest thou me good?* If it should be asked for what reason Christ put this question, we answer, for the same reason that He asked the Pharisees, why “David, in Spirit, called him Lord?” (Matt. xxii. 43), and that was to try, if they were able to account for it. This ruler, by addressing our Saviour, under the name of “good Master,” when the inspired Psalmist had affirmed long before, that there is “none that doeth good, no, not one” (Ps. xiv. 3), did in effect, allow Him to be God, no mere man, since the fall of Adam, having any claim to that character. And when he was called upon to explain his meaning, for that God only was *good*, he should have replied in the words of Thomas: “My Lord and my God!” which would have been a noble instance of faith, and cleared up the whole difficulty.

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.—Ex. xx.; Rom. xiii. 9.

*Thou knowest the commandments, &c.* It should never be forgotten that if it be true, as it is, on the one hand, that by faith, and faith alone, the sinner is justified before God, yet it is equally true, that the faith which so justifies, is a faith infallibly productive of obedience to the will of God. Morality, indeed, will, of itself, never save a soul, but no man can be saved whose faith does not prompt him to the vigorous and cordial discharge of all the duties of morality. Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

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.—Matt. vi. 19, 20.

*Jesus beholding him loved him.* In other words, He was struck with many sweet and attractive qualities of his mind. Purity, docility, ingenuousness, justice, gratitude, benevolence, any or all of which qualities may have entered more or less into his character, are in themselves lovely and conciliating.

*Sell whatsoever thou hast, &c.* No man is obliged to sell all that he has, &c., because Christ gave such a command to one person, any more than he is obliged to sacrifice his son, because God commanded Abraham to do so, and yet, doubtless, these were written for our instruction, that we might be ready always to obey the severest calls of Providence, a matter of no small difficulty, and which we infinitely deceive ourselves and others in. It is a common thing to say, “God’s will be done,” without one grain of sincerity, or true resignation. (Acts v. 4). *Went away grieved, &c.* Possibly, had he been permitted to unite the services of God and Mammon, to serve his neighbor without injuring himself, to shape his morals according to the conceptions of men, instead of the “pattern” of the sanctuary, he might have remained with Christ, and veiled a cold and conceited heart under the covering of a bright and showy religious profession. If mortification and self-denial, and taking up the cross, and devoting himself body and soul to Christ, and sacrificing all for the benefit of others, are the only terms of being a disciple of Jesus, then, however grieved at the result, he must quit the Saviour and cleave to the world.

Here is a most solemn lesson for young persons invested with all those qualities which attract and delight the observer, full of honor, and candor, and kindness, anxiously attentive to many of the duties of society—persons whom it is difficult to see without loving, and without wishing to transfer many of their attractive qualities into our own character. Let them learn from the narrative, that they may have all those attractions which win the applause

of the world, and yet, unless they "take up their cross" and "follow" Christ, unless they have "the mind which was in Christ Jesus," unless they are seeking redemption by His blood and the sanctification of their hearts by the influence of His Spirit, unless they are prepared to renounce all and do all which God requires, theirs, for the present, *is a lost state*, a state in which, if called to judgment, they would be disinherited of heaven, and dismissed to the place of the impenitent and unholy.

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 answered 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.

¶ Matt. xix. 23; Luke xviii. 24. ¶ Joh xxxi. 24; Ps. lii. 7; 1 Tim. vi. 17. ¶ Jer. xxxii. 17; Matt. xix. 26.

*How hardly, &c.* Looked at in the light of the occasion which called it forth, it is easy to see a special applicability of the passage to the time when it was spoken. It was extremely difficult at that time, at the first preaching of the Gospel, for any rich man to become a convert to Christianity. This can readily be believed, for those who were enjoying all the comforts, and elegancies, and luxuries of life, would not be very ready to sacrifice these, and submit to poverty, hardships, persecutions, and even death itself, to which the first converts to Christianity were frequently exposed. They would, therefore, generally follow the example of the rich man before us; would turn their backs on the kingdom of heaven, and go away to the world and its enjoyments. And this in fact we know to have been the case. For it was of the lower ranks of men that our Lord's disciples *principally* consisted, and we are expressly told that it was the common people chiefly that heard him gladly; and even after his death, Paul asserts that not many mighty, not many noble, were called. Still, however, it cannot be doubted that our Lord, in these words, had an eye also to rich men in future professing Christianity, as well as to the rich men of those days, who were either Jews or heathens.

Although the similitude made use of,

that of a camel passing through the eye of a needle, implies absolute impossibility, yet, according to every rule of interpreting Oriental proverbs (for such this is), it means only, in its application, *great difficulty*. And in this sense it was actually used, both by the Jews and the Arabians, and is plainly so interpreted by our Lord, when He says that "they that have riches" shall *hardly* enter into the kingdom of God. The explanation He gives in verse 24, shows plainly to whom He refers. He there indicates plainly that the possession of property in itself is not ruinous or reprehensible. The persons whom He describes are such as "*trust in riches*"—those who place their whole *dependence* upon them, whose views and hopes are centered in them and them mainly, who place their whole happiness, not in relieving the distresses of the poor and soothing the sorrows of the afflicted, not in acts of worship and adoration, and thanksgiving to Him from whose bounty they derive every blessing they enjoy, not in giving Him their hearts, and dedicating their wealth to His glory and service, but in amassing it without end, or squandering it without any benefit to mankind, in making it the instrument of pleasure, of luxury, of dissipation, of vice, and the means of gratifying every irregular appetite and passion without control.

*Who then can be saved?* The disciples are affected with wonder and admiration, at this teaching of our Saviour. Learn thence, that such are the special and peculiar difficulties which lie in the rich man's way to salvation, that his getting to heaven is matter of wonder and admiration to the disciples of Christ. Observe how our Lord resolves this doubt. *With men, &c.* Here it is implied, 1. That it is impossible for any man, rich or poor, by his own natural strength, to get to heaven; and 2. That when we are discouraged with the sense of our own impotency, we should consider the power of God, and fix our faith upon it.

28. ¶ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30. ¶ But he shall receive an 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. <sup>¶</sup>But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first. <sup>¶</sup>Matt. xix. 27. <sup>¶</sup>Chron. xxv. 9; Luke xviii. 30. <sup>¶</sup>Matt. xix. 30.

But he shall receive a hundredfold, &c.—Virtually, not formally, not a hundred fathers, but he shall have that in God, which all the creatures would be to him, if they were multiplied a hundred times; *wife* here is left out in the repetition. (1 Sam. i. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 21–23.) *With persecutions.* The afflictions and troubles, where-with God in His love chastens His children for their good, are indeed part of His promise, and that a gracious part, too. Here it is expressed; but, where it is not so, it must be ever understood, in all the promises that concern this life. It is a received rule among divines, that all temporal promises are to be understood *cum exceptione crucis*; that is to say, not absolutely, but with this reservation—unless the Lord, in His holy wisdom, shall see it good for us to have it otherwise. . . If we submit our wills to His, both in doing and suffering, doubtless we cannot finally miscarry. He will consult nothing but for our good; and what He hath consulted must stand. (John xv. 2; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Thes. i. 6.)

32. <sup>¶</sup>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. <sup>¶</sup>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. <sup>¶</sup>Matt. xx. 17. <sup>¶</sup>Luke ix. 22.

Verses 32–34: see on Matt. xx. 17; Luke ix. 22.

The Lord Jesus knew, from the beginning, all that was before Him. The treachery of Judas Iscariot, the fierce persecution of the chief priests and scribes, the unjust judgment, the delivery to Pontius Pilate, the mocking, the scourging, the crown of thorns; the cross; the hanging between the two malefactors, the nails, the spear—all, all were spread before His mind like a picture. How great an aggravation of suffering foreknowledge is, those well know who have lived in the prospect of some fearful surgical operation. Yet none of these things moved our Lord. He says: “I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters,

and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” (Isa. l. 5, 6). He saw Calvary in the distance all His life through, and yet walked calmly up to it, without turning to the right hand or to the left. He suffered intentionally, deliberately, and of His own free will. (John x. 18). Surely there never was sorrow like unto His sorrow, or love like His love.

35. <sup>¶</sup>And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst 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. <sup>¶</sup>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 him, 43. Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43. <sup>¶</sup>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.

<sup>¶</sup>Matt. xx. 20. <sup>¶</sup>Matt. xx. 24. <sup>¶</sup>Luke xxii. 25. <sup>¶</sup>Matt. xx. 26, 28; Luke ix. 48. <sup>¶</sup>John xiii. 14; Phil. ii. 7. <sup>¶</sup>Mt. ix. 28, 1 Tim. ii. 6; Titus ii. 14.

Verses 35–45: see on Matt. xx. 24, &c.; Luke xxii. 24–6.

And James and John, &c. Matthew represents Salome, their mother, herself as advancing the prayer, while according to Mark the 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. *Ye know not what ye ask.* Our Lord thus answered, doubtless, with a shudder in His soul, at the absence of foreboding with which His beloved disciples could ask a thousand times for that which was perilous, or even destructive, and still oftener for that which was unreasonable. For not only the want of foreboding with which they asked for themselves the places of the thieves, but also the arrogant regardlessness with which they aspired above all the other disciples, deserved a repulse.

*Drink of the cup.* This is a well-known Scripture phrase, denoting, generally, a partaking in some heavy and bitter portion. (Isa. li. 17; Jer. xxv. 15, 16; Matt.

xxvi. 39, 42.) *With the baptism, &c.* Our Lord elsewhere also speaks of His death, under the figure of a baptism of blood. (Luke xii. 50.)

*We can.* The desire of the sons of Zeb-edee was probably not merely an ambitious effort after dignity, it was inspired by a nobler motive. Rather their wish was, now that the Lord had spoken so plainly of His suffering, and perhaps some of the band of disciples might be terribly discouraged thereby, to express in the strongest way the confidence with which they, on their part, anticipated His glorification. "The Lord has often given me," says *Halyburton*, "when clouded by this fear (the fear of death) a sweet discovery of the beauty of this disposal, that we have promises to live upon, until the trials come, and that, when they come, we shall then get accomplishments to live on. 'In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' . . . I dare not say, 'I am ready to die;' I dare not say, 'I have faith, or grace, sufficient to carry me through death;' I dare not say, 'I have no fears of death;' but this I say, 'There is grace enough for helping me, laid up in the promise;' there is 'a throne of grace,' to which in our straits we may have recourse. He is 'a God of judgment,' who has the disposal, and will not withhold 'grace,' when it is really 'the time of need.'" (Deut. xxxiii. 25; Matt. vi. 34; 1 Cor. x. 13.) *Not mine to give*—as a matter of private friendship or of present favor, apart from the Divine plan of human redemption. The inferiority of Christ to the Father, which appears here as in many other places, is not an essential, but an official one. As Mediator, God-man, the Messiah, He always appears in subordination to the Father, and this, rightly understood, is not inconsistent with those great texts in which His Divinity and co-equal power with the Father are fully taught.

*But it shall be given, &c.* "The supplement which our translators have inserted," says *Dr. Brown*, "is approved by some good interpreters, and the proper sense of the word rendered 'but,' is certainly in favor of it. But besides that, it makes the statement too elliptical—leaving too

many words to be supplied—it seems to make our Lord repudiate the right to assign to each of His people his place in the kingdom of glory, a thing which He nowhere else does, but rather the contrary. It is true that He says their place is 'prepared for them by His Father.' But that is true of their admission to heaven at all, and yet from His great white throne Jesus will Himself adjudicate the kingdom, and authoritatively invite into it those on His right hand, calling them the 'blessed of His Father,' so little inconsistency is there between the eternal choice of them by His Father, and that public adjudication of them, not only to heaven in general, but each to his own position in it, which all Scripture assigns to Christ." The true rendering, then, of this clause, we take it, is this: "But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give, save to them for whom it is prepared." When, therefore, He says, "It is not mine to give," the meaning is, "I cannot give it as a *favor* to whomsoever I *please*, or on a principle of *favoritism*, it belongs exclusively to those for whom it is prepared, &c." And if this be His meaning, it will be seen how far our Lord is from disclaiming the right to assign to each his proper place in His kingdom; that, on the contrary, He expressly asserts it, merely announcing that the principle of distribution is quite different from what these petitioners supposed." *Called them unto him.* (Refer to viii. 34; ix. 35.) Men, that are often angry and for every trifle, in a little time will be little regarded; and they, that reprove with passion, will be less regarded, when they reprove with reason. (Gal. vi. 1; v. 22, 23.)

*They which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, &c.* The several governments, both in the East and West, in our Lord's time, tyrannized and exercised arbitrary power over the people. Christ appears to have spoken these words, to abate the envy rising against the sons of Zeb-edee, among the other Apostles.

*But whosoever will be great among you, &c.* Our Lord here showed them how wrong were all their disputes about precedence, explaining to them that true precedence

was not in rank, but in usefulness. High beneficence is high rank. Thus an incidental occurrence becomes the pedestal on which is exhibited to all mankind a precious and instructive lesson. That lesson is, that the disciple who desires to attain the loftiest dignity, must make up his mind to be characterized and distinguished by the greatest usefulness. The maxim is, that whosoever desires to be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, to be most renowned and celebrated among the wise and good of mankind, must bear in mind that there is but one path to pre-eminence and real celebrity—the path of the greatest possible usefulness. He who will have man's praise, must make up his mind to be man's servant. This is not the way of human nature. As *Luther* said, "human nature would be glorified first, without being crucified." It needs to be learned that there is but one way to the crown, namely, the cross, and that through tribulation, self-sacrifice, and self-denial in Christ Jesus, we must attain the kingdom of heaven.

*And to give his life a ransom for many.* We have here an express declaration from the mouth of our Lord Himself, that He came into the world to give His life as the price of our redemption from death; to die in our stead, that He might thereby purchase for us eternal life. (See also *Matt.* xvi. 28; *John* vi. 51, xi. 50–53; *Rom.* v. 15; 1 *Tim.* ii. 6; *Heb.* ix. 28.)

43. \* 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 call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. 50. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. 51. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 52. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

<sup>4</sup>*Matt.* xx. 29; *Luke* xviii. 36. \**Matt.* ix. 22; chap. v. 34.

Verses 46–52: see on *Matt.* xx. 29, &c.; *Luke* xviii. 36, &c.

*Blind Bartimeus.* Matthew mentions "two blind men." (xx. 30.) Mark mentions but one, and tells us his name. He was Bartimeus, and the very fact that he so names him seems to indicate that he

was a well-known person at the time. A learned commentator remarks: "As his was the case of special interest, whose case Mark wishes to narrate, so he omits to state that another man was healed at the same time. It is very possible that Mark was not informed of that fact. Inspiration does not imply omniscience. One inspired writer may be more fully informed than another. Both may be perfectly true so far as they go. But the naturalness of the picture of the two blind men, sitting by the road side, leaves but little doubt that Matthew, who was a disciple (as Mark was not), wrote as an eye-witness of the miracle."

*Sat by the highway side begging.* Blindness is worthy of compassion even when found in circumstances of affluence and ease—but how much more so when attended with indigence and want! Poor people should be thankful to God for the preservation of their limbs and senses. If they have no patrimony, nor independence, they can labor, and while they have hands and eyes they should scorn habits of beggary. But the helpless are not to starve, nor are we indiscriminately to reject every application we meet with upon the road. *And when he heard, &c.* Sitting under the shadow of some tree, listening to apprehend if any travelers were approaching—for though he could not see, he could hear, and this was an alleviation of his distress—a noise strikes him, the sound draws nearer and nearer, and he asks what it means.

*Jesus of Nazareth. . . . And many charged him, &c.* We must expect not only to have our prayers hindered, but our very faith itself endangered—the faith in which we alone can pray—as we pass through this wicked world. (*Luke* viii. 1, 8; xxii. 31, 32). *He cried the more, &c.* He was not to be discouraged. "This is my opportunity. I have addressed thousands who could give me bread, but here is one who can give me eyes. In a moment He will be out of hearing—and when may He pass by again?" *Jesus stood.* What cannot prayer do? Once the sun of nature stood still at the desire of Joshua, who was eager to complete his victory. And lo! now, "the Sun of Righteousness" stands

still, with "healing under His wings," at the desire of Bartimeus, who begs a cure.

*Casting away his garment.* How natural this representation? We must throw away everything that would keep us from coming to Jesus. *What wilt thou, &c.* Our Saviour is acquainted with all our sins, but He requires us to confess them; He understands all our wants, but He commands us to acknowledge them. Jesus in stooping to ask this blind man to state his condition, speedily gave a proof of His own assertion, so recently made. (Verse 45). *Thy faith, &c.* It was a great act of faith in Bartimeus to call Him *the Son of David*, and *Lord*, whom the people described to him, as being *Jesus of Nazareth*. His faith was great, because, being blind, he could not see the miracles which Jesus did. "Faith came" to him in the truest way, "by hearing." He believed on the testimony and report of others, and so he inherited, in a manner, that emphatic promise of the Lord his Saviour, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." (John xx. 29).

*Immediately.* The restoration of sight was instantaneous—the miracle at once

complete. *And followed Jesus in the way.* This was an improvement of the greatness of the mercy. "I can never," says he, "discharge my obligations to such a gracious and almighty friend. But let me devote myself to His service—let me continually ask, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'" Following Jesus is the best way to evidence a change of heart. None follow Him blind. The truly converted are willing to forsake all, in order to follow Him whithersoever He goeth. And every proof of our conversion, separate from this adherence to the Saviour, is fallacious and ruinous.

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 Saviour.

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1. What question was proposed to Christ? 2. How did He dispose of it? 3. How did He receive the young children that were brought to Him? 4. Who came running to him? 5. For what purpose did he come? 6. What did he say? 7. What was our Lord's reply? 8. What was the issue of the young ruler's case? 9. What did Christ say about riches? 10. How did He remove the astonishment of His disciples? 11. What did He say to Peter? 12. What did James and John ask? 13. Explain our Lord's answer. 14. State the particulars of the restoration of sight to Bartimeus.

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## CHAPTER XI.

1 *Christ rideth with triumph into Jerusalem: 12 curseth the fruitless leafy tree: 15 purgeth the temple: 20 exhorteth his disciples to steadfastness of faith, and to forgive their enemies: 27 and defendeth the lawfulness of his actions, by the witness of John, who was a man sent of God.*

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.—Matt. xxi. 1; John xii. 14.

Verses 1-10: see on Matt. xxi. 1-11.

When they came nigh, &c. Our Saviour is at last approaching the capital, whither

we beheld Him, in the preceding chapter (verse 32) proceeding with mysterious haste. From Jericho to Jerusalem is about twenty-five miles, a wild road, leading mostly through mountain passes, which the Saviour must have traveled, followed by a multitude of persons. He had now reached that neighborhood lying east of Jerusalem, where the districts of Bethphage and Bethany unite—being part of the Mount of Olives. *Sendeth forth two of his disciples*—probably John and

Peter. *A colt*, &c. Kings and princes commonly rode on the ass or mule, in times of peace; the horse was used more for war. (See Job xxxix. 19.) *Whereon never man sat*. In this it is supposed is implied, that he for whose use the colt was to be brought, was a sacred person; thus in Num. xix. 2, Deut. xxi. 3, we find that heifers to be offered in sacrifice were to be such as had never been employed in labor.

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.

If any man say, &c. Thus did our Lord, in assuming His meek sovereignty, show that the hearts of men were in His hand, and though He submitted to indignity from others, yet in such hearts would He establish His kingdom, and reign in meekness. As when he needed a room for the Passover, He foresaw who would afford it, and where he was to be found (chap. xiv. 12-16), so now, also, did He know who was worthy of this honor, and willing to grant what He needed. Let us gladly yield up to Christ whatever He demands. *In a place where two ways met*, literally, in a way leading around a place, i. e., a street of the town.

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: 11. Hosanna in the highest. <sup>1</sup>Matt. xxi. 8. <sup>2</sup>Ps. cxviii. 26. <sup>3</sup>Ps. cxlviii. 1.

*Their garments*—Men put their garments down for Jehu to walk upon. (2 Kings ix. 13.) *Branches off the trees*—the palm-trees. There were many species of the palm. It is the date-palm for which Syria and Palestine were distinguished. Jericho so abounded in palm-trees that it was called the “city of palms.”

*Hosanna, Blessed is he that cometh*, &c. When we read of the multitude shouting “Hosanna,” and call to mind that in less than one short week the same voices exclaimed “crucify Him, crucify Him,” we should learn a lesson of self-distrust, and fear lest we should ever be found so false and fickle. Many join the followers of

Christ when He seems to be riding in triumph; many voices are heard loud in profession, when profession is the fashion of the day; but how is it when the scene is changed? when the cross is to be meekly borne? when slights are to be endured for His name's sake, and temptations to be perseveringly and unostentatiously resisted? Experience shows that His ranks are then thinned, His professed friends and followers melt away. Few, as it were, go with Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. (Heb. xiii. 13.)

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. <sup>1</sup>Matt. xxi. 12, on which see notes.

*When he had looked round about*, &c. Silently and penetratingly Jesus took in everything in His glance, everywhere discerning spiritual death under the glistening curtain of life, the completest ruin in the apparent bloom of living worship: everywhere complete heathenism upon Moriah. Thus He went around, and perceived everything with clear glance and deep silence in His true heart. He had not completed this work until late in the evening, when, in the little company of the twelve, He went to Bethany through the approaching night. (See on Matt. xxi. 12-13.)

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 anything 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. <sup>1</sup>Matt. xxi. 18. <sup>2</sup>Matt. xxi. 19. <sup>3</sup>John xv. 6; Heb. vi. 4, 8, 10; 2 Peter ii. 20.

Verses 12-14: see on Matt. xxi. 17-19.

*He was hungry*. Jesus having left Bethany for the purpose of hastening to His abode and ministry in the house which was His Father's, in the deep attraction of His heart toward the place and the work, had not thought of appeasing His bodily necessities with a morning meal. *Fig tree*—the fig tree was very common in Palestine, and it is found there still, though not in great abundance. *Having leaves*. Its extraordinary show of leaves so early, gave a promise of early figs, since in the fig tree the blossom and the fruit appear before the formation of the leaves. It was this profusion of leaves which warranted the Lord in expecting to find figs

on the tree. It turned out that the tree was *preocious*. *He came, if haply he might find*, &c. By the laws of Moses great freedom in helping one's self to fruit was allowed, and Thomson says that the custom of plucking ripe figs as one passes by the orchards is still universal, . . . especially from trees by the roadside, and from all that are not enclosed. (See Matt. xxi. 19.)

*No man eat fruit of thee*, &c. It is observed that in the whole narrative of our Saviour's life no passage is related of Him low or weak, but it is immediately seconded, and, as it were, corrected by another high and miraculous. No sooner was Christ humbled to a manger, but the contempt of the place was taken off with the glory of the attendance in the ministrations of angels. His submission to that mean and coarse ceremony of circumcision was ennobled with the public attestation of Simeon concerning Him: His fasting and temptation attended with another service of angels: His baptism with a glorious recognition by a voice from heaven. When He seemed to show weakness in seeking fruit upon this *fig tree*, which had none, He manifested His power by cursing it to deadness with a word: when He seemed to be overpowered at His apprehension in the garden He then exerted His mightiness in causing His armed adversaries to fall backward, and healing Malchus' ear with a touch. When He underwent the lash, and violent infamy of crucifixion and death, then did the universal frame of nature give testimony to His divinity; the temple rending, the sun darkening, and the earth quaking, the whole creation seemed to sympathize with His passion. And when afterward He seemed to be in the very kingdom and dominion of death, by descending into the grave, He quickly confuted the dishonor of that, by an astonishing resurrection, and, by an argument *ex abundantia*, proved the divinity of His person, over and over, in an equally miraculous ascension. (xi. 7-10; Rom. i. 3, 4; 2 Cor. xi. 30, xiii. 14; Heb. xi. 34.)

We may regard this blasting of the fig tree in two lights. The fig tree, rich in foliage, but destitute of fruit, represents: I. The Jewish people, so abundant in out-

ward shows of piety, but destitute of its reality. Their vital sap was squandered upon leaves. And as the fruitless tree, failing to realize the aim of its being, was destroyed, so the Theocratic nation, for the same reason, was to be overtaken, after long forbearance, by the judgments of God, and shut out from His kingdom. The deep yet latent curse of the people and country appeared to the soul of Jesus in this sign of the misgrowth of a tree on the way, therefore through His word He revealed the hidden curse. II. This fig tree was an apt emblem of an unprofitable follower of the Messiah. It was a *showy* tree. It made a boast of fruitfulness. It was a lying tree. It invited people to believe that it had figs. It promised, by its foliage, to give men figs. Christ, therefore, doomed it to perpetual barrenness.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the act sprung from any feeling whatever on account of the fruitlessness of the tree. That, to such a being as Jesus Christ, was a matter of no consequence. But the Apostles, who were looking on, needed more instruction and faith. The tree was cursed that the Apostles might be blessed. The record of the miracle is full of solemn warning to churches and individuals. The leaves of a profession may exist where there is no fruit. A fruitless profession is a perpetual falsehood.

15. ¶ <sup>1</sup>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 vessels 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 evening was come, he went out of the city. <sup>2</sup>Matt. xxi. 12: John ii. 14. <sup>3</sup>Isa. lvi. 7. <sup>4</sup>Jer. vii. 11. <sup>5</sup>Matt. xxi. 45, 46; Luke xix. 47. <sup>6</sup>Matt. vii. 28.

*Began to cast out*, &c. Men ought to have taken warning the *day before*, whilst the Lord spared them and admonished them by gestures. *Sold . . . . bought*—animals for temple sacrifice and other commodities. *Money changers*. The Jewish money being alone accepted for the sacred treasure, brokers were always at hand to furnish it in exchange for the foreign coin. *Doves*—used in sacrifice by the poor. *My house*. In the prophetic writings, the temple of God is thus designated. *Den of thieves*.

(Jer. vii. 11.) Robbers and thieves have in every age betaken themselves to dens and caves, where they can enjoy their ill-gotten plunder in security. Hence the appropriateness of the expression as used here by our Lord.

Christ's clearing of the temple was a type of His second coming, and if, even in the days of His lowliness, He could put forth such awful power, how much more when He shall come in the clouds of heaven "in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels!" (Luke ix. 26.) His indignation will be first poured out against those who have profaned His name and gifts and ordinances by their ungodliness and worldly lusts. "Holiness," we are told, "becometh His house forever" (Ps. xciii. 5), and let us remember, that our bodies also are accounted His temple, in which He lodges: as it is written, "The temple of the Lord is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 17.) Holy, indeed, ought we to be, and we should pray Him now to cast out of our hearts whatever displeases Him, that so, however suddenly He come to His temple, He may find it a house of prayer, a place of holy thoughts and heavenly tempers and practices, not a den of base and deceitful habits.

20. <sup>†</sup>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. <sup>‡</sup>Matt. xxi. 19.

On verses 20-24 see on Matt. xxi. 20-22, xvii. 20, vi. 14-15; Luke xvii. 6.

*In the morning, &c.* (See on verses 13, 14.) *Dried up from the roots.* Whilst the trees of the Gentiles have been long since clad with verdure, the fig tree of Jerusalem has remained as our Saviour left it, for a warning to all. There it has stood through all the changes of time, as though, but yesterday, it had been visited by the curse of God. (Jer. xxiii. 40; Luke xxi. 24.)

22. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God.

Although the symbolical meaning of the dried up fig tree was that which has been already stated, our Lord was also pleased to inculcate another lesson from it, such as we need always to learn, on the power of *faith*, and that lesson is followed by another of like importance, on the

necessity of *love*, verse 25. (John xvi. 12; Acts xiii. 40, 41, 46; Gal. v. 6.) Jesus before referred to the power of faith (Matt. xxi. 21), now He is more explicit. The words might be rendered, "have faith of God," that is, be not confident in yourselves, or in any inferior power, but let your confidence be altogether that which cometh from God. So the Apostle exhorts (Eph. vi. 10), "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

23. For everly 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. <sup>‡</sup>Matt. xvii. 20; Luke xvii. 6, on which see notes.

*In his heart, i. e.,* in his mind. This is strengthened by the affirmative expression of the same idea in the next clause. The power of God is ours when our heart is entirely His by a faith which is lively and free from all distrust or doubtfulness. This is the fruit of that holy and faithful friendship which the Holy Ghost forms between God and the saints, and which consists only in desiring the very same things. Nothing is more or less difficult in respect of Him who can equally do all things, and whom nothing is able to resist.

24. Therefore I say unto you, <sup>†</sup>What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

<sup>‡</sup>Matt. vii. 7; John xiv. 13; James i. 5, 6.

*Therefore*—in view of this readiness of God to make your faith true the instant that it exists. *I say*—I declare this high privilege of the faithful soul. *Unto you*—Who have attained full communion with God. *Ye desire.* We are apt to acquiesce in the bare act of prayer, and can be well enough content all our lives to go without the spiritual good things we pray for. The case is plain, we do not *desire* them. (Matt. v. 6.)

"Prayer," says *Chrysostom*, "is an all-efficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine, which is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a haven unruffled by the storm; it is the root, the fountain and the mother of a thousand blessings. It transcends a monarch's power. . . . I speak not of the prayer which is cold, and feeble and devoid of energy; I speak of that which proceeds from a mind outstretched, the child of a contrite spirit,

the offspring of a soul converted: this is the prayer which mounteth to the heavens. . . . The power of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire, it hath bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of heaven, assuaged diseases, repelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, it hath stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt; in a word, it hath destroyed whatever is an enemy to man. I repeat, that I speak not of the prayer engendered by the lips, but of that which ascends from the recesses of the heart." (John iv. 24; Luke xi. 1; James v. 16.)

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 you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.  
†Matt. vi. 14; Col. iii. 13. †Matt. xviii. 35.

If ye do not forgive, &c. On the connection between *forgiving* and the *prayer of faith*, *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 Tim. ii. 8, "without *wrath* and *doubting*." It will be observed that Christ speaks indefinitely; *forgive*, not merely your brethren, but men (Matt. vi. 14)—all men, good and bad, friends and enemies. If we forgive one another freely, our Heavenly Father will forgive us fully.

27. ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there came to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, 28. And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? 29. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. 31. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? 32. But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

†Matt. xxi. 23, on which see notes. †Matt. iii. 5.

By what authority, &c. Had they been true to their office, or to themselves, they needed not to have asked this question. They had possessed long since abundant means of knowing the Divine authority both of the Lord's ministry, and of John's baptism. But their carnal passions pre-

vented them from acknowledging the first, while their cowardly fears, the offspring of a bad conscience, brought them into a dilemma, respecting the last. Do we see nothing like this among ourselves? Received truths are disputed; things certain are treated as uncertainties; old objections, often refuted, are revived; questions are raised, where the clearest light and evidence have long supplied an answer, adequate to the conviction of every honest mind: but men refuse to be convinced; they harden themselves in error; because of their lusts, they "love to have it so;" while some even venture to hope that their supposed inability to believe, which is their condemnation, will serve as an extenuation of their general guilt, at the last day. How awful, in these respects, are the warnings of the Lord! "Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you." "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* (Jer. xiii. 16; Ezek. xiv. 1-5; Luke xxii. 66, 67.)

*I also will ask you.* The counter-question is once more a testimony to the heavenly supremacy of Christ's wisdom as a Teacher. *Was it from heaven? i. e.,* did John act as a true prophet under Divine authority? The antithesis, *or of men*, signifies his having come by his own arbitrary boldness, undertaking an enthusiastic work, supported by the party spirit of like-minded confederates. Now if the sanhedrim declared for the latter part of the alternative, they would not only come into collision with the faith of the people, but they would condemn themselves as having proved false to the theocracy, as the administrators of its laws. If, on the other hand, they acknowledge the Divine mission of John, they must also acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, for John had declared himself to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and he had moreover directed the people to Jesus as the Messiah. In this dilemma, knowing their spirit, we are prepared for their answer, "We cannot tell."

*They feared the people.* In Matthew, "We fear the people." Mark expresses

the same in sense, but in the narrative form. This habit of passing from the direct to the indirect narration, is very common with all the ancient writers. Some think that this is Mark's own reason why they did not charge John with deriving his doctrine from men, and that they felt a fear of the consequences of such an assertion, but did not openly admit this, even to one another. But Luke gives the very words which they spake among themselves, "All the people will stone us," which shows that they did not attempt to conceal their fear of consequences from one another.

*For all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.* The appearance of sanctity, put on by every impostor, is a proof of the influence it has, when genuine and unaffected, over the minds of men. The preacher will always be attended who

conforms to his own doctrine, and exemplifies it in his life, be that doctrine ever so rigid. (Matt. iii. 5, 6, vii. 29; Acts xi. 24.)

*Neither do I tell you, &c.* Christ discovers not Himself to hypocrites. That man is altogether unworthy of the truth who seeks it only to oppose it. (See 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12.) It is to no manner of purpose to dispute and reason with those who study only how to ensnare in their discourses, and to take advantage of everything against truth. Such persons show plainly what concern they have for truth when they make use of lies and forgeries to oppress it. Humility does not oblige anyone to give an account of his conduct to all sorts of persons, nor at all times, nor in all circumstances, but only to be ready to do it whenever the glory of God and the benefit of his neighbors require it.

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1. Where did Christ send two of His disciples? 2. For what purpose were they sent? 3. What did the multitude do as Jesus rode along? 4. What is said about the fig tree? 5. What did Christ do in the temple? 6. What farther is said about the fig tree? 7. What did our Lord say to His disciples respecting faith? 8. What about prayer? 9. What about forgiveness? 10. What conversation took place in the temple between Jesus and the chief priests, scribes and elders?

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## CHAPTER XII.

1 *In a parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen, Christ foretelleth the reprobation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. 13 He avoideth the snare of the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Cæsar: 18 convinceth the error of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection: 28 resolveth the scribe, who questioned of the first commandment: 35 rebuffeth the opinion that the scribes held of Christ: 38 bidding the people to beware of their ambition and hypocrisy: 41 and commendeth the poor widow for her two mites, above all.*

**A**ND 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 wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

<sup>a</sup>Ezek. xx. 49; Matt. xxi. 33; Luke xx. 9. <sup>b</sup>Ps. lxxx. 8, 16; Isa. v. 1, 7; Jer. ii. 21; Rom. xi. 17, 24. <sup>c</sup>Rom. iii. 1, 2; ix. 4, 5.

Verses 1-12: see on Matt. xxi. 33-46; Luke xx. 9-18.

The general idea of this parable is taken from Isaiah v. 1-7. In its immediate reference it contains, partly as a narrative of the past, partly as a discovery of the future, the wonderful history of the

Jewish Church. It manifests the riches of Divine love, and the benefits flowing out of it to the chosen people, portrays an almost inexhaustible patience and long suffering on the part of God toward the refractory and unthankful sinner, discloses at the same time the wickedness and the hardening of the sinful heart as rising to a fearful height, and finally closes with a threatening of certain and dreadful, but most righteous, judgments. But when viewed in a more extended reference, this parable speaks also of the general truths, which, in the Christian Church, are continually unfolding themselves, and reflected anew in the history of individuals and entire communities. Viewed in either light, the description given of the lord of the vineyard serves to admonish us of the union there is in God's character of mercy and

holiness, of goodness and righteousness, of patience and indignation.

The "certain man" was more than possessor of the vineyard, he had himself "planted" it. (Ex. xv. 17.) The planting of this spiritual vineyard found place under Moses and Joshua, in the establishing of the Jewish polity in the land of Canaan. It is described Deut. xxxii. 12-14. (See Ezek. xvi. 9-14; Neh. ix. 23-25.) *Set a hedge about it.* In Ephes. ii. 14, 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.) *The wine-fat.* This was a square or round vat or pit excavated in the earth, mortared and plastered so as to make it tight like a modern cistern. Over this vat was the *wine-press*, into which the grapes were heaped, and when the juice was trodden out it flowed into the vat. *Built a tower*—a tower or observatory in the garden, having a view in all directions, in which a watchman is stationed to guard against robbers. The vineyard represents the Church or fold of God's service. This must be girt as with a *hedge*; it must have its ordinances for receiving the *flow* of the divine *nourishment*; it must have its *towers* and *watchmen* against the assaults of the profane or the incursions of hypocrites. *Let it out*—leased or rented it, with rent to be paid from the produce. *Went into a far country*—literally, *went away from home*, i. e., went abroad on his travels. This seems to be added as a reason why he rented out his vineyard, and sent his servants for the fruits, instead of meeting the husbandmen in person; and is not, as some absurdly think, a representation of the great distance of earth from heaven. It has no special bearing upon the application of the parable, and is only added to make the picture more natural and animated.

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.

The messages that are spoken of in the first parts of the parable, as sent by the owner to the husbandmen, for the fruit of the vineyard, refer to the constant appeals made to Israel by God's servants—the prophets. The reception which they met with was just as here described. They were despised, they were shamefully entreated, they were often put to death. *Beating some, and killing some.* "I am convinced," says *Melancthon*, "that in this world the true heavenly doctrine will ever have to maintain a conflict with errors and corruptions, and that those who uphold the cause of Divine truth, will be under the cross and suffer for their principles. From the beginning of the world it has been so, and holy and enlightened men know that these things must be borne." (Luke ii. 34; Acts xxviii. 22; Gal. iv. 28, 29.)

6. Having yet therefore done 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.'  
Ps. ii. 7. Ps. ii. 2, 3, xxii. 12, 16.

*This is the heir, &c.* After the raising of Lazarus, the Evangelist informs us that the "chief priests and Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe in Him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." The very original of the parabolic picture! *Come, let us kill him, &c.* We, on the contrary, say, "This is the Son of the eternal God, let us believe on Him, and the inheritance shall be ours. (xv. 32; Rom. viii. 17.) *And they took him, &c.* All three narrators describe Him as thus "cast out of the vineyard," by which we are reminded of Him who "suffered without the gate." (Heb. xiii. 12, 13; John xix. 17.) By that, as in the Pentateuch by the exclusion from the camp, was signified the cutting off from the people of God, and from all share in their blessings. (See 1 Kings xxi. 13.)

9. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

*What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? &c.* Jesus puts the question to His opponents, so that the answer from their own mouth (see Matt. xxi. 41) might serve

as a testimony to the righteousness of the punishment that had been so richly deserved by the wicked vine-dressers. The coming of the Lord is the period when the work of Divine judgment shall be executed. *He will come and destroy, &c.* The despisers of the Divine mercies, and those who misuse them, shall be torn away from them, that these may be given to others more likely to improve them. (See 1 Peter ii. 3-10.) *Will give the vineyard unto others.* The rejection of the Jews and the call of the Gentiles was one of the greatest mysteries of the Gospel dispensation; so obscure, so hard to receive, that even Peter, though gifted with the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, needed a repeated special vision from heaven, to convince him of it. Accordingly, as a doctrine so repugnant to Jewish prejudices, it was gradually taught and revealed by the Lord. Here, indeed, it is intimated with sufficient clearness; but our Lord had recently prepared the way by two most remarkable symbolical actions—the drying up of the fig tree, pointing to the rejection of the Jew; the assertion that the temple was God's house of prayer "for all nations," equally expressing the call of the Gentiles. (xi. 17, 21; Acts x. 14; Eph. i. 9, 10; iii. 1-12.)

10. And have ye not read this Scripture, 'The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: 11. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 12. And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.'

<sup>10</sup>Ps. cxviii. 22. <sup>11</sup>Matt. xxi. 45, 46; chap. xi. 18; John vii. 25, 30, 44.

*The stone which the builders rejected* (as unsuitable and unfit for use) *is become the head of the corner.* Jesus, rejected by the high priests, scribes, and elders, not owned and recognized as the true Messiah, is the strong and firm corner stone of the new building of the Christian Church, in which those who were hitherto divided asunder, Jews and heathen, have been united into one glorious body. (Eph. ii. 13, 20.) *This was the Lord's doing,* not according to the will, nor accomplished through the working of man. (Phil. ii. 9-11; Eph. i. 20-23.) *And it is marvellous in our eyes,* the exaltation of Christ, the gathering of a new Church, and the general extension of this Church is, as a work and manifestation of God's purposes and almighty power, an

object for men's adoring wonder. *For they knew, &c.* Their conscience bearing witness.

13. ¶ And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.  
<sup>13</sup>Matt. xxii. 15; Luke xx. 20.

*Pharisees and Herodians.* The Herodians were a political party rather than a religious sect. They were probably the partisan supporters of the Herod family, and so favorable to the Roman dominion. They were not therefore very strenuous for the peculiarities of the Jewish religion. The great foes of religion, which have in all ages opposed its progress and undermined its glory, are hypocrisy and profaneness. Between these two thieves the jewel hangs, as its great Master on the cross; and they both revile it, the one under the character of a familiar friend, the other under that of an open enemy: which of these does the greater harm, is sometimes difficult to determine. (xiv. 45, 46.)

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 Cesar, or not?

*Master, we know, &c.* How flattering the language with which our Lord was accosted by His enemies! How well these Pharisees and Herodians talked! What smooth and honeyed words were these! (Ps. lv. 21.) All professing Christians should be much on their guard against flattery. We greatly mistake if we suppose that persecution and hard usage are the only weapons in Satan's armory. That crafty foe has other engines for doing us mischief, which he knows well how to work. He knows how to poison souls by the world's seductive kindness, when he cannot frighten them by the fiery dart and the sword. Let us not be ignorant of his devices. By peace he destroys many. *Is it lawful, &c.* To the Jew. "According to theocratical principles, which regarded Jehovah as the only King in Israel." This question of itself obscures the supposition of duty, and the question: "Must we, as servants of the theocracy, refuse the tribute?" meant in other words: Must we resist the dominion of the Romans, and rise up in rebellion? *Or not? The not lawful* they would fain have put in His mouth.

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.

A penny, the coin in which the tribute was paid. This was the Roman *denarius*, worth, in our money, about fifteen cents.

16. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's.

The *image* was probably the likeness of the Roman emperor Tiberius Cæsar. The *superscription* was the motto upon the coin, which declared his sovereignty. In earlier ages the coin bore the symbols of the republic. *They said unto him, Cæsar's.* He would have them convicted by their own mouth.

17. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

<sup>1</sup>Rom. xiii. 7; <sup>1</sup>1 Peter ii. 17.

*Render to Cæsar, &c.* The answer of Jesus is very different from what they expected. He wisely discriminates between allegiance to the civil power and allegiance to God, yet by no means separating our civil and religious duties. A good Christian must be a good citizen. Our Lord in this reply, it has well been said, evades the peculiarity of every party, yet sustains the truth in question. The Herodians cannot complain, for Cæsar's government is not attacked. The Pharisees cannot complain, for His decision is but their own confession put in shape. The very Gaulonites cannot complain, for He does not decide that there are no just grounds for revolutionizing the government from the foundations, and asserting independence alike of Cæsar's coin and Cæsar's authority. All he decides is (and this He does, not as a political patriot or as a political arbiter, but as a religious teacher), that while Cæsar's government is the acknowledged government, it must receive its dues. Our Lord's mission was not to preach rebellion against the Romans, or a redress of civil wrongs. He came to preach deliverance to the captive, but it was the captive of sin and death. He aimed to make the heart of man better, to teach the duty of love to God and our fellow-men, knowing well that if the Gospel was cordially embraced, the great social and political evils would in due time be removed. Nothing is plainer than that the influence of our Christian character should pervade every relation of life, and control us in the discharge of every duty.

*The things that are God's.* God has greater

claims upon us than any other being can have. He created man in His image, bestowing upon him a reasonable soul and an immortal spirit. Therefore we are God's, because we bear His image, as the tribute money bore the image of Cæsar. But God has not only *created* us, He has *redeemed* us. When Satan had taken us captive, Christ *redeemed* us with His precious blood. (1 Cor. vi. 20). Have we given ourselves to the Redeemer? Is it our chief desire to do His will and to promote His glory?

Learn, 1. That our Saviour was no enemy to civil government. 2. That those who are subject to a government, ought, from a principle of conscience, to pay tribute to it. 3. That as Christ is no enemy to the civil rights of government, and His religion exempts none from paying their civil dues, so governments should be as careful not to rob Him of His Divine honor.

Let us not forget the obedience which we owe to the God of the Bible in spiritual matters. No temporal loss, no civil disability, no displeasure of the powers that be, must ever tempt us to do things which the Scripture plainly forbids. Our position may be very trying. We may have to suffer much for our conscience's sake. But we must never fly in the face of unmistakable requirements of Scripture. If Cæsar coins a new Gospel, he is not to be obeyed. We must "render to God the things that are God's."

18. ¶ Then came 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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxii. 23. <sup>1</sup>Acts xxiii. 8. <sup>2</sup>Deut. xxv. 5. <sup>3</sup>1 Cor. xv. 42, 49, 52. <sup>4</sup>Matt. xxii. 30; Luke xx. 35-38. <sup>5</sup>Ex. iii. 6.

Verses 18-28: see on Matt. xxii. 23-33.

*Which say there is no resurrection.* The Sadducees did not believe that there would be any resurrection of the dead, because they did not understand *how* it could be.

When they applied to Jesus they described a case which might have occurred under the Jewish law. The land of Canaan was divided into small inheritances. If a man died without a child to succeed him, God enjoined that his brother should marry the widow, and that if a child were born, he should succeed to the property of the deceased brother, and be considered as his heir. The Sadducees imagined that they had proposed a difficulty which the Lord *could* not solve, but by a word He exposed their folly.

*And dying.* "It is appointed unto all men once to die," and then they must shift the scenes and begin anew. No one can plead exemption, either by privilege or example. For all that have gone before us have trodden the same path—wise Solomon, rich Dives, long-lived Methuselah, righteous Job—none have been exempted, be they what they will, though their head have been of gold, their body of iron, their arms of brass, yet their feet, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, have been of clay, and they have gone into the dust. Here fortune has no part; the manner of our death, indeed, may be casual, but the matter of it is certain. (Gen. v. 8, 11, xiv. 17, 20, xxvii. 31; Josh. xxiii. 14; Zech. i. 5; 1 Kings xxii. 34.)

*In the resurrection, therefore, &c.* How carnal are the thoughts of carnal men concerning the life of heaven, and how unworthy of that blessed state! We must lose all the ideas of whatever passes upon earth, in order to frame one which may at all come near the true nature of that eternal happiness. The creature shall belong only to its Creator; man shall live only for his God. *They neither marry, &c.* All the alliances and unions here on earth are tokens and effects of man's indigence and mortality. When once he shall enter into eternity, where all his desires will be satisfied, all his wants supplied, and his mortality swallowed up in glory, then all unions shall be merged in the union with God.

*But are as the angels.* Angels are not divided into families as men are, and glorified saints will not be connected in heaven with the relations they had upon earth. They will have connections, but

not of an *earthly* kind. The pastor will rejoice to find again the flock he fed below. (See 1 Thes. ii. 19.) The pious parent will find himself united in *spiritual* bonds to the children who were born the *second* time, in answer to his fervent supplications. The friends who have borne each other's spiritual burdens up the hill of Zion, will walk together by the waters of life that gladden the city of their God. *Spiritual* bonds can never be dissolved.

*I am the God of Abraham, &c.* These words of our Saviour show us how much more there is in Scripture than at first sight appears. God spoke to Moses in the burning bush, and called Himself *the God of Abraham*; and Christ tells us, that in this simple announcement was contained the promise, that Abraham should rise again from the dead. In truth, if we may say it with reverence, the all-wise, all-knowing God cannot speak without meaning many things at once. He "sees the end from the beginning;" He understands the numberless connections and relations of all things, one with another. Every word of His is full of instruction, looking many ways; and, though it is not often given to us to know these various senses, and we are not at liberty to attempt lightly to imagine them, yet, as far as they are told us, and, as far as we may reasonably infer them, we must thankfully accept them. (Ps. cxix. 96.)

*The God of the living.* As the Sadducees denied not only the resurrection of the *body*, but the immortality of the *spirit*, therefore Jesus brought forward a proof of the *eternal* life of the pious dead. How glorious is the idea that *all* the saints are actually in existence! They not *only* live, but "are as the angels." Though we know not the degree of their happiness, Jesus did. He had but lately left the blessed company above, and now He was going to *die*, that they might live on forever, and that their number might continually increase.

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?"—Matt. xxii. 35.

On verses 28-34 see on Matt. xxii. 34-40.

*One of the Scribes.* A teacher of the law. *Which is the first commandment of all?* He

meant the first in importance, the primary, leading commandment, the most fundamental one.

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.—Deut. vi. 4; Luke x. 27.

*Israel.* The name put upon Jacob as wrestling with the angel of the covenant at Peniel. (Gen. xxxii. 28.) The disciple who was ready to receive the knowledge of God as revealed in "the Son of God . . . . . the King of Israel," was called "an Israelite," indeed. (John i. 47.) *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* Of all things, God requires this faith and persuasion of His fatherly goodness as the chief service, for, before He asks anything of us, He says, "I am the Lord thy God," giving Himself and all that He has to be our own—"The Lord *our* God," as He is the Head of the communion of saints; "the Lord *thy* God," as He is the Head of every particular member in the same mystical Body. That we may love Him, and also, for His sake, love one another, we must apprehend the Lord God in both these relations. (Ps. xlviii. 13; John xx. 28; 1 John v. 1, 2.) *With all thy heart . . . soul . . . mind . . . strength.* These are formulas nearly equivalent, but involving no redundancy, and united for intensity of sense, importing, not that perfection in degree, or exaltation in kind, contended for by some, but only denoting that "we must assign to God the *first* place in our affections, and consecrate to Him the united powers and faculties, both of body and mind," with which He hath endowed us so as to exert them most effectually. (Comp. Deut. vi. 5.)

31. And the second is like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. <sup>†</sup>Lev. xix. 18; Matt. xxii. 39; Rom. xiii. 9; Gal v. 14; James ii. 8.

*And the second is like.* He does not say, equal with it, although the duties of the second table are of the same authority, and of the same necessity with the first, as no man can be saved without the love of God, so neither without the love of his neighbor.

32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God: and there is none other but he: 33. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

<sup>†</sup>Deut. iv. 39; Isa. xlv. 6, 14, xlvi. 9. <sup>††</sup>1 Sam. xv. 22; Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 6-8.

*Well, construe with, thou hast said:* for it is founded on the truth, as Luke iv. 25. *There is one God,* an absolute phrase repeated from verse 29, that is, from Moses. (Comp. Zech. xiv. 9.) *One God requires one heart and one love.* *Whole burnt offerings*—the most noble species of sacrifice.

34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. <sup>†††</sup>And no man after that durst ask him any question.—<sup>††††</sup>Matt. xxii. 46; Rom. iii. 19.

*When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, i. e., intelligently.* 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. *Thou art not far, &c.* The sentiments expressed by the scribe, became a subject of Messiah's kingdom, and must have a happy influence to dispose the mind to examine the Gospel; on which account Jesus declared that this person was *not far from the kingdom of God.* *Durst, or rather, ventured, to ask him any questions.* It was not any stern prohibition, or terrible menace, denounced by our Lord, that frightened every one from further attempts this way, but the people saw how completely those were foiled who tried to ensnare Him with captious questions.

35. <sup>†††††</sup>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, <sup>††††††</sup>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.

<sup>†††††††</sup>Matt. xxii. 41; Luke xx. 41. <sup>††††††††</sup>2 Sam. xxiii. 2. <sup>†††††††††</sup>Ps. cx. 1.

See on Matt. xxii. 41-46.

"It is not to be forgotten that the prophetic Psalms are among the earliest discoveries, made of the exalted nature and proper dignity of Christ. The promise of

the blessing to come by the seed of Abraham showed the magnitude of the benefit (Gen. xxii. 17, 18); but not the personal glory of the Benefactor. In the Psalms, His personal attributes and *His Divine Sonship* invest the prophecy, and introduce the object of worship." (Ps. ii., xlv., cx.) *And the common people heard him gladly.* In good truth, says one, the more we know of Christianity and of the poor, the more deeply shall we be impressed with the exact adaptation of the one to the other, both in the substance of what it teaches, and in the manner of teaching. And the poor, it is carefully to be remembered, must ever constitute the great majority of those, to whom Christianity is addressed. (xiv. 7.)

33. ¶ And she said unto them in his doctrine, <sup>b</sup>Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and <sup>c</sup>love salutations in the market places, 39. And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40. <sup>d</sup>Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. <sup>e</sup>Chap. iv. 2. <sup>f</sup>Matt. xxiii. 1, &c.; Luke xx. 46, 47. <sup>g</sup>Luke xi. 43. <sup>h</sup>Matt. xxiii. 14.

*Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, &c.* Our Saviour here condemns, not civil salutations in the market place, not the chief seats in the synagogues, not the uppermost rooms at feasts, but their fond affecting of these things, and their ambitious aspiring after them. He condemns them for their gross hypocrisy in coloring over their covetousness with a pretence of religion, making long prayers in the temple and synagogues for widows, and thus persuading them to give bountifully to the common treasury for the temple, some part of which was employed for their maintenance. *Greater damnation, i. e.,* more tremendous suffering in the world of despair. *And for a pretence, &c.* In what triumphant measures, says an old writer, doth a Pharisee go from the altar! What a harmless thing is a cheat, after a sermon! What a sweet morsel is a *widow's house* after long prayers! What a piece of justice is oppression, after a fast! After so much ceremony, the blood of Abel himself, of the justest man alive, hath no voice. (Prov. vii. 14.) Nothing is more provoking to God, than the use of holy things without the conversion of the heart. (Mal. i. 14; Jer. ii. 4-11; Acts v. 5-10.)

41. ¶ <sup>a</sup>And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. <sup>b</sup>Luke xxi. 1. <sup>c</sup>Kings xii. 9.

*Sat, probably to rest. The treasury.* This repository received the voluntary contributions of the worshipers, who came up to the feasts: and the money thrown into it was designed to purchase wood for the altar, salt, and other necessary things, not provided for another way. As Jesus saw the people put in their money, He knew the motives that actuated them all, and as each dropped his gift into the chest, the heart and disposition of the individual was open before Him. He knew whether he was sincere or not, and according to the sincerity of the act, and the peculiar disposition of the giver, so was it acceptable or unacceptable in the sight of Almighty God. Jesus still observes how much is contributed to His cause, and by whom.

42. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

*A certain poor widow.* Our Lord had just been launching reproofs against the proud who devoured *widows' houses*. As if from the dim distance, one of these *widows* seems to have appeared, whose house, perhaps, had been devoured, and in whose behalf our Lord had denounced the judgments of God. *Two mites.* A mite was the smallest of Jewish coins, about the value of one-fifth of a cent. It took its name from its extreme smallness, being derived from an adjective signifying *thin, subtle*, and applied, among other things, to that which consists of fine particles, as *dust, sand*, and metaphorically, to gentle breezes, whispering, murmuring sounds, &c. (See on Matt. v. 26.)

43. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That <sup>a</sup>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, <sup>b</sup>even all her living. <sup>c</sup>2 Cor. viii. 12. <sup>d</sup>Deut. xxiv. 6; 1 John iii. 17.

*Hath cast more in.* What is meant by the "more"? "He must," says one, "mean one of three things—either *financially, proportionally, or morally*. It cannot 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," &c. 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. Let us remember, that the Lord Jesus never changes. The thing that we read of in this passage is the thing that is going on all over the world. "The eyes of the

Lord are in every place." (Prov. xv. 3.) Nothing is too little to escape His observation. No act is too trifling to be noted down in the book of His remembrance. He measures littleness and greatness by a very different measure from the measure of man. On no point, perhaps, do professed Christians come short so much as in the matter of giving money to God's cause. Thousands, it may be feared, know nothing whatever of "giving" as a Christian duty. The little giving that there is, is confined entirely to a select few in the Churches. Even among those who give, it may be boldly asserted, that the poor generally give far more in proportion to their means than the rich. These are plain facts which cannot be denied. The experience of all who collect for religious societies and Christian charities, will testify that they are correct and true. Let us judge ourselves in this matter of giving, that we may not be judged and condemned at the great day. (Prov. xi. 24.)

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1. With what parable is this chapter introduced? 2. Who is represented by the "certain man?" 3. Who by the "servants?" 4. Who by the "son?" 5. For what purpose did the Pharisees and Herodians come to Jesus? 6. How did He answer their question? 7. What did the Sadducees say to Christ. 8. Explain His answer to them. 9. State the interview between the scribe and our Lord. 10. What caution did He give concerning the scribes? 11. What is said of "a certain poor widow?"

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### CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple: 9 the persecutions for the gospel: 10 that the gospel must be preached to all nations: 14 that great calamities shall happen to the Jews: 24 and the manner of his coming to judgment: 32 the hour whereof being known to none, every man is to watch and pray, that he be not found unprovided, when he cometh to each one particularly by death.*

For the explanation of the chief things in this most important discourse of our Lord, see notes on Matthew xxiv. There is no doubt that part of it relates to the destruction of Jerusalem, and that part of it relates to the end of the world. This is the only way in which we can satisfactorily explain the interlacing phenomena of the two events.

AND as he went out out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!

<sup>a</sup>Matt. xxiv. 1; Luke xxi. 5.

Master, see, &c. The reference was to the temple, the sacred building itself, and the courts. These buildings are spoken of by Gentiles and Jews in language of admiration. *Josephus* says that some of the stones were sixty-seven feet long, seven feet high, and nine feet broad. This is not in the least incredible, for in the ruins of Baalbec, Syria, are stones of similar dimensions. *Dr. Robinson* measured three of the latter, and found them severally sixty-four feet, sixty-three feet, and sixty-three feet eight inches long. Referring to the stones of

Baalbec, *Thomson* says: "How such blocks could be transported a mile over uneven ground to the temple, and elevated to their position on its platform, is yet an unsolved problem in the science of mechanical forces."

2. And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? <sup>b</sup>there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

<sup>b</sup>Matt. xxiv. 2; Luke xix. 41.

*There shall not be left, &c.* This prophecy was literally fulfilled forty years after its utterance, fulfilled by Jewish fanatics and Roman soldiers in express violation of the orders of Titus, one of the most humane of the Roman emperors, who wished to save it. Now this prophecy was uttered in a time of profound peace, and when nobody even dreamed of the fulfillment by a man hated by His country, soon to be crucified as a criminal, without patronage, power, wealth or influence, and of whose history His enemies asked, "Whence hath this man learning?" This, then, was either fanaticism, or it was the absolute truth enunciated then and there by the God of all truth.

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. <sup>c</sup>Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

<sup>c</sup>Matt. xxiv. 3; Luke xxi. 7.

*Upon*—The mountain. The wall of the temple was lower toward the Mount of Olives, so that the interior of the temple could be readily seen. *Peter, &c.* James and Peter were to die before the rest, and yet the subject concerns even them, still more John.

5. And Jesus answering them, began to say, <sup>d</sup>Take heed lest any man deceive you: 6. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*, and shall deceive many.

<sup>d</sup>Matt. xxiv. 45; Jer. xxix. 8; Eph. v. 6; 1 Thes. ii. 3.

*Began to say.* He had said little previously concerning these things. *Take heed lest any man deceive you.* A great number of deceivers is one of the signs of the end of the world. It is a terrible judgment upon men for them to believe that they are consulting a man of God who may instruct them, while they are consulting only a seducer who deceives them. Let us beg of God to preserve us from it. The expectation of new and extraordinary things is an occasion of which the devil generally makes an ill use in order to deceive men. An author of heresy

or schism, an usurper of Christ's authority, a minister without mission, these are all so many false Christs, whom we must carefully avoid as so many seducers. *For many shall come in my name, &c.* This part of the prophecy began soon to be fulfilled; for we learn from the ancient writers, and particularly from *Josephus*, that not long after our Lord's ascension several impostors appeared, some pretending to be the Messiah, and others to foretell future events. The first were those whom our Lord here says *should come in his name*, and were, therefore, *false Christs*. The others are alluded to in the eleventh verse, under the name of *false prophets*: "Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many." Of the first sort were, as *Origen* informs us, one *Dositheus*, who said that he was the Christ foretold by Moses; and *Simon Magus*, who said he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God. Besides several others alluded to by *Josephus*.

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: <sup>e</sup>these are the beginning of sorrows.—Matt. xxiv. 8, on which see notes.

*When ye shall hear of wars, &c.* That there were in reality great disturbances and commotions in those times, that there were not only rumors of wars, but wars actually existing, and continued dissensions, insurrections, and massacres among the Jews, and other nations who dwelt in the same cities with them, is so fully attested by all the historians of that period, but more particularly by *Josephus*, that to produce all the dreadful events of that kind which he enumerates, would be to transcribe a great part of his history. It is equally certain, from the testimony of the same author, as well as from *Eusebius*, and several profane historians, that there were famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. It is added in the parallel place by Luke, "that fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." And accordingly *Josephus*, in the preface to his history of the Jewish war, and in the history itself, enumerates a great variety of astonishing signs and prodigies, which he says preceded the calamities that impended over the Jews, and which he expressly

affirms, in perfect conformity to our Saviour's prediction, were signs manifestly intended to forbode their approaching destruction. And these accounts are confirmed by the Roman historian *Tacitus*, who says that many prodigies happened at that time; armies appeared to be engaging in the air, arms were seen glittering in the air, the temple was illuminated with flames issuing from the clouds, the doors of the temple suddenly burst open, and a voice more than human was heard, "that the gods were departing;" and soon after a great motion, as if they were departing. *These are the beginning of sorrows, &c.* Terrible as all these omens seem, they are small compared to the miseries of the siege and downfall of the holy city.

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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. x. 17; Rev. ii. 10.

*Shall be beaten.* (See Acts xxii. 19, xxvi. 11.) *For a testimony against, or rather, to them.* (Comp. notes on Matt. x. 18, xxiv. 14.)

10. And the gospel must first be published among all nations.—<sup>2</sup>Matt. xxiv. 14.

Paul, in his Epistles to the Colossians, speaks of the Gospel "being come into all the world, and preached to every creature under heaven." And we learn from the most authentic writers, and the most ancient records, that the Gospel was preached within thirty years after the death of Christ, in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, in Media and Parthia, and many parts of Asia Minor, in Egypt, Mauritania, Ethiopia, and other regions of Africa, in Greece and Italy, as far north as Scythia, and as far westward as Spain, and in England, where there is great reason to believe Christianity was planted in the days of the Apostles, and before the destruction of Jerusalem.

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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. x. 19, on which see notes; also on Luke xxi. 15. <sup>2</sup>Acts ii. 4.

*But when, read, and when.* Neither do ye premeditate. Not only have you no need of anxiety, but not even of premeditation. *Whatsoever shall be given you, &c.* If they were thus to be furnished with words by the Holy Spirit for preaching the Gospel

orally to a few persons in particular times and places, shall we imagine that they were not equally well qualified by the same Spirit for preaching the same Gospel in writing to all ages and countries in the world? (1 Cor. ii. 11, 13, 16.) *That speak ye, the whole of it, and fearlessly, for with that view it is given, and fearlessly.*

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.

<sup>1</sup>Mt. vii. 6; Matt. xxiv. 9, 10, x. 21; Luke xxi. 16. <sup>2</sup>Matt. xxiv. 9; Luke xxi. 17. <sup>3</sup>Dan. xii. 12; Matt. x. 22; Rev. ii. 10.

*Brother shall betray, &c.* Grace teaches us to lay down our lives for the brethren, but corruption in general, and enmity to the Gospel in particular, teaches brother to take away the life of brother. *Hated of all men.* That the Apostles and primitive Christians were more hated and persecuted than any other religious sect of men is notorious. Faith and charity join us in the closest union with strangers and the most barbarous people, infidelity and hatred break even the strictest ties of nature. Observe how our Saviour comforts His disciples, that there would be an end of their sharp and bitter sufferings; assuring them that if their faith and patience did hold out *unto the end, they should be saved.* This is our comfort; our sufferings for Christ must be sharp, but they shall be short; if our sufferings for Christ end not in our life-time, they will end with our lives. Happy is that person who is hated for the sake either of the truth which he maintains, or of the virtue which he practices, and does not grow at all weary of being so! His cause is the cause of God. And what greater honor and happiness can we possibly have, than to be joined in the same cause with our Judge, who is at the same time the Holy One and the Almighty!

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 anything out of his house: 16. And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxiv. 15. <sup>2</sup>Dan. ix. 27. <sup>3</sup>Luke xxi. 21.

The Roman army is here called an *abomination*, because upon their standards were depicted the images of their emperor and the tutelary gods, whom they worshipped:

and it is well known that idols were held by the Jews in the utmost abhorrence, and the very name they gave them was the expression here made use of, *an abomination*. The word *desolation* is added for an obvious reason, because this mighty army brought ruin and desolation upon Jerusalem. *Him that is on the housetop . . . him that is in the field*. Strong expressions to awaken the disciples to promptness, and even haste in the crisis that will come. They should not be taken too literally; yet, if at the approach of the Roman armies one chanced to be on the roof of his house—the roofs were flat—he might and probably would have found literal compliance with the command necessary. As houses were then built, one could have escaped without being under the necessity of going down into and through the house. One might have run over *many* roofs till he came near to a gate of the city. *Anything*. Not a single article, but things generally. Better lose all for the sake of escaping.

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.

<sup>a</sup>Luke xxi. 23, 29. <sup>b</sup>Dan. ix. 23; Joel ii. 2; Matt. xxiv. 21.

*Woe . . . . with child . . . . give suck*. Both the Jewish and the Christian female. The former would find their sufferings redoubled in the miseries of their offspring, the latter would find redoubled the difficulty of escape.

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.

As, says a modern and excellent commentator, Titus had so invested the place that no provisions could be brought in from the surrounding region, famine soon made the most dreadful ravages, and together with internal seditions, by which thousands were butchered in the city, caused it to fall in the short space of four months. When Titus invested the upper city, which was so steep as to forbid its being taken without raising banks against it, the Jews of their own accord abandoned the town, which *Josephus* says, "could never have been taken by force, nor indeed in any other way than by famine." So infatuated was their course, that the same historian considers them

"ejected from these towers by God Himself." All these things were a part of God's determination to shorten these days "for the elect's sake." *No flesh should be saved*; literally, *there could not be saved all flesh i. e.*, no flesh, or not one man could be saved. Had the siege been prolonged, and the Roman armies tarried any length of time in Palestine, all the inhabitants would have perished. *The elect's sake*. This, without doubt, refers to Christians, not only those then living in Palestine, but such as in future were to be gathered in from the Jews (Rom. xi. 15), and which promise depended upon their continued existence as a nation. We are not to suppose that all the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea made good their escape (v. 16). Many of the sick, aged, infirm and poor, must of necessity have remained behind. Some would also stay, whose zeal and courage would not permit them to fly, or who were desirous of preaching the gospel to their countrymen, in this time of their extremity. These would all have perished had the siege been prolonged.

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.—<sup>a</sup>Matt. xxiv. 23; Luke xvii. 23.

*Lo, here, &c.* As a man that is dying hath many fantasies, even so the world declining shall have manifold errors. (1 John ii. 18). *Shall shew*, rather, do. *To seduce*—from the right path. *If it were possible*, literally, *if possible*. Great difficulty, and not absolute impossibility, is here implied. It is a truth beyond dispute that through divine grace the elect will be kept from apostacy, yet there is nothing in the nature of the case to forbid the supposition that they may sometimes be deceived in respect to the true character of those who assume to be religious teachers. A ripe Christian, who is wise in things pertaining to truth and righteousness is, however, quick to detect signs of imposition and hypocrisy.

23. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.—<sup>a</sup>2 Peter iii. 17.

*Take ye heed*. Beware of new tenets, they are like new wines: they fume up to men's minds, and make them light and giddy. (Acts ii. 13; Col. ii. 18.) It is not so indifferent a thing as some would make

it, what opinion a man is of. For it seems a man may be damned for his evil opinions, as well as his evil practices, insomuch that heresies are reckoned amongst the grossest sins. (Gal. v. 20, 21.)

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.

†Dan. vii. 10; Zeph. i. 15; Matt. xxiv. 29. †Dan. vii. 13, 14; Matt. xvi. 27; Acts i. 11; 1 Thes. iv. 16; 2 Thes. i. 7, 10; Rev. i. 7.

*But in those days, after that tribulation, &c.* All before the beginning of this paragraph describes the ruin of the Jewish state; all subsequent to that beginning predicts the judgment day. Did but this report of our Lord's discourse alone exist, not the slightest difficulty would exist in its interpretation. All the difficulty in fact arises in Matt. xxiv. 29, being the parallel passage to the first verse of this paragraph; and all the difficulty in that verse arises from the word "immediately."

Mark says that the "sun shall be darkened," etc., "in those days, after that tribulation." Making allowance for prophetic perspective and for the intentional obscurity, the phrase "those days" may bring us down to the last period of time. It thus stands in contrast with the phrase "these things" in the Apostle's question. The period of the destruction and the period of the advent stand, as the Lord intended, in stupendous contrast.

If we ask, When shall the second advent take place? Mark answers, It is in THOSE DAYS which are *after that* (Jewish) *tribulation*. If we ask, In what part of THOSE DAYS? Matthew will answer, *Immediately after the* (mundane) *tribulation* of THOSE DAYS.

We have then this parallel: a tribulation including the city's destruction, a tribulation ending in the world's judgment.

That a tribulation is to precede the second advent is the clear doctrine of Scripture. Thus, in Rev. xx. 7-10, at the close of the millennial thousand years, Satan, who had been bound during that period, is let loose, and with his armies besieges the camp of the saints just before the appearance of the judgment throne. And in 2 Peter iii: "In the last days scoffers shall come," etc. Of

this truth the Jewish tradition gives a shadowing, in the doctrine that a desperate tribulation shall precede Messiah's advent. "The Jews (as *Kuinoel* observes) expected that great calamities would precede the advent of the Messiah; yet at the time when these calamities should have reached their height they hoped that he would unexpectedly appear."

*And shall gather together his elect.* He will send His angels to gather His chosen together from all places. This shall be done before the living shall be taken up to meet the Lord. (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thes. iv. 16.) *From the four winds*, that is, from the four quarters of the globe—east, west, north and south. The Jews expressed those quarters by the winds blowing from them. (See Ezek. xxxvii. 9; also Isa. xliii. 5, 6.

On verses 28-33 see notes on Matt. xxiv. 32-34.

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.

†Matt. xxiv. 32; Luke xxi. 29, &c. †Isa. xl. 8.

*Now learn a parable of the fig tree.* "Now from the fig tree learn the parable," or the high lesson which this teaches. *Putteth forth leaves*—"its leaves." *When ye shall see these things come to pass*, rather, "coming to pass," *know that it*, "the kingdom of God," *is nigh, even at the doors*, that is, the full manifestation of it. *This generation shall not pass*, &c. If we regard this as meaning that the prediction respecting Jerusalem would be fulfilled within the limits of the generation then current, the fact entirely corresponds, for the whole was fulfilled in the destruction accomplished by Titus. But the expression has also a far deeper significance. The Holy Seed is the subsistence or establishment of the earth. When their number is completed, time shall end, and this visible world shall be set on fire. (1 Sam. ii. 8-10.) *Heaven and earth*, &c. This solemn declaration, following immediately, as it does, upon the *passing away of this generation* (the Jews then living), seems to carry on our thoughts to another generation—"the generation of God's children" (Ps. liii. 14), that was to

abide forever. *Origen* comments upon the text, "The generation of the Church will survive the world; but all other generations, especially that of *the tribes of the earth will pass away.*" Thus we are led from the contemplation of the destruction of Jerusalem to the far more transcendent vision of the final judgment and end of the world—the two subjects of this momentous prophecy; and from what has unquestionably been already fulfilled, we are to believe and to expect that which is to come.

*Neither the Son.* (Verse 32.) This Christ speaks in His human nature, and in His prophetic capacity. This point was not made known to Him by the Spirit, nor was He commissioned to reveal it. The union of Divine nature with human, in the person of Messiah, does not involve the communication of omniscience to Christ's human mind any more than omnipresence to His body. It seems a reasonable opinion, that the communication of supernatural knowledge to the human mind of Jesus Christ was made, as occasions were seen by Divine wisdom to require. In various passages we find things affirmed of the Messiah which can belong only to His superior nature. It is not then extraordinary if we find that asserted of Him *here* which can attach only to His dependent and limited capacity. Everything that could be said of man is said of Christ, sin excepted, and everything that can be said of God, is said of Christ. He was God and yet He grew in wisdom (Luke ii. 52), and if so, it is possible that there were things in the future that He did not know. How the Infinite can be finite, how the Omniscient cannot know, how Omnipotence can be weakness, we cannot understand; but the Bible announces the fact and we should embrace it as a truth clearly revealed, though not luminous—a mystery which we shall know hereafter, but cannot know now.

33. \*Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.  
 \*Matt. xxiv. 42; Luke xii. 40; Rom. xiii. 11; 1 Thes. v. 6.

*Take ye heed, &c.* This direction implies the most intense watchfulness and prayer. The reason is given in the next clause, viz.: their ignorance of the time of their Lord's coming. An old writer says: "I

puzzle myself about the prophecies, especially the Apocalypse, and am often prying into futurity, but do not advert enough to what I may certainly know without a prophecy; what and where I shall be within a few years at the most, if I suffer sin to keep possession of me, if I do not abhor and cast it from me in the fear of God, if I do not "pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand," if I do not humble myself deeply before God, cry earnestly for mercy and yield myself to Him unfeignedly and with the utmost sincerity of intention for newness of heart and spirit." (Phil. iii. 13–15.)

34. <sup>b</sup>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.

Note, I. The church on earth is Christ's house, or dwelling, (1) because He is the foundation stone of it; (2) because He is the builder; (3) because His friends are here. II. Although the church on earth be Christ's house, yet He is not here, He is risen, (1) He has gone to take possession of heaven in our name; (2) He has gone to intercede for us; (3) He has gone to prepare a place for us. III. All Christ's people are His *servants*, and have their work assigned them. (1) Ministers are servants. They are stewards, and as such should rightly divide the Word of life, giving to every one of the family his portion of meat in due season. They are *porters*. It is the duty of ministers to stand at the door and invite every sinner in. (2) All Christians are servants. Some people think that ministers only have to work for Christ; but see here: "He gave to every man his work." IV. Christ is coming back again, and we know not when. The whole Bible bears witness that the Master of the house shall return and that He will come suddenly. Our faith is incomplete if we do not live in the daily faith of a coming Saviour.

35. \*Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:  
 \*Matt. xxiv. 42, 44.

The Jews computed their hours from six in the morning to six in the evening. The night was divided into four watches, as here indicated. The first was at even and continued from six till nine. The

second commenced at nine and ended at twelve, or midnight. The third, or the time of cock crowing, lasted from twelve to three; the morning watch closed at six. It is the indispensable duty, and ought to be the indefatigable endeavor of every Christian, to stand upon his guard in a prepared readiness for Christ's appearance, both for His coming to them, and for their going to Him. There is a two-fold readiness for Christ's coming, namely, habitual and actual. An habitual readiness is a readiness of the state and condition; actual readiness is the readiness of the person, when we are furnished with all the virtues and graces of a good life, when our lamps are burning, and our loins girded, our souls furnished with all the graces of the Holy Spirit, our lives fruitful in good works.

36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

*Lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping, i. e., remiss in duty, inattentive to His commands, and in a state of worldly-mindedness. Remissness and negligence, as well as the greater sins, are often the occasion of our being surprised by death. A porter asleep exposes the house to be robbed, and well deserves to be punished. A Christian, whose faith is not watchful,*

exposes his own heart to the enemy of his salvation, and to those who are continually watching in order to steal away all the valuable things which God has laid up there, as in His own house.

37. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

The Lord's people in every age are always to be in condition to welcome the last day with its terror, to be able to appear with good courage before the presence of the Son of man in His judgment. For that purpose a constant watchfulness is needed before all things; a continual arousing of their faculties out of the illusion of spiritual sloth, which conceives that existing Christian attainments are good enough, out of the illusion of ease, which thinks that present circumstances are permanent, into the aspiration and the holy fear with which the advent of Christ reasonably fills Christians. Further, there is needed a continually renewing refreshment of eye and heart by means of this expectation, a continually renewed revival in the heart of the death of Christ, of His cross, of the judgment, of His Spirit, and an exclusion from the heart of everything which might establish in it a new spiritual sloth, lust and fear, and contradict the life in the death of Christ.

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1. What prophecy did Jesus utter respecting the temple? 2. What question was Jesus asked privately? 3. What was his reply? 4. What is meant by "the abomination of desolation?" 5. What is said about false Christs and false prophets? 6. What in reference to the coming of the Son of man? 7. What application is made of the parable of the fig tree? 8. What is said of "that day and that hour?" 9. How are we to understand the words "neither the Son?" 10. To what is the Son of man compared? 11. What exhortation is based on our ignorance of the time of His coming? 12. What is it to "watch?"

## CHAPTER XIV.

1 *A conspiracy against Christ.* 3 *Precious ointment is poured on his head by a woman.* 10 *Judas selleth his Master for money.* 12 *Christ himself foretelleth how he shall be betrayed of one of his disciples.* 22 *after the passover prepared, and eaten, instituteth his supper.* 26 *declareth aforehand the flight of all his disciples, and Peter's denial.* 43 *Judas betrayeth him with a kiss.* 46 *He is apprehended in the garden,* 53 *falsely accused, and impiously condemned of the Jews' council.* 65 *shamefully abused by them.* 66 *and thrice denied of Peter.*

**A**FTER 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. <sup>2</sup> But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxvi. 2; Luke xxii. 1; John xi. 55, x i. 1.

*The passover.* This is said literally, as in verse 12, "for the feast of unleavened bread" is added. That is to say, on the following day. The chief priests and the scribes, &c. The whole Jewish sanhedrim, or general council, conspired to contrive the destruction of the innocent Jesus. *By craft.* Satan makes use of the subtilty of crafty men, and abuses their parts as well as their power, for his own purposes and designs, he sends no fools on his errands. *Not on the feast day, &c.* The only objection to carrying out their nefarious design was, that it might occasion a tumult among the people, there being such a mighty concourse at that time in Jerusalem. But Judas making them a proffer, they readily comply with the motion, and resolve to take the first opportunity to put our Saviour to death.

3. <sup>†</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxvi. 6; John xii. 1, 3; see Luke vii. 37.

On verses 3-9 see on Matt. xxvi. 6-13.

*Bethany.* A village on the east of the Mount of Olives, adjoining Bethphage. *Simon the leper.* Three of the Evangelists are particular in the mention of a cure of leprosy by our Lord at an early period of his ministry. (Matt. viii. 2; Mark i. 40; Luke v. 12.) *A woman.* This must not be confounded with that anointing of our Lord mentioned by Luke, vii. 36-50. Woman is here again before man, as is so often the case in the gospel history. *An alabaster box.* The perfumes then and still most in request in the East, were preserved either in little boxes of gold, or what was far more common, in little oval, narrow-necked phials of the finest white

alabaster, a name which it received from its extraordinary resemblance to the precious stone of that name, though it was itself a marble of a very valuable description, found in the quarries of upper Egypt, or in the Libanus of Syria. In such immense quantities was this costly treasure obtained there, that long before the time of Christ, alabaster was in such general use that the name was universally applied to boxes of perfume, whatever was the material of which they consisted. *Spikenard,* genuine nard. The nard perfume was a compound of all the most valued perfumes of antiquity, among which were the malabatharum, costus, amomum, myrrha, and balsam. *Very precious.* Spikenard was regarded by the ancients as the most precious of ointments.

*Brake the box*—the narrow neck of the small phial or flask. She did not wish to keep or hold back any thing: offered up all, gave all away. Every thing which is given to God is acceptable to Him, when it is charity which gives it. Zeal and love for Jesus Christ have commendable excesses. Great expense in external magnificence designed to honor Him, would most commonly be better employed in feeding His members, but there are some extraordinary occasions on which a sort of profuseness cannot be blamed. It belongs to Him who gives this love, to inform us when and how far we are permitted to gratify it.

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. 6. And they murmured against her.

<sup>1</sup>Ecc. iv. 4. <sup>2</sup>John vi. 43; 1 Cor. x. 10; Phil. ii. 14.

*There were some.* Mark presents, without a doubt, the most accurate historic picture. John defines most sharply the motive. Matthew gives the specially practical historic form. *Three hundred pence.* The denarius or penny was equal to about fifteen cents of our money. *They murmured against her*—they scolded her, or addressed her harshly. "It is indecent" (say the Jerusalem Talmudists), "for a scholar of the wise man to smell of spices." "From this opinion, everywhere received among them," says *Lightfoot*, "you may more

aptly understand why the other disciples, as well as Judas, 'who kept the bag,' were indignant. *He* out of covetousness—they not liking such effeminate niceties as were used in bride-chambers—should be used towards their Master. But Christ, taking off the envy of what was done, applies this anointing to His burial, both in His intention, and in the intention of the woman." If a man devotes his time, money and affections without reserve to the pursuit of earthly things, the world does not blame him. But if he 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. Our position in the world may be lowly, but let us, like Mary, do what we can.

6. And Jesus said, "Let her alone, why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me." 1 Isa. liv. 17; 2 Cor. x. 18.

Jesus first rebukes the murmurers, and then justifies the action, pronouncing it *good*, because it flowed from a principle of love to Him.

7. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always.—Deut. xv. 11.

God has no need of us to feed the poor; no need of the widow to feed Elias. He could still have fed him with ravens. He could have created sufficient for all men, or so few men, as all should have been sufficient for them. He would not, He ordered there should be ever "poor in the land." (Deut. xv. 11.) Why? To prove them, and to prove us by them, that He, who feeds us, might feed them by us; that our superfluities might be their necessities; that they of their patience in waiting, and we of our liberality in supporting, might both together of Him that made us both receive a reward—they with us, in our bosoms there, as here, a good sight in heaven and a good sight in earth. (Luke xvi 23.) For surely there shall never be a rich man in heaven without a Lazarus in his bosom. Therefore we have need of them as they have need of us, yet, that, we make theirs, remains ours still. (2 Cor. ix. 6-10; Heb. xiii. 1, 2.)

8. She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

*She hath done what she could*, she has testified her gratitude and respect toward

me, according to the best of her ability, in my present circumstances. What an eulogy was that which Jesus pronounced upon Mary! *She is come aforehand*, &c. Jesus had before predicted his humiliation, even unto death on the cross; He now adds the prediction of His burial, a remarkable fact, considering on the one hand the manner of His death, and on the other the expectations He had given His disciples reason to entertain of His rising from the dead. The two great truths of the Gospel are expressed by the anointing and burial of Jesus. In His being buried, His work of humiliation was ended, and in His being anointed, there was given an example of that free and generous devotedness whereby the savor of His name is to be diffused in every place, and a preparation made for His glorious return, as the Messiah, the "King of kings and Lord of lords."

9. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

It brings no small authority to the predictions of the New Testament that, when many of them were made, there appeared no likelihood that they should ever be made good. When a poor Virgin, that was betrothed to a carpenter, confidently pronounces that "all ages should call her Blessed," what probability was there that what she said would ever come to pass? And when another private woman, then living in a village, had it foretold her that a censured action of hers should be reported, *through the whole world*, to her praise, what sober man, that were not a prophet, would venture to lose his credit by making such a promise? And therefore, since we see such unlikely predictions actually accomplished, it may well convince an unbiassed man, that the authors of them were really endowed with a true prophetic spirit; and that the events, by that foretold, were not effects of chance or policy, but of Divine Providence.

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.

1 Matt. xxvi. 14, on which see Notes. Luke xxii. 3, 4.

*And Judas Iscariot*, &c. Observe, 1. The

person betraying our blessed Redeemer—Judas—a professor, a preacher, an Apostle, and *one of the twelve*. 2. The heinous nature of the sin of Judas: he betrayed Jesus, Jesus his Maker, Jesus his Master. Sometimes the vilest sins and most horrid impieties are committed by those who make a high profession of religion. 3. The occasion of this sin—the inordinate love of money. It does not appear that Judas had any particular malice, spite, or ill-will, against our Saviour, but a base and unworthy spirit of covetousness possessed him, and this made him sell his Master. Covetousness is the root-sin. (See Luke xii. 15).

12. <sup>b</sup>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 whosoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 15. And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. 16. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. 17. <sup>1</sup>And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, <sup>2</sup>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 dipeth with me in the dish.* 21. <sup>3</sup>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.

<sup>b</sup>Matt. xxvi. 17, &c.; Luke xxii. 7. <sup>1</sup>Rev. iii. 20. <sup>2</sup>Prov. xvi. 1. <sup>3</sup>Matt. xxvi. 20, &c.; xxii. 9, iv. 13, 14; John vi. 29, xiii. 10, 11. <sup>4</sup>Matt. xxvi. 24; Luke xxii. 22. <sup>5</sup>Acts 1. 25.

On verses 12-21 see on Matt. xxvi. 17-24.

*They killed the passover.* The Jews killed it, according to the law, and therefore the disciples did so. *There shall meet you.* A wonderful sign in relation to the place where the *last* Paschal Supper, the *first* "Lord's Supper," was to be eaten. 1. That a person shall meet them; 2. A man; 3. Alone, 4. Immediately; 5. Bearing a vessel, 6. Containing water, 7. Going to the house which the disciples sought. An *honest employment*, however humble, is worthy of the attention of God, and even a man bearing a *pitcher of water* is marked in all his steps. This man was employed in carrying home the water which was to be used for baking the unleavened bread on the following day, for on that day it was not lawful to carry any; hence they were obliged to bring it on the preceding evening.

*And he will show you a large upper room, &c.* In this room they were to make ready. The upper room was not the worst room in the house, but really the best. It was a room sequestered from the tumult, the din, and the disturbance of a populous city. *And found as he had said unto them.* The knowledge, power and wisdom of Jesus appear in all His works. He makes them at this time more particularly known to the Apostles, on purpose to strengthen their faith and confidence, to prepare them for temptation, and to induce them the more easily to believe the mystery he was going to celebrate in their presence. *Made ready the passover—* They were not only to secure the *room*, but procure the *lamb*, which had been first inspected by the priests, have it killed and the blood sprinkled at the foot of the altar, and take it to the house. They were to obtain the *bread* and *wine* and the bitter herbs. The two disciples were Peter and John; and no doubt it was with wondering sadness that they performed the faithful office.

*In the evening,* when the stillness of the night invites to solemn thoughts, after we have collected our straggling ideas and suffered not a reflection to stir, but what either looks upward to God, or inward upon ourselves, upon the state of our minds; then let us scan each action of the day, fervently entreat God's pardon for what we have done amiss, and the gracious assistance of His Spirit for the future; and after having adjusted accounts between our Maker and ourselves, commit ourselves to His care for the night. (Gen. iii. 8; Ps. iv. 9, cxxxii. 3.) "Our Lord Jesus on that evening gave us the example of five great virtues: that is of humility, in washing their feet; of love, in the type of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, and in the discourse, which is filled with precepts of love; of patience, in bearing with His betrayer, and with those many revilers, when he was taken and carried away as a thief; of obedience, in going to suffering and death at the command of His Father; of prayer, in praying three times in the garden. Let us strive to imitate Him in these virtues. (Matt. xi. 29; 1 Peter ii. 21; Rom. viii. 29.)"

What a sorrowful moment it was to the affectionate disciples when the Lord said, *One of you which eateth with me, shall betray me!* Each anxiously inquired, "Is it I?" It was right in them to ask this question, rather than to say, "Is it Peter?" "Is it John?" "Is it James?" Not one was so ungenerous as to fix his suspicion upon his fellow. This is the spirit we ought to cultivate. Are we not more apt to suspect our fellows than to distrust ourselves? No doubt each of the Apostles felt in his heart that *he* could not betray his Master, but then each believed the Lord knew his heart better than he knew it himself. "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." (1 John iii. 21.) Did *Judas* believe that God knew all things when he asked, "Is it I?" Surely he must have hoped that he had deceived his *Master* as well as his fellow-disciples. *Good were it for that man, &c.* More terrible words cannot be imagined. They prove that the lost spirits can never be released from hell, for if at *any* period (however remote) they were to enter heaven, it *would* be good for them *in the end* that they had been born. If among Christ's friends there was a secret foe, there were many secret friends among His foes. The traitor proceeds to complete his transgression, and Jesus proceeds to the institution of the Sacrament of the Supper.

22. ¶ And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.  
¶ Matt. xxvi. 26; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 23.

On verses 22-25 see on Matt. xxvi. 26-7.

Our Lord, having eaten the passover with His disciples the evening on which He was betrayed, instituted the sacred Supper, to be a memorial of His sufferings, a sign of His presence with the Church, and a seal of the new covenant which He was to confirm the next day with His blood. How tender is the assurance it conveys of His love to a sinful world. It teaches us, not only that He has died for us, but that, in the greatness of His mercy, He has established a memorial by which our faith and love may be constantly deepened and enlarged. He has remembered that we are but dust, that our belief would be easily shaken, our hopes dissi-

pated, and our cheerfulness destroyed. And, tenderly stooping to our infirmities, He has not trusted the recollection of the event on which our salvation depends to our mere memory, but has Himself erected an unchanging monument of it. Here, to the eye of faith, he again and again suffers, "the Just for the unjust, that He may bring us to God." How much, then, ought this sacrament to endear to them that compassionate Redeemer, who is thus studious of their happiness, and affectionately considerate of the infirmities of their nature; who thus bends over them in tender sympathy, as the parent over his infant child; who thus provides against the sluggishness of their feelings, the waywardness of their hearts, and the shortness of their memories; who thus opposes sensible things to sensible things, and supplies, amidst the objects which surround and detach them from God, an object to win them back again, and constrain them by a holy violence to love "Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us."

*And as they did eat, i. e.,* toward the end of the supper. *Took bread,* literally, *the bread* used at the paschal feast. *And blessed, i. e.,* invoked his Father's blessing upon it. *And brake it, &c.* This is the manner in which bread was distributed at their common meals when one presided, the cakes being thin and brittle, and knives not being in use, nor, indeed, convenient for the purpose. *This is my body. . . . This is my blood.* (v. 23.) Papists appeal to these words of institution in defense of their doctrine of transubstantiation, and affirm that they must be understood in their obvious and literal sense. "This is my body," they say, must mean, "This is truly my body," and "This is my blood," "This is truly my blood." Yet, they will not contend that other passages of Scripture, in which the phraseology is similar, should be subject to the same rigid interpretation. They never suppose that, when our Lord said, "I am the vine," "I am the way," "I am the door," He meant us to understand that He is literally a vine, a way, and a door, but really concede that we should put a spiritual sense upon such passages. It belongs, there-

fore, to them to assign a satisfactory reason why the same liberty should not be granted in explaining the words of institution. It may indeed be more justly claimed in the present than in any other case, because the words confessedly relate to a sacrament, in which symbols are employed, and nothing is more natural than to give the name of the thing signified to the sign. Moses said of the paschal lamb, "It is the Lord's passover" (Ex. xii. 11), just as our Saviour said of the bread, "This is my body." The Apostle Paul called the symbol of our Saviour's body bread, not only before but also after consecration. (1 Cor. xi. 26-28.)

23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

When he had given thanks. The Lord's Supper was instituted with *blessing and giving of thanks*; the gifts of common providence are to be so received (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5), much more the gifts of special grace. At His other meals, Jesus was wont to *bless*, and *give thanks* (chap. vi. 41, viii. 7), so remarkably, that He was known by it. (Luke xxiv. 30, 31.) And He did the same at this meal.

24. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

The Lord's Supper was to be a memorial of His death, and therefore He brake the bread, to show how it pleased the Lord to *bruise Him*, and He called the wine, which is the blood of the grape, the *blood of the New Testament*. The death of Christ was a bloody death, and frequent mention is made of the *blood*, the *precious blood*, as the price of our redemption. It is called "the blood of the New Testament," for the covenant of grace became a *testament*, and of force, by the death of Christ, the Testator. (Heb. ix. 16.) It is said to be *shed for many*, to justify *many* (Isa. xliii. 12), to bring *many* sons to glory. (Heb. ii. 10.) It was sufficient for *many*, it has been of use to *many*; a great multitude which no man could number, had *washed their robes*, and *made them white in the blood of the Lamb* (Rev. vii. 9, 14), and still it is a *fountain opened*. How comforting is this to repenting sinners, that the blood of Christ is *shed for many*! And if for *many*, why not for *me*? If for the chief of sinners, then *why not for me*?

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.

That interpretation of this verse seems to be most free from objections which refers the wine spoken of here, to *the joys and communion* of heaven, which are often represented under the imagery of a feast. Wine thus emblematic of this heavenly communion, would be drank new (*i. e.*, in a far higher and more spiritual sense) with Him in His Father's kingdom, when they entered upon their heavenly inheritance. The words *fruit of the vine* are here put for *wine*, and this declaration being made at the close of the feast, when the cup was about to be passed around, He naturally and appropriately uses the drinking of wine, as a figure to show that his life was soon to end, and that He would never on earth again partake with them of such a feast as they were then celebrating, but that the reality of this symbolical representation would be enjoyed by them all in His Father's kingdom in heaven. *That day* is to be taken in the general sense of *time*, and its actual reference to each believer is the time of his admission to the upper sanctuary at the hour of death.

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: for it is written, † I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But † after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

† Matt. xxvi. 30, on which see notes. † Matt. xxvi. 31. † Zech. xliii. 7. † Chap. xvi. 7.

And when they had sung a hymn, &c. The Psalms the Jews used at the end of the passover began with the one hundred and thirteenth, and ended with the one hundred and eighteenth. Was the hymn here used one of *these*? Or was it any one else of the compositions of David, "the sweet psalmist of Israel?" Or was it the words of any other pious poet? We cannot determine. Singing is a Christian ordinance, it is sanctioned by our Lord's own example. As this singing was immediately *preceded* by the administration of His own Supper, we learn that singing should accompany this sacred ordinance. As it was *followed* by His entrance into Gethsemane, we learn, 1. That the prospect of suffering should not prevent our joy and praise. 2. That religious ordinances and engagements should not lead us to dispense with retirement.

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 she spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

<sup>29</sup>Matt. xxvi. 33, 34, on which see notes; Luke xxii. 33, 34; John xiii. 37, 38. <sup>32</sup>2 Kings viii. 13; Jer. x. 23, xvii. 9.

*Although all, &c.* To presume upon our own strength, to prefer ourselves before others, and not to hearken to admonitions, are three branches of pride, and three occasions of very grievous falls. How little does man know himself, if he believes he can have any dependence upon his own heart! Christ is our own strength, when we rely upon Him, but He is only an occasion of our falling, when we do not put our whole confidence in His strength.

*Verily I say unto thee, That this day, &c.* Our Lord who knew Peter much better than he did himself, saw that his declaration, though perfectly honest, "sprang more from a swell of strongly excited generous emotion, than from a firmly grounded will," thus announced to him in plain terms, that, in the course of a very few hours, he should deny with oaths and execrations, Him for whom he is now declaring, and declaring truly, that he is willing to make any sacrifice. The slight variations in the different accounts given by the the Evangelists are easily reconciled. With regard to the time of the predicted event, Jesus intimated two things: that all denials should take place ere the period called the cock-crowing had passed, a period more fixed in Judea, where there is little difference in the length of the days as compared with our country, and that the cock, which Peter should hear, should not crow twice till he had a third time denied Christ. It was the fact that immediately on his third denial the cock did crow a second time, along with the look from his suffering Master, which brought so strongly before Peter's mind the omniscience and the kindness of Him whom he had so basely denied, turned the tide in his mind and heart, and converted him from a falsifier and blasphemer into a thoroughly penitent believer.

32. "And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

<sup>32</sup>Matt. xxvi. 36; Luke xxii. 39; John xviii. 1.

*Gethsemane*—or "oil valley," at the foot of the Mount of Olives. *Sit ye here, &c.*

Leaving eight of the disciples near the entrance of the garden, our Saviour is found to withdraw with the three most favored of their number.

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.

*Peter . . . . . James . . . . . John.* The wisdom of God usually proportions our temptations to our respective degrees of strength. He gradually inures His weaker children to the cross, and frequently permits them to view for a time the conflicts of others, before they themselves are engaged in the battle. The weakest He stations at a distance; those who are somewhat stronger He takes along with Him, and in some measure admits to a "fellowship of His sufferings." (Gen. xxxiii. 2, 3; 2 Kings x. 10; Isa. xxvii. 8.) *Began, &c.* As if all His former sorrows were as nothing in comparison of this fullness, or as if He was now only entering upon a course of suffering for sin, such as man's continued unbelief and ingratitude would prolong from age to age, and so it is written of Him. (Matt. xi. 20.)

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.

<sup>35</sup>Rom. viii. 13; Gal. iv. 6. <sup>36</sup>Heb. v. 7. <sup>37</sup>John v. 30, vi. 38.

*Abba, Father, &c.* Our blessed Saviour had not, as yet, experienced bodily sufferings at man's hands, and though what awaited Him at man's hands throughout that dreadful night and day, might well occasion some natural shrinking of His human nature, yet we may be sure that the cup which He saw prepared for Him, was one which human malice alone could never have mixed. The weight of God's just and terrible indignation against sin then lay upon Him. It was Jehovah's sword which then awoke to smite Him, and, though strengthened for the coming conflict by the angel sent down upon that blessed errand, yet He foresaw that He should be left alone to combat with that power of darkness, whose malice and blasphemous suggestions He had experienced during His temptation in the wilderness. We cannot pretend to comprehend the nature of that Divine infliction,

or the manner of those assaults of evil spirits, at the near approach of which He underwent this mysterious agony of soul and body, but we may be sure that the burden thus borne by Him, was unspeakably heavier than any which man's malice and cruelty could inflict. He was about to bear the punishment due to God's justice for man's sins, and so heavy was the burden, that with all His love of sinners, and His willingness to suffer, He seems to ask whether no other way of salvation were possible, meekly submitting His will to that of His Heavenly Father. We should consider the part which our own sins had in causing these sufferings of the Lord Jesus. Each of us should consider they were endured for his sake, as much as if he were the only one for whom Christ thus travailed; in that agony each of us should see the measure of Christ's love for himself. (See on Matt. xxvi. 36-46.)

37. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest thou not watch one hour?

Saith unto Peter, whom He especially addresses, since he had a short time before, with every asseveration, strongly declared, that he would willingly encounter all calamities, nay, even death itself, with Jesus. Observe, too, He calls him not Peter, *i. e.*, rock (*constant*), but Simon. Peter ought to have been thoroughly sensible that he had promised too much upon his own strength, since he found himself overcome even by sleep. God permits the lesser faults, on purpose to cure men of presumption; but when they take no warning thereby, He suffers them to have grievous falls.

38. Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

<sup>a</sup>Rom. vii. 23; Gal. v. 17.

After His reprehension, Christ subjoins an exhortation, *Watch ye, &c.*, and adds a forcible reason, *The spirit is willing, &c.* Thence learn that the holiest and best resolved Christians, who have willing spirits for Christ and His service, should, in view of the weakness of the flesh, or frailty of human nature, watch and pray, and thus guard themselves against temptation.

39. And again he went away, and prayed and spake the same words.

The simplicity and plainness of Christ in His prayers is an important lesson, and of great use and advantage. A Christian who prays to God is not an orator, who would persuade by his eloquence, but a beggar, who would move to compassion by his poverty and humility. These speak plainly and without ornament, and Jesus speaks thus to God, because He has clothed Himself with our humility and poverty.

40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.—Rom. iii. 19.

When he returned. "Wherefore," says an old writer, "did the Lord so often break off that prayer of His, which was of such mighty consequence? In my opinion, it was to teach us, that our prayers are most perfect when intermixed with anxious concern for the welfare of our neighbors." *Asleep again.* It is a dangerous thing to give way to spiritual sloth. The disciples, who had not aroused themselves at Christ's first exhortation, became the more drowsy and sunk into deeper sleep. Sloth and a disinclination to good insinuate themselves, like intoxicating poison, and gradually deprive the mind of all thought and reflection. (Verses 68, 70, 71; Prov. vi. 9-11.)

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.

<sup>a</sup>John xiii. 1. <sup>b</sup>Matt. xxvi. 46; John xviii. 3.

*Sleep on now, &c.* The ironical meaning, as conveyed by Matthew, is altered by Luke into a reproof: "Why sleep ye?" Mark presents an intermediate view; first irony, then the call to awake. *It is enough,* that is, all is over. This expression intimated that the time when they might have been of use to Him, by their counsel and comfort, was now lost; and that He was in a manner already in the hands of His enemies. *Lo, he that betrayeth, &c.* They opened their eyes to see how much more vigilant he was who served the devil, than themselves, who were in the service of God. (Luke xvi. 8). "The power of faith," says *Chrysostom*, "is secure in dangers, it is endangered by security. (Verse 67.)

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.

<sup>a</sup>Matt. xxvi. 47, on which see notes; Luke xxii. 47; John xviii. 3.

*One of the twelve.* The sufferings of the Church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home; her open enemies can do her no harm, until her pretended friends have delivered her into their hands; and, unnatural as it may seem, they, who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to "lift up the heel" against her. (John xiii. 29; Acts xx. 30; Rev. ii. 2.)

44. And he that had betrayed him had given them a token, saying, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: take him, and lead him away safely."  
 \*2 Sam. xx. 9, 10; Ps. lv. 20, 21; Prov. xxvii. 6.

See on Matt. xxvi. 48.

As those who came to apprehend Jesus were strangers to Him, and as it was now night, and there were several persons with Him, a signal was the more necessary. It is probable that our Lord, in great condescension and love, had been used, according to the Jewish custom, to permit His disciples to salute Him, when they returned to Him after having been some time absent. The hint, *lead him safely away*, may intimate Judas' suspicion that Jesus might miraculously escape, as on former occasions (Luke iv. 30; John viii. 59, x. 39), though He had expressly declared the contrary (Matt. xxvi. 24), or it may perhaps mean, that notwithstanding the wickedness of the traitor, he was desirous that his rude assailants might do his innocent Master no injury.

45. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him.

See on Matt. xxvi. 49.

*Master, Master.* Not merely an exclamation of excitement, but also of hypocritical reverence carried to its greatest height. *And kissed him.* It is noticeable, that upon the spot where Jesus was seized by the band, Titus, the Roman commander, pitched his camp forty years after. The Turks, however, have walled the place where Judas kissed Christ, as an accursed spot.

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."

\*Matt. xxvi. 55, on which see notes, Luke xxii. 52. \*Psa. xxii. 6; Isa. liii. 7, &c.; Luke xxii. 37, xxiv. 44. \*Psa. lxxxviii. 8; verse 27.

*A servant of the high priest.* His name was Malchus. Simon Peter drew the sword. Concerning the miracle which

followed, see the note on Luke xxii. 51. *Are ye come out, &c.* These wretches, observing that, throughout His prolonged sufferings, Jesus had complained of no other injury done to Him, than this, that when they came to apprehend Him as a criminal in the garden, they had approached Him as a thief, determined to treat Him in this way which seemed to grieve Him most. Hence, not satisfied with having ranked Him beneath Barabbas, a thief of the worst description, they made thieves His companions to Calvary, and between thieves they lifted Him to the cross. "As men," says *Beza*, "had knowingly and willingly deserted their Creator, become traitors against Him, and robbed Him of his glory, so Christ willingly making satisfaction for the unjust, being deserted by His disciples, and betrayed by one whom He had admitted to the most familiar acquaintance with Him, is apprehended like a robber, that the punishment might answer to the sin, and we, the real traitors, deserters, and sacrilegious robbers, might be rescued from the snare of the devil." *But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.* It is not the Scripture which makes the necessity of fulfillment, but the will of God, revealed in the prophets, causes the fulfillment in the Scriptures. The darkness, likewise, stands beneath God's light. *And they all forsook him, and fled.* Nothing is the cause of greater mortification to Christ, than to be betrayed and sold by one friend, to be denied by another, and to be forsaken by all the rest, being so worthy as He was to be constantly loved.

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 linencloth, and fled from them naked.

*And there followed him a certain young man, &c.* There are many who have become known to us only on account of their having had something to do with Jesus. We should never have heard of this young man, if he had not followed Him this terrible night. It was a moment never to be forgotten, when he heard the tumult, and determined to go and see what it was. It appears that He loved the Lord, and desired to be with Him in the hour of danger and disgrace. But when the enemies laid hold on him his

courage failed, and leaving his covering in their hands he fled for his life. This circumstance gives us a lively idea of the terror that prevailed among the friends of Jesus. Those who had a little while before clung closely to His side, were now afraid to be known as His disciples. Many suppose that the "young man" in question was no other than the Evangelist Mark himself. It is, however, impossible to determine, and therefore idle to inquire, who this was. "It seems," says *Alford*, "to have been some attached disciple of the Lord (probably well known to the readers of Mark), who had gone to rest and had been aroused by the intelligence. The disciples were not laid hold of; this person, perhaps, was throwing some obstacles in the way of the removal of Jesus, or he may have been laid hold of merely in wantonness from His unusual gait."

A *linen cloth*—an article of dress which was used at night, and also in summer, as a substitute for the ordinary mantle, or outside garment. *His naked body*. The word "*naked*" may here express, as it does in other places (see Isa. xx. 23; John xxi. 7), that the young man was almost naked. Being aroused by the tumult, he did not wait to dress himself in the ordinary manner, but merely threw this linen cloth over what dress he had on. *And he left*, literally, *and having left*. In attempting to lay hold on him, they grasped only the loose folds of the linen cloth. Letting this remain with them, he fled away and escaped, either not being pursued, or taking advantage of his knowledge of the place, in the darkness of the night, to elude his pursuers.

The *Rev. Henry Melvill, B. D.*, in his sermon on verses 51 and 52, says: "We have shown you, that, except in describing the dress of this young man, the Evangelists nowhere mention the *shroud*, but where they have to speak of the raiment, in which Christ was consigned to the grave. This is surely very remarkable. It is as though to force us to connect, in some way, the appearance, the mysterious appearance of the young man so strangely attired, with the burial of Christ, to compel us to assign it a prophetic or typical

character, in place of passing it over as an incident, from which little can be learned. As Christ is led to trial, and, therefore, virtually, to crucifixion, He is followed by a young man having nothing on his naked body but the vesture in which, after having been crucified, Christ would be laid by Joseph in the tomb. The same parties who have seized Christ, lay hold on this young man, and try to detain him. But though he is but one against a multitude, he escapes from their hands—he escapes, but he escapes naked, leaving the grave-clothes behind him. Is not this Christ, who, when He had put on the grave-clothes, was not to be kept in the grave by all the malice and power of His enemies, but who sprang from the grasp of the tomb, leaving in it the raiment in which He had been bound up for burial?"

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. †Matt. xxvi. 57, on which see notes; Luke xxii. 54; John xviii. 13. †Matt. xxvi. 59. †1 Peter iii. 16, 18. †Ps. xxvii. 12.

*He sat with the servants*. Often an error is easier among such as those who are less feared, than among the great. It is not safe traveling upon the confines of what is lawful and of what is sinful. He that to-day will go toward sin, as far as he thinks he may, is in danger of going to-morrow further than he should. It is not easy to be safe in walking upon the brink of a precipice. (Prov. iv. 14, 15, xix. 16; Gen. xxxix. 10; 2 Sam. xi. 2.) *Warmed himself*. It was by the light that Peter was discovered, who otherwise would have been less exposed. Often while the body is fostered, the soul is neglected. *At the fire*. The nights in Palestine are intensely cold during the Paschal season. *Sought for witness, &c.* It is in the power of every man to preserve his probity; but no man living has it in his power to say, that he can preserve his reputation, while there are so many evil tongues in the world, ready to blast the fairest character, and so many open ears, ready to receive their reports. (Ex. xxiii. 1; Prov. xxvi. 20-22; 1 Peter iv. 8.)

*But their witness agreed not together*. Truth

—'tis a plain, straight, open road; falsehood—'tis a dark, deep, devious, winding labyrinth, where it is very hard for its accomplices not to lose the one the other; nay, not to lose themselves in it. 'Tis impossible for falsehood to be so consistent, so true to itself, as not in something to give itself the lie. (Job xxvii. 4; Matt. xii. 34-37.)

57. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58. We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59. But neither so did their witness agree together. 60. 'And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 61. But he held his peace, and answered nothing. 62. 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. \*Chap. xv. 29; John ii. 19. †Matt. xxvi. 62, on which see notes. ‡Isa. liii. 7. §Matt. xxvi. 63. ¶Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64; Luke xxii. 69.

Neither so did their witness agree together. Perhaps one testified that He had said that He was able to destroy the temple, and the other that He would actually destroy it. Some understand this expression as meaning that the testimony was insufficient. Answerest thou nothing? What is it which &c. Two distinct questions. *The Blessed.* An ordinary Hebrew expression for the Deity. (See Luke i. 68; Rom. i. 25.) *And Jesus said, I am.* Seldom in the course of His ministry did our Lord announce Himself as the Messiah. But here, in the great and trying moment, when questioned by the Jewish nation, in the person of their high priest, solemnly, *Are you the MESSIAH?* to the Jewish nation he returns the solemn reply, *I am.*

63. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64. Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. 65. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands. \*Isa. xxxvi. 22, xxxvii. 1; Jer. xxxvi. 23, 24; Acts xiv. 13, 14. †1 Kings xxi. 9, 13; John v. 18, viii. 58, 59, x. 31, 33, xix. 7.

*Rent his clothes*—tore all his clothing, except that which was next his body. Persons of respectability, and travelers, sometimes, wore two articles of under-clothing. (See on Matt. xxvi. 65.) *Some began to spit on him, &c.* These wretched miscreants, who spat upon the face of Him who is described as "the Brightness of (the Father's) glory, and the express image of His person" (Heb. i. 3), had been beheld long before by the keen eye of prophecy. They occupy a distinct place

in Isaiah's solemn picture of the humiliation of the Son of man: "He hid not His face from the shame and the spitting."

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.

‡Matt. xxvi. 69, on which see notes; Luke xxii. 55; John xviii. 18.

*Beneath.* This is in opposition to the hall of trial, which was higher. *I know not,* or, it is unknown to me, not understood. *Into the porch,* or, according to Matthew, the entrance-hall. It is the same idea.

69. †And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. 70. And he denied it again. ‡And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. 71. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. 72. (And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crew twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.)

†Matt. xxvi. 71, on which see notes; Lev. xxii. 58; John xviii. 25. ‡Matt. xxvi. 73; Luke xxii. 59; John xviii. 26. §Acts ii. 7. ¶Matt. xxvi. 75.

*And a (the) maid.* As soon as she noticed him, began to say, as the other had begun. *For thou art a Galilean.* His broad dialect betrayed him. It is evident that Peter failed to convince these persons of his not belonging to the party of Jesus, and that, in their estimation, he was guilty of falsehood. It is hardly supposable that he did not show signs of conscious guilt, when thus repeatedly charged with being one of Jesus' followers.

*And when he thought thereon he wept.* *Doddrige* supposes that this is intended to express, not only the immediate sensibility of Peter, but his feeling through life, and that he always wept at the thought of his vile and ungrateful conduct. His sin was certainly very aggravated, and, with all his failings, he was a man of very tender affections, and great ingenuousness. Let us never be ashamed or afraid of such tears as Peter shed. Nothing is so becoming and reasonable. Other grief may be excused, but this can be justified. Other sorrow may render us amiable in the eyes of our fellow-creatures, but this is extolled of God. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." This brings us within the reach of the promises: "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy,"

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." It is not easy, or perhaps possible, to make others comprehend this—but there is a pleasure even in the frame itself, and they who are the subjects of it well know that their happiest moments are their most tender ones, and, with *Augustine*, they can bless God for the "grace of tears." Here is proof of our being under the renewing of the Holy Ghost. If the heart of stone was not taken away, how could I feel and grieve? And

if there was nothing in me but nature, how could I feel and grieve for sin? There is nothing more useful in the divine life than this disposition. It endears the Saviour and His atonement, and His righteousness, and His intercession, and His grace, and makes its possessor cautious and circumspect; in this temper of mind he cannot expose himself to temptation, to trifle with sin, but be always watchful and prayerful. Blessed is the man that feareth always.

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1. What occurred in the house of Simon the leper? 2. What objection was made to it? 3. Where did Christ send two of His disciples? 4. For what purpose? 5. What took place "in the evening?" 6. What is said of the institution of the Lord's Supper? 7. What was done before they went to the Mount of Olives? 8. What occurred in Gethsemane? 9. Explain verse 36. 10. In what state did Christ find His disciples when He came to them. 11. What did He say to them? 12. What particulars of the betrayal are given? 13. What is said about "a certain young man?" 14. What is said of Peter's denial of Jesus? 15. What, of his repentance?

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## CHAPTER XV.

1 *Jesus brought bound, and accused before Pilate. 15 Upon the clamour of the common people, the murderer Barabbas is loosed, and Jesus delivered up to be crucified. 17 He is crowned with thorns, 19 spit on, and mocked: 21 fainteth in bearing his cross: 27 hangeth between two thieves: 29 suffereth the triumphing reproaches of the Jews: 39 but confessed by the centurion to be the Son of God: 43 and is honourably buried by Joseph.*

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.

<sup>a</sup>Ps. ii. 2; <sup>b</sup>Matt. xxvii. 1, 2.

The events of this chapter are explained more fully in Matthew xxvii.

*In the morning, &c.* The meetings of the Jewish sanhedrim could not be held till morning, as the courts of the temple were shut at night. Nor was it lawful to put any man to death on the passover. So the council of Jews, fearing the people too much to retain our Lord in prison, and not daring to proceed with the execution, delivered him to Pilate, on charge of sedition, that He might be put to death immediately, and according to the Roman custom. *Theophylact* observes: "The Jews delivered up our Lord to the Romans, and they, for that sin, were themselves given up into the hands of the Romans."

<sup>2</sup> And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering, said unto him, Thou sayest it. <sup>3</sup> And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing. <sup>4</sup> And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. <sup>5</sup> But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

<sup>b</sup>Matt. xxvii. 11. <sup>c</sup>Matt. xxvii. 13. <sup>d</sup>Isa. liii. 7; John xix. 9.

*Thou sayest it, or, it is as thou sayest. But he answered nothing.* Jesus answered Pilate, but would not answer the chief priests a word before Pilate, probably for these reasons: because His innocence was such as needed no apology; because their calumnies and accusations were so notoriously false, that they needed no confutation; to show His contempt of death; to teach us by His example to despise the false accusations of malicious men, and to teach us patience and submission, when for His sake we are slandered and traduced.

<sup>6</sup> Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

<sup>a</sup>Matt. xxvii. 15; John xviii. 39.

There was no law to oblige Pilate to this, but as acts of grace are generally popular things, this seems to have been first voluntarily used by the Romans, to please their tributaries, and by custom was in a manner established.

7. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. 8. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

*Bound with them, &c.* This shows that he belonged to a band of murderers, of whom he was most likely the leader. *In the insurrection*—in which he had been captured—one of the numberless Jewish insurrections, not known more exactly. As this charge was most offensive to Pilate, he would willingly punish Barabbas.

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.

*The King of the Jews*—an ironical use of an opponent's words. Let us take warning of the fatal effects of *envy*, as shown in the conduct of the priests. They delivered up our Lord, and persecuted Him to death from envy—envy at His superior holiness, which put them to shame, at His wonderful works, which they could not equal, at His growing influence, which threatened to bring theirs to nothing. How anxious should we be to root out this basest of passions, which is excited in the heart by the sight of superior excellence! Be watchful against it, and if you find a secret pain when any outshine you in piety or success (much more if you are tempted to disparage those who thus surpass you), pray earnestly that you be not given up to this truly devilish temper.

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.—Matt. xxvii. 20; Acts iii. 14.

*Moved the people, more literally, excited, instigated.* An active and urgent influence is denoted by the word. The cross was in the form of a †, corresponding to the human form with the arms spread. It was early adopted by the Romans and other nations as a means of inflicting torture and death upon the human body. It was among the striking occurrences of this great transaction, that this mode of death extended him upon a representation of a human form, and presents him to our view with his outspread arms as if to embrace the human race.

Let us take warning against that base disposition which speaks well of a person

while he is prosperous, and joins others in decrying him as soon as he is afflicted. The fickle multitude which joined in the cries of Hosanna, when there seemed a prospect of the Lord's triumph, preferred a robber and murderer to Him, when they saw Him deserted, "stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." So hollow and fleeting is popular applause, such a disposition is there in man's breast to favor and fawn upon those who are rising to join in trampling upon the fallen. One characteristic of such as shall rest upon God's holy hill is, that in their eyes a vile person is contemned, but they honor "them who fear the Lord." The outward prosperity of a wicked man does not alter their feeling toward him, and the misfortunes which befall the good are to them an additional reason for favoring and honoring them in their adversity.

15. ¶ And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

*To content, literally, to satisfy, i. e., to remove all grounds of complaint, and render himself popular with the people.* *Scourge him.* The Romans usually scourged the criminals whom they condemned to be crucified. Hence, Pilate delivered Jesus to be scourged in order to be crucified, but not before he had made efforts to rescue Him from His enemies. Let us never forget the patient sufferer of all these cruel outrages; and when, we find the multitude choosing Barabbas instead of Him, let us be reminded to examine whether there be no evil way, no unrighteous or self-indulgent habit, which we are preferring to Him, who bore all this so patiently for our sakes.\*

\*We annex here, in a note, a most singular document, entitled the *Death Warrant of Christ: Sentence rendered by Pontius Pilate, acting Governor of Lower Galilee, stating that Jesus of Nazareth shall suffer death on the cross.*

"In the year seventeen of the empire Tiberius Cæsar, and the 25th day of March, the city of holy Jerusalem, Anna and Caiaphas being priests, sacrificators of the people of God, Pontius Pilate, Governor of Lower Galilee, sitting on the presidential chair of the Pretory, condemns Jesus of Nazareth to die on the cross between two thieves—the great and notorious evidence of the people saying—

1. Jesus is a seducer.

2. He is seditious.

3. He is an enemy of the law.

4. He calls himself falsely the Son of God.

5. He calls himself falsely the King of Israel.

6. He entered into the temple, followed by a multitude bearing palm branches in their hands.

Order the first centurion, Quillus Cornelius, to lead him to the place of execution.

16. <sup>b</sup>And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium: and they called together the whole band. 17. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head. 18. And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! 19. And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. 20. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.—<sup>b</sup>Matt. xxvii. 27.

No pity was awakened in the hearts of the Roman *soldiers*, by the sight of the Redeemer's sufferings. After the scourging was over, they led Jesus away *into the hall, i. e.*, into the palace-court, which we may easily suppose was surrounded by the neighboring buildings of the governor's palace, forming a kind of barracks. *The whole band*—the entire cohort, one-tenth of a Roman legion. The number of the cohort varied, however, from three hundred to a thousand. Calling this cohort five hundred, there could not have been, in the court and around the building, less than a thousand persons, all thirsting for the blood of their victim. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the number was much larger.

*And they clothed him, &c.* A scarlet military mantle (see on Matt. xxvii. 28) was made to represent the imperial purple, hence the designation *purple*, as Mark and John describe the robe. And because this is the symbolic import of the robe, there is no discrepancy. The scarlet military cloak no more required to be a real purple, than the crown of thorns required to be a real crown, or the reed a real sceptre, for the whole transaction was an ironical drama, and such an one, too, that the infamous abuse might be readily perceived through the pretended glorification. *A crown of thorns.* Still making themselves

Forbid to any person whomsoever, either poor or rich, to oppose the death of Jesus.

The witnesses that signed the condemnation of Jesus are, viz.: 1. Daniel Robani, a Pharisee; 2. Joannas Borobabic; 3. Raphael Robani; 4. Capet a citizen.

Jesus shall go out of the city of Jerusalem by the gate of Struems."

The above sentence is engraved on a copper plate; on one side are written these words: "A similar plate is sent to each tribe." It was found in an antique vase of white marble, while excavating in the ancient city of Aquila, in the Kingdom of Naples, in the year 1820, and was discovered by the Commissariat of Arts, attached to the French armies. At the expedition of Naples, it was found enclosed in a box of ebony, in the sacristy of the Chartrom—the vase in the chapel of Caserta. The French translation was made by the members of the Commission of Arts. The original is in the Hebrew language. The Chartrom requested earnestly that the plate might not be taken away from them. The request was granted as a reward for the sacrifice they had made for the army. M. Denon, one of the savans, caused a plate to be made of the same metal, on which he had engraven the above sentence. At the sale of his collection of antiquities, &c., it was bought by Lord Howard for 2,390 francs.

merry over the innocent one, the soldiers weave a crown of thorns, and put it on His head. It is impossible to decide which of the many kinds of thorn that grew in Palestine was used. This crown was put upon Jesus partly to mock Him, and partly to cause Him pain. Some of His faithful followers have thought of this crown while enduring suffering for His sake. When a crown not made of *thorns*, but of *paper*, and painted with the figures of three devils, was placed on the head of the martyr John Huss, he said, "I am glad to wear this crown of ignominy, for the sake of Him who wore a crown of thorns." He felt that the Saviour's torments were sharper than his own; he felt, also, that it was for *his* sake that the thorns pierced the Saviour's brow. Yes! it was for *us* that Jesus wore a crown of thorns. No evil thought had ever proceeded from His Divine mind. It was to atone for *our* offenses that the blood trickled down His sacred cheeks. He who suffered all these pangs, and bore all these insults, was *God*, the God who made us, who gives us health, who upholds the worlds! What must *sin* be to require such an atonement! It must be infinitely evil. And what must *Jesus* be, to be willing to offer this atonement! He must be infinitely good. The day is coming, when He will appear adorned with *many* crowns, but not *one* of them composed of thorns. Then all shall worship Him, not in cruel mockery, but with deep awe, and call Him *Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.

*And they smote him on the head.* On this an ancient writer says: "Thou, who didst submit Thy glorious head to be wounded, pardon thereby whatever by the wilfulness of my head I have done amiss. Thou, who didst suffer Thy hands to be perforated, pardon thereby whatsoever I have done amiss by unlawful touch, by unlawful execution. Thou, who didst allow Thy precious side to be pierced, pardon thereby whatsoever I have done amiss in the heat of passion by unlawful imaginations. Thou, who didst permit Thy blessed feet to be nailed down, pardon thereby whatsoever I have done amiss in the progress of my footsteps, ever swift to evil. Thou, who didst give Thy whole body to be stretched

upon the cross, pardon thereby whatsoever sins I have committed by the co-operation of all my members. (Mi. v. 1.)”

21. <sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>Matt. xxvii. 32; Luke xxiii. 26, on which see notes.

And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, &c. It does not appear that Simon was unwilling to bear the cross, for the choice was not given to him. Simon will never be forgotten, because he was the Saviour's cross-bearer. How many angels in heaven would joyfully have taken his place, if they could have obtained permission! We may well believe that there are some on earth who would, if they might, have borne their Lord's burden, and shared His reproach. Though our Lord is not now fainting beneath the weight of His cross, His name is still despised, and His people are persecuted. He delights to see us willing to bear shame for His sake. Some have humbled themselves to the very dust that they might please Him. *Dober*, the Moravian missionary, intended to sell himself for a slave, that he might teach the negroes the way of salvation. Circumstances prevented him fulfilling his intention, but if he had, would he have degraded himself? To bear the cross of Jesus, and to share His reproach, is reckoned in heaven more honorable than to govern kingdoms, or to discover worlds. Whether Simon knew it or not, no monarch on his throne occupied a place of such distinction as he did when bearing the cross of the Nazarene. *Cyrene* was a city of Africa, and contained many Jews. *Alexander and Rufus* are mentioned, because well known among the disciples (see Rom. xvi. 13), and this is a strong proof that the facts recorded are true, for the appeal was sufficient to detect any fallacy.

22. <sup>1</sup>And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. 23. <sup>1</sup>And they gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. <sup>2</sup>Matt. xxvii. 33; Luke xxiii. 33. <sup>1</sup>Matt. xxvii. 34.

*They bring.* Not merely lead. *Golgotha.* A small hill on a greater hill or mount, north-west of Jerusalem, so called from its form, or because criminals were executed there. *Wine mingled with myrrh*, termed by Matthew, *vinegar*. Mark speaks of more ingredients in the drink than Matthew, and hence uses different words to

denote the same thing. Vinegar was usually made of wine, or of the juice of grapes. *Received it not.* Jesus must drain the cup of suffering to the very dregs, and therefore will not partake of the opiate now offered to His lips.

24. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.—<sup>1</sup>Ps. xxii. 18; Luke xxiii. 34.

*They parted his garments.* Our Saviour had not much to leave; how affectingly His poverty appears at His death. It was but His garments the soldiers could divide, there was nothing more. They might have been woven by the fingers of love, but they were all that He had. And it may be, believer, that thou hast reached the end of life's journey with little else than the clothes that cover thee. Think not of these, however, but of the shining raiment thou art speedily to receive from the hand of Him who, though He was rich; yet for thy sake became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich, who wandered here in nakedness and sorrow, a forlorn outcast, that we might reach a mansion of bliss and be clothed in a robe of righteousness, by which we should be qualified for the very presence of God and the enjoyment of His love forever.

25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.—<sup>1</sup>See Matt. xxvii. 45; John xix. 14.

*The third hour*—nine o'clock in the morning. *They crucified him.* “The meek and lowly Man who permitted them to place the cross upon His back, permitted them also to stretch His hands and feet upon it, and with the hammer and the rugged nails to fix them there. O mysterious love! O meek, yet Almighty Saviour! how was it that no ray of Thy Godhead escaped in the midst of such cruelty, to wither and to blast forever the wicked hands which sought Thy death? O wondrous love! which held Thy power in check, and kept Thee passive as a lamb beneath the wounds which drained Thy life away! O holiness! how dear wast thou to the heart of Jesus! Rather than see thy garments stained by sin, He gives His blood! O justice! how precious to the Lamb of God wast thou! Rather than thou shouldst waive thy righteous claims, unholy men shall nail His body to

the tree; and inch by inch He will die, and calmly, slowly, 'mid sweat, and wounds, and blood, and darkness, and agonies unutterable, and death, He will pay into thy hands the utmost which thy law demands. And thou, too, mercy! how closely to the heart of Jesus didst thou cleave, rather than part with thee; His heart shall bleed, that with the purple tide thy hand might lend a balm to heal the wounds of men."

26. And the superscription of his accusation was written over, **THE KING OF THE JEWS.**  
 \*Matt. xxvii. 37; John xix. 19; Luke xxiii. 38.

*The superscription of his accusation.* By the Romans, the title of the crimes for which criminals were condemned, were either carried before them, or affixed to the instrument of their punishment. There were three inscriptions, or rather one, with slight variations, in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Matthew is supposed to have given the Hebrew; John the Greek; and Mark the Latin. It was written in Latin for the majesty of the Roman empire; in Greek for the information of the Hellenists, who used that, as indeed most of the Roman provinces did. Hebrew was the *vulgar language* of the place. Can this be the King of Israel, on the cross, dying the death of a malefactor? Is this "a king?" Retrace the ancient Levitical service, and behold in the sacred songs and prophetic language of the Old Testament, that which shall throw light upon the appalling scene. Light thy torch in the Psalms of David, in which thou hearest a great King complain and say, "They pierced my hands and my feet. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," and yet he remains a King. Listen to the prophet Isaiah, speaking of One who, though He was "wounded for our iniquities," yet "the government was upon his shoulder, and of his peaceful kingdom there shall be no end." Read the words of Zechariah, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow!" and hear the forerunner in the wilderness, exclaiming, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!"

27. And with him they crucify two thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.  
 \*Matt. xxvii. 38; Luke xxiii. 33, on which see notes.

No men who ever lived *died* in such re-

markable circumstances as these two thieves. They were *crucified* with Christ. We know not whether they had ever seen Jesus before that morning, when they accompanied Him to Calvary, and were compelled to pass many hours close to His side. What a different use each made of this precious though painful opportunity! One asked merely to be released from the pangs of the cross. He thought not of *eternal* misery. But the other thief asked, *not* to be released from *present* suffering, but to be admitted into *eternal* life.

28. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, ¶ And he was numbered with the transgressors. 29. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days. 30. Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

¶Isa. liii. 12. \*Ps. xxii. 7. \*John ii. 19. \*Matt. xxvii. 41.

*Numbered with the transgressors.* (See Isa. liii. 12.) *Let Christ the King of Israel, let the Messiah, the king, &c.*—words uttered in derision.

¶ 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.

\*Matt. xxvii. 45; Luke xxiii. 44. \*Ps. xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46. \*Matt. xxvii. 48; John xix. 29. \*Ps. lix. 21. \*Matt. xxvii. 50; John xix. 30.

*There was darkness over the whole land.* The anger of God, as avenging our sins on our Surety, was attested by this horror of darkness. Most commentators understand the expression as relating to Jerusalem and all the neighboring country. While the sun enlightened the rest of the earth, and even at the noon-day this one corner of the world, in which so horrible a crime was being perpetrated, was covered with the thickest darkness. The passover, at which time Christ was crucified, was at the full of the moon, when it is impossible for a natural eclipse of the sun to take place. *Eloi, Eloi, &c.* Consider how the mysterious complaint, which these words embody, is the very burden of the twenty-second Psalm, from which the words are quoted. (See verses nine and eleven of that Psalm.) It is, indeed, a complaint of perpetual recurrence in the book of

Psalms, as if this most terrible calamity of all, and perhaps the most mysterious of the sufferings of the Son of Man, had been constantly presented to the mind of the inspired Psalmist. (See Ps. x. 1, xxvii. 9, xxxv. 22, &c.) *And some of them that stood by, &c.* On examination, it will appear that all the insults endured by our Lord on the cross were during the first *three hours*. After this the multitude of the Jews sympathized with Him, they *ran* to assist Him, and expected Elias to minister to Him. May not this change of conduct have arisen from the awful darkness having awakened them to a degree of reflection? *Cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.*

"The things wonderfully observable in the death of our Saviour," says *Sir Matthew Hale*, "are many; first, that it was a voluntary delivering up of His spirit; this is that, He said. And truly this voluntary delivering up of His soul was well nigh as great an evidence of His divinity, as His resuming it again. (Ecc. viii. 8; John x. 18; Gal. ii. 20; Ti. ii. 14.)

38. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.—<sup>b</sup>Matt. xxvii. 51.

There were two veils of the temple, one at the entrance into the holy place, the other between the holy place and the sanctuary, called "*the inner veil*," to distinguish it from a curtain which was hung at the entrance of the holy place. It is particularly described (Ex. xxvi. 31-3), and is the veil here intended. It was of the strongest contexture, the richest materials, and the finest workmanship. *Was rent in twain, &c.* With regard to the unbelieving Jews, this was a very melancholy event. Hitherto God had dwelt in the temple, within the Holy of Holies, over the ark of the covenant, and there manifested His presence in a peculiar manner. Hence this place was accounted so sacred, that no mortal eye was to look into it, and for this end, God had directed this thick veil to be made. But now, God having rent it Himself, thus, as it were, opened the door of the Holy of Holies, that every one might look into it. He thereby intended to signify, that, from a just indignation and displeasure against the wickedness of His people and their

priests, in putting the Lord of the temple to death, He would from that time leave this His dwelling (Matt. xxiii. 38), and profane His Sanctuary, by giving it up to the eyes and hands of unbelievers. But to the faithful this rending of the veil is a joyful type, representing that an entrance was then opened to them into the Sanctuary which is not made with hands. Hitherto the flesh of Jesus Christ, by the imputation of our sins to Him, had hung before it as a veil. But when this veil was rent at the separation of His soul and body by death, and Jesus Christ, the true High Priest, had Himself, with His own blood, entered into the holy place, *i. e.*, into heaven; the way to the throne of grace is cleared of all obstacles; heaven is laid open, and the covering which hung before the mysteries of the Levitical worship is removed. (Isa. xxv. 7.) The Church militant on earth, which was prefigured by the Sanctuary, and the Church triumphant in heaven, the antitype of the Holy of Holies, are now united with each other—the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, namely, the ceremonial law, together with the whole Levitical economy, is thrown down. (Heb. x. 19-22.)

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.

<sup>c</sup>Matt. xxvii. 54; Luke xxiii. 47, on which see notes.

*So cried out.* This may refer either to the words themselves, spoken by our dying Lord, or to the "loud voice" with which He uttered them, for both attested His Divinity; both attested His innocence, in regard to that charge of blasphemy, for which He was condemned in the Jewish court. His addressing God twice on the cross as His Father (Luke xxiii. 34), shewed that He maintained to the last the justice of His claim to be "the Son of God;" and then the full-toned loudness of voice with which He cried out, gave evidence of being the Lord of life, having "life in Himself."

*Truly this man was the Son of God.* This testimony of the centurion was confirmed by that of the infidel *Rousscau*. "Where is the man," says he, "where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary good

man, loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ; the resemblance was so striking, that all the Fathers perceived it. What prepossession, what blindness, must it be to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the Son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion there is between them! Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last, and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was anything more than a mere sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice, he had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just before Socrates defined justice; Leonidas had given up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty; the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his cotemporaries, that pure and sublime morality, of which He only hath given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known amongst the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honor to the vilest people on earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed, indeed, the weeping executioner who administered it, but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for His merciless tormentors." And hear his last words. "Yes," says this infidel, "if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God."

40. <sup>a</sup>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 of Salome; 41. Who also, when he was in Galilee, <sup>f</sup>followed him,

and ministered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem. <sup>a</sup>Matt. xxvii. 55; Luke xxiii. 49. <sup>b</sup>Ps. xxxviii. 11. <sup>c</sup>Luke viii. 2, 3.

*The mother of Joses*, is probably the person whom John calls *Mary, the wife of Cleophas. Salome*. Probably the same as "the mother of Zebedee's children," in the parallel passage in Matt. xxvii. 56. *Looking on afar off*. The best defence against sin at any time is the remembrance of Christ's sufferings. Not only at the sacrament, but, wherever we are, this remembrance is an excellent shield in the day of battle. Art thou walking, art thou standing, art thou sitting, art thou going out, or coming in? Set a bleeding Saviour before thee. When "sinners entice thee," think of thy Saviour's wounds; when thou art tempted to overreach or defraud thy neighbor in any matter, think of the bitter cup thy Master drank off; when any lust, any vain desire rises in thy mind, think of thy dear Redeemer's groans; when thy flesh grows weary of a duty, remember who suffered on the cross; when thou art tempted to be indifferent in religion and faint in thy mind, look upon Him who made His soul an offering for sin, for thy sin; when thou art loth to overcome, think of Him who "by His death overcame him that had the power of death;" when impatient thoughts assault thy mind, think of "the Lamb, that before His shearers was dumb;" and, surely, under this sad scene, thou wilt not dare to sin. (1 Peter iv. 1, 2; Heb. xii. 1-4.)

42. <sup>f</sup>And now, when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43. Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.—<sup>a</sup>Matt. xxvii. 57; Luke xxiii. 50. <sup>b</sup>Luke ii. 25, 38.

*When the even was come*. The Jews spoke of two evenings; the first was considered as commencing from the *ninth hour*, that is, in our reckoning, *three o'clock*, afternoon; the second, from the *twelfth hour* or *sunset*. It is probably the former of these that is meant here and in Matt. xxvii. 45, for at six the preparation ended and the Sabbath began, when they durst no longer be so employed. Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the council that had condemned Jesus, but had not consented to their unrighteous sentence. (Luke xxiii. 51.) He, like Nicodemus, who was also one of the sanhedrim, waited for the con-

solution of Israel. Both these honorable persons believed in Jesus, but had not yet openly confessed Him, from dread of the indignation of the Jewish rulers. They, however, acknowledged their attachment to Him at His death—they joined in honoring His burial. Nicodemus brought spices to embalm Him. (John xix. 38, 39.) Joseph went *boldly* to Pilate, with whom he was, no doubt, acquainted, and begged the body of Jesus, to protect it from further insults, and to bury it in a decent and honorable manner. Though he had nothing to fear from the Roman governor, he had everything to dread from his fellow-counselors. It was, therefore, a courageous act for this noble senator thus publicly to own his regard for Jesus in the midst of infamy.

44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45. And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen; and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. 47. And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother of Jesus* beheld where he was laid.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxvii. 59, 60; John xix. 40, on which see notes.

If, or rather according to the meaning of the original word in some cases, *that he were already dead*. We have strong reason to think that this is the meaning here, from the question put to the centurion, whether he had been *any while*, not *already dead*. *When he knew*—that Jesus was really dead. *He gave*—the body of the crucified had been at the disposal of the judge. Therefore the body, which was to be kept free from corruption, was at the disposal of a heathen. Marvelous! Joseph would probably have paid for it a large sum.

*And laid him in a sepulchre*, &c. All that was done to Jesus was done to Him as a *public* person. He was the Surety for His people. He *died*, because *their* sins were imputed to *Him*. *They shall never die*, because *His* righteousness is imputed to them. What a glorious exchange! Who would have made such an exchange but the compassionate Son of God? Why should the believer fear to descend into the tomb, since Christ has taken away his guilt? In the prospect of death he may say, in the words of a Christian poet:

"The place where once *thy* body lay,  
The place it did perfume,  
There will I drop *my* breathless clay,  
And rest within *thy* tomb."

"Jesus teaching at Nazareth, or preaching on the Mount of the Beatitudes, or even transfigured on Mount Tabar" says an eminent theologian, "will not suffice us. Christ crucified must be the object of our affections. Therefore ascend to Him on the spiritual ladder of sorrow for sin, longing for mercy and belief in the efficacy of His sufferings and death. Detach Him from the accursed tree, and deposit Him in your hearts, as your only consolation in life and death. That it is the real saving love to Jesus which burns within us, and not a mere caricature of it, may be best ascertained by its being first enkindled by the sight of Him, bleeding and dying on the cross, and then embracing Him as the ever-living One. He, on the contrary, who turns away from the dead Christ, and imagines that the living Christ, going about doing good, teaching, and setting an example, suffices him, miscalculates, and on the day of His coming, notwithstanding His greeting of 'Rabbi! Rabbi!' will hear from His lips the awful words, 'I know not whence thou art, I never knew thee.'" *And Mary Magdalene*, &c. The infinite wisdom of God foresaw the objection of unbelievers and infidels, and provided against them. Did the Son of God really die? Did He really rise again? Might there not have been some delusion as to the reality of His death? Might there not have been imposition or deception, as to the reality of His resurrection? All these, and many more objections, would doubtless have been raised, if opportunity had been given. But He who knows the end from the beginning, prevented the possibility of such objections being made. By His overruling Providence, He ordered things so that the death and burial of Jesus were placed beyond a doubt. Pilate gives consent to His burial. A loving disciple wraps the body in linen, and lays it in a new tomb hewn out of a rock, "wherein was never man yet laid." The chief priests themselves set a guard over the place where His body was deposited. Jews and Gentiles, friends and enemies, all alike testify to the great fact that Christ

did really and actually die, and was laid in a grave. It is a fact that can never be questioned. He was really "bruised." He really "suffered." He really "died." He was really "buried." Let us mark this well. It deserves recollection.

1. To whom was Jesus delivered by His enemies? 2. What did Pilate ask Him? 3. What effect had Christ's silence on Pilate? 4. What is said of Barabbas? 5. Why did Pilate release Barabbas? 6. What treatment did Jesus receive from the soldiers? 7. Who was compelled to bear His cross? 8. What occurred at Golgotha? 9. Who were crucified with Jesus? 10. How was He mocked on the cross? 11. What did He cry with a loud voice? 12. What followed? 13. What is said of the centurion? 14. What of the women? 15. What did Joseph of Arimathea do?

## CHAPTER XVI.

1 *An angel declareth the resurrection of Christ to three women.* 9. *Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene: 12 to two going into the country: 14 then to the apostles, 15 whom he sendeth forth to preach the gospel: 19 and ascendeth into heaven.*

AND when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him.

<sup>a</sup>Matt. xxviii. 1, &c.; Luke xxiv. 1, &c.; John xx. 1, on which see notes. <sup>b</sup>Luke xxiii. 56.

*The Sabbath.* We are going to spend a Sabbath in eternity. The Christian will require as much of the Sabbath spirit (Rev. i. 10) as he can. And, in proportion to a man's real piety in every age of the Church, he will be found to have been a reverent observer of the Sabbath day. *Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome.* These three women had watched the Lord while hanging upon His cross, and now they come together to visit His tomb. Their attachment to Him united them to each other. Two of these women were mothers—the mothers of Apostles. Mary was the mother of James and Jude, the relations of the Lord, and Salome was the mother of James and John, two of His most favored friends. How was it that none of these four Apostles accompanied their mothers to the sepulchre? Why did they suffer weak women to go alone, while it was yet dark, to a place where they were exposed to the assaults of enemies? Surely these mothers exceeded their sons in love to their Lord. A woman was the first to eat the forbidden fruit. It was merciful in God to permit her to be the first to visit the sacred tomb.

2. <sup>c</sup>And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.—Luke xxiv. 1; John xx. 1.

These women sought Christ in the first day of the week, and first hour of the day, but many defer to seek the Lord until the last week of their life, the last day of the week, the last hour of the day, the last minute of the hour. Let us awake from sin with David, early; rise with Samuel, early; with Abraham send away Hagar, early; with Christ and His audience come to the Church, early, and seek the Lord with these holy women, early. (John viii. 2; Ps. lvii. 9; 1 Sam. xv. 12; Gen. xxi. 14.)

3. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

The great difficulty which occurred to the minds of the women, and which formed their conversation by the way, was the removal of the stone from the door of the sepulchre, for it was very large. Doubtless they were convinced that if this were overcome all would be well, and they should find their Lord. They were equally mistaken in both these expectations. The stone was no impediment, for it was already removed, and yet they did not find the Saviour. How often, in passing through life, do the same results occur? We view from a distance difficulties which we never expect to overcome, some events that will be too much for our fortitude, some trial that will be too great for our faith, yet as the day of trouble approaches, the difficulty has subsided, or the provi-

dence of God has made it easy, or all that we feared to do is done for us, and the stone which the utmost efforts of our strength could not have stirred, some unseen hand has rolled away.

4. And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

When our Saviour came the third day out of His grave, it was done early in the morning; the stone was rolled away, and no noise was heard—all was transacted with a profound silence. The resurrection of Lazarus was preceded by "a loud voice." The Angel, at the Great Day, shall summon the dead with "the sound of a trumpet." Was it, then, because the Son of God would have His resurrection an article of our faith, and faith is of "things not seen?" It may be so; but, withal, He made it His business to conceal His own glory, and to honor and advance us. (1 Kings vi. 7; Josh. vi. 10.)

5. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

<sup>1</sup>Luke xxiv. 3; John xxii. 11, 12.

*Young man*—a man in form, but an angel in nature. The resurrection of the dead, as the Apostle declares (Eph. iv.), will be "unto the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ;" that is, in the season of *youth*, which needs no further development, and which is free from all defect, complete in every respect, having fullness of strength. (Rev. xxi. 4.) *Sitting on the right side*—at their right hand as they entered the inner chamber. *A long white garment*. The heavenly messenger was clad in robes of purity and splendor. *They were affrighted*, as was natural, at sight of so resplendent a personage.

6. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. 8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled, and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxviii. 5, 6, 7, on which see notes. <sup>2</sup>Matt. xxvi. 32; chap. xiv. 28. <sup>3</sup>See Matt. xxviii. 8; Luke xxiv. 9.

*Jesus of Nazareth*. The Jews had given this name to Christ by way of *reproach* (Matt. ii. 23), but as it was under this name that He was crucified (John xix. 19), the angel here, and the Apostles after, have given him the same name. *He is risen*, &c. He is not, said the angel, where

they laid Him, where you left Him. Death hath lost its prey, and the grave has lost its prisoner. Observe, it is not said, He is not here, for He is raised; but, *He is risen*. The word imports the active power of Christ, or the self-quicken- ing principle by which Christ raised Him- self from the dead. (Acts i. 3.) It was the divine nature or Godhead of Christ, which raised the human nature from death to life. Others were raised from the grave by Christ's power, but He raised Himself by His own power. *Behold*—to prove to the women the certainty of Christ's resurrection, the angel appealed to their senses.

*And Peter*. How much of love and mercy was there in this mention of the Apostle who had thrice denied his Lord! and who may well be thought, at this very time, to have been swallowed up with sorrow—to have felt that he was "not meet to be called an Apostle." Jesus, who is "touched with our infirmities," has pardoned the weakness of His repentant servant, has still a commission to entrust him with, and will enable him to show, by a life of faithfulness, that the grace bestowed on him had not been bestowed in vain. Observe, that for his further comfort and assurance, to him was vouchsafed a special appearance of his risen Lord. (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5.) *Before you into Galilee*. Mark records the angel's announcement of the appearance in Galilee; but concerning the appearance itself, he is silent. (See on Matt. xxviii. 7 and 16.)

*Fled from the sepulchre*. We may suppose that most probably the women did glance at the spot vacated by the risen Lord. The vacuity, and the consciousness of an angel's presence, filled them with awe. *Neither said they anything to any man*—that is, on their way they addressed no bystander, but hastened to fulfill the message of the angel to the disciples.

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.

<sup>1</sup>John xx. 14. <sup>2</sup>Luke viii. 2; see on Matt. xxviii. 9.

*Was risen early*. We have no means of knowing the precise hour in which our Lord rose from the dead. It must have been long enough before the visit of the

women, to give time for the guard to recover from their swoon of terror, and leave for the city. *First day of the week*—Sunday. Hence this day of the week was called the Lord's day, by John, in Rev. i. 9. It is therefore recognized by inspiration as the sacred day in the Christian week. The day of the Saviour's sepulchral repose was the last of Jewish Sabbaths. The first day of the week has from that time to this, succeeded to the honors of the fourth commandment. To *Mary Magdalene*. (See verse 1.) "My soul," said *Austin*, "if thou at any time lose the presence of thy God, seek Him with diligence and perseverance; seek Him with prayers, and sighs, and tears, and be sure, at last, thou shalt find Him with joy. He hides not Himself that we may not find Him, but that we may seek Him, and be thereafter more fearful to lose Him. Despair not; He again will show Himself; only go on, and seek Him still with hope, and thou shalt be sure to find Him at last with joy. (Cant. ii. 14; Luke ii. 43-46.)"

<sup>10.</sup> *And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.*

<sup>11</sup>Luke xxiv. 10; John xx. 18.

*Them that had been with him, i. e., His disciples. Mourned and wept.* Because they had lost their Lord and Master, and had basely abandoned Him in His extremity. To Christ, the Incarnate God, our relations are wholly personal. He is not a notional abstraction, nor an idea of the mind enthroned in a logical vacuum. We are bound to Him by all our deepest, strongest, most personal feelings, by our personal consciousness of sin, by our personal need of redemption, by gratitude for personal forgiveness, by love, on account of love, shown directly, personally, to ourselves. (Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Peter ii. 3, 7.)

<sup>11.</sup> And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

<sup>12</sup>Luke xxiv. 11.

*Believed not.* They had not forgotten, nor did they truly disbelieve their Lord's predictions. But in their dejection of mind they had lost the realizing power and could not grasp the fact. (See on verse 13.)

<sup>12.</sup> ¶ After that he appeared in another form unto two of them as they walked, and went into the country. <sup>13.</sup> And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

<sup>14</sup>Luke xxiv. 13. <sup>15</sup>Luke xvi. 31; John xx. 8, 25.

*Neither believed they them. Lange* accounts

for the doubts of the disciples in the following manner: The eleven disciples 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. *Their* doubting is the confirmation of *our* faith; and the more difficulty they showed in believing Christ's resurrection, the greater reason have we to believe it. For the testimony of those who believed not themselves, till after unquestionable conviction, is the more credible on that account.

<sup>14.</sup> ¶ 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.

<sup>15</sup>Luke xxiv. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 5.

*Upbraided them, &c.* It is humbling to think, that even after our Lord's resurrection, His disciples should have given Him occasion to upbraid them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, in not fully believing the evidence which they had of that glorious fact. These reproaches, however, were not His last words. He was too compassionate to leave His disciples with words of reproof. In the act of blessing those whom He had loved and kept so faithfully, He left the world. (See Luke xxiv. 50, 51.)

<sup>15.</sup> ¶ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

<sup>16</sup>Matt. xxviii. 19; John xv. 16. <sup>17</sup>Col. i. 23.

*Go ye, &c.* The Apostles had received from the Lord the richest blessings. They had been great receivers of grace; they were, therefore, to be munificent givers. They had been saved themselves freely by His grace—He asks them to go forth and

prove themselves active benefactors to all the rest of mankind. No man receives a blessing to be absorbed in himself—God sanctions no monopoly in religion. All we have, we have as stewards, and what we have, we are commanded largely and liberally to devote to the glory of God, and to the good of all over whom we have any influence. No man liveth unto himself; every man, by being a Christian, becomes necessarily and everywhere a missionary. The commission thus given to the Apostles is substantially the same as that stated in Matt. xxviii. 19, on which see notes. It is altogether probable, that on more occasions than one, and in various forms of expression, Jesus especially enjoined on His Apostles their official duty. These words were, of course, also addressed to all preachers of the Word, who are, therein, successors to the Apostles.

*All the world.* Observe the largeness of the commission thus given. (See Matt. xviii. 19; Luke xxiv. 27; Acts i. 8.) These injunctions stand in remarkable contrast with the commission which the Twelve received from their Lord during the days of His earthly ministry. (Matt. x. 5, 6.) Clime and country, latitude and longitude, were no elements which they could regard. Wherever there was an ear to hear, there was a claim upon their beneficence, and a call to discharge their duties. Hitherto the Jews alone enjoyed the Gospel; now, that which was a lamp to a land was to be hung up like the sun in the sky—the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel.

*Preach the gospel.* Proclaim the glad news of salvation through Christ. The preacher and the preaching are divine institutions. They are established by Christ, and shall last till the world shall end. All other moral means of converting the world to righteousness—the press, the Sabbath-school, the voluntary societies, social prayer meetings, &c., are auxiliary to the preacher and the preaching of the Word.

*To every creature, literally, to the whole creation.* No one was to be overlooked. To all of every age and nation, pardon for sin was to be offered, on condition of their repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. By these words the missionary office is bound

upon the Church through all ages, till every part of the earth shall have been evangelized.

16. \*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.  
\*John iii. 18, 36. Acts ii. 38, xvi. 30; Rom. x. 9, 1 Peter iii. 21. \*John xii. 48.

*Believeth and is baptized.* Baptism is here put for the external signature of the inner faith of the heart, just as “confessing with the mouth” is, in Rom. x. 10; and there also as here this *outward* manifestation, as the proper fruit of faith, is not repeated in what follows. (Rom. x. 11.) In view of this declaration of our Lord, how can men avoid the conclusion that baptism is necessary, when it may be had? That outward baptism, which seems to be here intended, is not absolutely necessary to salvation, the case of the penitent thief plainly shows. He went to Paradise unbaptized. That outward baptism alone often confers no benefit, the case of Simon Magus plainly shows. Although baptized, he remained in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.” (Acts iii. 23.) But that baptism is a matter of entire indifference, and need not be used at all, is an assertion which is evidently at variance with our Lord’s words in this place. “Baptism,” says *Scott*, “is the outward sign of regeneration; and it is also that profession of faith in Christ, which is required of all who embrace Christianity. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Acts ii. 37–40; Rom. x. 5–11; 1 Peter iii. 21, 22.) But if men truly believe in Christ—profess openly faith in Him, and partake of His sanctifying Spirit, they will doubtless be saved, even should they have no opportunity of being baptized with water, or should they fall into any mistake, about the external mode of administering that ordinance; and if men both believe and are baptized, it does not follow, from the order of the words in the text, that the *baptism* is invalid, because it was previous to *believing*, for no sect of Christians rebaptize those who have been baptized in their own way, because it afterward appears that they were not true believers at the time, though it be hoped that they have since become so.”

*But he that believeth not, &c.* This has reference to those who hear the preached

Gospel. All others are to be judged in accordance with the principle laid down in Rom. ii. 12. The belief here required as essential to salvation, has special reference to Christ as the Saviour and Redeemer of men, but embraces all the declarations of God's Word, which lie around this great central truth, such as human depravity, the extent and spirituality of the Divine law, the need of regeneration through the Spirit, the retributions of eternity, and the like.

*Saved . . . . damned.* These awful issues of the reception or rejection of the Gospel, though often recorded in other connections, are given in this connection only by Mark, as also the "signs" enumerated in verse 18. Those who believe the Gospel, and give themselves to Christ, and to God in Christ as their God in covenant, and evidence by their adherence to this covenant their sincerity, shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin, it shall not *rule* nor *ruin* them. Those who do not this, cannot expect any other way of salvation, but must perish; they *shall be damned*, by the sentence of a despised Gospel added to that of a broken law. Eternal damnation is manifestly intended. (See Matt. xxv. 45, 46; 2 Thess. i. 5-10; Rev. xx. 11-15.) The two damning sins under the Gospel are unbelief and hypocrisy, not receiving Christ for their Lord and Saviour by some, or doing this feignedly by others. Happy are they in whom the preaching of the Gospel produces such a faith as is the parent and principle of obedience.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe: <sup>1</sup>In my name shall they cast out devils; <sup>2</sup>they shall speak with new tongues; 18. <sup>3</sup>They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; <sup>4</sup>they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

<sup>1</sup>Luke x. 17; Acts v. 16, viii. 7, xvi. 18, x'v. 12. <sup>2</sup>Acts ii. 4, x. 46, xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28. <sup>3</sup>Luke x. 19; Acts xxviii. 5. <sup>4</sup>Acts v. 15, 16, ix. 17, xxviii. 8; James v. 14, 15.

*These signs shall follow, &c.* (See Acts x. 46, xix. 6; Luke x. 19; comp. Acts xxviii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 9; James v. 14, 15.) What was obviously meant was, that these signs should follow the first promulgators of the Gospel, till Christianity was clearly vindicated, by unequivocal proofs to be from God, and having done the great work for which they were intended, these signs and miracles should cease and be withdrawn.

Some insist that there ought to be miracles in the Church now. But it should be remembered that a ceaseless miracle would be a ceaseless contradiction. The miracle now is, that the grass should grow, that the trees should bud, and that the flowers should blossom in summer, but if winter were to be the season for flowers, and fruit, and corn, and summer to be the season of snow, and frost, and hail, then the continuance of this would make it cease to be a miracle. If anybody by speaking a word could cure a withered hand, unloose the tongue of the dumb, unstop the ears of the deaf, or open the eyes of the blind, it would cease to be a miracle, for the continuance of such a phenomenon would make it cease to be wonderful at all. A ceaseless miracle, therefore, is no miracle at all, and to assume that there shall be miracles always, or constant contradictions to the ordinary laws of nature, would be to suppose what would bring all things into confusion, and cease to subserve, because ceasing to be miraculous, the great ends for which miracles were intended. But at the beginning of a new dispensation a miracle was important.

To the question, "Do *no* such signs as those here spoken of follow them that believe?" one replies: "Let us be well persuaded that the mighty works under discussion are daily enacted by the faithful—surely although invisibly, and indeed, after a very lofty fashion also. Evil inclinations overcome, and wicked imaginations effectually repressed; a divine theme (the language of heaven) constantly engaging 'the best members that we have,' intercourse with sinners, and familiarity with a sinful world, yet no harm incurred; with the eye polluting sights encountered, by the ear noxious discourse drinking, yet (by God's mercy) without defilement; ministrations to sick souls, and their consequent recovery—what are all these glorious privileges of Christian men but daily fulfillments of the Divine promise concerning what 'signs' should 'follow them that believe?'"

*And if they drink any deadly thing, &c.* The art of poisoning was almost cultivated as a science, and it might be expected that their enemies would endeavor in this way

to destroy them. By these particulars, doubtless, the Saviour conveys a *general promise*, pledging to His disciples, amidst the trials and dangers of their mission, the *protection* of that *Almighty One*, by whom "the hairs of their head were all numbered," and without whom "not a sparrow falleth to the ground."

<sup>19.</sup> So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

<sup>a</sup>Acts i. 2, 3. <sup>b</sup>Luke xxiv. 51. <sup>c</sup>Ps. cx. 1; Acts vii. 55.

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.* The account of the ascension is in every point to be supplemented by that of Luke, with whom Mark stands in no contradiction. Although Matthew and John give no account of our Lord's ascension, the fact is clearly indicated by them. The declaration of the Saviour, 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 Saviour 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 Saviour 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 Peter 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.

And sat on the right hand of God. An

account, resting partly upon the direct vision of the disciples (Acts i. 19), partly upon a revelation (Acts i. 11), partly upon the words of Christ (John. xiv. 3), and upon the lively inference of faith, especially from the events occurring at Pentecost. (Acts ii. 33.) The fact is itself, on the one hand, local, that is, the being seated upon that throne of glory where the self-revelations of God take place, and in the midst of that majesty whence the manifestations of His power proceed; and, upon the other hand, is symbolic of Christ's royal dominion. (Phil. ii. 10.)

<sup>20.</sup> And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

<sup>a</sup>Acts v. 12; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5; Heb. ii. 4.

*Went forth.* They no longer sat and mourned and wept (verse 10). They were like heroes, and quitted themselves like men. They were afraid of no danger, and braved all deaths. Such was the Pentecostal power with which they were endued from on high. *Preached everywhere.* The book of the Acts of the Apostles furnishes the illustration of this verse. It is the concurrent testimony of the early writers of the Church, that the Apostles (including Paul, who was added to their number), and their fellow-laborers, preached the Gospel throughout the habitable world, at least that portion of it which was then known and accessible.

*The Lord*—the Lord Jesus. This Divine title is applied to Jesus by Mark himself, in this and the preceding verses only. It is a most important link of connection with the Acts of the Apostles, where He who directed all the movements of the infant Church, is perpetually styled "THE LORD," thus illustrating His own promise for the founding and building up of the Church, "Lo, I am with you alway."

*The Lord working with them*—through them as instruments. This points at the inward operation of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men. It is sweet and prosperous, working in fellowship with Christ and His Holy Spirit. He directs His ministers, assists them, guides their lips, influences their minds, quickens their affections, sets home their instructions, and crowns all their endeavors with His blessing.

And confirmed the word, &c. This confirmation resulted partly from the miracles, which were wrought upon the *bodies* of people, which were divine seals to the Christian doctrine, and partly from the influence it had upon the *minds* of the people, through the operation of the Spirit of God. (See Heb. ii. 4.) These were properly *signs following* the Word—the reformation of the world, the destruction of idolatry, the conversion of sinners, the com-

fort of saints, and these signs still follow it.

*Amen.* Each of the Evangelists, in turn, concludes his Gospel with a word, solemnly asserting the living truth of the inspired record, a word of devout affirmation, which, as it were, sets the seal of the Spirit on every syllable that has gone before, and which declares the Evangelist to be—like “the AMEN” of whom he writes—a “faithful and true witness.”

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1. Who came very early in the morning to the sepulchre? 2. On what day did they come? 3. For what purpose? 4. What did they say? 5. What did they see? 6. What was said to them as they entered into the sepulchre? 7. What did they then do? 8. To whom did the risen Saviour appear first? 9. What course did she pursue? 10. When did Christ again appear? 11. When did He appear unto the eleven? 12. What command did He give them? 13. What did He promise them? 14. What took place after Jesus had spoken to them? 15. Explain the word “Amen.”