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The Indian Church Commentaries

Edited under the general supervision
of the Bishops of Lahore & Rangoon

GENERAL EDITOR

The Rev. C. F. Andrews, M.A.

Cambridge Brotherhood, Delhi

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

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The Indian Church Commentaries

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
ST. MATTHEW

BY

THE REV. H. U. WEITBRECHT, PH.D., D.D.

SOMETIME

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY, PANJAB, CANON OF LAHORE,

*Examining Chaplain to the Bishop, Chief Reviser
of the Urdu New Testament*

Madras

S. P. C. K. DEPOSITORY

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1912

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DEDICATED
TO
THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD
RANDALL
BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE
LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
BY ONE OF MANY WHOM HE HAS HEARTENED AND
ENCOURAGED IN THAT WORK WHICH HAS
'THE CENTRAL PLACE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH'

ERRATA.

Owing to the author's absence from India, he was unable to correct the proof-sheets; hence slips are somewhat frequent. The subjoined list does not include such as the reader can easily correct for himself, but only those which seriously affect the sense.

ERRATA OF TEXT.

- p. 17, line 4, *omit* "is"
,, 53 ,, 3 *for* "the chapter" *read* the following chapter.
,, 67 ,, 6 ,, "stoop" *read* stood
,, 106 ,, 25 *omit* "of"
,, 204 ,, 14 *for* "his" *read* is
,, 255 ,, 22 ,, "weaver" *read* wearer
,, 264 ,, 14 ,, "granted in" *read* granted. In
,, 302 ,, 6 ,, "say us 'Kobhút" *read* say, 'Us ko bhút
,, 307 ,, 7 ,, "religions" *read* religious
,, 315 ,, 12 ,, "nation" *read* nations
,, 460 ,, 27 *before* "not" *insert* 5
,, 600 ,, 13 *for* "Christians" *read* Christs
,, 627 ,, 21 *after* "Dan. xii. 2" *insert* literally
,, 641 ,, 12 *for* "brought" *read* bought
,, 662 ,, 19 ,, "two-armed" *read* two armed
,, 675 ,, 10 ,, "strangers (!)" *read* strangers'
,, 683 ,, 24 ,, "and exasperates" *read* that exasperates
,, 687 ,, 2 *after* "garland" *insert* of
,, 697 ,, 16 *for* "wine, it" *read* wine. It
,, 701 ,, 29 *after* "should" *insert* not
,, 709 ,, 24 *for* "seems" *read* seem
,, 709 ,, 24 *before* "Luke" *insert* in
,, 715 ,, 11 *for* "to" *read* so.

ERRATA OF REFERENCES.

- p. 54, line 11, *for* "23-34" *read* xxxi. 34
,, 85 ,, 24 ,, "x. 17" ,, iii. 10-17
,, 122 ,, 16 ,, "vi." ,, 6
,, 140 ,, 28 ,, "xxii." ,, xxxii.

p. 167,	line 2,	<i>for</i>	"xi."	<i>read</i>	vi.
" 169	" 9	"	"xxiii."	"	xxii.
" 198	" 29	"	"vi."	"	v.
" 209	" 12	"	"Job"	"	Tobit
" 218	" 15	"	"x."	"	ix.
" 222	" 26	"	"27; xvii. 1"	"	xxvii.
" 270	" 31	"	"i."	"	l.
" 275	" 4	"	"iv."	"	vi.
" 294	" 15	"	"iv."	"	iii.
" 301	" 2	"	"74, 75"	"	47, 49
" 311	" 4	"	"Eccles."	"	Ecclus.
" 330	" 28	"	"xxii."	"	xxiii.
" 337	" 13	"	"xi."	"	ix.
" 363	" 21	"	"xviii."	"	xvii.
" 424	" 15	"	"13-15"	"	xv., 15, 16
" 427	" 26	"	"xviii."	"	xvii.
" 436	" 10	"	"x."	"	ix.
" 443	" 29	"	"xli."	"	xlii.
" 445	" 14	"	"xiv"	"	xvi.
" 510	" 28	"	"xxi. 30"	"	xxx. 12
" 536	" 11	"	"xv."	"	xiii.
" 618	" 5	"	"v."	"	iv.
" 642	" 22	"	"x."	"	xii.
" 653	" 25	"	"xii."	"	x.
" 679	" 13	"	"46"	"	4-6
" 679	" 14	"	"xviii."	"	xix.
" 685	" 13	"	"x."	"	xi.
" 691	" 29	"	"xxxiii."	"	xxxii.
" 692	" 18	"	"xiv."	"	xv.
" 698	" 9	"	"xiii. 46"	"	xv. 36
" 700	" 5	"	"xxii."	"	xxiii.
" 703	" 13	"	"xxvii."	"	xxvi.
" 704	" 19	"	"vi."	"	vii.
" 704	" 22	"	"xxviii. 6"	"	Luke xxiv. 7, 21
" 709	" 1	"	"xxvi."	"	xxvii.
" 713	" 23	"	"xvii. 6"	"	xx. 17
" 715	" 30	"	"xxix."	"	xlix.
" 716	" 21	"	"iv."	"	iii.

GENERAL PREFACE

BY THE

BISHOP OF LAHORE

A FEW words of introduction are necessary to explain the general purpose of this series of Commentaries. The work was commenced under the general supervision of the Bishop of Rangoon and myself, acting as a Committee appointed in accordance with a Resolution of the Synod of Indian Bishops which met in 1900. Subsequently, with the sanction of the Metropolitan, the Rev. C. F. Andrews, of the Cambridge Brotherhood, Delhi, was appointed General Editor. The work of revision before publication is being left mainly in his hands, but a general Episcopal supervision of the work will still be maintained.

It is hoped that these Commentaries, while presenting a direct and scholarly interpretation of the New Testament, based upon the work of the great English Commentators, will, at the same time, contain such references to eastern religious thought and life as may make them serviceable to both Christian and non-Christian. The series will, in due course, if funds

permit, be translated into the leading Indian Vernaculars. It is inevitable that in the interpretation of the New Testament there will be differences of opinion, and it has seemed best to allow these differences to appear in the series rather than to aim at a colourless uniformity. The final responsibility for the views taken of particular passages will rest with the individual contributors.

The thanks of the Synod Committee are given to the Editors of the Cambridge Bible for Colleges and Schools for their kind permission to quote freely from that Series, and also to the Cambridge University Press and the Delegates of the Oxford University Press for a similar permission to use the text of the English Revised Version in this volume.

G. A. LAHORE.

BISHOPSBOURNE,
LAHORE.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

To follow with a new commentary on the first Gospel, hard upon the outstanding works of Zahn, Willoughby Allen, and Plummer, as well as upon the Matthew volume in the Meyer Weiss series, the Expositor's Greek Testament, and the popular, but excellent One Volume Commentary, would be a task for which the writer is unqualified, were it not that, as its title shows, this series has an object different from the above-named works or any other contemporary series. The present series is being published under the direction of the Indian Episcopal Synod, whose representatives have defined its object thus: 'It is hoped that these commentaries, while presenting a direct and scholarly interpretation of the New Testament, based upon the work of the great English [and, I would add, German] commentators, will, at the same time, contain such references to eastern religious thought and life, as may make them serviceable to both Christian and non-Christian readers' in India. It was further anticipated that a series of commentaries on this basis in English would furnish material ready to the hand of the translator into the Indian vernaculars, or at least needing far

less of omission and adaptation than the books written for English readers, which previously were all that we could give the translator to work upon. The commentaries so far published are *Philippians*, by the Rev. T. Walker, M.A., C.M.S., Dohnavur; *Revelation*, by the Rev. E. H. M. Waller, M.A., C.M.S., Allahabad; *The Epistles of St. John*, by the Rev. W. Pakenham-Walsh, B.D., Bishop Cotton School, Bangalore; *The Acts of the Apostles*, by the Rev. T. Walker, M.A., to which is now added this on St. Matthew.

It has been my aim in the following pages to give the solid results of scholarship without its apparatus, illustrated by experience of missionary life and thought in India. However much, accordingly, I may have used or even quoted from the above named or other writers, I have purposely given no references, for I know that the best thanks which the true Bible expositor desires is that others should pass on the light which he has been able to reflect. At the same time, I have had in mind the needs of translators, and a few remarks for their guidance are appended in this preface. The principles which I have followed in endeavouring to suit my exposition to the needs of Indian readers are briefly these: (1) To view the gospel narratives, as far as in me lay, through the atmosphere of Indian thought and life, leaving the application to be done mainly by the sincere and devout reader. The other sort will skilfully skip the hortatory passages. I am deeply conscious that my efforts in the direction indicated are nothing but a study. For a real Indian exposition of the gospel

we must wait till God raises up the Indian brother, who both lives the life and thinks the thoughts of his own people, and also possesses a mastery of theology ancient and modern. (2) Meanwhile, it is the missionary life of the Church which throws the most vivid light on the nature and growth of the Synoptic Gospels, and of this I have tried to make good use. When we view them as, what they undoubtedly were, the earliest missionary manuals of the evangelizing and catechizing Church, compiled by men who were gathering in and building up converts, carried about by their helpers who sought out disciples in town and village, explained by them to the learners who memorized the apostolic narrative, then these records stand out concrete and living, and while we understand their message better, we also are more able to visualize the process by which they assumed the form in which God's providence has given them to us. (3) It has been my endeavour to show the living thread of interest which would hold the learner of the first century, as he followed the teaching of his catechist, without attempting to elucidate each thought or take up each point in detail. The object of the commentator is not to say all that may pertinently be said, but to stimulate the student to visualize for himself the great subject of the narrative, in His actions, His influence, His character, and His teaching, so that the reader may elicit for himself many more vitalizing truths than are contained in the printed comments.

HINTS TO READERS

I have here in mind chiefly my Indian brothers and sisters on whose special behalf I have been working.

(1) It might go without saying that the reading of this, or any other commentary, will be of little solid use, unless it is accompanied with prayer. Yet I say it, because it is so often overlooked. If we want to get enjoyment and profit from the reading of any great work in literature, it is acknowledged that we must get into the spirit of it. How much more so with the record of our salvation! And the spirit of this is the spirit of prayer.

(2) Next comes the determination to study seriously. I hope that, with this commentary, you will always use the Bible itself. By preference I recommend the English Revised Version with references, and including the Apocrypha. The few references given to the Apocrypha in this commentary will indicate how much light is thrown on not a few passages in the New Testament by those writings of devout Hebrew scholars between the Old Testament and the New. To get the force of the exposition, each reference should either be looked up, or if familiar, be mentally repeated. For further comparison I strongly recommend the edition of the New Testament with fuller references published by the Cambridge University Press, and available in the various Tract Depots in India. If the study of this volume leaves you a diligent searcher and comparer of Scripture with Scripture, it will not have been in vain.

(3) Regarding the use of the commentary, I will only add that it is best in each section, first to read the introduction, then the text as printed, then the comments continuously, then to look up the references, and note for yourself fresh thoughts which are likely to occur to you.

HINTS TO TRANSLATORS

Though this volume is intended to be specially of service in your work, and, comparatively speaking, adapted for translation without much alteration, yet this does not mean that you will not have to be on your guard against foreign thoughts and idioms, for, after all it is done by an Englishman, and it is based on an English Version of the Bible. Hence you will find a certain number of passages in which there are explanations of archaisms and the like in the English, which are perfectly clear in the most recently revised translations, such as the Urdu, and accordingly you will omit such remarks.

Furthermore, there will be passages of commentary in which it will be difficult to follow exactly the arrangement, not only of words, but even of thoughts in the English text. Here you will remember that you are not dealing with the sacred text itself, and therefore you may be allowed considerably greater latitude in the reconstruction of thought and sentences than a Bible translator would claim.

I venture to suggest to you, as the result of many years' experience, the following method. Read over the

whole book first, marking, as you go, difficult or doubtful passages. Then get the rendering of these correct; later ones will often throw light on earlier ones, and it is very likely that these passages will mark salient thoughts in the whole, which once grasped, will make the main work more smooth and rapid. Then translate straight ahead, first reading each section over again; make a rapid translation of it with the thoughts fresh in your mind; and finally go over this carefully and revise for accuracy of expression and style.

As I leave India, after nearly thirty-five years of happy labour, to take up work for the missionary cause in England, I offer this very imperfect volume as a parting gift to my much loved Indian brothers and sisters, praying that God may be pleased to make it something of a help and strength to them.

I desire to express my hearty thanks to the Rev. J. Passmore, the Secretary of the Christian Literature Society for India, who has very kindly undertaken the labour of seeing these sheets through the press after I leave this country to be Secretary of the Board of Study for Preparation of Missionaries in the United Kingdom.

H. U. WEITBRECHT

SIMLA, *July, 1911*

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

i. THE NATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS

THE Son of God came into the world in the fulness of time (Gal. iv. 4), that is to say, when the preparatory revelation of God in the Old Testament had fully accomplished its object. The writings which we call the Old Testament show how God had prepared the world for the coming of the Saviour of all men through one nation, the Hebrew, to whom He entrusted His message. The relation in which God thus placed Himself to the people of Israel is designated in the Old Testament as that of a covenant; that is an agreement between two parties who undertake mutual obligations towards one another. God promises His people deliverance from sin and suffering and His special favour and protection, while they on their part undertake to obey and serve Him with loyal affection. The writings which record the preparation and history of this relation between God and Israel have therefore been given in the Christian Church the name of the 'Old Testament', or covenant, since the covenant of God with Israel

was the ground-work of a new and perfect covenant between God and man, prophesied of in the Old Testament itself (Jer. xxxi. 31-34). Our Saviour (Matt. xxvi. 28) speaks of this new covenant being established through His death, the event of His history which occupies by far the largest place in the writings of the New Testament, which is the cause of our salvation (Matt. xx. 28), and which binds us to His loving service (John xv. 13-14). The Son of God accomplished the work of our salvation by His incarnation, His teaching, His sinless life, His death, resurrection and ascension. Finally He sent the Holy Spirit to convey, to those who believed, the message of His salvation and the enjoyment of its blessings. The Spirit came in the likeness of a mighty wind, to indicate the power of a new life, and of fiery tongues, showing the enlightenment of a new teaching. He inspired, or breathed into the believers, especially the apostles, the new power that came from Christ and changed the lives of men, uniting them in a new society which we call the Church of Christ. He also inspired them with a new light, teaching them to understand and set forth the witness of the Old Testament Scriptures to Jesus, together with the events of the Saviour's life and the teaching that he had given for the guidance of His disciples.

For some time after the foundation of the Church there were, of course, no New Testament Scriptures acknowledged as such; the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching of converts was carried on by the apostles and their helpers, as witnesses of what Jesus

had said and done. As the first generation of Christians passed away, the need of embodying this spoken or oral record in a written form, so as to ensure its permanency and purity, became evident. The earliest Christian writings were letters written by the apostles or their helpers to the Churches which they had founded, to order their affairs and to preserve them from false teaching and wrong living. But while these writers were guided to draw out and apply the lessons of the life of Christ to the needs of the Church, others were inspired by the same Spirit to record the history of the life of Christ itself and His teachings, as hitherto presented only by word of mouth, and to describe the first beginnings of the spread of the Gospel and the formation of the Church from among Jews and Gentiles. Thus came into existence the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of SS. Paul, Peter, James and John, together with the Revelation of St. John which is of the nature of a circular letter.

These writings were not circulated on any uniform plan: they gradually became known, some in one part of the Church, some in another; while other writings professing to give an account of the same things were circulated alongside of them. Some of these other books were for a time highly esteemed, and indeed, almost regarded as on a level with Holy Scripture; but gradually, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church eliminated them and came to recognize the Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation which we now have as the Scriptures of the New

Testament, constituting the canon, or rule of the faith. Hence they are often spoken of as canonical writings. The careful examination of these canonical Scriptures with the uncanonical writings of the earliest age makes us feel how truly the Church was guided, and how marked is the difference between the two groups. The judgement of the Church on the 'Canon' was finally expressed in a decree of the Council of Carthage (A. D. 397). But the earliest list which we have of the New Testament books is a mutilated one, known by the name of the *Muratorian fragment*, and going back to about the year A. D. 180-200.

Other attestations of the age and authorship of the New Testament writings go back much further, to men who lived at the time when the books were written or very soon after they were completed. Thus the New Testament is one book in respect of the unity of its subject, which is the witness of Jesus Christ and His salvation. On the other hand, it is a 'divine library' in that, like the Old Testament, its books were written by various men at different times, though the period of its production ranges over a far less number of years than that of the Old Testament.

ii. THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

At the time when the writers composed their books it was customary to write on a kind of paper (2 John 12) known as papyrus, made from the reed of that name which grew in Egypt. Many papyrus documents of the period of the New Testament writings, with letters, legal agreements, and even sayings attributed to

Christ, composed in the same dialect of Greek which we find in the New Testament, have been found in late years in Egypt and neighbouring countries. On similar materials the authors of the Gospels and Epistles wrote their books, sometimes with their own hands, sometimes through scribes (Rom. xvi. 22; Gal. vi. 11). But none of these original writings have as yet been discovered, and we are less likely to find them than secular documents such as those referred to, because, in the persecutions of the second and third centuries after Christ, the Christian scriptures were repeatedly searched out and destroyed. Apparently it was not till the Church enjoyed peace and dignity after the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine (306-37), that it became customary to copy the New Testament writings on fine and durable parchment with the art of the best scribes whom that age could produce. Accordingly the oldest manuscripts which we possess date, as far as we can determine, from some time in the fourth century, and we have only a few fragments of earlier date from that time onwards the number of copies of the Greek New Testament in our possession greatly increases. The oldest copies are all written in Greek capitals or uncials, the only characters then in use, and are hence called majuscles. After some centuries the small or cursive letters now commonly employed came into use, and the copies written in these, called cursives or minuscles, are recognizable as more recent than uncials or majuscles; but it is almost certain that some of these cursives were copied from uncials older than any which we now possess. Thus

the text, even of the cursive manuscripts, goes back to the earliest times, while that from which the oldest uncial manuscripts were copied goes back to the originals themselves.

In this process of copying and recopying it was natural that a considerable number of minute errors, and a few (really very few), greater ones should creep into one or other of the texts of the New Testament writings, but we have other means of checking them besides the comparison of the most ancient copies of which I have spoken. Very early in the history of the Church translations of the New Testament began to be made. Even over the cross of our Saviour the tablet recording the accusation against Him was inscribed in three languages; Latin the tongue of the Roman administration, Greek the language of common intercourse and literature, and Hebrew or Aramaic, the tongue which our Lord and His apostles commonly spoke, as we see by occasional quotations in the Gospels and Epistles.¹ In Greek, the second of these, the New Testament books, as we have them, were written, because it was the language which at that time would reach both Jews and Gentiles most widely. But some time in the second century translations began to be made into both Latin and Aramaic, or Syriac, and these were followed by others into the Egyptian, Armenian, Ethiopic and Gothic languages. The comparison of these translations affords a valuable check on the text of our Greek manuscripts. Besides this, the quotations from the New Testament in the writings of the

¹ See Mark v. 41; xiv. 86; xv. 84; John i. 41-2; xx. 16.

early teachers of the Church whom we know as the Fathers are so numerous and full, that if all other sources were dried up, we might, from them alone substantially reconstruct the New Testament, though the result would leave doubt, in some places, as to the exact words, for the Fathers often quoted from memory. These quotations begin from the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas and that of the Roman Clement (about A. D. 100), and go on to the writings of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, the *Shepherd* of Hermas, and the writings of Justin Martyr (about 150), after which they come thick and fast.

We may thus confidently say that the text of the New Testament as we have it in the Greek language, is in all essential respects identical with that which the writers of the books set down. Moreover, the evidence for this fact, whether of manuscripts, translations, or quotations, is better than that which we possess in the case of the best known and most widely accepted Greek and Latin writers, such as Plato, Thucydides, Virgil or Tacitus. The corruptions alleged by Muhammadan divines have really nothing to do with the small textual variations in the great New Testament manuscripts, which were utterly unknown to Muhammad and his contemporaries. Muhammad, though he had never read them, accepted the New Testament writings as current in the seventh century after Christ, that is, long subsequent to our earliest copies; but owing to the differences between the statements of the New Testament and the Qur'ân the theologians of Islâm were driven to maintain, first, that the

Christian Church had put a wrong interpretation on the New Testament; and afterwards, when this could not be established, that the text of the New Testament had been corrupted. The existence of various readings is the one fact which bears any resemblance to a proof of such corruption; and has been used accordingly. In reality it is a proof of the impartial and accurate care with which Christian scholars have tested the genuineness of their sacred writings, in contrast to the arbitrary act by which the Khalifa 'Uthmán unified the text of the Qur'án, ordering all that varied from his own to be destroyed.

The Middle Ages (say from A. D. 800 to 1500), were a time of great neglect of the Bible, and in the Church of western Europe almost nothing was known and used, save the Latin translation of the New Testament made by Jerome in the fifth century and called on account of its general use, the *Vulgate*, or common version. But towards the end of that time, owing to the migration of many Greek scholars to the west, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks (1453), the Greek language became better known, and fresh copies of the Greek New Testament reached Germany, France and England. At the same time the general spread of the Greek New Testament and its translations was immensely facilitated by the invention of the printing press. Still, not one of the four oldest manuscripts which we now possess were known to the first editors of the printed text, and so it came to pass that the Greek New Testament was printed according to inferior copies, and with defective editing, and the great

translations of the sixteenth century, such as the German and the English, were made from this text, which came to be regarded as the *Received Text* (in Latin *Textus Receptus*). It was not till the eighteenth century that the great number of copies, which had meanwhile been discovered and brought together from various quarters, began to be carefully compared according to an accurately determined scientific method known as textual criticism. As a result of this method, we now have a text of the New Testament much purer than the old *Received Text* (from which the English translation known as the *Authorized Version* was made), and from it we may believe that all errors of any moment have been eliminated. The readings of this purified text were in the main followed by the Company of scholars who revised the English translation of the New Testament from 1870-81, and, therefore the text of the present commentary, as shown on the title page, follows the English Revised Version.

iii. THE FOUR GOSPELS

These have always been the first four books of the New Testament ever since its writings were collected in a single volume, and in the early Church they were accorded special honour as containing the acts and words of Christ. When we consider them more carefully, we see that they are not histories in the modern sense, but rather what we should call collections of certain sayings of the Master and events in His life which the narrators had come to consider specially needful and worthy to be preserved. We also notice that

there is a very marked difference between the first three Gospels and the fourth. Much in the matter and even in the words of the first three is identical, and the arrangement too is similar, whereas the fourth writer gives an independent account of his subject, which for the most part covers fresh ground and supplements the first three. For the purposes of a commentary, therefore, it is best to take the Gospels of SS. Matthew, Mark and Luke separately, and to treat of St. John by itself. Because of the common view which they give of the life of Christ, the first three Gospels have come to be called Synoptics, and it will be convenient to refer to them by that name.

IV. THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE FIRST THREE, OR SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The meaning of gospel, as well as of the Greek word from which it is translated, is 'good news'. This was the title given both by the Saviour Himself (Matt. xxiv. 14) and by the evangelists (Matt. iv. 23; Mark i. 1), to the message which He proclaimed, and the same was applied to the proclamation of the good tidings of Christ's salvation by St. Paul and other apostles (Acts xx. 24, etc.). It did not come to be applied to writings containing the record of Christ and His preaching till generations had passed. The *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (about A.D. 100) in ch. iii probably refers to written Gospels, and Justin Martyr (about A.D. 150), writes of these books as 'called Gospels'. The titles which we now prefix to the books are not part of the original writings, but

in their shortest form (according to Matthew), they are a very ancient superscription of the rolls on which they were written by the earliest scribes, signifying that the book is the 'good tidings' of Jesus Christ as recorded by St. Matthew. This form of title, therefore, signifies that in the Gospels we have the one 'good tidings' according to its four witnesses.

The earliest testimonies as to the composition of the Synoptic Gospels are as follows:—

(1) As to St. Mark, Papias (about A. D. 125) relates, on the authority of 'the Elder John', whom he describes as a 'disciple of the Lord', that Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately, but not in order all that he remembered (or that he, i. e. Peter mentioned) . . . who used to frame his teaching to meet the wants (i. e. of his hearers), but not as making a connected account of the Lord's discourses. . . . He took heed to one thing, to omit none of the facts that he heard, and to make no false statement in his account of them. Irenæus (about A. D. 180) similarly writes: 'Since the decease of these (Peter and Paul) Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself also has handed down to us in writing the things which were preached by Peter'; and Clement of Alexandria (died A. D. 220) confirms this.

(2) As to St. Matthew, the same Papias writes that 'Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language; and each man interpreted them as he could'. But by the time of Justin, the Greek Gospel of St. Matthew was in general use, for it is this from which he and others quote.

(3) As to St. Luke, Irenaeus (died A. D. 202) writes : ' Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel which he (Paul) used to preach '.

(4) None of the Synoptic Gospels, nor indeed that of St. John itself designates its author, but the ascription of them to the ' four evangelists ' as we know them is uncontradicted in the early Church, and may be safely accepted as expressing a fact. Further details are given below in the special introduction to the First Gospel.

V. THE COMPOSITION OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

When we look at these Gospels more closely, we cannot help asking the question : How did their writers compose them ? A large part of their matter is common. St. Mark contains only 7 % of matter which is not found in the two others, St. Matthew 42 %, and St. Luke 59 %. This correspondence in many cases amounts to verbal identity, as any one may see who will compare the careful translation of the Revised Version in the parallel passages ; yet in many cases minute variations of the wording occur which escape the attention of any but a very careful reader, and for which we can now assign no certain cause, as they do not affect the sense. But then other differences occur which amount to a real difference in meaning, either by way of added information or even apparent contradiction in detail. Besides these characteristics of matter, we also find that the arrangement of the story is in general very similar, yet varies in detail, sometimes considerably. How did it come about in the work of three different men that they produced such very similar results ?

Or if they worked in concert, or from a common original, how did the differences arise?

As already noticed, by far the greater part of St. Mark is reproduced in the other two synoptics, and we may add that the sequence of events as given by him is generally followed by the two others, though less by St. Luke than St. Matthew. St. Mark records few sayings of Christ and no connected discourses of any length. On the other hand St. Matthew and Luke give many such sayings at considerable length, and each of them has many words of Christ not recorded by the other. Each also prefaces the story of the ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus by a story of our Lord's birth and events connected with it, but in quite different ways, and St. Luke differs in his arrangement from St. Mark more widely than does St. Matthew. Various explanations of these facts have been offered. Some writers have thought that all three synoptics had before them a Gospel older than any of our present ones; others, that the later of the three used the writings of the one or two who had gone before, supplementing them with fresh information, or leaving out what they thought less necessary. Others again, have supposed that the evangelists started from a fixed oral tradition of the deeds and words of our Lord which was current among the Churches. In any case the early tellers of the life of Christ must have begun by oral tradition of what they had seen or heard, and finally they came to writing books; the problem is to find out where the verbal story ended and the written one began. We cannot hope to give more than a probable answer to this

question; still, in order to understand and expound the Gospels rightly, it is necessary to form the best picture we can of the way in which they came to be written.

When a large number of converts was first brought into the Church at Pentecost we read that 'they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching' (Acts ii. 2); that is, they went on regularly receiving instruction from them. These converts were Jews, and had no need to be taught the truths contained in the Old Testament: what they needed to learn was the doings and sayings of Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Saviour of Israel and of the world, and the light thrown thereby on the duty of His disciples. To teach three thousand converts, it must have been necessary to organize them into classes, in which the apostles would take the lead, and it was probably for this purpose that they continued 'stedfastly in the temple' (Acts ii. 46) day by day. The leader in this work of the first teaching of the Gospel facts would naturally be Peter who, already before the coming of the Holy Ghost, had moved the disciples to choose an apostle to take the place of Judas Iscariot, as a witness of the resurrection of Jesus. The scope of that witness St. Peter had described as 'beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us' (Acts i. 22), and it is noteworthy that this corresponds to the common matter of the three Gospels referred to above. It is reasonable to suppose that St. Matthew, as one of the twelve, also took part in this instruction of the first converts in Jerusalem and Palestine. The method of instruction would doubtless

be that of repetition by the teacher of the sayings and doings of Our Lord, to be memorized and recited by the scholar, just as is still done in the 'Azhar' at Cairo and other seats of Muhammadan learning. 'Commit nothing to writing' was a maxim of the Jewish scribes of that day, and at the first the Apostles would naturally follow it.

But gradually the work of instruction grew beyond the powers of the apostles, as the number of believers increased in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine, and it could not be very long before they found it necessary to appoint helpers, not only for the work of ministering to the poor, but also for 'the ministry of the word' (Acts vi. 4), and we find later on that this class of Christian workers was recognized under the name of 'teachers' (Acts xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29; Eph. iv. 11). Then, as the first generation of Christians, among whom were the personal witnesses of our Saviour's life and words, gradually passed away, the leaders and teachers of the Church began to feel the need of something more than oral tradition of the facts on which the faith and life of the Church is based, and we learn from the preface to St. Luke's Gospel that 'many took in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word' (Luke i. 1, 2).

These words of St. Luke remind us that the task of teaching all things that Christ had commanded His apostles (Matt. xxviii. 20) had extended far beyond the

limits of Palestine, to the nations of the Roman empire, among whom Greek was the most common tongue. Though we read in the Acts of the Apostles almost entirely of the progress of the Gospel through preaching, (just as in missionary reports of the present day), yet we cannot doubt that the no less important, if less striking, work of teaching went on diligently with the same memorizing methods, and thus an oral tradition of the deeds and words of Christ, probably rather in sections than continuous, must have been formed in Greek as well as in Aramaic (or so-called Hebrew).

For the 'Hebrew' speaking Christians of Palestine it seems from the testimony of Papias quoted above, that the apostle St. Matthew wrote down a collection of the sayings of our Lord, with probably only so much of narrative as was necessary to explain their occasion (like the *shân-i-nuzûl* of Qur'anic passages in Muslim commentators). Such a record of sayings would be the thing most needed by the Christians of Palestine where the events of Christ's life were comparatively familiar. Owing to the gradual decay of the Jewish Christian community after the destruction of Jerusalem, this writing of St. Matthew has not survived; but we may believe that its substance has reached us in the Greek Gospel that bears his name.

The experiences of missionary preaching, teaching, and Bible translation in our own day enable us to understand how the oral tradition of the Gospel sections, which found their way into Greek through the teachers who were originally sent out from Jerusalem

and had received their instruction from the apostles, would bear traces of the missionaries' native language, and would also, for practical necessities, be moulded in its ordinary language of everyday intercourse, as is the case with our Gospels. And we also learn from St. Luke's preface, that there were a good many narratives of the sayings and doings of Christ in circulation in his own day before he wrote. Now, among the apostolic helpers, who accompanied the great missionary St. Paul and who are mentioned in his letters and the Acts, is one named John Mark (Acts xii. 12). He was a native of Jerusalem, and in all probability one of the helpers in the work of memorizing and teaching whom St. Peter must have employed, for we find that this apostle writes of him as his 'son' (1 Pet. v. 13), implying early discipleship; and to this agree the testimonies of Papias, Irenaeus and others, already quoted, who describe Mark as the disciple and interpreter of Peter. This position and other qualifications pointed to John Mark as a suitable helper in the work of instructing Gentile converts in the Gospel, and as such he was selected and taken down to Antioch by Barnabas and Saul (Acts xii. 25). After working among the teachers there, Mark became the attendant of these two great missionaries. The Greek term by which Mark is here designated is the same as that for the synagogue attendant (Luke iv. 20), called by the Jews *Khazzán*, or keeper, who not only had to look after the requirements of service, but also to teach the boys who attended the synagogue school which resembled the *páthshálas* or *maktabs* of

this country. This seems to indicate that the duties for the sake of which the evangelists took John Mark with them were not so much the attendance of a chela who ministers to the needs of his guru, as the assistance to be given by one who was already well qualified as an acknowledged transmitter of the Gospel tradition, in fact he was an evangelical *háfiz* or *ráwi*. Though for a time, probably through his timidity, Mark was parted from Paul, yet he eventually rejoined him (Col. iv. 10) and near the end of his career the apostle bears emphatic witness to the great value of the work that Mark had done as a helper in the ministry of the word (2 Tim. iv. 11).

We can now see how St. Mark, after the decease of the two great apostles whom he had served (St. Peter and Paul died about 64-5), and the experience of a lifetime in the instruction of catechumens and new disciples, would feel moved to set down in writing the record of Christ, as he had heard it from St. Peter. This might be about A. D. 67. His book is entitled 'the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ'. He had been accustomed to instruct beginners, and he suits his Gospel to their needs, keeping to the limits of instruction laid down by his master before Pentecost, and doubtless observed in the practice of the missionary Church.

The Acts and Epistles of the New Testament give ample evidence that there was active intercourse among the early Christians scattered through the Roman empire, and it would not be very long before a writing of this kind came under the notice of

some in the position of teachers, and acquainted with both Greek and Aramaic, who had used the Aramaic 'oracles' of St. Matthew for purposes of instruction. Such would naturally desire to give Greek-reading-Christians and others the benefit of the discourses recorded in the one, as well as the events contained in the other, and one of these persons appears to have used the framework of St. Mark, embodying in it the discourses of St. Matthew, either in a translation of his own, or in the form which they may have assumed in Greek instruction classes. The writer used his materials freely according to his judgement, adding such things as he thought most profitable for instruction from the written or oral tradition at his command, and dropping a few, probably to meet the exigencies of space; for the Gospel of St. Matthew, as it now stands, would just about take up the available space of a single parchment roll, and motives of economy, as well as of expediency would lead an experienced missionary teacher not to increase the size of the book beyond what the poor and light-travelling teacher could easily buy and carry, or what the average learner might be expected to retain.¹ Who is more likely to have done this than the apostle St. Matthew? As an official of the revenue department in Galilee he must have known both Greek and Aramaic, and when the Gospel spread widely among the Jews outside Palestine, what would be more natural than

¹ This may not improbably account for the fact that the length of the four Gospels and Acts is so nearly uniform.

that the apostle should desire to make his earlier Aramaic record of Christ's discourses more widely useful by incorporating them with the story of the Master's deeds, and setting both forth in the language of the Dispersion? St. Mark, the disciple, the catechist helper of St. Paul, wrote for the catechumens and disciples of the great Roman empire, whose roads and colonies his missionary chief systematically traversed and visited, and in whose capital city both he and St. Mark's 'father in the Faith' bore their last witness. St. Matthew writes for the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, to vindicate the Messiahship of Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament against all aspersions of a recusant nation.

The beginning of St. Luke's Gospel throws considerable light on the composition of these records. The first four verses contain a preface composed by the author in a literary Greek style, which is quite different from anything else in the Gospel, showing that the author was a scholar who could have written in the literary language of the time if he had chosen to do so. He, however, preferred to use the common dialect of Greek in vogue throughout the Empire, for this made it needless for him to alter to any considerable extent the language of the earlier writings which he used. At the same time he was writing for a Greek gentleman of high station or noble family, or both, who had had some instruction (probably after the oral method), and now desired more: hence the evangelist does not hesitate to arrange the matter at his command in the form which he believes will best suit his purpose, which in this as

in each of the Gospels is that of missionary instruction for converts. St. Luke was apparently a Greek, and his writings show him to have been no mean historian. For the instruction of this cultivated Greek convert he determines to give a comprehensive, though portable history, first of the life and teaching of Jesus, and then of the spread of his Gospel. The materials for it have been 'delivered' (orally and in writing) to him and the rest of the church by those 'which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word', and he has 'accurately traced the course of all things from the first'. Besides this, as the book of the Acts shows, he has been the companion in travel of the apostle Paul, and in the course of his journeys and researches he has gained access to another record of the sayings of Christ, which was not before the two other Synoptics. From this and like sources St. Luke gives his readers the beautiful parables which are characteristic of his Gospel, as well as the birth history which points to the mother of Jesus as its source. At the same time he treats his matter with still more freedom than St. Matthew, showing in a special way the human characteristics of Jesus and the universal application of His message.

vi. THE HISTORICAL CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

We have dwelt hitherto on the manner in which the first three Gospels were composed, in connexion with the personality of the men to whom they have been attributed by the church since the earliest

times of which we have any outside testimony whatever. As historical records, these writings exhibit a matchless vividness and force in the presentation of their subject, and a convincing sincerity of description. At the same time they employ the ordinary methods of human literary composition, which do not exclude imperfections of style or errors of narration in detail. But on the divine side of these records we are struck by the person whom they delineate. He is a real, yet perfect man, a teacher of marvellous simplicity, force and depth, a Saviour of the lost who gives his life for them, and a Divine Being who claims the allegiance of all men, regardless of time or place. The Gospels show that these things and the facts corresponding to them were believed in the Christian church from the very first. But the question has been raised in every age by opponents of the faith, and it is, of course, raised in India, as to whether these records are historically true, as well as authentic. To answer this in full is the work of what is known as Christian 'Apologetic', that is, vindication of the faith, on which many excellent books have been written. It is only necessary here to give an outline of their contention as the basis of our exposition.

(1) The Gospels, and we should add, the Acts of the Apostles, fit in with the statements of contemporary historians and inscriptions, as far as they come in contact with them. Not to mention others, there are two principal non-Christian historians of this period, one a pagan, the Roman Tacitus, whose

Histories and *Annals* are a common textbook for European schools and colleges; the other a Jew, Josephus, who wrote on the *Antiquities* and *Wars of the Jews* in the first century of our era. Tacitus mentions the death of Christ (the most prominent event in the Gospels), and the persecution of the Christians of Rome by the emperor Nero in A. D. 64. Josephus refers to the martyrdom of James, the brother of Jesus, in A. D. 66. The Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius, king Herod I and his successors the tetrarchs, Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus, the Roman governors of Judea, Gallio, governor of Achaia (i. e. Greece), are referred to by these and other historians, and the condition of cities and political divisions of provinces on St. Paul's journeys are found to correspond with the statements of St. Luke in the Acts, even in cases in which such divisions were altered not long afterwards. There are difficulties to be cleared up, possibly inaccuracies here or there; but the tendency of fresh discoveries has been to confirm, what already was well attested, that the Gospels and Acts (which hangs together with them) are trustworthy historical records.

(2) The main facts of the Gospels are also attested by other Christian writings, especially the Epistles of the New Testament. If we had no Gospels, we could still learn the chief features of our Saviour's character and work from the letters which the apostles, specially the great missionary, St. Paul, began to write before any Gospels were composed; and the fact that we find these matters so prominently put forward in letters which were generally written for

other purposes connected with the needs of the church, shows how entirely the facts narrated in the Gospels had penetrated the consciousness of the Christian community and were regarded as the source of its life. But, besides these writings, we have also two great institutions of the Church which testify to the prime facts of the Gospels, and would do so even if there were no such writings in existence; I mean the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, and the Christian Sunday. The observance of these by Christians from the very first is indisputably proved by history. The first of them is, as the Saviour intended it to be, a most striking witness to the fact of His death as the means of our life; the other is an equally plain witness to the fact of His resurrection, for if this had not been believed in by the first Christians, there would have been no reason why they should have named the first day of the week, the 'Lord's day', and why they should gradually have accepted it as the weekly day of worship in the place of the Sabbath or Saturday.

(3) Again there is the Church itself, its existence and history to be accounted for; and that from a double point of view. First we have to ask: How came it that out of the Old Testament religion, with all its imperfections and limitations, there arose not only the idea, but also the reality, of a Universal Church, a Father in heaven loving all His children alike, a Saviour to whom all nations are absolutely equal as His brethren, a law of love to all alike, and of holiness dependent on no ceremonial

rules: all this, and much else, set forth by Jewish preachers to whose whole outlook and habit of thought such teaching was utterly strange? This is fully explained, if the Gospel history is true that Jesus claimed to fulfil the law, by showing the depth and breadth of its inner meaning, and the propbets, by proclaiming that the kingdom of God was to be extended to all nations, and if He confirmed this teaching by the purity of His life, the power of His works, the sacrifice of His death, and the triumph of His resurrection. Without the truth of the gospel history the existence and history of the Christian Church are an enigma for which no satisfactory answer has ever been found though its opponents have been looking for it during 1,800 years. Either they never seriously consider it, as is the case with most of them in India, or they adopt unproven theories which, one after another, have to be abandoned. The same applies when we look at the rise of Christianity in relation to the pagan world. The Roman empire around the Mediterranean Sea and the lands bordering in it were the regions in which Christianity first spread. In them dwelt nations possessed of great learning, culture and power. The laws of Rome, the sculpture and philosophy of Greece, and the literature of both are still our models. But on the religious side these peoples were either sceptical or superstitious, on the moral they were generally tainted with selfishness and impurity. In the midst of these surroundings arose a Society organized on the basis of love, meekness, and purity, possessed of little learning to start with, and of no

political power. Yet despite bloody persecutions and insidious polemics, this Society in 300 years became the acknowledged religious guide of the Roman empire, and when that empire perished, the Church of Christ handed on all that was best in it to the coming ages through the darkness of barbarian invasions. The only reasonable explanation of this is the person and work of Christ, as set forth in the Gospels.

(4) Once more, the character of Jesus is unique in the world's literature. In its perfect balance, harmony, uniting the opposite qualities found in others, it forms the perfect ideal. Courage and meekness; humility and dignity; truthfulness and consideration for others; indignation against wrong doers and tenderness to penitent sinners; renunciation of the world and joy in God's creation are instances of this completeness of character. It has been well said that 'such a character men could not invent if they would, and would not if they could'; and the fact is patent that no man ever has invented such another.

(5) The final test is the experience of the individual Christian life. The conviction of truth is an individual thing. Till the testimony of any fact or experience convinces *me* it is nothing to me, however much a million others may know it or discuss it. Still more is this the case, if the matter closely concerns my personal well-being, as the affection of a friend, or the possession of the means of livelihood. If I know that I have it, the opinion of others may interest, but will scarcely move me. Most of all does this apply to the knowledge which concerns the relation of my soul

to God, and its dealings with Him which none else can observe. The message of the Gospels is that there is One universally present with us, who once lived as a man upon earth, while yet He was the perfect dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, and the incarnation of God our Father; that His teaching there recorded is an unailing guide in all that concerns our sanctification; that His life is a faultless example of likeness to God, as man may reach it, His death a perfect sacrifice of divine love which brings us sinful beings near to God our Father; His resurrection from the dead the pledge that we may attain likeness to God, His ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit the actual bestowal of power to live the godlike life. Countless Christians have proved from the first, and are proving now, the truth of the Gospel story, in that the life recorded in it exercises the effects which the record claims for it: those who accept the record as true receive through faith in Christ, the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, the power to lead a new life, guidance and help in its perplexities and difficulties, and a quenchless hope of life to come. They find Him true to the promise here recorded: 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest; . . . learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest.' So the record of the Gospels is vindicated by the strongest of proofs, because it is true to experience.

Yet this message comes to us, like Him of whom it witnesses, in a truly human form. We behold Him, born through the operation of the Holy Spirit yet confined by human limitations, both of power

and knowledge. And so with the records of His life; they verify the promise which Jesus gave to His apostles, that the Holy Spirit should guide their words and thoughts as the setters forth of His message (Matt. x. 20; John xiv. 26). At the same time they are compassed with human infirmity, as in their acts, so in their writings; yet their lives and their testimony equally are an adequate and convincing presentation of Christ and His saving power. Thus in other writings of the New Testament the apostle Paul could claim the guidance of the Spirit for the words of his teaching (1 Cor. ii. 13), while yet again he writes to his converts in the same letter: 'I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say' (1 Cor. x. 15). It is as we test the Gospel records in this spirit that we shall best be able to edify ourselves and to give to others a reason for the hope that is in us.

We see in the Gospels a wonderful beauty of presentation, acknowledged by most of those even who disbelieve in them, yet this is not inconsistent with considerable defects in literary style. In like manner we find in them a sincerity and accuracy which is altogether remarkable, even when compared with the best historians of their time; yet this is not inconsistent with inaccuracies and errors in certain points. Owing to the conditions of their origin the Gospels are condensed writings which contain scarcely anything in the way of explanatory matter; for it was intended that that should be supplied by the teacher who used the record. But it is to be noted—more

especially with reference to the first three Gospels—that in estimating evidence for facts under investigation, as in a court of law, inaccuracies or contradictions in some details, by no means invalidate the statements of the witnesses as a whole, but, on the contrary, rather free them from the suspicion of collusion, and go to show that they have told their story naturally and truthfully, provided that their truthful disposition and access to reliable information are established. The fact that they still need examination in detail is no impeachment of their trustworthiness as a whole, and the plain man who reads his Gospel without note or comment is not in the slightest danger of being led astray as to anything that concerns his faith or conduct. On the contrary he may confidently rely on it for the knowledge that will make him 'wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. iii. 15), and it is thus that the vast majority of Gospel readers have found and do find in it the food of their souls. And for the most advanced and careful student the first requisite—next to that of a humble and teachable spirit—is to consider carefully what the words themselves say and mean, before he makes or listens to doctrines or theories about them. This is the object of the commentator, and it is his great privilege and responsible task to help others in attaining it. May the writer and the reader be guided by the Spirit who inspired the sacred writings.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW

i. THE PERSONALITY OF ST. MATTHEW

OF this we know little for certain, beyond what is contained in the account of his call to be a disciple of Jesus, as told in Matt. ix. 9-13; Mark ii. 13-17; Luke v. 27-32. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Levi mentioned by SS. Mark and Luke is the same person as the Matthew of this Gospel. It may well be that 'Levi the son of Alphaeus' (Mark ii. 14) on leaving his old occupation and way of life, also changed his name to Matthew, meaning 'the gift of God'; but it is not probable that his father was the same person as Alphaeus, the father of James (Matt. x. 3) known as 'the Less' (to distinguish him from James, the brother of John, and one of the special companions of Jesus); otherwise the names would be coupled together in the lists of apostles, as in the case of other pairs of brothers. The occupation of Matthew, when Jesus called him, was that of a 'publican' in the town of Capernaum on the north-east shore of the Lake of Galilee. Under the Roman government 'Publicani' was the name given to the high officials, mostly of noble rank, who

collected the tolls and taxes on a contract with the State, as road and river tolls are still collected in India, and generally speaking the publican squeezed what he could out of the people, often by fraud and violence (Luke iii. 12, 13; xix. 8). They were collectors of other taxation also, as well as tolls, and for this extensive work they had, of course, to employ minor officials who became known by the same title, and employed the same methods. As rapacious officials of a foreign rule the publicans were peculiarly obnoxious to the Jews, besides being, as a class, of low morality (Matt. ix. 10). Capernaum was on a busy trade route from Damascus to Palestine, and it is probable that Matthew was collecting the tolls on merchandise or (octroi) on the fish from the lake when Jesus, passing along its shore, came to his chauki, or toll-booth, and bade Matthew follow Him as His disciple. It is likely that Matthew had heard and believed in the Prophet who did not disdain to preach the good news to publicans and sinners, and, like Zacchæus later (Luke xix. 8), had practised repentance and restitution, for apparently he was ready to follow the call without delay, and he signalized his joy at the new life which he was beginning by making a feast to his fellow publicans. This provoked the wrath of the Pharisees and elicited a decisive utterance from Christ as to His attitude towards the outcasts of his day ('I am not come to call the righteous but sinners'), which helped to widen the breach between Him and the Pharisees, and was presently confirmed by the choice of St. Matthew as one of the twelve apostles (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18;

Luke vi. 15 ; Acts i. 13). The Gospels tell us no more of St. Matthew individually. Doubtless he was sent out with the others to preach and returned with joy at the powers conferred and exercised (Luke ix. 10). With them after Pentecost he taught the new disciples and did many signs (Acts ii. 42), suffered imprisonment (Acts v. 18), and remained in Jerusalem when the other Christians were scattered abroad (Acts viii. 1). Clement of Alexandria (about 200) mentions that Matthew was an ascetic and abstained from the use of animal food, which is likely enough. Other traditions are late and unreliable.

In St. Matthew we have the only person among the apostles whom we know, in virtue of his occupation as a revenue official, to have been something of a penman and acquainted both with Greek and Aramaic. The bearing of this fact upon the authorship of the Gospel has been pointed out above.

ii. CONNEXION OF THE GOSPEL AS WE HAVE IT
WITH THE APOSTLE ST. MATTHEW

This has been indicated in the section on the composition of the Synoptical Gospels. I now give the testimony as to St. Matthew's authorship more in detail.

Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, (died 338) in his Church History gives a statement of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (about 125) in his work entitled 'An exposition of the Lord's sayings', in these words: St. 'Matthew, indeed, compiled the sayings in the Hebrew language, but each one interpreted them as he was able'. Papias

was a disciple of 'John the Elder' who was a disciple of the Lord (that is in the wider sense, not the apostle of that name); hence this testimony reaches back to the earliest age. Just before this statement, Papias had written of Mark as recording 'that which was either said or done by Christ'. From this it is evident that the Hebrew writing of St. Matthew which he mentions contained almost entirely discourses with little, if any of acts. The compilation consisted in the collecting of traditions of our Lord's words as already orally taught in the Churches of Palestine, and the interpretation was carried on by the teachers there or in other lands who had to instruct Greek-speaking disciples. This could hardly be satisfactory in the long run, and we cannot be surprised that the needs of the Mission field called for an authoritative Greek version of these sayings, together with more details of the doings of Christ, for the benefit of those who had no access to the oral traditions of them current in Palestine.

Irenæus (died 202) relates in his treatise 'against the Heretics': 'St. Matthew among the Hebrews also put forth a written Gospel in their own language, when SS. Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel and founding the Church in Rome.' By the time of Irenæus the Greek Gospel of St. Matthew was current in the Church, for Justin (died 166) uses it more than any other in his writings.

Eusebius (died 338) relates of Pantænus (died 202), head of the catechetical school in Alexandria, a tradition that he found among the Indians (probably meaning the southern Arabians) the Gospel according

to St. Matthew in Hebrew letters which had been brought there by Bartholomew.

Eusebius also quotes Origen (died 254) as writing on the strength of tradition that 'the first Gospel is written according to St. Matthew, who was first a tax-gatherer, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who published it in Hebrew for believers from among the Jews.'

Eusebius gives as his own opinion that 'St. Matthew, having first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to others, bequeathed the Gospel according to himself, written in his native tongue, and thus by his writing supplied to those from whom he was sent away that which was lacking of his presence.'

We possess no statements of early writers as to who was the translator of the original Hebrew document of the Apostle Matthew the existence of which is thus fully attested. But we find quotations from our Greek Gospel as from a writing acknowledged in the Christian community, in the Epistle of Ignatius Bishop of Smyrna (died 115) and Polycarp, Bishop of Ephesus (died 167), a disciple of St. John the Apostle, as also in the 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles', (written about the year 100); and in the so called Epistle of Barnabas (about 130) Matt. xxii. 14 is quoted in Greek as a word of Holy Scripture. Moreover, Papias in the passage already quoted, indicates (by the tense of the Greek verb which he uses) that the practice of oral translation of the Hebrew sayings of our Lord was a thing of the past; probably because it had become superfluous owing to the existence of a Greek St. Matthew. A version

of the Gospel which enjoyed such consideration at the beginning of the second century must go back to apostolic times: and seeing that this Greek St. Matthew has from its first mention onward been regarded in the Church as the work of the apostle, we may regard the former Roman revenue official, acquainted with both Aramaic and Greek, as the author of the record before us. This conclusion is supported by the following considerations:

The incorporation of a large part of the matter of St. Mark, combined with the freedom of treatment, and the unity of arrangement in this Gospel, which a writer of less than apostolic authority would have been unlikely to allow himself.

The fact that the Hebrew St. Matthew was entirely lost at a very early period. Even Papias does not say that he had seen it. If the fuller Greek version was the work of the Apostle himself, we can understand that the imperfect work in Hebrew was left to the Hebrew speaking Christians of the sub-apostolic age who soon died out. If the Greek St. Matthew had been done by a lesser man the neglect of the apostolic original by the early Church would be difficult to explain.

iii. CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS GOSPEL AS COMPARED WITH ST. MARK AND ST. LUKE

It has already been pointed out that St. Mark contains very little matter which is not found in either of the other Gospels while St. Matthew coincides with

him far more both in arrangement and matter, than St. Luke. This agrees with the view that St. Matthew re-arranged the matter of St. Mark, in order to bring in his own record of the sayings of Jesus, and also to exhibit him as the true Messiah, not only for the Jews, but for all nations, in reply to the slanders of the Jews of his day; while St. Luke as he says in his preface, entered upon independent investigations, in order to set forth the Gospel history in such a way as might best meet the needs of a Gentile convert. Part of the fresh matter which he found was also used by St. Matthew, and part was peculiar to himself. St. Luke also greatly altered the grouping of events employed by the others, in accordance with his purpose in writing.

As compared with St. Mark, the style of St. Matthew is smoother and more correct, though somewhat less vivid. But the outstanding difference between the two is the attention bestowed by St. Mark upon deeds and by St. Matthew on words, whether of the Old Testament Scriptures or of Christ. The fulfilment of Scripture in the events of the life of the Saviour is mentioned twelve times by St. Matthew and once only by St. Mark (not at all by St. Luke, and seven times by St. John), and the quotations from the Old Testament are far more numerous in St. Matthew. In a few instances St. Matthew uses the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, in many he gives an independent translation of the Hebrew original, and almost as often he mingles both. St. Matthew less often than St. Mark uses Aramaic words which seem

to represent the exact speech of our Saviour (such as 'Talitha kumi' Mark v. 41), and St. Mark oftener employs Latin words in common use, while he gives explanations of Jewish terms and usages, which St. Matthew finds unnecessary (cp. Mark vii. 11 with Matt. xv. 5). In brief we may say that while St. Mark presents Jesus in the work of His ministry as the Son of God and Saviour, St. Matthew depicts him as the true Messiah and Prophet of the Jewish nation and as the King of the universal kingdom of God.

IV. CONTENTS OF ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

These may be summed up in the words of the evangelist: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.'

(I) Chapters I and II. His entry into the world

- i. 1-17. The lineage of Jesus the Christ (or Messiah).
- i. 18-25. His birth through the Holy Spirit.
- ii. 1-12. The visit of the Magi.
- ii. 13-23. The flight into Egypt and return to Nazareth.

Jesus is the legitimate heir of Abraham and David, yet of divine origin; the fulfiller of the aspirations of His nation and of Old Testament prophecy: His kingship is acknowledged by Gentiles, yet he is persecuted as an infant, sheltered in heathen Egypt, and brought up in a village of ill-repute in a despised province.

(2) iii. 1—iv. 11. The preparation for His work.

iii. 1-12. By the ministry of John the Baptist.

iii. 13-17. By the baptism of Jesus.

iv. 1-11. By His temptation.

(3) iv. 12—xi. 1. The activity of Jesus as the Prophet of Galilee (cp. ch. xxi. 11).

iv. 12-25. A general outline: He preaches; chooses His first disciples; heals many; becomes famous.

v. 1—vii. 29. As teacher. (The Sermon on the Mount).

viii. 1—ix. 34. As healer. (Sundry miracles).

ix. 35—xi. 1. As preacher (or herald), personally and through His disciples.

(4) xi. 2—xv. 39. The impression made by Jesus on various classes of men, (as set forth in the parable of the sower; ch. xiii. 3-23).

xi. 2-15. The doubt and justification of John the Baptist.

16-19. Rebuke of the fickle populace.

20-4. Woe to the favoured cities.

25-30. The counsel of God and the universal invitation of Jesus.

xii. 1-13. Sabbath controversy with the scribes.

14-21. Their plot and the retirement of Jesus.

- 22-37. Cure of a blind and dumb man. Blasphemy of the Pharisees.
- 38-45. Rebuke and warning to those who ask for a sign.
- 46-50. Who are the true kinsfolk of Jesus?
- xiii. 1-52. Teaching by parables, a punishment and a help.
- 53-8. Jesus rejected at Nazareth.
- xiv. 1-12. Herod, remembering the fate of John, inquires after Jesus.
- 13-36. Jesus retires; feeds 5,000; stills the storm.
- xv. 1-20. Ceremonial purification and true purity.
- 21-8. Healing of the Canaanitish woman's daughter.
- 29-39. Cure of many sick; feeding of 4,000.
- (5) xvi. 1—xx. 34. Preparations for the sufferings of Jesus and foundation of a new Society.
- xvi. 1-12. A sign refused; the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- 13-20. Peter a rock as confessing Jesus to be the Son of God.
- 21-8. Jesus predicts His sufferings and rebukes Peter as Satan.
- xvii. 1-13. The transfiguration of Jesus.
- xvii. 14-20. Healing of a demoniac boy.

- 22-3. Prediction of the passion.
 24-7. Jesus pays tribute money.
- xviii. 1-20. Rank and discipline in Christ's kingdom.
- 21-35. Forgiveness of offenders.
- xix. 1-14. Jesus in Peraea, deals with divorce; welcomes little children.
- xix. 16-30. Earthly riches and the rewards of Christ's kingdom.
- xx. 1-16. The labourers in the vineyard (the mercenary spirit).
 17-19. Prediction of the passion.
 20-8. Ambition and the kingdom of Christ.
 29-34. Two blind men are healed at Jericho.
- (6) xxi—xxv. **The activity of Jesus in Jerusalem. He claims His heritage, here and in the world to come.**
- xxi. 1-11. Christ's royal entry into Jerusalem.
 12-17. The temple cleansed.
 18-22. The fruitless fig tree withered.
 23-7. The authority of Jesus vindicated and set forth in
 28-32. The parable of the two sons.
 33-46. do do vineyard and the husbandmen.
- xxii. 1-14. do do king's marriage feast.

- 15-22. The Pharisees and the tribute-money.
 23-33. The Sadducees and the resurrection.
 34-40. The lawyer and the great commandment.
 41-6. David's Son and Lord.
- xxiii. Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees,
 and woe on Jerusalem which follows them.
- xxiv. Prophecies of the fall of Jerusalem and the
 end of the world.
- xxv. Three parables of judgement.
- (7) xxvi—xxviii. **The passion and the resurrection.**
- xxvi. 1-5. The prediction of Christ and the plot
 of his enemies.
 6-13. Jesus anointed by a faithful woman.
 14-16. Betrayed by a treacherous disciple.
 17-30. The Last Supper.
 31-5. Prediction of Peter's apostasy.
 36-46. Christ's agony in the garden of
 Gethsemane.
 47-56. The arrest of Jesus.
 57-68. His trial before the High Priest.
 69-72. Peter denies his Master.
- xxvii. 1-26. The remorse of Judas and the trial of
 Jesus before Pilate.
 27-56. The mockery, crucifixion and death of
 Jesus.
 57-61. His burial by Joseph of Arimathaea.

- 62-6. Precautions by the Jews against His resurrection.
- xxviii. 4-10. Christ rises and appears to two women
- 11-15. The sentries at the tomb bribed to spread a false report.
- 16-20. Jesus, meeting the disciples in Galilee commands them to make disciples of all nations.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
ST. MATTHEW

CHAPTER I

1-17 THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS

THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham begat Isaac ; and Isaac begat Jacob ; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren ; and Judah begat Perez and Zerah of Tamar ; and Perez begat Hezron ; and Hezron begat Ram ; and Ram begat Amminadab ; and Amminadab begat Nahshon ; and Nahshon begat Salmon ; and Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab ; and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth ; and Obed begat Jesse ; and Jesse begat David the king.

And David begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Uriah ; and Solomon begat Rehoboam ; and Rehoboam begat Abijah ; and Abijah begat Asa ; Asa begat Jehoshaphat ; and Jehoshaphat begat Joram ; and Joram begat Uzziah ; and Uzziah begat Jotham ; and Jotham begat Ahaz ; and Ahaz begat Hezekiah ; and Hezekiah begat Manasseh ; and Manasseh begat Amon ; and Amon begat Josiah ; and Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon.

And after the carrying away to Babylon. Jechoniah begat Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel; and Zerubbabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations.

There were two chief calumnies set on foot by the Jews against Jesus of Nazareth: one, that He was an illegitimate child, the other that His body had been stolen by His disciples from the tomb. Either of these would have been fatal to His claim to be the Messiah. St. Matthew begins his Gospel by refuting the one in this chapter, and deals with the other in the twenty-eighth chapter.

1. *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ*: this links the Gospel to the Old Testament, and shews that both are organically connected. The Jews set special value on the record of genealogies of kings and priests (Ezra ii. 62; Neh. vii. 5; 1 Chron. ix. 1); some of them were fanciful and worthless, but one such as this, which could be verified by the sacred books and public archives was specially valuable for Jewish Christians, when called upon to give an answer of the hope that was in them regarding Jesus (1 Pet. iii. 15). It reminds us that Christianity is an historical

religion, based upon facts and courting investigation. A learned Hindu of the writer's acquaintance, who began to read the New Testament for the first time, was arrested by this record of the ancestry of our Lord, and led to inquire after the previous record of the Old Testament, the study of which greatly helped him to the understanding of the New Testament and so to faith in Christ. Jesus is the personal name of the Saviour (v. 18), Christ His title. It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *mashiakh* (John i. 21 and iv. 25) or Arabic *Masih*, meaning 'anointed'. This refers to the ceremony of pouring oil upon the head of a king as a symbol of consecration to his office (1 Sam. xvi. 13); hence the term was applied to the king of Israel as having been set over His people by Jehovah (Ps. ii. 2 and 6), and destined eventually to rule over all nations and to establish the kingdom of God in all the earth.

The son of David: Jesus was a descendant of this great king of Israel, but the phrase was also a title of the Messiah, because God had promised that the universal king should come from David's family (2 Sam. vii. 12-16; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Matt. xxii. 41-2; Luke i. 32).

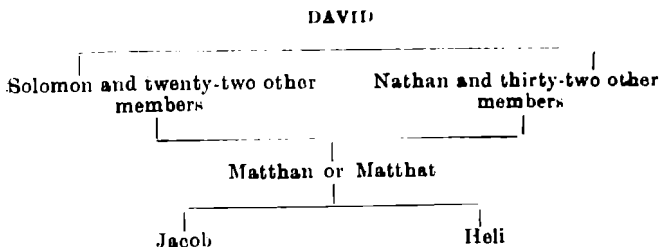
Son of Abraham: to whom the Jews looked up as the first founder of their race, and nation and religion, as the Muhammadans also do: likewise the first recipient of the divine promise that all the nations of the earth should be blessed through a chosen seed or progeny (Gen. xxii. 18).

2-17. This genealogy will best be understood in its connexion with that given by St. Luke iii. 23-38.

(1) Both the genealogies are of Joseph (v. 16; Luke iii. 23), whose son Jesus was accounted to be (Matt. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 22; John i. 45 and vi. 42), as he legally was his heir.

(2) The genealogy of Matthew is theocratic, that is, it exhibits Jesus as the successor of the great founders of the kingdom of God, as revealed in the Old Testament; Abraham on its religious side, and David on its political side. The genealogy of Luke shews Jesus in His human character, as the second Adam and the brother of all mankind, who have their unity in the one fatherhood of God (Luke i. 38).

(3) This genealogy runs downwards from Abraham, the other upwards from Joseph, but between Abraham and David both coincide; thence they separate in this fashion:—



Clearly Joseph cannot have had two fathers, but as the two-fold line of descent had before coincided in Matthat, through decease of one male heir, or marriage, so apparently both sides came together again in Joseph. Mary may well have been the daughter of either Jacob or Heli, though unable, for some reason,

to inherit; while Joseph, her relative and next heir, would step into the line of succession, and this would naturally be confirmed by the marriage. Such an arrangement would be natural enough in India now. In default of exact information we can, of course, only put forward a reasonable supposition, which serves to shew how the two accounts might tally. Certainty is impossible, but there is no necessary contradiction.

(4) Luke mentions no women; Matthew brings in four; of whom two, Rahab and Ruth, were foreigners, and three, Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba, were stained by impurity. If, in the acknowledged genealogies of the scribes, God had accepted such women after conversion or repentance as mothers in the line of Messianic succession, how vain were all slanders against the birth of Jesus, whose pure mother, as the succeeding story shews, God had vindicated by the special intervention of an angel! And the introduction of foreign women in the Old Testament line of royal ancestry is an indication that the kingdom of God was from the first intended to be regardless of race and open to all nations (Ch. xxviii. 19). In this land it reminds us that all caste distinctions in connexion with the privileges of the Church are irreconcilable with the first principles of the Gospel.

(5) In the generations between David and Matthan Luke's is the fuller list, and it is evident that Matthew in v. 17 makes an artificial division for a purpose of his own; for between Nahshon (Num. i. 7 and ii. 3) soon after the Exodus, and Jesse the father of David, there must have been many more than two intermediate

members (Salmon and Boaz); and between Joram and Uzziah, three kings, Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah are omitted. The fact that Jeconiah, though childless, is designated as the father of Shealtiel, illustrates what was said under (3), and shews that the object of the list is to shew the right of succession. To help the Jewish Christians who committed these lists, like other sections of the Gospels, to memory, St. Matthew gave them sufficient names to prove the Messianic succession of Jesus, and divided them into groups of fourteen (probably a symbolical number, as 2×7) to assist their memory. The three divisions seem to be made up thus: (i) Abraham to David, i. e. from the first call of the Hebrew race to the establishment of their kingdom, in the line that received the divine promise; (ii) David (counting him again) to Josiah, on whom follows the Babylonish captivity, which seemed to shatter the theocracy, while really it prepared the way for the mission of Israel to the world; (iii) From Jeconiah to Jesus, in whom the kingdom is finally and fully re-established.

18-25. THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise; When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived

in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,

And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us. And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS.

Matthew here shews that Jesus was not only the legitimate son of Joseph in the line of succession from David, but also the Saviour from sin, and the embodiment of the divine presence with men. He is the sinless avatar.

St. Mark, as explained in the Introduction, gives no account of these events: St. Luke, in i. 26-56 and ii. 4-20, adds to our knowledge (1) the annunciation by the angel Gabriel; (2) Mary's visit to Elizabeth; (3) the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem; (4) the appearance of the angels and the adoration of the shepherds.

The New Testament sets out with the agency of the Holy Ghost. In the Old Testament the Spirit of Jehovah is the agent in creation (Gen. i. 2), in fitting for material (Exod. xxxi. 3) and spiritual service (Num. xi. 17-26), for kingship (1 Sam. xvi. 13-14), for prophesy (Joel ii. 28), for the Messianic office (Isa. ii. 2), in effecting regeneration (Ezek. xxxvi. 17), and giving guidance (Ps. cxliiii. 10), in being the source of all power

(Zech. iv. 6). Here and in St. Luke i. 35 he is the agent through whom Messiah is born into the world as the Son of God. In iii. 11 the Baptist announces that the Messiah will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire; in iii. 16 He descends on Jesus at His baptism; in iv. 1 He leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted; in x. 20 He is promised to disciples, called upon to witness for their Master under persecution, as the inspirer of their speech; in xii. 18 Jesus is claimed to be the Servant of Jehovah promised by Isaiah on whom His Spirit is put; in xii. 2 Jesus claims to cast out demons by the Spirit of God; in xii. 32 He denounces blasphemy against the Holy Ghost as the one sin that can find no pardon; in xxii. 43 David in Ps. cx. is described as speaking in the Spirit; in xxviii. 19 the Holy Ghost is coupled with the Father and the Son, as comprehending the full 'Name' or revelation of God in the faith of which disciples from among all nations are to be baptized. In St. Luke's Gospel we find special mention of the influence of the Holy Ghost on certain persons, John the Baptist (i. 15), Mary (i. 35), Elisabeth (i. 67), Zachariah (i. 67), Simeon (ii. 25), Jesus (iv. 18), and Jesus is said to rejoice in the Holy Spirit (x. 21). In the Gospel of St. John the teaching of Jesus on the Holy Spirit is recorded with the greatest fulness, and it is developed by St. Paul and the other Epistle writers in accordance with the promise of Christ (John xvi. 13).

18. *The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.* It is not the fact that needed to be recorded, nor most of its features, which could be taken for granted

as well known to the Christians of Hebrew origin. One special feature only needed to be brought out, to meet the slander circulated by unbelieving Jews.

Betrothed. In vv. 19-20 Joseph and Mary are spoken of as husband and wife, because betrothal among the Jews of our Lord's time, even though the final marriage ceremony had not been performed, placed the parties legally in the position of husband and wife. The penalty of unfaithfulness was the same in both cases (Deut. xxii. 22-34), and the dissolution of betrothal required all the formalities of divorce.

Found with child, probably by the other women of the family, who would have to tell Joseph, while Mary's mouth was sealed with her holy secret. She only knew that It was *of the Holy Ghost*, but she had willingly accepted the position of suspicion (Luke i. 38) which rendered it impossible to advance so incredible a defence till it was revealed to Joseph by God.

The Qur'anic account of the conception of Jesus is characteristically confused and perverted. The title Holy Spirit (Rūḥu'l-Quds) is given to the angel Gabriel, and the only faint trace of the Spirit's operation is found in the statement that Gabriel breathed upon Mary. In the confusion between a holy spirit and *the Holy Spirit* the latter is lost and Muḥammad's conception of God permanently impoverished. In place of the Holy Spirit who in the Old and New Testament inspires the prophets and their writings, we have Gabriel bringing down instalments of a book and whispering in the prophet's ear.

Stories of the virgin birth of an avatar or guru are to be found in Buddhism, Hinduism and other religions, but they differ from the Gospel narrative (1) in their wild and fanciful details compared with its self-restraint and sobriety; (2) in the absence of the idea of purity and sinlessness which is the very life of this story; (3) in the absence of an accredited series of prophecies which find their fulfilment in this event; (4) in the fact that the historical existence and character of the women concerned has no such attestation as that of the Virgin Mary.

19. *Joseph . . . being righteous*, in a two-fold sense. He was a respecter of the law, like Zachariah and Elisabeth (Luke i. 6), and indeed all those to whom the knowledge of the incarnation was first vouchsafed. As such he was bound to visit an offence that seemed so grave. But his righteousness was not merely legal but equitable, and he must certainly have been perplexed by what he knew of the character of Mary. Having, therefore, the alternative, either of summoning Mary before the law-courts with the prospective penalty of death, or of a private divorce (cp. Deut. xxiv. 1), he chose to *put her away privily* before the formal home-bringing to his house.

20. *Behold*: not a verb, but an interjection; a characteristic Hebrew idiom of the Gospel writers, calling the attention of the reader to some freshly introduced fact or teaching.

When he thought on these things: the same Spirit who had worked on Mary uses the natural deliberations of Joseph's mind to guide him by means of a

dream. Inspiration comes through the use of natural faculties guided by God. The messenger in this case, and throughout the chapter (vv. 12, 13, 19, 22) is an angel, probably Gabriel who had brought God's message to Zachariah and Mary (Luke i. 19-26). The angels are pure spirits whose office it is to execute the divine commands, both in connexion with the natural world (Ps. ciii. 20; civ. 4), and on behalf of His people (Heb. i. 14). They are specially connected with the Son of Man (Matt. xvi. 27).

Son of David. Joseph was conscious of his royal descent, and he was among those who looked for the promised Son of David, cp. v. 1.

21. *Thou shalt call his name Jesus.* Joseph is to act as the father of the Divine Child, from His naming at the time of circumcision (cp. Luke i. 63) onwards. The name given was an historical one among the Jews, and in common use among them. It is identical with Jeshua or Joshua, in its full form Yahoshua (Num. xiii. 16; Zech. iii. 1), and its meaning is 'Jehovah is salvation', an expression of the conviction that deliverance from sin and evil is realized only in communion with God (Ps. xxvii. 1). Yaho stands for Yahowah, shua means salvation. This was shortened to Yeshua and by Greeks to Ἰησοῦς. Muḥammad in the Qur'án reversed the original letters (ye, shin, 'ain) into the form 'Ísá, thereby destroying the meaning of the Name. The appellation 'Ísá' for Christians, taken from this Muḥammadan form of the Saviour's name should be avoided as much as possible. Christians have from the first taken

their name from Christ as their King (Acts xi. 26), they are *Masīhī*. There have been many named Jesus, but only one Christ. It was unnecessary for St. Matthew to interpret this name for his Jewish readers; he proceeds straight to its application: *it is he that shall save his people from their sins*. The Jewish nation would more willingly have been saved from the domination of the Roman power, but it was this salvation from the power of sin to which the prophets pointed forward as the chief benefit of Messiah's kingdom (Jer. xxiii. 6-8; 23-34). His kingdom from the first is stamped as a spiritual rule based on moral deliverance (John viii). 31-6. *It is He*, there is none before or after who can do this work, and His accomplishment of it is a certainty; but personally it depends on us to receive the gift from Him, and if we do not do so we are not of *his people* (λαός iii. 9; viii. 11-12).

22. *This is come to pass*. The use of the perfect tense is naturally that of a contemporary; hence it seems to be intended by the writer that the following words, together with the quotation in v. 23 are part of the angel's message. As such they would greatly enforce the divine command to Joseph which, in some sense, would go against the grain, and would help him to put away suspicion in so grave a case.

That it might be fulfilled, etc. This formula is peculiar to St. Matthew's Gospel (it occurs ten times), though similar expressions occur in all four. It was of special importance to him, in vindicating Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah of the nation, to

shew how He had fulfilled all the promises and hopes held out by the prophets of the Old Testament, and how he corresponded to the features of their picture of Messiah. It was God's purpose, in each event of the life of His Son to fulfil the scattered indications of His will: given by holy men of old.

23. *The virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which is, being interpreted, God with us.* Isaiah (vii. 14) prophesies to the unbelieving king Ahaz the birth of a child to whom the name Immanuel shall be given, as a sign that God is with His people. The point of the prophecy, and of its quotation here, is in this name and its interpretation, not in the word 'virgin', for this in the original Hebrew may mean a young woman, married or unmarried, and there is no reason to suppose that in Isaiah's day a child was born as our Saviour was. In Old Testament prophecy there are two main lines: one the expectation of the manifestation of God among and in the likeness of men; the other the ideal of a perfect Man who is exalted to the throne of God. It is the fulfilment of the first of these which is pointed out here. Immanuel, God with us, is the form in which St. Matthew expresses the fact of the divine incarnation; St. Luke i. 35 speaks of 'the Son of God'; S. John i. 14 says 'The word was made flesh'.

24. *Joseph arose . . . and did:* his was prompt obedience like that of Abraham (Gen. xxii. 3).

Took unto him his wife. The ceremony of home-bringing was duly carried out.

. 25. *And knew her not, etc.* These words merely affirm that Joseph was in no way connected with the conception or birth of Jesus. We do not know whether Mary bore him children or not. The mention of the mother and brethren of Jesus together in xii. 46 (cf. John vii. 5; Mark vi. 3) make it somewhat probable that she did; more we cannot say.

Called his name Jesus; see v. 21

NOTE

THE ORDER OF THE EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Here we have to compare Luke i. 26-56 and ii. 1-20. It is evident that this Gospel regards the events from the point of view of Joseph: it is he who is perplexed by what he has come to know of Mary's condition, who is told by God what is to be done, both as to going to, and returning from Egypt, and as to migrating to Nazareth instead of staying at Bethlehem. St. Luke's narrative is told from Mary's point of view: she only knew what passed at the visit of Gabriel (Luke i. 26); the full account of her visit to Elisabeth (i. 39); the mention of the swaddling clothes and the manger (ii. 7); of her meditation on the events of the nativity (ii. 19); of the presentation in the temple and its accompaniments (ii. 34); all go to shew that the story must have come from her to Luke as the events here related must have come to be known through Joseph. Combining the two sources of information which are before us, we have the following order of events: (1) Conception of John the Baptist, (Luke

i. 24;) (2) Annunciation to Mary of the conception of Jesus, at Nazareth, six months later, (Luke i. 26); (3) Visit of Mary to Elisabeth in Judæa for about three months; (4) Return of Mary to Nazareth, (Luke i. 56); (5) Birth of John, (Luke i. 57); (6) Mary found with child, (Matt. i. 18); (7) Joseph guided by an angel, (Matt. i. 20-25); (8) He travels with Mary to Bethlehem, (Luke ii. 4); (9) The birth of Jesus, (Matt. i. 25; Luke ii. 7).

The divine incarnation is fitly brought about by the birth of the Son or Word of God from a virgin. Natural generation gives rise to a new person or individuality. But the true incarnation of God does not mean that a special influence or power of His is residing in a human individual, for this has often happened both before and since, and indeed it is the normal case of every true Christian, who, to the extent of his capacity, is a son of God, and partaker of a divine nature (John i. 12; 2 Pet. i. 4). The incarnation means that a Divine Person, the Word of God, took upon Him a true and complete human nature. This came from the pure mother of Jesus, through the operation of another Divine Person, the Holy Spirit, who is the Life-giver. On the other hand, there is nothing in the process of conception and birth in itself, which is necessarily connected with sinful defilement, as is so often urged by non-Christians. This, like every creative act of God, is in itself pure, and its accomplishment in this unique case, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, has broken the connexion which subsists between the natural propagation of the race and the sinful tendency which invariably adheres to each individual.

CHAPTER II

1-12. THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him. And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet,

And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Which shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

Then Herod privily called the wise men, and learned of them carefully what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out carefully concerning the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him. And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great

joy. And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of *God* in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

It was natural that the evangelist should now impress upon the Hebrew catechumen that the birth of Jesus in the royal city of Bethlehem in accordance with Old Testament prophecy, and the adoration of the Messiah by great men from among the Gentiles (cf. Ps. lxxii. 8-11) was fulfilled in the case of Jesus. While the king and the people are ignorant of the birth of the Christ, God through the stars in their courses has guided devout and honoured scholars of that age to seek and find Him. Though their science was imperfect, and would now be called exploded, yet it was the foundation of the modern science of astronomy and all the progress connected with it. And chiefly, it was followed in a sincere and humble spirit which led them to acknowledge its limitations, and to seek for light on divine things beyond it. This is still the true attitude of science to religion. The advance of science since the days of those Magi is enormous, but few or many steps of progress are equally far from the knowledge of infinite perfection which is God. Science can describe something of what *is*; religion teaches us, through God's revelation of Himself, what we *ought to be* and *may be* in becoming like Him, as we shall soon see in the Gospel narrative (cp. v. 48). This, the greatest scientist has to learn as humbly as a child.

1. *Now when Jesus was born, in the days of Herod the king.* Unlike Luke, who gives careful chronological details to fix the date of the birth of Jesus (Luke ii. 1), Matthew merely refers to the fact as a well-known one to his Jewish readers, in order to draw attention to this particular circumstance which accompanied it. The exact date of the birth of Jesus cannot be fixed with the data at our command. A Christian monk, named Dionysius Exiguus, who lived in the sixth century after Christ, calculated the date of His birth as 753 after the foundation of Rome, which was the era by which Roman historians dated events, and this reckoning became customary and has continued so. But it is certain from historical records that Herod died in the year 749 of this Roman era, so that the ordinary Christian era (indicated by the letters A. D., that is, Anno Domini, or in the year of the Lord) is dated at least four years too late. Other indications go to shew that it may be still further out. The calculation of Herod as to the age of the children to whom the star might have reference (from two years old and under, v. 16) carries us back to 5 or 6 B. C. The celebrated astronomer Kepler calculated that in 7 B. C. there occurred three times a most remarkable conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn, which were in the next year joined by Venus, and that this conjunction was followed by the appearance of a remarkably coloured evanescent star, which he took to be the star of the Magi. Further, in 7 B. C. Herod had destroyed two of his sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, because he suspected

them of designs on his throne, and about 6 B. C. he was meditating the death of a third son, Antipater, for the same reason. We cannot, of course, insist that the birth of Jesus took place just at the time when the Magi first observed the star, nor can we tell exactly how long they may have been delayed before undertaking the journey to Judaea in consequence of it. But we may fairly conclude that our Saviour was born in 5 or 6 B. C., and that the visit of the Magi to Bethlehem took place about 5 B. C., so that the stay of the Holy Family in Egypt would last about a year. This Herod was the first and only one of his name who attained the dignity of kingship. He was by race a native of Edom, known to the Romans as Idumea, of which territory his grandfather Antipater was chief ruler. His father, also called Antipater, embraced the Jewish Faith, and was made procurator, that is governor, of Judaea by the Romans in 47 B. C. In 40 B. C. Herod was nominated king of Judaea by the Romans, and after three years fighting, he established himself as supreme ruler at Jerusalem. He was a firm and sagacious ruler, and united the whole of Palestine, west of the Jordan and a large territory on the east under his rule. He built cities, harbours and fortresses, and developed the resources of the country. More especially, he rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem on a scale of unexampled magnificence. He encouraged the introduction of Greek and Roman civilization, and was mistrusted by the Pharisees and the people, whom on occasion he treated with great cruelty, for he was suspicious, selfish and revengeful.

Bethlehem of Judaea, as distinguished from a place of the same name in Zebulon (Joshua xix. 15), in a fertile district, five to six miles south of Jerusalem. It was the city of David, the son of Jesse, the king of Israel (1 Sam. xvi. 1, etc.), and the place where the Jews expected the birth of Messiah from the family of David; John vii. 42. How Jesus came to be born there (Luke ii. 8 ff.) is taken for granted as known to the Palestine Christians.

Wise men: Greek μάγος Arabic *majūs* or *majūst*. The ancient Zend name of the priests of the Fire-worshippers of Babylon and Persia, who were also astrologers. The heavenly bodies, as the sources of fire and light were sacred to them, and from their movements they deduced the course of earthly affairs. The Rab Mag mentioned in Jer. xxxix. 3 at the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, was chief of the Magi of the king of Babylon, and Daniel was made chief governor of them (Dan. ii. 48). Magic is the name given to the hidden wisdom originally practised by them.

From the east: probably Babylonia, beyond the Euphrates. There were many Jews in those regions through whom prophecies, such as that of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 17) might become known.

To Jerusalem, as the capital where the birth of a prince would naturally be well known.

2. *Where is he, etc*: the inquiry combines an assertion and a question. That he is born is taken for granted; the only question is as to his residence.

King of the Jews: this is the name of the Messiah as used by outsiders in the Gospel, especially at the

trial of Jesus before Pilate (xxvii. 11, etc.). The Roman historian Tacitus, the Jew Josephus, and other non-Christian writers refer to the hope of a Saviour-king from among the Jews as known to the outside world.

We saw, at a certain definite time, now past; *his star*, one which they recognized, according to the rules of their art, as denoting the birth of a king in a special country. *In the east*, that is, when we were still in our own country, before setting out on this journey; not that the star appeared in the easterly sky. Meanwhile the particular brilliant conjunction above mentioned had vanished; hence they have to inquire of the local people.

Come to worship him: to do homage by prostration and presentation of a nuzzur, as to their overlord, who was to bring a new light and divine wisdom into the world. The indications on which these Magi based their conclusion may seem to us fanciful, but their conclusion was correct because they followed with a single mind, and a desire for more light, such guidance as was available. How often have inquirers after Christ in this country been guided by dreams or other uncertain signs to find Christ their Saviour, because they truly sought Him with all their heart. (Jer. xxix. 13).

S. *Herod was troubled*, in view of his recent suspicions as to his own sons, and also because he knew that the people regarded him, the Idumaeon, as an alien, and would be ready to welcome the Messiah as their true king. *And all Jerusalem with*

him, for they well knew Herod's remorseless cruelty in removing possible rivals, and those who sympathized with them. Only two years before, under a similar apprehension, Herod had slaughtered all the leading Pharisees.

4. Herod hereupon gathers together an assembly of theologians learned in the Old Testament Scriptures, as a Muhammadan ruler would consult his muftis. These included *all the chief priests and the scribes of the (Jewish) people*. The Roman government allowed the Jews much religious liberty, but they kept a firm hand on appointments which affected the politics of the nation. According to the law of Moses, the High Priest of the nation was appointed by divine choice, with a ceremony of sacrifice and anointing (Exod. xxix. and xxx., cp. Heb. v. 4). But the appointment was now made by the Romans for one year at a time (John xi. 49), and the priests who had held the office afterwards had the honorary title of Chief Priests. They represented the religious officials, who were in touch with political affairs, and should know if this announcement had any political bearings. The Scribes were the class of scholars who copied out, studied and expounded the Law and the Prophets. Their origin can be traced as far back as the time of 'Ezra the scribe' (Ezra vii. 6). By Luke (vii. 6, etc.) they are generally called lawyers, as having to do with the exposition of the Torah or Law of Moses, which governed the life of the Jews, just as the Shar'a of Muhammad does that of his followers. As scribes, they resembled muftis; as lawyers, qâdîs. The

meeting so convened does not appear to have been one of the Sanhedrin, or Chief Council of the Jews, as the 'elders' chosen by the people, who formed the third element in the Sanhedrin (cp. xvi. 21; xxvi. 3, 57) are here omitted. *The people* is here and throughout the New Testament, a singular noun, and in the great majority of cases it signifies the Jewish nation as the chosen people of God, or the Christian church which has taken that position (cp. Acts xv. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 10.) To this assembly of experts Herod propounded the theological question *where the Christ should be born* according to their traditions.

5, 6. Apparently the answer was given without hesitation, as an accepted opinion (John vii. 42). *Bethlehem of Judaea*, see v. 1. *Written by* (or *through*) *the prophet*, as the messenger of Jehovah. The quotation is freely given from Mic. v. 2. It would be read out by the leading scribe in the original Hebrew, and then translated by him into the vernacular (either Aramaic, or Greek in the court of Herod, probably the latter), just as the Maulavi cites the Qur'an first in the original, and then in his own or an accepted translation. The translation of the Hebrew Scriptures when read in public had become necessary since the time of Nehemiah (viii. 7-8). It was often done by a special official called Methurgeman (*tarjuman*). The evangelist, here and elsewhere, acts as Methurgeman for his readers, and uses the freedom to which such translators were accustomed. The Hebrew text literally runs: 'And thou, Bethlehem

Ephrata (*land of Judah*) though little to be among the thousands (*art in no wise least among the princes*) of Judah, (*for*) out of thee shall come forth for me one that is to be a ruler in (*a governor which shall be shepherd of my people*) Israel.' The brackets show the differences in the Greek translation given by Matthew. Some of them, for instance, 'princes' for 'thousands' (that is, larger tribal divisions) are based on different vocalizations of the consonants in the Hebrew text, but generally speaking it is clear that, in this and many other quotations in the Gospels and Epistles, the writers quoted Scripture freely according to its sense, and sometimes combined passages of similar meaning. But while, in such cases, the sacred writers show that their concern is rather with the meaning than with the letter of the passages in question, in others they lay stress on the exact form of a word, when it affects the argument, for instance, in Gal. iii. 16-17; Heb. xii. 26-27. The same holds good of the scriptural quotations of the Fathers of the Church; and in our own case as students of the Scriptures both methods have their value. Sometimes it serves best to take the general trend of a passage for our instruction; at others it is more profitable to dwell carefully on the form and position of a single word, as affecting the teaching of the divine Spirit through the writer.

7-8. Having determined the place of his possible rival, Herod carefully fixes the time of his birth, on the assumption that the star appeared then. He called the Magi *privily*, lest the Child who might be a popular hero, should be identified by any one else but his emissaries.

9. *The star went before them.* The Magi had learned the direction of Bethlehem, and according to the rules of their art it appeared that the star pointed in that direction. When they arrived at Bethlehem the star in the same way indicated the part of the town for which they were bound: it apparently *stoop over where the young child was.* The words imply that the Magi took a night journey to Bethlehem, though the distance to be traversed was at most six miles. Possibly the interview with the king was not over till evening, and they were then eager to attain the goal of their journey as rapidly as possible; or they may have waited till nightfall to ascertain from the stars the lucky time (*muhurt*) for their journey, and as they were engaged in this the rising of the star which they had previously seen drew their attention and filled them with joy in the assurance that they had been rightly guided.

11. They find the Holy Family in *the house* where they had taken up their abode with the intention of remaining in Bethlehem, as the city of the royal ancestor whose kingdom the Child was to inherit (Luke i. 32). The stay in the stable of the sarae (Luke ii. 7) would be of very short duration. *They fell down and worshipped,* as an act of homage to the King of the Jews. It is noteworthy that, in spite of the analogy of Ps. lxxii. 10, 11, the evangelist here quotes no scripture; whereas later this analogy was pressed to prove that the Magi were kings. Still, the meaning of the Psalmist's prophecy then began to be fulfilled. *Treasures* mean the receptacles in which

valuables are kept (cp. xii. 35; xiii. 52). In this case they would be caskets or bags brought on camels: From these *they offered unto him*, a nuzzur to a king: *gold* (Ps. lxxii. 15) is still offered at a royal or viceregal darbar; *frankincense*, is a sweetsmelling gum, used largely in worship (Exod. xxx. 34, etc.); *myrrh* is also an aromatic gum, used among other things, for embalming the bodies of the dead; see John xix. 39. The two latter were also used as scents (Song of Sol. iii. 6). They were costly articles of luxury and probably characteristic products of the country from which the Magi came, suitable as an offering to a person of high rank: cp. Jacob's offering to Pharaoh, Gen. xliii. 11. This is one of the passages in the Gospel which indicate that splendour and dignity is a true element in our offering to Christ, whether in worship or otherwise.

12 The warning by *a dream* is characteristic of these two first chapters but particularly appropriate to the Magi, who were specially versed in the interpretation of dreams (Dan. ii).

13-15. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.

Among the slanders current among the Jews of the first century was one that Jesus had acquired his wonder-working powers by the study of magic arts in Egypt. The Christian neophytes are therefore taught that Jesus had indeed lived for a short time in Egypt, but under circumstances which showed how baseless was this calumny, and in fact constituted a fulfilment of prophecy.

13. *Egypt*, though often an enemy and corrupter of Israel, had once and again proved a foster mother to the nation, ever since Jacob and his sons had taken refuge there (cp. also Jer. xlii. 14). At this time more than a million Jews were settled in Egypt, specially in the great city of Alexandria, and they were wealthier and better educated than their countrymen in Palestine. The Holy Family would readily find countrymen among whom they could lodge, and Joseph carry on his trade. They were under Roman government, though outside the jurisdiction of Herod.

14. After the dream is past, Joseph does not wait for day to dawn, but in alarm and with ready obedience, sets off at once, *by night*. The poor artisan had not much to pack.

15. *Till the death of Herod*; about 4 B.C. so that the stay was probably not over a year in length (see introduction to this chapter). *Out of Egypt did I call my son*. Hosea (xi. 1) in these words is enlarging on the fact of God's loving care for Israel as His son (Exod. iv. 22, 23). After a temporary sojourn of that son of God in Egypt, Jehovah called him thence to fulfil a high calling, which alas,

Israel lamentably missed. The evangelist sees in this a parallel with the protection which Jesus found for a time in Egypt, till he was called thence to fulfil the great lifework which he perfectly accomplished.

16-18. MASSACRE OF THE INFANTS OF BETHLEHEM

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully learned of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

A voice was heard in Ramah,

Weeping and great mourning,

Rachel weeping for her children ;

And she would not be comforted, because they are not.

This is quite in accordance with what we know of the character of Herod, and it might easily be paralleled from the history of India. Jesus, the Son of the Virgin, gave a new meaning and sanctity to child life (xviii. 2; Mark x. 15), and His church has recognized that the death of these innocent little ones was specially 'precious in the sight of the Lord' (Ps. cxvi. 15). This was expressed by the institution of the Festival of the Holy Innocents, in close proximity to that of our Lord's birth, on December 28. They were the first who lost their lives, though involuntarily, through association with Him.

16. Herod regards himself as *mocked of the wise men*: he supposes that, while they were apparently agreeing to his proposals, they had, by means of their art, seen through his pretences. The idea that he had been outwitted by unworldly strangers increased his fierce irritation, and made him *exceeding wroth*. We see in him a superstitious credulity, combined with obstinate opposition to the divine will, and the equally superstitious idea that he could frustrate it by measures of worldly policy. He sends forth executioners to kill *all the male children that were in Bethlehem* and its *borders*, that is the outlying homesteads or hamlets within the village area. The present population of Bethlehem is reckoned at about 6,000. According to Indian census returns the number of infants up to two years of age is about seventy in 1,000. On this basis the number of infants slaughtered in Bethlehem would be about 400; but Bethlehem may have been smaller then than it now is. In any case this was a small thing compared to other bloody deeds of Herod. Not long afterwards he gave orders, according to Josephus, that all the principal men of the country, whom he had gathered together in the hippodrome at Jericho in expectation of his death, should be executed when that event occurred. The deed was not done, but it would have been in character with his policy. Josephus does not mention the massacre at Bethlehem, but he ignores almost all that has to do with Jesus, and Herod would keep the affair as quiet as might be, for he would not wish it spoken of in connexion with its motive, to

frustrate the Messianic hope of the Jewish nation. What *he had carefully learned of the wise men* had led him to believe that the child could not have been born more than two years ago.

17. *Then was fulfilled*, according to the Jewish manner of interpretation; we should rather call it an illustrative incident. The quotation is freely given from the Septuagint translation of Jer. xxxi. 15. Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, is there poetically represented as standing on the heights of Ramah in the territory of the tribe which was descended from her son, and weeping for her children, as she sees them carried away into captivity by the Chaldean conquerors who treated their captives, especially women and children, with great barbarity (Isa. xiii. 16). Rachel's tomb was close to Bethlehem, and in like poetic manner the evangelist sees the typical bereaved mother weeping for her children ruthlessly slain.

19-21. RETURN OF THE HOLY FAMILY FROM EGYPT

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

19. *When Herod was dead*, in the year 749 after the foundation of Rome, or four years before the traditional date of the birth of Christ. He died at the age of seventy of a loathsome disease. There might still be agents of his who would be carrying out the policy

that sought to extirpate any possible supplanter; hence Joseph does not move till the angel comes to him with the message: *They are dead that sought the young child's life*: with the death of Herod this policy of his had ceased.

22-23. RETURN OF JOSEPH TO NAZARETH

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of *God* in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.

22. *Archelaus was reigning over Judæa.* On Herod's death the Roman emperor his overlord divided his kingdom into four parts, (see map). Two, including Judæa, Idumea and Samaria were given to his son Archelaus, the elder brother of Antipas. He received the title of Ethnarch (ruler of a nation) with the promise of being made king like his father, if he showed himself worthy. He is spoken of as *reigning*, that is, exercising the office of a king, though he was so far only governing, like a rajah who has not received his full powers. He was as suspicious and cruel as his father, but without his ability, and his bad rule excited constant rebellions among his subjects, till at length they appealed to the Roman emperor who deposed Archelaus and banished him to Vienne in France in A. D. 6. From that time till A. D. 41 Judæa was under the rule

of Roman Governors called procurators, of whom Pontius Pilate was the sixth (A. D. 26-36). The remaining parts of the kingdom of Herod were given to two other sons. Antipas received Galilee and Peraea: he was less cruel than his brother Archelaus, but weak and vicious. Philip was set over Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis, regions east of the Jordan. These two latter princes had the title of tetrarch, or ruler of a Fourth, as they each received a quarter of their father's kingdom. Such being the character of the ruler, Joseph's fear of settling in his territory was confirmed by divine guidance, and he *withdrew into the parts of Galilee*, to the city of *Nazareth*, where he had lived before, long enough to be regarded as the regular carpenter of the place (xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3) while Jesus regarded it as his native place (xiii. 57) and became known as Jesus of Nazareth (John i. 45; Matt. xxi. 11.) Nazareth is not mentioned either in the Old Testament or in Josephus, and we may suppose that it was a place of less importance in the time of Christ than now, though in the Gospels it is referred as a town or *qasba*, as we should say in North India. At present it is a village of Lower Galilee, in an upland valley, north of the Plain of Esdraelon, and five and a half miles west of Mount Tabor, containing about 8,000 inhabitants. In the time of Christ it probably lay higher up the slope, on 'the brow of the hill' (Luke iv. 29), 1,600 feet above the level of the sea. After the revelation which Joseph had received as to the origin of his foster-son, it would have been natural for the family to migrate to the City of David, but

the evangelist wishes his Jewish Christian disciples to understand that there was a divine fitness in the settlement of the Messiah in a remote and inconspicuous provincial town. It fulfilled, he tells them, a prophetic announcement, *that he should be called a Nazarene*. There is no passage to which we can point as containing these words; hence they seem to indicate a general description of the trend of prophetic details regarding the Messiah, as in xxvi. 56; Mark xiv. 49; John xvii. 12. There may be an allusion to the description of Messiah in Isa. xi. 1 as the Branch, or in Hebrew *netser*, the same root from which the place name Nazareth is derived. In that passage Isaiah describes the coming King under the figure of an insignificant shoot growing out of the stump of a tree which has been cut down almost to the root. The play upon words thus elicited—the apparently insignificant ‘sprout’ of royal lineage, growing up in the unimportant ‘sprout-town’—would quite go home to the Jewish reader and learner, as after the manner of their theology. By the time this Gospel was written Christians had already received in scorn the name of Nazarenes (Acts xxiv. 5), which still clings to them in Muhammadan lands in the form *Nasará*. A like contemptuous use of ‘*Krishtán*’ or ‘*Kirúní*’ in India need not disturb us.

CHAPTER III

iii. 1-12 THE PREACHING AND BAPTISM OF JOHN

(MARK i. 2-8; LUKE iii. 3-18)

And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Make ye ready the way of the Lord,

Make his paths straight.

Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now is the axe laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he

that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and *with* fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

Having given necessary glimpses of the descent and infancy of Jesus, the evangelist now begins his main narrative 'from the baptism of John' (Acts i. 22) as St. Peter defined the outset of the apostolic witness.

'It was the glory of John the Baptist', writes the author of *Ecce Homo*, 'to have successfully revived the function of the prophet. Armed with the prophetic authority, he undertook a singular enterprise, of which probably most of those who witnessed it died without suspecting the importance, but which we can see to have been the foundation of the universal Church. In his career it was given to him to do two things—to inaugurate a new regime, and to nominate a successor who was far greater than himself'. St. Luke tells how John had been sanctified from his birth to be the forerunner of the Messiah (Luke i. 13-17; 76ff), how he had grown up in the wilderness like the prophet Elijah who was his model, and in John i. 33 we read of the special sign which he had received in order to enable him to recognize Jesus as the Coming one to whom he witnessed. From him Jesus received the outward seal of his ministry and Messiahship, and to his testimony He owed His first disciples (John i. 35 ff).

John came forward with the announcement that the kingdom of God was at hand, and the King

Himself about to appear. He refused to be hailed, as he might have been, as Messiah (Luke iii. 15; John i. 20), and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, who should take away the sin of the world (John i. 29). He was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and like them, regarded the coming of the kingdom of God as permanently connected with the restoration of the Israelitish polity; but, like those same prophets, there was that in his teaching which went beyond this view. In his recorded words we hear nothing of the temple or its ritual, or of the observances of the Law; the conditions of fitness for the privileges of the kingdom are repentance from sin, righteousness of life, and acceptance of the coming King; descent from Abraham is no inevitable condition of divine favour, but the benefits which Messiah will bring are for the whole world, and will be realized by His sacrificial death. At the same time Messiah is the executor of judgement which is imminent, but may be averted, as in the teaching of the Old Testament prophets, (for instance Jonah), by repentance, through which the people may escape the wrath to come (iii. 7f).

1. *In those days.* This phrase illustrates the way in which the Gospels were intended to be used, namely, as a basis for oral instruction. When we read them as they are, we are taken aback by the fact that the whole boyhood, youth and early manhood of Jesus has been omitted, yet the writer speaks of 'those days,' as if he were continuing the narrative from the last point. The words refer to certain well-known days which were in the mind of the instructor, and which

he would particularize orally before going on to this next section. Similarly the phrase 'in that day', frequently used in this and other gospels (vii. 22; Mark xiii. 32), means the well-known day, familiar to the readers from previous instruction. The actual date would be as explained above, about A. D. 26. St. Luke iii. 1, 2 carefully defines it. At this time Jesus is still living as an unknown artisan at Nazareth, and the preparation for His public appearance and ministry is the next point, after His birth history, on which the instructor desires to fix the attention of His pupils. First *cometh John the Baptist* on to the stage of history, for hitherto he, too, had been leading a life of retirement; not, however, that of social duty but of austere asceticism. The present tense, as in v. 13, pictures him in the act of stepping forth. The title Baptist suggests celebrity. It is mentioned by Josephus, who speaks of his great influence and the crowds who flocked to him, and says that he taught men 'justice towards one another and piety towards God'. The title further suggests that John's baptism had a character of its own, distinct from the Jewish baptism of proselytes which probably was in vogue then. The evangelist John, who of the four was alone his disciple, does not use the title, though he mentions the baptism. To the inner circle of his disciples he was 'a man sent from God, whose name was John' (John i. 6). He came *preaching*: the word almost always signifies announcing as a herald or crier on behalf of a ruler. He is the herald of the king Jehovah, who is coming in the person of Messiah (v. 3). The scene of his first

activity is *the wilderness of Judaea*. The meaning of the word here and elsewhere rendered 'wilderness' is much better expressed by the Indian term *jangal*. It does not mean an absolutely barren country, but one that is not under cultivation, nor more than very sparsely inhabited, however much of grazing or wild produce it may afford. The wilderness here mentioned consisted of the hilly pasture lands between the central mountain range of Judaea and the Jordan and Dead Sea (see map). It was remote from busy life, yet not entirely without means of sustenance.

2. The message of this herald is: *Repent ye*. An earthly monarch is usually welcomed with change of garments or surroundings, such as roads and dwellings: the welcome demanded by John is literally a 'change of mind,' that is, first in regard to sin, which has been regarded with pleasure, or longing, or at most indifference, but is now looked on with abhorrence as fatal; and next as regards God (Acts xx. 21) once rebelled against as a tyrant, now accepted as the true Lord. This is the fundamental nature of scriptural repentance. Reformation of life is its fruit (v. 8), and therefore a test of its reality. The message is addressed to all whom it may concern, that is to the nation as a whole, and is a trenchant reminder to them that the whole tendency of their thought and efforts is on wrong lines, although they are the chosen people of God. And so it is an integral part of God's message to the Christian Church, and is regularly impressed upon us by the recurring seasons of Advent and Lent. The Baptist's exhortation is enforced by

an announcement: *for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand*. In St. Matthew the phrase 'kingdom of heaven' is used thirty-three times; elsewhere, we almost always have 'kingdom of God'. The meaning is identical, and both phrases were current at the time of our Lord. This is the only place where the kingdom is mentioned by John the Baptist. The qualification expressed by 'heaven' here and elsewhere in this Gospel is germane to the object of St. Matthew, who is anxious to impress upon his learners that this divine kingdom or theocracy, however truly it is continuous with, and the fulfilment of, the theocracy of the Old Testament, is a heavenly and invisible order of things, which is but gradually realized upon earth (vi. 10), and not a political state in this world, such as the Jews loved to connect with the Messiah. Kingdom may mean either the region over which a monarch rules (Luke xix. 12; Col. i. 13) or the organized authority which he (personally, or through others) exercises over it (xvi. 19, 28; xxv. 34); or participation in the privileges of membership of a state (xxi. 43; Mark x. 5). Here and elsewhere in the Gospels the prevalent meaning is usually the second of these, that of organized rule, but we cannot always confine the reference strictly to one aspect. When John announces that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, he means that the ruler is shortly to appear, who will restore its decayed authority and establish its order. The word repentance has indicated that this order and authority is moral in its nature. Jesus is to restore the moral rule of God in the hearts and lives of men, and in

the world at large, and to do this he must first purify it from the material and worldly meaning attached to it by the Jew, who regarded it as equivalent to liberation from domination and rule over the nations of the earth, conferring supreme honour and enjoyment on every member of the chosen race. Of course, we have here only so to speak the text of John's preaching, and *vv.* 7 to 12 the main thoughts. Some of the early missionaries who used this Gospel for Palestine learners must have been disciples of the Baptist, and they would be able to illustrate the exposition of these thoughts by the great prophet from their own memories of what he had said.

3. Since God's covenant had been made with Israel at Sinai, the greatest deliverance which they had experienced was the return from the Babylonish captivity. How partial the results of that deliverance had been, the Jews of our Lord's time and the Palestine Christians of the first century well knew. But the herald voice which Isaiah heard and recorded (*xl.* 3) was realized in John the Baptist. The prophet of the exile is proclaiming that Israel is to be released from its long bondage in Babylon, and he hears in spirit the voice of a herald, proclaiming that Jehovah is coming, as of old, to deliver his people from bondage and bring them through the wilderness to their land. In uninhabited tracts the road must be repaired and straightened (made *ready* and *straight*) just as is now done in this country when a viceroy or other ruler makes his progress through some rarely traversed jungle. Without such preparation his subjects cannot expect

a gracious disposition on the monarch's part when he arrives. John is *the voice* (John 1. 23); *the wilderness* represents the moral degeneracy of the people which hinders the coming of the Kingdom; in this moral wilderness the way must be prepared by repentance, which straightens out the crooked ways of sin, and by casting up a highway of holiness (Isa. xxxv. 8). Notice that John's call is concentrated on his message: 'I am the voice of: one crying' (John i. 23) the message of Jesus on His Person: 'Come unto me' (xi. 29).

4. In garb and in manner of life this herald follows the most austere of the Old Testament prophets. *John himself*, in his personal appearance, as distinguished from his message, had his *raiment of camel's hair*. This rough hairy garment, bound together with a leathern girdle, was characteristic of the Hebrew prophets (Zech. xiii. 4) especially of Elijah (2 Kings i. 8). Before his birth this prophet had been designated by the angel as the spiritual model of John, and naturally, having heard this from his parents, John would imitate him in outward fashion also. The garb was coarse but serviceable, like the hair garment worn by many faqirs, and the same, as in their case, for summer and winter. *His food* was the same as is often eaten by the poorest Bedouin nowadays. The word used for *locusts* is that used for the last of the four kinds of locust which the law of Moses allowed the people to eat, (see Lev. xi. 22, Greek translation). The Bedouin eat them with honey and butter, the products of

a deserted land (Isa. vii. 15): John used honey only, which could be found without the help of others in the rock caves common in the limestone hills of Judaea.

5, 6. A recluse of such ascetic life and startling message would soon acquire wide fame. He first receives many pilgrims from the nearer countryside, *Jerusalem* the capital city, *Judaea* the surrounding province, and *all the region round about Jordan*, which would take in part of *Peraea*. It is evident that John was quickly and generally recognized as a prophet (xi. 9; xiv. 5). *And they were baptized in the river Jordan*, which divides eastern from western Palestine, as being the nearest water sufficient for large numbers (cp. John iii. 23). Baptism signifies dipping or bathing. Such religious bathing might be carried out, by immersion or, as often in India, by pouring water over the body or some other object (pots or couches Mark vii. 4). The idea of a ceremonial washing, conferring religious purity, is common to almost all religions,¹ and it was highly developed in the Jewish religion (cp. Heb ix. 10). The baptism of proselytes on their admission into the Jewish faith was probably current at this time. The words of the priests and Levites sent to interview John (John i. 25): 'Why baptizest thou then, if thou art not the Christ?' suggest that the Messiah and those who had to do with him were expected to

¹ In the Hindu daily ritual of *sndn* the worshipper addresses *Gangá* thus: 'Protect us mother; wash our sins that we commit from birth to death'.

baptize. In any case John used the rite of baptism to signify the purification which was needed to make the people acceptable to Messiah when he should come. Hence, it was accompanied by confession of sin: perhaps, sometimes individually, sometimes in groups (Luke iii. 10-14). Such spontaneous and public confession was apparently a new thing, and very offensive to the pride of the average Pharisee. This, and the subsequent strong rebuke on the part of the Baptist alienated the majority of them (cp. Luke vii. 30). In the case of Christian baptism, such confession became customary (Acts xxii. 16) and it is in Ephesus, where the first disciples were disciples of John, that the most striking public confession of sin recorded in the Acts occurs, see Acts xix. 18.

7-12. In these verses we have a sketch of the main points in the preaching of the Baptist, supplemented by St. Luke and St. John. He rebukes in sharpest terms the leaders of the people, who come to his baptism as a hypocritical concession to popular feeling, and announces imminent judgment on them. To the crowds, who are more or less seriously concerned as to their spiritual welfare, he gives counsels of practical righteousness (Luke x. 17). He announces the near advent of One immeasurably greater than himself, who will execute judgment (v. 11-12) and (John i. 19-28); in answer to a deputation of the leaders of the people, he confirms this prediction.

But when he saw, etc.—The coming of Pharisees and Sadducees is a new stage in the ministry of John and

a tribute to his rising popularity. The leaders of the people can no longer afford to ignore him, and they are actually *coming to his baptism*. Apparently, they are ready in some fashion to confess their sins, as many church goers do still, not because they feel ashamed of themselves, but because it is fashionable, and what every one is doing they may safely do without branding themselves as worse than others. When John saw them he could recognize them by their dress and demeanour, as one may recognize men of the maulavi or pandit class in an Indian crowd. The great men would be followed by a tail of respectful disciples.

The name Pharisee signifies separatist ; it was given to the section of the Jews, who were most zealous in separating themselves from all idolatrous and foreign influences after the nation came into closer contact with Greece and Rome. Their formation into a religious and political party can be traced from the time of the Maccabee kings (167 to 163 B.C.). Their fundamental principle was that of strict obedience to the law of Moses and to the unwritten traditions handed down by the scribes. They were the popular party, and were generally held in great reverence, because of the services which they had rendered to the national cause. In the time of our Lord they had degenerated, and were given, as a class, to formalism (xxiii. 23-6) self-righteousness (Luke xviii. 9) and hypocrisy (xxiii. 1 ff), though, as the examples of Gamaliel and Saul of Tarsus show, there were many good men among them. We shall see in the course of the Gospel, how their exclusiveness and narrowness

led them into an attitude of opposition to Jesus, which developed into an actual alliance with their bitterest opponents, the Sadducees, in order to bring about the removal of Jesus from their path. We may compare the Pharisees with the Wabbábi sect among the Muḥammadans, in their zeal for the Qur'án and the genuine traditions, and their occasional collision with the political authorities, owing to hatred of non-Muslim rule.

The derivation and meaning of the name *Sadducees* is uncertain, but there is no doubt as to its application. 'It is always used to designate the political party of the Jewish aristocratic priesthood, from the time of the Maccabees till the fall of the Jewish state. . . . Any one, whatever his rank or station, could be a Pharisee, but no one could be a Sadducee, unless he belonged to one of the high-priestly or aristocratic families' (Hastings, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, p. 548; Acts iv. 1; v. 17). They were the Broad Churchmen or Reformers of the Jewish nation, who acquiesced in foreign rule, and welcomed foreign civilization. They denied the resurrection (xxii. 23) personal immortality, and retribution in a future life; also the existence of spirits and angels, (Acts xxiii. 8) and divine predestination. They also held by the written law only, and rejected the Pharisaic traditions.

Ye offspring of vipers.—When the stubble is fired in Palestine for the winter sowing, these snakes emerge from their holes to escape from the heat, as they flee from the water in this country when land is

for the first time irrigated. It is not unlikely (see v. 12) that John spoke these words in the autumn, when such burning was going on in the fields, and this parable from nature before their eyes would carry home his message to the hearers. The point of the comparison of these leaders of the nation to poisonous snakes lay in the injuriousness of their influence by teaching and example, especially the latter (xii. 34; xxiii. 33). Later on, Jesus compares the influence of the Pharisees and Sadducees to leaven (xvi.), with reference to their false teaching (xvi. 12) and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Luke xii. 1). This John chastises in the words: *who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* A day of wrath for the nations was to be connected with the coming of Messiah (Ps. cx. 5; Isa. xiii. 9) but it would be for Israel as well, and especially for those who were the appointed guides of the people (Mal. iii. 2 ff). These spiritual guides now gave themselves the air of acting under the impulse of some such prophetic warning, but in reality they were calculating how far they had to fall in with a strong movement which they could not afford to ignore (xxi. 26) though in their hearts they despised the people (John vii. 49). In v. 8 the preacher changes the metaphor to one familiar to all his hearers from the Old Testament (Isa. v. 4, etc.). *Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance.* God's people are his plants; their life must show good deeds which spring from the inner root of the life that God has given; otherwise they are not truly his plants (xv. 13). And if that life has been stifled by sin, its

reformation must spring from the root of a real change of mind. The greatest obstacle to such a true change is the false notion of hereditary religious privilege: *We have Abraham to our father.* (cp. John viii. 39, Phil. iii. 5). The privilege of descent from pious ancestors and of upbringing amid sound religious traditions is among the greatest that we can have, it becomes a snare only when it is put in the place of the one thing needful to which it was intended to lead up, the life of God rooted in the soul and the fruits that spring from it. Such deadly spiritual pride among ourselves is not only in those who boast of their descent from Brahma or Muhammad: it is found wherever the later generation of Christians feel themselves absolved by reason of being 'born Christians' from the zeal and self-sacrifice of the first converts. Such pride surely comes before a fall. *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.* There seems to be a play upon words between *stones* (Hebrew *abanim*) and *children* (*banim*). *These stones* says John, pointing to the limestone boulders of the hills on which he stood, (the same which Jesus was afterwards invited to make into loaves) could by God's power become children of Abraham; how much more the Gentiles who were still reckoned by the race-proud Jews to be 'no people' (1 Peter 2-10, see Gal. iii. 7, 29).

10. Here again it is possible that John sees a shepherd cutting down for firing purposes some fruitless shrub of the wilderness. The *axe*—judgement; *root*—the internal life; *fruit* and *fire* are the alternative issues for the tree: the life that is unprofitable

for God and men is only fit for destruction (cp. Ez. xv). If this applied to Israelites, much more does it to those who have been made branches of the living Vine (John xv. 6).

11, 12. This first testimony of John to Jesus is given before his baptism: that recorded in John i. 26-34 is after it. *He that cometh after me*. This designation of Messiah seems to have been a standing one with John (John i. 15, 27; Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16). He probably uses it in preference to the regular title because of the false notions which people connected with the word Messiah. Because of this He wishes to impress upon them, first the true nature of the activities of the Great One who is so soon to appear. To express this, the Baptist uses three of the elements as images. *Water* expresses his own activity, as symbolizing purification from sin. This baptism was external and temporary. *He that cometh after John* is immeasurably exalted above even this the last and greatest of the prophets (xi. 11), who knows himself unworthy to do for him the service of the meanest slave who carries his master's shoes. His work is typified by air and fire, *He shall baptize, that is, actually and vitally cleanse, you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*¹ The Hebrew word *ruah*, the Greek *pneuma*, the Latin *spiritus*, and the Arabic *ruh* (used also in Urdu) alike mean wind or breath. In the Old Testament the Spirit of God is referred to as the divine wind or breath (Ps. civ. 29, 30; Ez. xxxvii. 9, 14) but it is also the moral aspect of God's influence (Ps. li. 11;

¹ On the Holy Ghost or Spirit, see i. 18.

Isa. lxiii. 10, 11). Not till after the resurrection of Christ, is the spirit fully revealed, in accordance with his promises (John :xiv. 15 f, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13) as a divine Person. The Baptist did not yet know this, and that is one reason why he was less than the 'little in the kingdom of heaven' (xi. 11) for this crowning revelation he could not impart, and his disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus were ignorant of it (Acts xix. 2). Yet when the Holy Spirit came in the fulness of His light and power at Pentecost, the elements which He chose for His manifestation were those which the Baptist had indicated, wind and fire. The attributes thereby indicated are life-giving power and purifying power, in both cases with the converse connotation of destruction of what is tainted or impure by the hurricane or the refiner's fire. The images used in this verse emphasize the purifying operation of the Christ. In v. 12 the same metaphors are continued, but with the aspect of judgement and retribution. *Whose fan is in his hand*: the peasant's winnowing-fan or basket is used, when a breeze is blowing, to throw up the corn that has been trodden out by the oxen on the threshing floor, and expose it to the wind which blows away the husks and dust, (Ps. i. 4) while the heavier wheat falls down straight in a separate heap. Then the wheat is gathered *into the garner* or granary, for the use of the master, but the chaff is burned up (Mal. (iv. 1) *with unquenchable fire*. How far it was or is customary in Palestine to burn up chaff (which is not done in India) I have not been able to discover. The force of the word

unquenchable seems to be that the fire is not permitted to be quenched till the whole of the refuse is consumed (cp. Mark ix. 45, 48). Then the threshing floor is thoroughly cleansed; in other words Messiah's work of judgement will not be partial and provisional, like that done by prophets of old: it will be carried out to the final separation of the good from the evil, disregarding all outward appearances and human judgements (see xiii. 40 f). Here John, like other Old Testament prophets, sees the saving and the judging work of the Messiah as if they were simultaneous, as one looking at a hilly country before he comes to it sees the further and the nearer hills on one horizon. In reality the two are separated by a considerable distance of time or space; but the judgement of which the Baptist speaks is a moral judgement which is working itself out in the history of every man according to his relation to Christ (John iii. 18) and Jesus distinctly claims to exercise both these functions of judgement, in the present (John ix. 39) and the future (Matt. vii. 21-3).

13-17. JESUS BAPTIZED BY JOHN.

(MARK i. 9-11; LUKE iii. 21-2; JOHN i. 31-4)

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were

opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Before Jesus is depicted as setting out on His career as Messiah, it remains for the evangelist to show how He first of all took care to link His ministry to that of the Baptist, and through him to the line of Old Testament prophecy, and how in so doing He received the complete and permanent anointing of the Holy Spirit, who had only been given partially and at times to holy men of old; and how, at the same time He received the unique seal of divine sonship. The latter expresses the unique relation to God which qualifies Him for the work of Saviour; the former conveys to the human nature, which he shares in common with all men, an illumination and power adequate for the work to which he was called from the first, and to which He now devotes himself completely.

13. *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee.* Now for the first time He appears on the stage of history. Doubtless news of the great movement caused by the appearance and preaching of His relative, John the Baptist had reached Jesus in the retirement of Nazareth. He had thought over it in the light of the Scriptures which were His study, and now He knows that He too is called to relinquish the unknown life of his country village and to fulfil the expectations which John had roused. So far we have heard of the Judæan population only as resorting to John (v. 5; xi. 7 ff) imply that later on Galileans also came to him

in great numbers. Was Jesus the first of these? In the consciousness of His infinite mission He comes *to the Jordan*, the river in which the work of baptizing was going on, (iii. 6) *to John*, who had not yet known Him as Messiah (John i. 31), *to be baptized of him*. As far as any cleansing from sin was concerned, such baptism was needless, for Jesus was Himself the forgiver of sin (ix. 4) the pattern and giver of new life (xix. 21), in a word, the sinless king of the kingdom of heaven. Yet doubtless He was led on this errand by the Spirit no less than when He went to meet the tempter in the wilderness (iv. 1). He is about to die to the old life of earthly relationships, and to devote Himself to a new life of complete absorption in His messianic calling. In so doing He places Himself in the position of the sinful members of His people, and undergoes a rite, the deepest meaning of which is death to sin and life to righteousness (Rom. vi. 3-4). In thus dedicating Himself to death and resurrection He receives for Himself the seal of Sonship and the power of the Spirit, the same gifts which, according to their capacity, He is to impart to all who are baptized into Him (Rom. vi. 5; viii. 14-15).

14. *John would have hindered him*. They were related through their mothers (Luke i. 36), and John must have known of the purity of the character of Jesus, and inspired as he was, would intuitively recognize that He was the mighty one who had the baptism of the Spirit and fire at His command. But he did not yet know the higher power of holy love which sacrifices itself for the ungodly (Rom. v. 8).

15. *Suffer it now.* In these words Jesus tacitly accepts John's estimate of Him. Gently, but authoritatively, He directs that that this inversion of positions is to take place, but only for the occasion then present. What for others was an occasion for the confession of sin, is for Jesus an act of moral seemliness, and a dedication to the first step in the fulfilment of a perfect ideal of righteousness, which includes not merely the performance of every moral duty, but the sacrifice of His moral rights for the sake of imparting righteousness to others. His unalterable resolve is *to fulfil all righteousness*, not merely that of the law which demands right doing, but the claim of the perfect will of God, which is salvation through sacrifice (John vi. 37-40). *This*, Jesus says, *becometh us*. Far from being below His dignity it was a seemly act, worthy of His divine mission. The law of moral seemliness is accepted by God Himself. 'It became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings' (Heb. iii. 10) and on this is based the supreme moral worthiness of Christ (Rev. v. 12). This word of Jesus corrects the false estimate of honour which is so current among us. Nothing is below the dignity of a Christian by which he can truly serve God and his brethren, and nothing can impair his dignity, save to fall short of the will of God and His 'high calling' (Phil. iii. 14). Jesus freely resolved to subject himself to ordinances which presupposed the sinfulness of the observer. Until we

are content to humble ourselves for the sake of others we shall fail to draw and lift them up.

16. After John had suffered Him thus to abase Himself, and had performed the act of baptism *Jesus went up straightway from the water*, without waiting, like others, to confess sins, or to receive instructions in the way of righteousness. *And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him.* The idea conveyed by the plural of the word heaven though elaborated in a very carnal and external fashion by Jewish and Muhammadan theology, is clear enough in the New Testament; namely, that in the unseen world there are degrees of glory and differences of condition in which angels and departed spirits abide. Jesus, when about to depart, assured His disciples that in His Father's house are many mansions. He came from the highest heaven, (forth from God, John xiii. 3), and was to return thither (he hath passed through the heavens, Heb. iv. 14) and now a vision of the home from which He had accepted temporary exile, is opened to Him. As He looks into His native glory One comes to greet Him: *He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him.* This is the Holy Spirit whom John (v. 2) had connected with Messiah. He has come, not only to abide upon Him (John i. 32; cp. Isa. xi. 2), but to fill (Luke iv. 1) and lead Him (iv. 1) as all sons of God through Him must be led (Rom. viii. 14). The appearance to the spectator is that of a dove hovering over and settling upon Jesus. The dove was a bird accepted and much used in sacrifice, especially by the poor (Lev. xii. 11; Luke ii. 24) and it was a symbol of

innocence and harmlessness (x. 16; cp. Heb. vii. 26). While its movement indicated, the coming of the Spirit from heaven, its symbolism declared the sinlessness of Him who had but now put Himself on a level with sinners.

17. The emblematic declaration of the fitness of Jesus for His office is followed by an explicit declaration in words of His unique relation to the Father, upon which His character as mediator is based. Out of those same heavens whence He had come is heard the Voice: *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.* This would be understood, in the first instance, as a confirmation of the Messiahship of Jesus. The King who is God's vicegerent on earth is spoken of in Ps. ii. 7 as the Son of God, begotten by Him on the day of his elevation to the royal dignity, whereby he is born into a new life. Also the righteous Servant of Jehovah, who is so fully described in Isa. xl. to lvi, as doing and suffering all His will, is spoken of (Isa. xlii. 1) as 'my chosen in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon Him.' But the words 'beloved son' carry more than this. They express not only a relation of office (as God's anointed King), but still more of essence (as partaking of the nature of God, and possessing essential deity). There is a close relation between the terms 'beloved' and 'only' or 'only-begotten' (cp. Gen. xxii. 2, 'thine only son whom thou lovest' Mark xii. 6, 'he had yet one, a beloved son'); and the idea here expressed by St. Matthew is essentially the same as that which St. John (i. 14; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9) signifies by

the term 'only-begotten son'. From the human side 'beloved son' expresses perfect agreement of will with the Father and fulfilment of His ideal of sinless humanity; from the divine side a real community of nature with Him. Matthew gives the oracle as beginning with 'This is', as it was heard by John; Mark and Luke have 'Thou art', as heard by Jesus.

The analogy of this scene with the transfiguration is close. Both the visions conveyed strengthening and enlightenment for the work that lay before Jesus, this first for His active ministry, the other mainly for His Passion. In this Jesus is vouchsafed the vision of heaven itself; in that of visitants from heaven. In both the heavenly vision is supplemented by a voice; here it seals the self-dedication of Jesus; there it confirms the confession of the disciples' faith by Peter. In the Greek Church it is the baptism of Jesus which is commemorated at the Festival of the Epiphany, and for this reason the Second Lesson for Evensong on that day in our Calendar contains St. Luke's story of the event. Matt. iii is also an alternative lesson for the evening of Trinity Sunday, for it relates the first distinct manifestation of the triunity of the Divine Being. The voice of the Father who has sent His Beloved Son to be the Saviour from sin is addressed to Him, accepting His self-devotion to that work, and His Holy Spirit descends upon the Son, as the bond of union with the Father and the communication of power for the work of salvation (op. xxviii. 19).

CHAPTER IV

iv. 1-11. THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

(MARK i. 12, 13; LUKE iv. 1-13)

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward hungered. And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

And on their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the

devil leaveth him ; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

In all probability the temptation of our Lord followed immediately upon the baptism, for St. Mark uses the word 'straightway', and St. Luke states that Jesus returned from Jordan full of the Spirit and was led by Him into the wilderness. It was moreover, the natural counterpart of the baptism, which had ended with the declaration of the Divine Sonship of Jesus. From this the tempter takes his first occasion of evil suggestion, while Jesus takes the next step in the fulfilment of all righteousness by meeting the attacks of evil on the same footing as all men since the first temptation. The account of the temptation could only have come to the evangelists from the lips of Jesus Himself, and it is related as an actual experience, though described in symbolical language, as is the first temptation in Gen. iii. In both cases, had the story been framed in terms of theology or philosophy, it would have been unintelligible to those for whom it was first intended, and in later ages, more especially our own, those terms would have been antiquated and positively misleading.

Jesus' most frequent designation of Himself was 'the son of man', that is, he in whom the ideal of man is fulfilled (see note on viii. 20), in accordance with which St. Paul speaks of Him as the 'second man' or Adam (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47 ; ep. Rom. v. 12, 15). As such, His task was to meet and overcome the

spiritual seductions of the tempter, so that He might eventually overthrow the social and physical evils which result from the moral fall. Our Saviour refers to the temptation in xii. 29 (the binding of the strong man) and in Luke x. 18, 'I beheld Satan fallen' (cp. Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15). He actually went into the wilderness, and remained there forty days, and there experienced the promptings here depicted, which He recognized as proceeding not from His own heart, but from an evil agency outside Him. That this agency is recognized and treated by our Saviour as that of a person who is the head of the kingdom of evil, and absolutely opposed to the kingdom of God, is quite clear from the Gospels, and, as we see at the end of this chapter (v. 24) and repeatedly afterwards, Satan and his inferior spirits are regarded as having a special connexion with many forms of physical evil and disease. The tempter is called in the New Testament by two names. Here he is 'the devil' (Greek, *diabolos*, that is, accuser or adversary: Arabic *Iblis*). As such, he places the requirements of God in a false light to man (cp. Gen. iii. 1; 'Yea, bath God said', etc.) and accuses man to God (cp. Job i. 9-11 and Rev. xii. 10). In v. 10 and elsewhere he is called Satan (*Shaitān*) which is the Hebrew equivalent of *diabolos*. In Rev. xii. 9, the overthrow of his authority is emphasized by the use of both names. Some have supposed that our Lord in his utterances about Satan and demons was accommodating himself to the notions of the day, without demanding a belief in the real existence of such

beings. There seems to be no sufficient reason for such a theory. The presence of sin and temptation in the world which is created and ruled by a Holy and Almighty God, is no doubt a mystery which we cannot explain, but only grapple with by action. But, seeing that this is a fact, the operation of the power of evil, which we undeniably experience, through the agency of personal beings, is less inexplicable than if we suppose it to emerge from mere nothingness. The old remark is true that, if there be a personal devil, he would do his best to persuade men of his non-existence, so as the easier to lead them astray.

1. *Led up.* The use of the word 'up' with verbs of motion in the Gospels, which is unfortunately incapable of rendering in the Urdu and other vernacular versions, is worthy of attention, as showing the local knowledge of the writers. In this case our Lord mounted from the low-lying Jordan valley about 1,000 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, to the hilly 'wilderness' of Judæa, some 2,000 feet above the sea. Wherever the words going up or going down are used of places, these are actually higher or lower than the starting point; e. g. xx. 17, going up from the low-lying Jericho to the mountain city Jerusalem, or John ii. 12, going down from Cana on the hills of Galilee to Capernaum on the lake shore. To a place of solitary meditation and communion with His Father Jesus was led by the Spirit, now abiding in Him without measure (John iv. 34) filling Him with power (Luke iv. 14) and joy (Luke

x. 21). Doubtless Jesus would be intending to reflect on the work which He was about to take up, but there was yet another object in the guidance of the Spirit; Jesus was *to be tempted of the devil*. 'God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man' says St. James (i. 13). But God permits His servants to be tested, because without the conscious rejection of evil goodness remains negative and undeveloped. Therefore the presentation and rejection of possible forms of self-will is the foundation of the work which Jesus has come to do in saving men from their sins. We must remember that the word tempt, has a twofold meaning: first to put a person or thing to the trial to ascertain his or its quality, or with a view of establishing its excellence; and next to solicit to sin with a view to destruction, or bringing to a fall, as here. Every moral temptation has these two sides: from the devil's side it is calculated to show or produce unsoundness and apostasy; from God's side, if met in the way of His will, it is designed or overruled to prove the steadfastness of His servant and to confirm it, as in the case of Job.

The three temptations have these points in common: (1) The end proposed in each case is in itself good—preservation of life by food; assertion of His authority to purify the Jewish religion, by a miraculous descent into the Temple court; the dominion of Jesus over all the kingdoms of the world. (2) The means suggested for gaining these good ends is contrary to the ideal of 'all righteousness' (iii. 15)

that is the view of goodness as a whole, which cannot be divided up so as to take only one of its parts, as for instance trust in God without obedience, or the reverse. Therefore a good end cannot sanctify really evil means. The first suggestion denies complete trust in God; the second, entire resignation to His guidance in what seems a slow process; the third, absolute loyalty to Him as King. (3) The radical defect which runs through all the courses proposed is self-will in supplying personal needs, securing personal ease, and satisfying personal ambition, the things which make man live for the visible present, and are summed up by St. John (1 John ii. 16) as 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vain-glory of life'. As far as we can judge, these temptations happened in the inner world. The form of the first is suggested by objects which actually lay around Jesus, the stones of the desert; the second is presented under the form of a definite city where He had repeatedly been; the third is on an imaginary mountain from which the whole world can be seen.

2. The temptation is preceded by a time of meditation in the intensity of which His bodily wants are forgotten. The fasting in this case is a spontaneous act, due to profound mental preoccupation, as when our Lord forgot His hunger in ministering to the Samaritan woman (John iv. 31-4). In this case too the food which supported him was the doing of the will of Him that sent Him. In reflecting on the work that lay before Him, with all the immense possibilities of the powers that had now been entrusted

to Him, Jesus placed His own will in absolute subjection to His Father's, whatever of sacrifice it might involve. Thus He was fully armed for the struggle, yet the strain of such preparation provided the occasion of temptation; *he afterwards hungered*. As there is no temptation which, if we take it in the right way, cannot be turned by God to our profit, so there is no spiritual exaltation which, unless we hold fast the clue of complete obedience, may not become an occasion of falling. The *forty days and forty nights* remind us of Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 28) and Elijah (1 Kings xix. 8).

3. The first temptation. *If thou art*: that is, granted that thou art. The temptation is based on the assumption that Jesus is *the Son of God*, as Messiah (Ps. ii. 7), and as essentially related to God (iii. 17). It is a satanic echo of the divine voice, and a recognition of Christ's dignity by the prince of this world (John xiv. 30). If God can make sons of Abraham from the stones of the wilderness, His Son can *command that these stones become bread*, seeing that all things have been delivered to Him by his Father (xi. 27). He will thus supply his own pressing need, and he will be vindicated as stronger than the strong one whom he would dispossess (xii. 29).

4. *It is written*. Each phase of the temptation is met by an appeal to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Jesus overcomes the solicitation of evil as a pious man and as a believing Israelite. His mind is saturated with the Bible and a word of it which meets the case leaps instinctively to His tongue.

Such intimate knowledge of Scripture which brings fitting passages involuntarily to our minds is one of the greatest safeguards against temptation. The passage which Jesus now quotes, and both the others, (vv. 7 and 10) are from the book of Deuteronomy, in which the spiritual lessons of the leadings of Israel as God's son in the wilderness are drawn out. In Deut. viii. 1-3 the hunger suffered during forty years in the wilderness, and its relief by the gift of manna, was to teach the people that *man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*. The life-giving power of earthly food lies not in itself, but in the divine ordering which has adapted it to this end. As man, Jesus was to live a life of dependence for His personal needs on the same care of His heavenly Father as that in which He enjoined His disciples to trust (vi. 25-33). To use His miraculous power here would have been to withdraw Himself from fellowship with them, and so to forfeit His position as Saviour. The devil's test of sonship is bodily satisfaction; that of Jesus is loving obedience and trust.

5. *Then the devil taketh him.* It is as if, in the course of the temptation, the Saviour increasingly experiences of a certain power which the tempter is permitted to exercise over his consciousness, in representing to Him the possibilities of power. *The holy city*, that is Jerusalem, so called as being the place of God's sanctuary (Isa. xlviii. 2; Matt. xxvii. 53) still called by the Arabs El Quds. In the vision the thought prominently before the mind of Jesus

is of God's presence and worship there. The place of worship may be the place of the severest temptation. *The pinnacle of the temple.* The definite article shows that this was some well known elevated spot on the temple buildings, probably not a spire or minaret as the word pinnacle would imply, but a parapet or flat-topped wall. There was a very lofty wall of this kind which bounded the south side of the temple enclosure on the edge of a deep valley, a dizzy height from which the worshippers and doings in the courts of the temple could be observed. In the mind of Jesus the condition of things would be imaged which so greatly stirred His indignation not long after at the first Passover of His ministry (John ii. 19-22).

6. The suggestion to cast himself down signifies the performance of a miracle of the same kind as the sign from heaven which the Pharisees afterwards actually demanded from Jesus and which He indignantly refused (xvi. 1-3), a wonder calculated to arrest public attention and summarily to convince the people of His authority. A sudden descent into the midst of the temple courts would have seemed to fulfil the prophecy (Mal. iii. 1-3) that the Lord should come suddenly to his temple, following on the messenger who was to prepare His way before Him (Mark i. 2), and Jesus would be accepted as a purifier of the sons of Levi, and of the temple worship, instead of arousing the first beginnings of the opposition which He foresaw, would end in His death (John ii. 19-22). He is to use His miraculous

power, not for a private but for a public end, and that one for which He was indeed called. But He is to try whether He cannot do so without going through the long weary process that lay before Him, and without drinking the cup of suffering which was so bitter to Him (xxvi. 42). The temptation increases in subtlety; it is supported by a word of Scripture from Ps. xci. 11-12, in which angelic protection is promised to the righteous man who trusts in God alone. His action would have all the appearance of trustful and self-sacrificing surrender to God's care.

7. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* The words in Deut. vi. 16 refer to the 'Massah' or temptation at Rephidim, when the Children of Israel tempted the Lord to see whether He were among them or not (Exod. xvii. 2-7). For the moment the result of the temptation was the granting of a benefit to the people in the shape of the water which they needed, but the hardness of heart expressed in their action ended in the rejection of that generation from the far greater blessings of the Promised Land (Ps. xcv. 8-11). They challenged the power of God in a spirit of impatience and disobedience, disregarding His former revelations and deliverances. The temptation is still with us to 'try it on' with God, and see whether He will let us get away from discipline, and do His work by other means than those of patience and obedience. It is much pleasanter to gain recognition by seeming rather than being, but that means to prefer the lust of the eyes to the realities of His kingdom.

8. Third temptation. *The devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain*: here the expression becomes entirely parabolic; the tempter places Him on the highest summit of spiritual outlook, and presents to His mind that world dominion which is His inheritance, and *all the glory* of recognition as universal king (Ps. ii. 9; Isa. lxvi. 12).

9. All this the devil offers to give to Jesus, adding according to St. Luke (iv. 6) 'for it hath been delivered unto me, and to whom I will I give it' (cp. John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11). According to these passages and the teaching of St. Paul (Eph. ii. 2, etc.) the devil, owing to the submission of mankind to his influence, is no doubt *de facto* prince of the world; at the same time in these words he reveals himself as the slanderer of God, as if He had agreed to invest him with this power, and to leave the authority of evil in the world universal and invincible. The moral aspect of the age of a Tiberius and a Herod Antipas might seem to lend a colour to the claim. The condition of bestowal of world rule is an act of homage to the ruler in possession; *if thou wilt fall down and worship me* (cp. ii. 11). In place of absolute resistance to every form of evil (1 Thess. v. 22) the prospect is held out of gaining mankind for the kingdom of God by a compromise which shall allow the power of evil to be practically too great to be entirely overcome. The most striking historical illustration of this is found in the history of Muhammad and his religion. He desired to restore the true religion of Allah, and in many ways did so,

but he compromised with the passions of hatred and greed in Jihád, of lust in polygamy and divorce, of arrogance and selfishness in slavery; and the result was that his noble aspirations were clouded and the kingdom of God set back. The same temptation comes to the Church in this country when she is urged to gain rapid success and numerous adherents through compromise with caste or any other anti-Christian principle. It comes to the individual Christian when he is solicited to compromise loyalty to Christ or the call to His service by the hope of earthly advantage which, the tempter whispers, will give you so much influence on the Christian side, besides the ease and honour.

10. It is precisely this temptation which provokes the indignation of Jesus. Get thee hence, Satan; that is, 'Away! thou enemy!' (cp. xvi. 23). His loving, passionate loyalty to His Father cannot abide the thought, and His mind reverts to the words of Moses, addressed to the people about to enjoy ease and prosperity and rule over their own promised inheritance, urging on them that the one thing needful in prospect of it was to fear and serve Jehovah (Deut. vi. 13). 'I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me' (John v. 30) was the rule of His life, and His last rendering of account to the Father runs: 'I have accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do' (John xvii. 4).

11. The test is complete; *then the devil leaveth him* (Luke iv. 13) 'for a season'. He returned once and again (John xiv. 30) but the first and critical

battle of a uniformly victorious campaign was won in the wilderness, *and, behold*, as he returns to consciousness of the world and his physical needs, *angels came and ministered unto him*, not in the way suggested by the devil (v. 6) but after His acceptance of God's will only; and so again in the last great temptation (Luke xxii. 43).

iv. 12-16. JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE

(MARK i. 14-15; LUKE iv. 14-15)

Now when he heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
Toward the sea, beyond Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,
The people which sat in darkness
Saw a great light,
And to them which sat in the region and shadow
of death,
To them did light spring up.

Here St. Matthew and the other synoptic Gospels leave a great blank. Jesus had doubtless been ministering in Judæa and Jerusalem for several months after His return from the wilderness to the haunts of men, and He returned from those parts to Galilee by way of Samaria (see John i. 19; iv. 42). But the synoptic Gospels trace the ministry of Jesus according to the earliest scheme of instruction for Christian

disciples indicated by St. Peter (Acts i. 21-2) when he calls upon the apostles to choose in the place of Judas Iscariot 'a witness of his resurrection' who had been a companion of the apostles 'beginning from the baptism of John'. The latter part of the ministry of the Baptist ran parallel with the earlier ministry of Jesus and this as recorded by John's disciple, the evangelist of the same name (John ii-v) was largely in Jerusalem, though not without visits to Galilee (John i. 46; ii. 12; iv. 43-54). But when the last message of the prophet had been delivered and his mouth was closed in prison, Jesus began his main work in Galilee, where the twelve were first assembled around Him, and where His organized ministry as the head of a band of followers was inaugurated. The apostles as a company it was who were teaching and witnessing in Jerusalem after Pentecost, and they naturally took as their starting point for describing the ministry of Jesus the time and place when they were first called to the closer following of their Master. It was, too, of more importance for the earliest Christian converts to be instructed in the simpler teaching which Jesus gave to the unsophisticated multitudes of Galilee, than in the more intricate controversies with the Jews of Jerusalem, which St. John outlined for the Church to meet the needs of a later period of development.

12. *John was delivered up*: the word used here is the same as that often rendered 'betrayed' when used of Jesus (x. 4, etc.). The words of Jesus regarding John the Baptist (xvii. 12) in which He compares his treatment

by the scribes ('they did unto him whatever they listed') with His own death through their means ('even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them') suggest that the arrest of the Baptist was effected through treachery on the part of the Jewish leaders. If so, there was all the more reason for the withdrawal of Jesus from the neighbourhood of such treacherous opponents (John iv. 1) Herod Antipas was at this time ruler both of Judæa and Galilee. The evangelist treats the arrest of John as a well-known fact which formed the starting point for the work of Jesus in Galilee, and introduces further details of his end quite incidentally in chapter xiv to explain the impression made on Herod by the reports of the works of Jesus. The name Galilee means 'circle'. It was originally given to a circle of twenty cities in the territory of Zebulun given by Solomon to Hiram and little appreciated by the latter (1 Kings ix-xiii). In Isa. ix. 1, quoted in v. 15, it is spoken of as the circuit of the Gentiles, because the original inhabitants had not been thoroughly exterminated and were mingled with the Israelite population. It was conquered by the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser III, in 734 B.C. (2 Kings xv. 29), and the Israelitish inhabitants carried away, while the land was settled by foreign idolaters. It so remained till the second century B.C. when the Maccabees forcibly converted the non-Jews of Galilee. Patches of Gentile population, such as the ten-city-league known as the Decapolis, remained in the time of our Lord, and the Galilean population was looked down upon by

the Judæans as an inferior type of Jews (John vii. 52). Jesus *withdrew*, as His foster-father Joseph had done before Him (ii. 22). Jerusalem might seem the most suitable place for the manifestation of the King, but Jesus went to Galilee to do the work of the Prophet (cp. xxi. 11; John vi. 14). St. Matthew repeatedly mentions the withdrawals of Jesus: here from Judæa to Galilee; xii. 15, from the city where the Pharisees were plotting against Him; xiv. 13, from the place where He had heard of the execution of John the Baptist; xv. 21, from Galilee into the parts of Tyre and Sidon; in each case he draws back before the opposition or machinations of His enemies, but only to advance the better afterwards.

13. Jesus now definitely abandons His secluded home in the out-of-the-way country town of *Nazareth*, which was away from the great routes of commerce and intercourse; and he settles in the most populous and busy part of the province at *Capernaum*, hereafter called 'his own city' (ix. 1). It was *by the sea*, that is the Lake of Galilee or Gennesaret (Luke v. 1). The word 'sea' was used by the Jew loosely both for ocean and lake (as *bahr* or *darya* in Urdu for sea and river or *die See* and *der See* in German) but it is noticeable that of the evangelists, the one who had experience of sea travelling, St. Luke, uses the accurate word 'lake'. In English the word *sea* is misleading. The exact site of Capernaum is uncertain. Archaeologists are divided between Tel Hum and Khan Minyeh; but there is no doubt that it was on the north-west shore of the lake, by the great caravan route from Jerusalem

to Damascus. From this place Jesus, if threatened by Herod Antipas, could easily withdraw into the territory of the tetrarch Philip (see note on ii. 22) on the opposite shore. Capernaum had a custom house and a Roman garrison, and it was a centre for the catching and sale of fish. The Lake of Galilee, or as it is now generally called, the Lake of Tiberias, is formed by the river Jordan about sixty miles from its source, or half-way down its course. It is 683 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea, and the climate is consequently hotter than that of the surrounding country, and the fruits earlier. Its greatest depth is 160 feet, and it still abounds in fish though its fisheries are no longer important. *In the borders*, that is the region, *of Zebulun and Naphtali*: it was actually in the latter but near the borders of the former, so that the prophecy of v. 15 was applicable.

14-16. This prophecy is quoted freely from Isa. ix. 1-2. The prophet announces that those parts of the land which had suffered most severely from the incursions of the Syrians and Assyrians would be delivered, by the royal child who was to be born, from war and rapine, and enjoy the blessings of peace and prosperity under His rule. The spiritual darkness and ignorance of this region, and other evils from which its people suffered were removed by the preaching and healing work of Jesus and His apostles which now began (vv. 17, 23-4). The sea in v. 15 is again the Lake of Galilee, but the light is to shine also in the region *beyond Jordan*, as it did when Jesus repeatedly

crossed to the regions on the east of the lake. The words of v. 16 are again fulfilled in each extension of missionary work.

iv. 17-22. THE FIRST DISCIPLES
(MARK i. 16-20; LUKE v. 1-11.)

From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him. And going on from thence he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.

The scene described in Luke v. 1-11 may be a more detailed description of this one, but more probably it was subsequent to it. Here the evangelist is pointing out to his learners the way in which Jesus carried out His work: by proclamation of the coming kingdom (v. 17); by the choices of helpers (v. 18-22); by teaching and healing among the people generally (v. 23-5); and by detailed instruction of His disciples (chapters v, vi and vii). All this he sketches in outline without exact regard to time, though what is here recorded belongs to the first period of our Lord's Galilean work.

17. This verse gives a general sketch of the preaching with which our Lord began, and which prepared the men whom He afterwards called to follow Him at once, when He called them individually. *From that time, after settling in Capernaum, began Jesus to preach* in a special way, not hitherto followed in Judæa; for He now takes up the message of John, whose mouth had been closed by the tyrant Antipas (cp. iii. 2). The true meaning of repentance and the kingdom He will explain in His Sermon on the Mount and in His treatment of sinners (ix. 10-13).

18. His selection of the first leaders of His kingdom is after the manner of Elijah who selects his disciple and successor (1 Kings xix. 19) at his daily work. The first chelas of the great Guru were hard working men, not unemployed inquirers. He is walking by the lake, doubtless after a delivery of His message on its shores. There He sees two brothers, who had been among His hearers, and had returned to their work, *casting a net*; the word here signifies a hand-net which could be worked by one or two men. In xiii. 47, we have the drag-net which is carried out from the land by boats in a large sweep, and requires the labour of a number to pull it in; in v. 21, we have the general word for nets which the fishermen were mending, including the larger and the smaller. The two brothers are *Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew*. Their father's name was Jonah (xvi. 17) or John (John i. 42). They had been disciples of the Baptist, and had been first pointed to Jesus by him (John i. 35-42). *They were fishers*, and as such they

would be strong, hardy, observant, and patient. Apparently they were well to do, for their trade was a prosperous one at that time, and John the son of Zebedee their partner (Luke v. 16) was well connected in Jerusalem (John xviii. 15).

19. Doubtless Jesus knew these men as fitted to become leaders of others and they had already recognized His mission (John i. 41, 45, 49). Accordingly He addresses them in a tone of authority: *Come ye after me*, claiming to be their leader, with the right to dispose, not only of their inward allegiance, but also of their outward service; so much so that they are to go wherever He directs. At the same time He promises them a power over others and a career which was dazzling to men of aspiration; *I will make you fishers of men*. When we think of the youthful artisan, not many months out of his country village, we realize the greatness of the claim that He makes.

20. When he first brought him to Jesus, Andrew had said to his brother: 'We have found the Christ.' So far Jesus has been holding back from decisive steps, but now they recognize that the great moment has come when He is about to gather His followers, *and they straightway left the nets and followed him* as His professed disciples; learners from Him and servants to Him.

21-2. The same call, with the same result, comes to *James, the son of Zebedee and John his brother*, also followers of the Baptist. Their father had hired servants in his concern (Mark i. 20). These two pairs of brothers comprise the leader of the apostles, with

the other two special companions of Jesus, and Andrew who first brought the leader to Him. In memory of this first evangelizing act his day is observed by the Church of England as the special day of intercession for missions.

iv. 23-5. JESUS PREACHING AND HEALING
IN GALILEE

And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with devils, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and *from* beyond Jordan.

In *v.* 1 the first activity of Jesus in Galilee was depicted (*v.* 17: cp. iii. 2) as similar to that of the Baptist. Now it stands out in contrast to John's. Jesus is no dweller in the wilderness who waits for the multitudes to come to Him, but He goes amongst them where they congregate most thickly; He works not by His speech only, but by His mighty deeds of mercy. John is the *sadhu*, Jesus the itinerant evangelist and healer. The description given in these verses is a general summary of the nature of our Lord's ministry in its first period, after He had chosen His first disciples, and it is here inserted to lead up to the Sermon on the Mount, which was addressed to the circle of the disciples. The

description is repeated in almost identical words in ix. 35, when Jesus was about to fix and perpetuate the organization of His society by the choice of the twelve apostles (x. 1-4). Between these two St. Matthew gives us examples of the teaching of Jesus (v-vii) of His healings (viii. 1-17), and sundry incidents of His journeyings (viii. 18, 50; ix. 34).

23. *Jesus went about in all Galilee.* His life was one of constant activity and movement, and His work was a threefold one. Its object was first the spiritual and bodily benefit of the people, and second the training of His disciples to become fishers of men. He was *teaching in their synagogues* (see note at end of chapter) doubtless by exposition of the Scriptures which were systematically read in the Jewish worship of that day (as He did at Nazareth, Luke iv. 16-21) showing their application to the sins and needs of the people and their fulfilment in Himself. This would be a more or less systematic teaching, given on Sabbath days and extending at least over many weeks. Next, He was *preaching* (as a herald, cp. iii. 1) *the good news of the kingdom*. This was a more general and public proclamation of the tidings that God had sent deliverance from the guilt and power of sin and Satan, and that all might have it who would repent and believe the good tidings (Mark i. 15). This would reach a much wider circle, including an increasing number of those who were sunk in sin and visited no place of worship, and were considered irreclaimable by the Pharisees. Third, He was *healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness*

among the people. This was the outflow of the divine and compassionate love which was the mainspring of all His activities (ix. 36), and also the manifestation of the new life that was in Him (Mark v. 30; Luke viii. 46) which revealed His power to heal the soul also. Christ's works of healing were a real part of His work of salvation. Suffering and death are connected with sin, though both are used by Him to counteract it. Hence, as a fruit of Christ's spiritual salvation, they too are eventually to be abolished (1 Cor. xv. 26). Meanwhile the soul is reached through the body, as we see in medical missions. These form in our own day one of the most striking and easily understood evidences for the truth of Christ's gospel, as in the early Church the care of Christians for the sick and suffering was the wonder of the non-Christian world, and a convincing argument to many that Jesus was the Saviour of the soul. In a country like this the support of hospitals and promotion of sanitation is a special Christian duty. Healing of the sick also in answer to prayer in the name of Jesus, is still one of the signs that confirms the word (Mark xvi. 20). These activities of our Lord in Galilee furnish the types of missionary work, educational, evangelistic and medical.

24. The tidings of this new teaching and these wonderful works spread further than even that of John the Baptist; it extended *into all Syria*, the larger Roman province, of which Galilee was a small part, and with which it was closely connected by different trade routes. Wherever the news reached,

people brought to Jesus all the sick whom they could transport, *holden with divers diseases and torments*, that is afflicted with obstinate and painful complaints, of which three kinds are specified. *Possessed with devils*, or rather demons. The word in the Greek meant a spiritual being who might be either good, bad, or indifferent. But to the Jews the demons were evil spirits whose head was Satan (xii. 24). In many cases (as in viii. 28-34) possession by them was connected with insanity, but it is also connected with epilepsy and other complaints (see note on demoniacal possession). Second come the *epileptic*, literally moonstruck. This disease was then, and still is, often popularly supposed to be caused by an influence of the moon something like that of sunstroke (Ps. cxxi-vi). It is also sometimes connected with demoniacal possession (xvii. 15, 18). Third come the *palsied* or paralytic who from a stroke have lost the use of their limbs. All these are nervous diseases, which would be particularly open to the strong and sympathetic influence of Jesus. But our Lord healed many functional diseases also, such as lameness, deafness and blindness, to say nothing of His raising of the dead. In the case of other physicians, or of the exorcists and magicians who were common among the Jews (xii. 27; Acts xix. 13), the results were a matter of uncertainty, but *he healed them*.

25. Besides the people from far places who brought their sick folk and took them away when cured, many persons followed Jesus from the nearer parts more persistently to hear the teaching of this Prophet who

did such wonderful works, and it was such who clustered round Him and His disciples when Jesus sat down to teach (v. 1). Not only Jews from the whole of Palestine (*Galilee, Judæa, and beyond Jordan*, i. e. the district of *Peræa*), but dwellers in the Gentile region of *Decapolis* were there, and even the proud and bigoted inhabitants of *Jerusalem* were not wanting.

THE TEMPLE (see plan)

The temple of God in Jerusalem, as referred to in the New Testament, was that which was rebuilt by Herod probably on the main lines of the temple of Zerubbabel which he built, after its complete destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, on the return of the Jews from their captivity, as related by Ezra (iii, v, vi). In the year 20 B.C. the eighteenth of his reign, Herod began this reconstruction, so that, at the beginning of our Lord's ministry, it had been forty-six years in building (20 B.C. to A.D. 26; cp. on ii-1). The building was raised on a scale of unprecedented magnificence, and in order to gain more space for it on the billy site, immense vaulted chambers were constructed, so as to double the area. The words used to designate the temple in the N.T. are two. *Hieron*, or sacred building, includes the whole complex of courts and dwellings and sanctuaries. *Naos*, or shrine, signifies the inner sanctuary in which was the Holy Place with the altar of incense, the seven-branched candlestick, and the table of shewbread, and the Holy of Holies which formerly contained the ark of the covenant, but since the captivity was entirely empty

(cp. Exod. xl. and Heb. ix. 1-5). Between the two was a double veil, which was rent at the death of our Lord (xxvii. 51). The account of the temptation in iv. 5 mentions the Hieron, as our Lord was placed on one of the outer battlements; in xxiii. 16 'the gold of the temple' refers to the actual gold plates with which the white marble of the temple was covered. The whole temple was surrounded with a spacious court, called the Court of the Gentiles into which the general public had access, and it was here that the traffic was carried on which caused our Saviour such indignation because the proper use of this court was for the devotion of proselytes, of whom there were many in his time (Mark xi. 17). Within this was the Court of the Israelites raised above the other by flights of steps. Into this no Gentile might enter on pain of death. A tablet with an inscription to this effect in Latin and Greek has been discovered in recent years (cp. Acts xxi. 28). Here the people assembled, while the priests in the inner courts and the sanctuary performed the sacrifices and other worship (cp. Luke i. 10). The eastern and smaller part of this court was set apart for women. Inside this again was the Court of the Priests, immediately surrounding the sanctuary, in front of which and outside it was the great altar of burnt offering. Here only the Priests and Levites who were engaged in the service of the sanctuary might enter, and it was a token of reckless and defiant despair when Judas Iscariot 'cast the pieces of silver into the sanctuary' (xxvii. 5). Our Lord was brought as an infant to

the temple (Luke ii. 28-39) and from the time of His first visit as a boy when He was held entranced by its services and teaching (Luke ii. 46-9) He doubtless took devout part in its worship as opportunity offered. In the outer precincts of the temple were places, just as in a large mosque, where the divines of the day taught their pupils, or where a popular teacher could address his audience, and here Jesus, when He was in Jerusalem, used to teach (xxvi. 55).

THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

We do not know when exactly this institution first took its rise, but there is no doubt that from the time of the captivity onward, when the services of the temple were no longer available, the need of other places of worship was increasingly felt, and at the time of our Lord synagogues were found wherever there were enough Jewish believers to support them, and sometimes devout proselytes would build such places (Luke vii. 5). The word, like our 'church' signifies originally the 'assembly' of worshippers (applied Jas. ii. 2 to a Christian gathering); and secondarily the building in which they meet. It is in this sense that it is always used in the Gospels. Apart from degrees of ornamentation, a synagogue was an oblong room or hall with its entrance, like that of the temple, at the east. The essential feature was an ark or chest, containing the sacred writings on parchment rolls, wrapped in embroidered cloths. This was at the further end, opposite the door, and in effect it took the place of the qibla in a mosque. Over it was a canopy

and in front of it a curtain. Towards the middle of the building was a raised platform with a lectern at which the reader recited the Scripture portions, and on which the preacher pronounced his discourse sitting (Luke iv. 20). The chief seats (xxiii. 6, etc.) were at the further end in front of the ark, facing the congregation. Here the elders and officials had their places. The two necessary officials of the synagogue were the ruler and the attendant. There were no stated ministers serving each synagogue as in our Churches, but the ruler had to call on suitable persons to conduct the service (Acts xiii. 15) and to keep order (Luke xiii. 14). The attendant (Luke iv. 20) was entrusted with the care of the place, the needs of worship, and the teaching of the children. He also had to scourge offenders sentenced by the panchayat of the synagogue (x. 17). In large synagogues there would be almoners who collected and administered the offerings of the congregation (cp. Acts vi. 3), and translators (see Introduction) to render the Hebrew Scripture readings into the Aramaic or Greek or other vernacular. The service consisted of four parts: (1) The recital of the Shema or Kalima of the Jewish religion. It was so called from the Hebrew for the word 'Hear', with which Deut. vi. 4 begins; 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah' (cp. Mark xii. 29). The full passages recited were Deut. vi. 4-9; xi. 13-21 and Num. xv. 37-41. (2) Then followed prayers, which by the time of our Lord had probably begun to be set forms; hence the request of the disciples (Luke xi. 1). It is likely that these

included Psalm recitations. (3) The central part of the Sabbath worship consisted of lessons from the Law and the Prophets. These were arranged in a lectionary, by which the Law was completed in a year, the lessons from the Prophets being so arranged as to enforce the teaching of the portions from the Pentateuch. It is not certain that this had been fully developed by the time of our Lord. (4) Here the liturgical service terminated (Luke iv. 20; 'he closed the book and gave it to the attendant', who would formally replace it in its receptacle). But the custom of giving a translation of the sacred text into the language of the country had developed, first into a somewhat lengthened paraphrase, and then into a set discourse which, like our sermon, formed the concluding part of the service. This our Saviour (iv. 23, etc.) and His apostles (Acts xiii. 5, etc.) frequently pronounced; in fact it was the first form in which the gospel was preached. The synagogue was thus (1) an assembly of worshippers; (2) a place of worship; (3) a court of Jewish law; (4) a school.

DEMONIACAL POSSESSION

The signs of this affliction, as given in the Gospels are as follows: dumbness, deafness and blindness (Matt. ix. 33; xii. 22; Mark ix. 18, 25); abnormal fierceness and strength (Matt. viii. 28; Mark v. 4; Luke viii. 29); falling into fire and water (Matt. xvii. 15); convulsions (Mark i. 26; ix. 20; Luke iv. 35); raving (Mark v. 5); grinding the teeth (Mark ix. 18); foaming at the mouth (Luke ix. 39, 42). These are signs either of

epilepsy or insanity, but in Matt. iv. 23 the epileptic, or moonstruck, are distinguished from the 'demonized'. In Matt. xi. 18 and John x. 20 the latter seems to be equal to 'demented'. A number of demons or one can dwell in a man as in a house (Matt. xii. 45). Sometimes the demon is differentiated from the man possessed (Mark i. 24); sometimes both are identified (Mark iii. 11). The same outward signs are spoken of, sometimes under the terms of ordinary sickness; sometimes as the effect of demoniac possession (cp. Matt. xvii. 15, 18). Jesus exercises absolute power over demons, and His expulsion of them is regarded by the people as 'a new teaching' (Mark i. 27) because He used none of the formulas or incantations which were customary among the Jews, who called in the aid of Solomon or some great magician, while Christ cast out the demons on His own authority. This authority He committed to His apostles (Matt. x. 1); and the early fathers of the Church, such as St. Athanasius, frequently appeal to the power of casting out demons, as exercised by Christ and by Christian people in their own age, as a proof of His Divinity, and of His presence with them. In modern times it is especially the mission field in China (see *Demon Possession* by Dr. Nevius of Chefoo) which furnishes instances of the same obsession by demons, and of their awe at the name of Christ who has been preached among the people, and of their inability to withstand prayer in His name. Indian missionaries and Christians are not without occasional experiences of the same kind. Of recent years investigation into

the working of mind in its relation to the body has taught us much of how the cure of bodily ailments is helped, or even accomplished by influence brought to bear on the mind through suggestion, which is now a recognized method of medical treatment. It has also shown how many instances there are of double personality, in which the same individual acts in absolutely different characters. How the alien personality supersedes the normal remains a mystery, of which He who saw into the springs of thought and motive with a sinless divine eye (John ii. 24-5) knows more than we do. Physicians who are mental specialists tell us that insanity is connected in countless cases with moral causes, and where this power of sin was operating, Jesus brought and still brings His power as healer and saviour to bear. Because He could touch the root of sin He was able to heal the physical disorders connected with it as no physician can.

CHAPTERS V-VII

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In all probability there is no part of the New Testament which is so widely read and so generally accepted, even by many non-Christians, as this discourse, though few enough allow its full force. To get at this as far as we may, it will be best to take its more general aspects first.

1. Its composite character. To realize this we give the parallels with the Gospel of St. Luke:—

	Matt.	Luke .
The beatitudes ...	v. 3-12.	vi. 20-3.
The salt of the earth ...	v. 13.	xiv. 34 <i>f</i> .
The light of the world ...	v. 14.	
The lamp on a stand ...	v. 15.	viii. 16 ; xi. 33.
Let your light shine ...	v. 16.	
The law perfectly fulfilled.	v. 17-20.	xvi. 17.
Against murder ...	v. 21-4.	
Avoid lawsuits ...	v. 25-6.	xii. 58, 59.
Adultery ...	v. 27-30.	cp. Mark ix. 43-7.
Divorce ...	v. 31-2.	xvi. 18.
Perjury ...	v. 33-7.	
Retaliation ...	v. 38-42.	vi. 29-30.

	Matt.	Luke
Love to enemies ...	v. 43-7.	vi. 27-8 ; 32-3.
Likeness to the heavenly		
Father ...	v. 48.	cp. vi. 36.
Almsgiving and prayer ...	vi. 1-8.	
The model prayer ...	vi. 9-13.	xi. 2-4.
Forgive if you would be forgiven ...	vi. 14.	cp. Mark xi. 25.
Fasting ...	vi. 16-18.	
Treasure in heaven ...	vi. 19-21.	xii. 33-4.
The single eye ...	vi. 22-3.	xi. 34-5.
Two masters cannot be ...	vi. 24.	xvi. 13.
Against worldly anxiety ...	vi. 25-33.	xii. 22-31.
The day's evil for the day.	vi. 34.	
Against censoriousness ...	vii. 1-5.	vi. 37, 38 ; 41-2.
Against sacrilege ...	vii. 6.	
Perseverance in prayer ...	vii. 7-11.	xi. 9-18.
The golden rule ...	vii. 12.	vi. 81.
The narrow gate ...	vii. 13.	xiii. 28.
False prophets ...	vii. 15.	
The tree and its fruits ...	vii. 15-20.	vi. 43-4.
Deeds, not words ...	vii. 21.	vi. 46.
Judgement accordingly ...	vii. 22-8.	xiii. 26-7.
The true foundation ...	vii. 24-7.	vi. 47-9.

It will be observed that in Luke vi. 20-49 we have the main sections of the discourse; further that some of the passages omitted or much shortened by St. Luke, especially the comparisons with the Mosaic Law (v. 17-37) would seem to have been considered less suitable to a Gentile catechumen; but besides these there are sundry passages of the sermon as given by St. Matthew scattered in various parts of

St. Luke's Gospel, and sometimes connected with different occasions, for instance, the Lord's Prayer. This illustrates what we have seen to be the plan of St. Matthew; to arrange his matter, and especially the discourses of our Lord, topically, that is in order of subject rather than of time or place. In these chapters, then, the evangelist has combined into a whole the discourse pronounced by our Lord on the plateau of a mountainside in Galilee, and cognate teachings given on other occasions. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the result is a body of teaching, which is unparalleled in its moral authority and the impression which it has made and is making on mankind for moulding them to the highest ends.

2. For the Jewish Christian learners of this Gospel this body of teaching is very suitably placed at this juncture. They have seen Jesus as the true Messiah victorious over Satan, taking up the work of the Baptist with power that he could lay no claim to, gathering a circle of disciples and attracting immense crowds of hearers through His healing, His preaching of the kingdom of God, and His teaching of the true meaning of the Scriptures. But it was of the utmost importance for them, as it is still for converts from non-Christian religions, especially Islám, that they should realize that the fundamental convictions of the religion whence they had emerged were not shaken. The new teaching of Jesus was really continuous with the truths by which their forefathers had lived, yet it so widened and deepened them that the religion of a nation was not only capable of

becoming the faith of the world, but must inevitably become such, as was happening before the eyes of the readers of this Gospel. They would see that the contemporary Jewish slander, which accused Jesus of Nazareth and His followers of disloyalty to the Old Testament revelation, was false, and that in Him was its only true fulfilment.

3. Among the ethical characteristics of this sermon we notice first that it is a reflection of the inner life and character of the preacher Himself no less than of His outward conduct. The blessedness which He offers is that which He Himself possesses, because He is the perfect pattern of the qualities which He demands. The love, the purity, the truth, the secret alms and prayer and fasting, the freedom from covetousness and anxiety, all these are perfectly exemplified in Him. Hence the objective of the discourse is the formation of personal character in His disciples, whereas the principles of the growth and progress of the disciples as a society are set forth later in the seven parables of chapter xiii. At the same time this sermon has frequent references to the kingdom of heaven as the sphere of true life and the goal of effort and ambition. However much the Christian may be thinking of his own advancement in likeness to Christ, he can never do so in the right spirit, unless he is also thinking of himself as a member of the whole Body of Christ.

The outstanding quality of the sermon when first preached appeared to the hearers to be its authority of tone (vii. 28) as contrasted with their scribes. These

would support their teaching by an appeal to Moses or the elders; the prophets enforced their message by the words: 'Thus saith the Lord;' but Jesus, when dealing even with the law of Moses simply says: 'I say unto you.' The tremendous nature of such an utterance we may realize if we imagine a Muhammadan teacher quoting some fundamental command of the Qur'án, and adding a modification of it prefaced by the words: 'But I say to you.' But this claim to be an authority greater than Moses is thrown into the shade by the announcement in which the discourse culminates (equally in Matthew and Luke) that it is He who in the day of judgement will decide as to the deserts and the fate of each of His followers, and that the extreme sentence to be pronounced on those who are rejected will be separation from Him (vii. 22f) because obedience to Him is the supreme test of moral character (vii. 24-7). The moral authority which this discourse exercises over the consciences of men has its source in the moral authority of Him who not only pronounced it, but embodied it in a perfect life; and this supports the claim which He makes to be the perfect revealer of the divine will and the judge of men at the last day by that standard which He has manifested in word and action. The Sermon on the Mount is not a codified statement either of morals or of doctrine, but it embodies the principles of both in a form which could be apprehended by the Galileans who listened to it, and like the parables of our Lord it opens up its meaning and application to the single-minded in each succeeding age of the Church.

In dealing with utterances of the Old Testament our Lord Himself in this discourse has taught us to distil the spirit from the letter; when He elected to speak in paradox, He would surely have us follow His example of interpretation.

As to the form of the sermon, we shall understand it the better, if we realize that it is varied in its way of speaking, as we might expect from its composite nature, and therefore different passages will have to be interpreted on different principles. We have plain precepts, such as: 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you;' or statements of moral and spiritual truths, such as the Beatitudes, in both which cases the meaning is perfectly plain, however difficult it may be to act up to it. Then we have comments on legal points such as that on divorce (v. 31-2) which are fragmentary and require thought and research as to the scope of their application, though the general meaning is clear enough to the ordinary person. Then we have commands couched in parabolic language, such as that to deprive one's self of the right hand or the right eye, the meaning of which is not hard to determine. But we have also a number of commands couched in language which is not exactly parable, yet seems to use familiar phrases as representative of wider meanings. Bishop Gore compares such phrases as, 'Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also' with proverbial expressions, such as 'Look before you leap', which may almost always be balanced by converse ones, such as, 'Nothing venture, nothing have.' These phrases

give a general principle in the guise of a concrete instance; they would be perfectly understood in their bearing on contemporary life by the hearers, and the Church in succeeding ages has generally succeeded in solving their meaning by practical experience. Extremists, have sometimes gone near to making precepts such as that of non-resistance ridiculous, but even in such cases they have impressed the public conscience by a distorted object-lesson, conveying an important truth in a startling form. The use made of such passages by enemies of the faith is best met by parallels from other religions, showing the sound principle on which such forms of speech are everywhere used. The object of our Lord, to arrest the attention of the average man and to convey sound moral lessons, has always been attained by these sayings and will be.

i. 1-2. NARRATIVE INTRODUCTION

(MARK iii. 13; LUKE vi. 12)

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying.

Comparing Luke vi. 12-19 it would seem that the choice of the twelve apostles (which St. Matthew in x. 1 merely refers to) had taken place that day. After a night spent in prayer on 'the mountain' (Mark iii. 13; Luke vi. 12) Jesus, having called up his disciples to Him, chooses the twelve apostles from among them, and then comes down with them

to a level place or table-land on the hillside, like the 'Idgah in some of our hill stations, where there was room for a large number of people to assemble, and there He sits down to teach. St. Matthew omits much of what had happened after Jesus 'went up into the mountain', as not needed for his purpose. Jesus, as the Teacher, would sit on a higher place while His disciples gathered round as an inner circle of hearers (v. 1; Luke vi. 20), nearest of all the recently chosen apostles for whom this was, so to speak, their ordination sermon. The multitude (vii. 28) would sit further off. The discourse is introduced by the circumstantial phrase: *he opened his mouth*, indicating a weighty and solemn utterance (cp. Acts viii. 35; x. 34). We give an analysis of the sermon, but in doing so it must be remembered that it only represents the endeavour of the writer to follow out the train of thought in our Lord's words as arranged by the evangelist. It will be well for the reader to test it as he goes along and if he finds more evident or closer connexions to make his own notes.

The subject is the righteousness of the true citizens of the kingdom of heaven, which is to exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, though it is, or rather, because it is a true fulfilment of the law (v. 17-20.)

1. The citizens of the kingdom; v. 1-16.

(1) Their character as followers of the prophets; v. 1-12.

(2) Their world-wide influence; v. 13-16.

2. The new law of the kingdom ; v. 17-48 (cp. Jer. xxxi. 33).
 - (1) A complete fulfilment of the old law ; v. 17-20.
 - (2) As shown by specific instances ; v. 21-48.
3. Its new life ; vi. 1 to vii. 23.
 - (1) Acts of devotion ; vi. 1-18.
 - i. Alms ; vi. 1-4.
 - ii. Prayer ; vi. 5-15.
 - iii. Fasting ; vi. 16-18.
 - (2) Aims to be followed ; vi. 19-34.
 - i. The true treasure ; vi. 19-21.
 - ii. Single-minded service ; vi. 22-4.
 - iii. Perfect peace of mind ; vi. 25-34.
 - (3) Conduct to be observed ; vii. 1-12.
 - i. Charity in judging brethren ; vii. 1-5.
 - ii. Circumspection in dealing with outsiders ; vii. 6.
 - iii. Perseverance in recourse to God ; vii. 7-12.
 - (4) Dangers to be avoided ; vii. 13-23.
 - i. From one's own slackness ; vii. 13-14.
 - ii. From false teachers ; vii. 15-23.
4. The test of adherents of the kingdom ; vii. 24-7. Not hearing, but doing.

v. 3-12. THE BEATITUDES

Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when *men* shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Before entering on His own relation to the Law and its fulfilment, or His disciples' behaviour to their fellow men, Jesus sets up an ideal of character without which they cannot enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. The Law said: Blessed are they that *do* (all these commandments, e.g. Deut. xxviii. 1-5); Jesus says: Blessed are they who *are* (poor in spirit, etc.). Being what pleases God comes before doing what God commands. The good character has its value even where action is excluded; action without character lacks the essence of goodness. The sequence of the beatitudes may be traced in various ways; e.g. (1) the character of Christ's disciples in themselves (poor in spirit, sorrowful, meek, hungry); (2) their character relatively (a) to men, merciful; (b) to God, purehearted; (3) to the hostile world, peacemaking, yet persecuted. Or again, the first three beatitudes are in contrast to the world, which (1) clutches at gold; (2) shrinks from suffering; (3) asserts

its own rights. They must have reminded the hearers of the sententious utterances of the Old Testament, such as Psalm i, but how far they advance beyond them in showing the path of life!

In St. Luke vi. 20-6 the beatitudes are given in a shorter form, followed by denunciations of the opposite characteristics, just as the Lord's Prayer (Luke xi. 2-4) is abbreviated. The reports given in a written form in the Gospels are obviously very fragmentary, intended to give the main points of the oral tradition. It is clear, too, that our Saviour taught largely in sententious sayings, which, as with the parables, He would expand in various ways. Accordingly one form or outstanding point would be preserved by one narrator, another by another.

3. *Blessed* is the key-word of the ideal character. In the New Testament it means possessed of happiness in the highest sense John xiii. 17, as distinct from mere good fortune on which men congratulate one another, or pleasure which is selfishly enjoyed. *Blessed* is a word used of God, as the supremely blissful One, like Anand or Bhagwan in Hinduism, but with a higher connotation. His blessedness is connected with the good tidings of His glory revealed to men in the salvation of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. i. 11). In this respect also Christ's words are a fulfilment of the Old Testament, which made forgiveness of sins (Ps. xxii. 1) and salvation by Jehovah (Deut. xxxiii. 29) the ground of blessedness. But Christ, as distinct from others, opened the way to its attainment.

(1) The Stoics, who attained the highest moral level

of teaching before or apart from Christ, taught that only the wise man could be blessed, and that he must not follow happiness as an aim. Jesus teaches that happiness is a legitimate object of pursuit, provided it be followed on the right lines, namely those of likeness to God; and he allows no privilege in the pursuit to the philosopher, but leaves it open to the simplest (xi. 25). (2) Buddhism and Hinduism, in effect, despair of happiness as positive bliss; it is to them only the extinction of desire and even of personal identity. Christ taught that conscious bliss is possible of attainment, nay a certainty, if only we will fulfil its true conditions. (3) Islám teaches that the attainment of the bliss of Paradise is contingent from God's side on His arbitrary decree, from man's side on good works. Jesus taught that it is essentially dependent on the right relation to God, which involves agreement with His will and likeness to Him in character (v. 48). *Poor in spirit*, that is in their inmost soul free from attachment to mammon, or earthly possessions, which so many would like to serve as a second master beside God (vi. 24). The words 'in spirit', added to St. Luke's 'poor' only, show that not possessing earthly goods, but being possessed by them is what excludes from the kingdom. The test is the spirit of detachment from earthly possessions which may at any time demand their actual renunciation, as in the case of the rich young man xix. 21. The treasure in heaven promised to him is in effect the same thing as *the kingdom of heaven* which belongs to the poor in

spirit. It is a present internal condition (Luke xvii. 21) of righteousness and peace and joy (Rom. xiv. 17) in the Holy Ghost; caused, that is, through the indwelling of God (cp. Gen. xv. 1; Isa. lvii. 15); but it is also a future possession, which will be realized when the kingdom of God shall come in the power that subjects all opposing forces, and the environment of His people will finally correspond with their inner condition (xxv. 34). Now they are 'heirs of the kingdom' (Jas. ii. 5).

4. Together with poverty, sorrow is one of the great common ills of mankind, yet it is a poor nature that has no room for sorrow and its expression, and it is a poor remedy for sorrow to repress its manifestation, as the Stoics did and as Hindu sages would have us do. Jesus allows its expression, by precept and example (John xi. 35), and has a blessing for it: *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*. It is the office of the Messiah to comfort the mourners (Isa. lxi. 12) who are grieved for the desolation of God's heritage and for their own sufferings as its members. This mourning is one of the dominant notes in the Psalms, but it carries with it its own remedy in the assurance of the final triumph of the kingdom of God (Rev. xix. 6-8) and the mourners share in that joy (cp. Luke xvi. 25). The promise includes the final abolition of sorrow for all God's people (John xvi. 20; Rev. xxi. 4) and it applies even to their sorrow for sin (cp. 2 Cor. vii. 10).

5. Earthly sorrow by itself as often as not issues in bitterness; the mourning of Christ's disciples mellows

the character, and so promotes instead of destroying happiness. Blessed are *the meek*, that is, they who suffer wrong without bitterness or desire for revenge. Apparently such persons are likely to be oppressed or even enslaved; but in the divine appointment, *they shall inherit the earth*, as the Psalmist of old saw (xxxvii. 11). Meekness is a greater power than pride, and more world-compelling. On it Jesus bases His claim to universal service (xi. 29) and His meekness has been and is the power which inherits all that is best on earth.

6. Meekness limits self-assertion; hunger is the impulse which tends to self-preservation, the imperative desire for what is necessary to maintain life. There is one thing needful to maintain the life of the spirit, and that is righteousness, or conformity to the divine will, which is the standard and the source of life; in other words to be pleasing to God (cp. iii. 17). Therefore, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness*, as Jesus Himself did (John iv. 34; cp. Job xxiii. 12); for theirs is a desire which cannot fail of satisfaction, seeing that they 'through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness' (Gal. v. 5). They shall be filled (cp. Deut. viii. 3; Matt. iv. 4). They will be satisfied with likeness to Him in righteousness (Ps. xvii. 15; 1 John iii. 2); and they will be able to do His will perfectly (Rev. xxii. 3; cp. Matt. vi. 10).

7. In dealing with a world full of sin and sorrow, the requisite which brings us nearest to the character of God is mercy (Luke vi. 36). He has had mercy

on us, therefore we should have mercy on our fellow-servants (xviii. 33). Only the merciful man is capable of receiving God's mercy, but he will surely do so. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy* (vi. 14), and that not only from God, but from man (vii. 2; Luke vi. 38). Mercy is to be shown both to the suffering and the sinful, but it does not consider special suffering as a penalty of special sin (John ix. 1).

8. Here Jesus touches the innermost condition of His disciple. In contrast to the lenity towards others is the strictness towards himself implied in the words: *Blessed are the pure in heart*. To the Pharisee purity meant the absence of ceremonial defilement. Jesus maintained that defilement can only come through sin which is indulged in the heart (Mark vii. 20-3) and equally, purity can only be attained through cleanness of heart (cp. Ps. li. 6, 10; Prov. iv. 23). By purity of heart He means especially freedom from fleshly lust, but also from covetousness, envy, pride and all selfish passions. This purity is not in our present condition absolute; it corresponds to the singleness of eye demanded (vi. 22; cp. Col. iii. 22); it is not sinlessness of heart, but singleness of heart. The pure in heart are blessed, not only because they gain the approval of conscience, but because they are on the path which leads to the highest joy of which the creature is capable; *they shall see God* through the removal of the cloud of sin which hides Him. The promise is fulfilled even now progressively; hereafter perfectly (Heb. xii. 14; 1 John iii. 2; Rev. vii. 15; xxii. 4).

9. It is not sufficient for the disciple to mourn over the world's strife and misery; he must be actively a *peacemaker*. This is one way in which the meek inherit the earth; they have the most powerful influence in assuaging the internecine strifes which destroy mankind. To make peace is a greater victory than to fight and conquer. The disciple is to follow the example of Jesus the great Peacemaker (John xvi. 33; Eph. ii. 14-22). Party spirit was at that time the most fatal danger of the Jewish nation; to it the destruction of Jerusalem was largely due; and they would not receive from Christ the things that belonged to their peace (Luke xix. 42). The enmity between Jew and Gentile threatened to rend asunder the infant Church of Christ, had not the peacemakers prevailed. Racial animosity in India endangers the body politic and weakens the Church. It is not always a popular thing to act as peacemaker, but it must be done if the people of Christ are to fulfil their destiny, and the dignity of the work will be recognized at last; they shall be called, what they show themselves to be, *sons of God* (1 John iii. 1; Rom. viii. 19).

10. In v. 3 the kingdom of heaven is recognized in its unity as the possession of Christ's disciples; in the following verses the various benefits which it brings to those who show its qualities are particularized (comfort, satisfaction, etc.). Now, after the peace which must follow the final struggle has been anticipated, the kingdom is again held out as a possession to those *who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake*. Such virtues as those described above should win the hearts of all;

but no, the world's reply is rejection and persecution. The appeal of righteousness has apparently failed. Yet its votaries are twice blessed, because such failure is the road to success; the end is more than worth the hard way. At the same time the suffering incurred must be *for righteousness' sake*. Suffering of itself conveys no claim to reward apart from the end for which it is endured, and that end is not only for a principle; it is for a Person; *for my sake* (cp. x. 22, 39). The opposition will be by word (*reproach*) and deed (*persecute*); it will be inventive and stick at no devices (*say all manner of evil against you falsely*). How these words of Jesus were fulfilled in the career of St. Paul, in the pagan slanders against the early Christians, and how they are still fulfilled in the misrepresentations by non-Christians of the actions and aims of Christians in India! We do well to remember that, if only our conscience condemn us not, these biting slanders bring us into the range of this beatitude. Not only may we bear them with composure, we may *rejoice and be exceeding glad*. The spirit which successfully endures persecution is that which can buoyantly rejoice in tribulations (Rom. v. 3-5). Like his Master, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, the disciple may look for a *great reward in heaven*, for the kingdom of heaven is his (cp. 2 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Pet. i. 4). Just as we saw in the case of happiness, so here the desire for and expectation of reward is recognized as a laudable incentive to goodness, provided that the reward is not followed for its own sake but for the sake of Him who gives

it. In fact the two are inseparable; the reward is the joy and satisfaction of His presence which includes all other good. Meanwhile the disciples are in good company; *for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you*. They are received into the goodly fellowship of the prophets (cp. x. 41; xxiii. 34; Luke xi. 49). Hence the apostolic testimony is accepted by the Church as the inspired message of God, and the Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. ii. 20; cp. iii. 5).

V. 13-16. THE WORLD-WIDE INFLUENCE OF THE
DISCIPLES

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

To remedy the inward corruption of the people denounced by the Baptist, the disciples of Jesus must first and foremost have a new character; but to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, that character must manifest itself in powerful effects on others. This is expressed by two images taken from common things: salt which purifies and preserves from within, and light which illuminates and guides from without. From the first this influence is to be world-wide in their

capacity of disciples of Jesus; what then must the Master be!

13. The employment of salt as an indispensable savour in food is known in every country, and also that it is needed not only for enjoyment but for health. To dwellers by the Lake of Galilee moreover the use of salt as a preserving agent, especially in connexion with their fisheries, was familiar. The town of Tarcheæ, at the south end of the Lake, had its name from the salting of fish which was the staple industry of the place. In English it might be called Salterton, or in Hindustani Namakpur. No doubt the fish carried about by the lad whose store Jesus multiplied (xiv. 17; John vi. 9) were salted. The influence of the disciples is to be exercised on *the earth*, the common mass of humanity, without distinction of class or race, to preserve it from perishing by moral corruption (Col. iv. 7; Eph. iv. 9) and also to make it, as it were, savoury to the divine taste (cp. Jer. xxix. 17; Rev. iii. 15). This was typified by the command to include salt in every food-offering under the Levitical law (Lev. ii. 13). To be acceptable to God is the supreme end of man, fulfilled in Jesus; to make men acceptable to God is the high calling of His disciples, and that is fulfilled by preaching the gospel in all its fulness. By it the nations are made an offering acceptable to God (Matt. xxviii. 19; Rom. xv. 16). To be rejected by God as unsavoury is the depth of condemnation. *If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?* (cp. Mark ix. 50; Luke xiv. 34-5). Strictly speaking, salt, while it remains

salt, cannot lose its savour, but it may be so mixed with foreign substances as to be practically useless as salt and not worth treatment. Being equally useless for purposes of cultivation (Luke xiv. 35) it is cast out by the roadside *and trodden under foot of men*. The unfaithful Christian is despised by the world as we see in the case of apostates in India.

14. *Ye are the light of the world* which is in darkness (cp. John i. 5; iii. 19). Essentially Jesus is the Light of the world, but He has elected to shine by means of His disciples (Phil. ii. 15). They are lamps, kindled at a never-dying fire (v. 15), their light streams forth in rays of righteousness (v. 16) which is to be a revelation to the world of the Father who has made them His children. But the disciples are not only a collection of individuals or a school of true opinion and teaching; they are also comparable to *a city set on a hill*, like Jerusalem (Ps. xlviii. 2). They are a community, separate from the world, exalted above it, and attracting its gaze. It is noticeable that our Lord from the first treats His disciples as a society or Church. The idea of Christendom as merely a number of individuals who have elected to follow Christ is so incomplete as to be misleading. Their life cannot be true if they fail to recognize the tie that binds them to all their fellow men, much less if they ignore the one life which is theirs as Christians from a common source. The immediate followers of Jesus were in danger, like many an Indian Christian surrounded by non-Christian fellow workmen or officials, of concealing their testimony through timidity.

Hence the Master reminds them that their city is *set on a hill*; concealment is futile as well as wrong; men will still form a judgement as to the religion which you represent, but it will be, through your fault, a wrong one. Moreover such conduct is a foolish waste of labour, as much as if a man should first take the trouble to trim and light a lamp and then cover it up with a bushel, that is a large grain measure of about two and a half maunds. He would frustrate his own object in lighting the lamp, and very soon it would go out for want of air. This is what Christian people or Churches do who fail to witness for Christ. Never was spiritual life so low in England as when the missionary duty of the Church was forgotten, and never will the life of the Church and of Christians in India shine as it should and may till its witness is bright and clear. The inquirer, too, who says, 'I can believe on Christ in my heart without openly confessing Him,' may have a light of true faith, but he is putting it under the corn measure of his temporal necessities or relationships, and it will infallibly go out and stink. Put it on the lampstand (15) of open profession and it will enlighten *all that are in the house*. You injure not only yourself, but your fellows, by withholding the light which you have acquired.

16. Therefore you are to *let your light shine before men*, without fear of consequences. It may entail persecution for you, but the result will be praise to God when men *see your good works* (1 Pet. ii. 12) and recognize their source and author in *your Father which is in heaven*, for they cannot see Him

on earth except through you. So far Jesus has been speaking of the kingdom of heaven; now He manifests the King as the Father: the disciples are not only a city but a family, bound together in the brotherhood of common relationship to one Father. God as a Father was not unknown to the Old Testament writers (Deut. xxxii. 6; Isa. lxiii. 16) nor indeed to the pagan nations. The Greeks could speak of Zeus as 'father of gods and men', and his name Jupiter, or Zeuspater is paralleled by the Vedic Dyauspitar or Skyfather. But all these surmises of what God might or must be were essentially and practically realized by Jesus who alone revealed the Father (xi. 27) and gave men the right to become children of God (John i. 12). He is the author of their life (John i. 13) who loves them (1 John iii. 1) and cares for their wants (vi. 26-32) to whom they owe obedience (1 Pet. i. 14) and whom they should resemble (v. 48).

V. 17-20. THE NEW LAW OF THE KINGDOM

Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It is first stated in general terms as being the true fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets, that is, the Old Testament revelation. This was of the utmost importance for Jewish Christian learners, as showing them that the accusation of opposition to the Old Testament brought by Jews against their Master was untrue, and also that real loyalty to the earlier revelation demanded that they should accept the further truth for which it had prepared the way. When we deal with professors of other religions, we have to keep both these points before our minds. We should sincerely accept and urge all the truths contained in their faiths, as demanding still their allegiance and serious pursuit; but it is even more necessary to insist that they can only do this by following the truths revealed by Christ to which those others lead up, and in which they are fulfilled.

17. *Think not that I came, from God into the world* (cp. x. 34). The words imply that they might be in danger of such a false idea, either then or later. John had said nothing of the relation of the Messiah to the Old Covenant; possibly Jesus had by this time done acts which bore a superficial resemblance to a disregard of the Law. In any case such acts would have to come as in the matter of the Sabbath (xii. 1-8) or of purifications (xv. 1-20). And in later ages some heretics roundly asserted that the Law of Moses was a snare and the God of the Old Testament not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our own day the truth has been more widely recognized among Christians than formerly, that the revelation of the Old

Testament was imperfect and progressive, but some have drawn from this the false conclusion that, therefore, we have no need to occupy ourselves with it. The exact opposite is the truth as taught by Jesus. He treats the Old Testament as the foundation of His own doctrine, and declares that it has an eternal validity in its accomplishment through Him. *Destroy*, that is, deprive of force, or abrogate. *The law and the prophets*, the two principal parts of the Old Testament (vii. 12; xxii. 40), to which for a full description would be added the Psalms or third division of the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 44). The special feature of the Law is its declaration of the divine commands, of the Prophets, the divine promises (and of the Psalms, the human response to both). In both these aspects Jesus came to fulfil the Old Testament, that is, to bring it to completeness (John xv. 11) to accomplish its purpose (Rom. x. 4). He deals with it as a painter with an outline picture, modifying the whole surface, but bringing the idea of the sketch to perfect expression. Or again, His fulfilment is as the fruit emerging from the flower, after first casting off its petals and other coverings which were needed to preserve it till maturity was come. Jesus makes fully effectual the ideal which was embodied in a temporary form; so in regard of the commandments treated in this section; murder is barred by the elimination of the emotion of hatred which is its spring, etc.; the promises are summed up in vi. 25-34; the warnings in vii. 21-7. All merely positive legislation, like much of that in the Old Testament, which

consists of a body of rules promulgated with reference to a certain time and place, needs continual revision and even, at times, repeal. Our Lord's teaching has escaped this common fate of human legislation, and of religions which make concessions to human expediency, by giving instead of a body of rules certain principles which have a progressively expansive force, such as that of love to enemies, purity of heart, and the like. And in place of temporal ideals of well-being or honour He sets up the kingdom of heaven, which is based on a moral relation to God now, and realized in unimpeded fellowship with Him hereafter.

This fulfilment of previous revelation by Christ stands out in striking contrast to the Muḥammadan doctrine of abrogation (*tansikl*). The Qur'án being regarded as a legal code delivered to Muḥammad in chapters, it is held that a verse of a later chapter may abrogate one of a former. Similarly, each of the successive codes, sent down from heaven to special prophets (Moses, David, Jesus) is supposed to abrogate the preceding one; restating what in it was still valid, and abolishing or changing what had lost validity or truth. Were the divine revelation such a legal code, it could never be applicable to all men and valid for all time, as are the principles embodied by Jesus in His life and laid down in His teaching. The Qur'án which had its uses for Arabia in the seventh century is clearly unsuited for the western world in the twentieth, but the gospel of Jesus is as applicable to the twentieth century as to the first.

18. In what follows Jesus deals with the Law or Pentateuch which was and still is by the Jews considered the principal part of the Old Testament, and is sometimes named for the whole (John x. 34; xii. 34; xv. 25). Jesus supports His claim to fulfil the law by a solemn assertion of its eternity as being the expression of God's will. *Verily*: the evangelist here uses the original Aramaic, word which Jesus spoke, the same as our Amen. Matthew uses it thirty times, Mark thirteen; Luke seven; John twenty-five (always double). It conveys emphasis, I tell you truly, such as Christ permitted to His followers (v. 37). *Jot*: the Hebrew letter Yod, the smallest in the alphabet. *Tittle*: a horn or hook at the corner of a letter, distinguishing one from another; the minutest and most easily disregarded things in the law have their meaning and importance. Little and great alike are parts of one organic whole, and bear their part in its fulfilment. Therefore they *shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished*; each has its due effect in the plan of the whole, and even when it has played its part (e.g. the laws of purification) it still stands for a meaning and purpose which has its analogy in our lives.

19. True, there are distinctions of importance in the commandments of the Law (cp. xxii. 36); but that does not justify disregard of any on the principle that it is a meaningless thing. The over zealous reformer who puts his strength into negation *shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven*. He will weigh light in the test day, though he may not actually be rejected (cp. 1 Cor. iii. 15). *Do and teach*;

great in the kingdom of heaven: performers are better than reformers.

20. Jesus has spoken of two ways of treating the Law, and their results before the tribunal of His kingdom: (1) He who puts aside the little for the sake of the great is counted least; (2) he who keeps both little and great is great—now, He adds; (3) he who puts aside the great in favour of the little is excluded. This was the common practice of the Scribes and Pharisees considered as a party (xxiii. 23), excepting sincere men, such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, or Gamaliel, who went against the general current of opinion. Their 'leaven' was hypocrisy; they had put self before God, appearance before reality; the salt of their religious life was so mingled with worldly elements that it had lost its savour. This is a disease from which Christendom still suffers, where we find a traditional morality, keen on conventions, careless of principles. The examples which follow, taken from the current teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, show in what way the righteousness of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven must exceed theirs. Chapter vi. 1-18 deals with their practice.

21-48. Here we have specific instances of the fulfilment of the law by Jesus, as contrasted with its limitation, or even reversal through the exposition of the Scribes. First Jesus deals with two of the seven 'deadly sins', murder and adultery; in the latter case adding a command on divorce, which may easily become a legalized loophole for adultery; then He treats the law of oaths and retaliation. The new law begins

with the love expressed in goodwill ; it goes on to purity of heart and truthfulness of intention, and it comes back again to the love expressed in forgiveness and self-sacrifice. Our Saviour shows how the fulfilment of the spirit of the law may involve a modification of its letter. He pronounces with the supreme authority of a lawgiver on the most fundamental moral questions in the formula, 'But I say unto you,' just as later (vii. 23) he passes sentence as the Judge: 'Then will I profess unto them.'

V. 21-26. REVISION OF THE LAW OF MURDER

Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement : but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgement ; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council ; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art with him in the way ; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing.

21. *Ye have heard* it read and explained in the synagogue. *Them of old time* signifies the nation as organized under Moses. *Thou shalt not kill* (cp. Exod. xx. 13) : better 'shalt do no murder' as there and in the

Prayer Book version (cp. Gen. ix. 5-6). The Hindu or Buddhist view, that to kill a sentient creature is in itself wrong, is equally against the Old and New Testament. *Shall be in danger of the judgement*: that is, the local court of seven elders, instituted in accordance with Deut. xvi. 18. This was a suitable law for the administration of criminal justice in an earthly state; it was inadequate for the kingdom of heaven which takes primary account of the motives that lie beneath the act.

22. The appeal to antiquity is insufficient; we need a present authority, and as the disciples had this in the Lord Himself so have we in His word and Spirit. *I say unto you*, etc. While what has gone before is true, and such laws of criminal justice are needed for the well-being of the state, and indeed have divine sanction for the Christian (Rom. xiii. 3-4), yet the foundations of the kingdom of Christ go deeper; they demand eradication of anger; not the displeasure of reaction against evil (Eph. iv. 26) but the passionate feeling of hostility to one's *brother*, that is, fellow man, and especially fellow disciple, as a son of the same Father. The springs of action are to be controlled and sin remedied at its source. One of the hearers afterwards wrote: 'He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him' (1 John iii. 15). If feelings are to be under control, how much more their expression in words. The exact degree of excess in the expression 'Thou fool', as compared with 'Râqâ' or blockhead, is impossible to determine, since we do not know

the exact word which our Lord used for the former. It might have been one which meant rebel, or one meaning godless (*fásid* or *káfir*). We may take the first as expressing annoyance or contempt, the second more severe moral reprobation (cp. Luke xii. 20). The degrees of punishment are obvious: first the local court or *judgement*, then the central *council* of seventy at Jerusalem, that is, the Sanhedrin (see note at end of section) and finally the *Gehenna* or *hell of fire*. Gehenna was the Hebrew name of a valley by Jerusalem where the bodies of criminals were burned; hence it became a synonym for hell. Hostile passion indulged at last becomes satanic and hopeless. There might be an appeal from the local court to the Sanhedrin, or from the Sanhedrin to the judgement of God in another world, but from the divine tribunal there is none.

23-4. Now follow two illustrations of the truth before enunciated from ordinary life: the first from the religious observances of a Jew, the second from the experience of civil litigation. First; to put away an evil so deadly as hatred of the brother is a duty which must take precedence of the most sacred act of worship, even if it be in course of performance (*if thou art offering*, etc.) for sincere worship will bring to mind sins that have been overlooked in the bustle of ordinary life. The object of a temple offering, of whatever kind, must be to restore or maintain the worshipper's communion with God. Hence the completion of the sacrifice itself must wait for reconciliation with the brother (including reparation

for wrong done) for without placability and mercy the sacrifice is abhorrent to God (ix. 13) and the forgiveness and communion with Him which it is meant to bring about is impossible (vi. 15). Evidently the temple was still standing when these words were written.

25-6. Not only to gain the greatest of blessings must this sin be put away, but to escape the greatest of dangers ; that is, condemnation and punishment by the divine tribunal. The saying is allegorical. The *adversary* corresponds to the injured brother of v. 23. He is, so to speak, a creditor demanding satisfaction at the divine tribunal, if it is withheld from him by his brother. Therefore *agree with him quickly whiles thou art in the way*, before you come into court. In other words, let reconciliation and reparation be brought about in this life, before you have to answer at the divine judgement seat. The reparation there exacted from one who has refused to put away enmity in this life will be of a different nature. Once judicial proceedings had issued in sentence (the *adversary deliver thee to*, or as we should say *summon you before, the judge, and the judge deliver thee*, for execution of sentence, *to the officer*) it was no easy matter in Galilee at that day, to get out of one of Herod Agrippa's prisons—but how much more certain is the operation of the divine justice—*till thou have paid the last farthing*. On earth an offence against the law of love may be atoned for by repentance ; in another world the full penalty, whatever that may be, will be exacted.

V. 27-30. REVISION OF THE LAW OF ADULTERY

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery : but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell.

Besides carrying the law to its spiritual conclusion, Jesus gives a needful counsel to the tempted.

27-8. *It was said in Exod. xx. 14, Thou shalt not commit adultery ;* but the scribes stopped there, instead of going on to v. 17 (thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife) which showed that the desires of the heart must be guarded. In his spiritual interpretation Jesus is bringing out the real meaning and object of the Old Testament law itself and fulfilling it. *Every one that looketh on a woman (with a view) to lust after her.* Christ gave no 'ordinance of the veil'. He nowhere barred the innocent social intercourse of the sexes which does so much in Christian lands to sweeten and purify life. But neither did He make any exception in favour of any divine favourite, excusing the lustful look, as Islam has done. Still less does He allow any such justification for impurity on the ground which some moderns would allege of an invincible natural instinct.

29-30. On the contrary, He solemnly avers that it is better to be actually maimed by the loss of a precious organ than to allow the sin which brings perdition to the whole man. The same thought is indicated in xix. 12 where our Lord speaks of voluntary abstinence from marriage for His sake under the image of castration. Every natural human function is good and wholesome in its due place when sanctified by self-control through the indwelling of God's Spirit, but there is none which may not be a cause of destruction, if allowed to run riot in selfish satisfaction, and most of all the instinct of reproduction which touches the very origins of our existence. Hence the urgency of this counsel to the tempted. *Right eye*, parallel with *right hand*, is a rhetorical enforcement of the nobility and preciousness of the organ; the one the organ of contemplation, the other of action. Both sides of our life need to be guarded with the same decision. *Cause thee to stumble* in the way of life (vii. 14), that is, make you fall into sin. As a limb is sacrificed to prevent blood poisoning in the whole body and death, so it is better to sacrifice the most useful faculty, even in the most painful way, to escape the loss of the whole man in hell.

v. 31-2. REVISION OF THE LAW OF DIVORCE

(COMPARE xix. 9 WITH LUKE xvi. 18)

It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whoso-

ever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.

31. *It was said*, in Deut. xxiv. 1, as a protection of the wife against arbitrary desertion without redress at law. But the words of the law were pressed against the woman, and to render divorce as easy as possible, just as has been the case in Muḥammadan custom. The cause of divorce might be 'some unseemly thing'. Rabbi Shammai interpreted this to mean unchaste behaviour or adultery; Rabbi Hillel stretched it to anything displeasing to the husband, though not even he was as easy as the Muḥammadan law which absolves the husband from assigning any reason whatever. The retrogression of Islām from the Christian to the Jewish standpoint has in this case carried it below the level of the Mosaic economy; but in both cases divorce is a corollary to polygamy.

32. The prophet Malachi (ii. 16) had written: 'I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,' thus showing what the marriage law of the Old Testament was intended to lead up to, and this Jesus brings out in words which forbid divorce, *saving for the cause of fornication*. The Greek noun signifies illicit sexual connexion generally, but in this connexion, as in John viii. 41, it is used specifically of adultery. Strictly speaking, such wrong-doing was followed by the death penalty (John viii. 5; Lev. xx. 10) but the offended husband might choose a private divorce (i. 19). The only permissible ground for divorce is, then, that offence which destroys the very essence of the marriage bond, namely life-long faithfulness

between man and woman. If the wife is put away for this cause, she is already an adulteress; if for any other, the husband *maketh her an adulteress*; that is by giving her permission and occasion to marry another. This does not mean that a divorce on account of adultery of one of the parties gives permission to the guilty one to marry again. Of course alterations of the marriage law of the state cannot in themselves affect the command of Christ here given. The words of our Lord as here recorded deal only with lapses on the part of the woman. In what terms He may have supplemented them on other occasions we cannot tell with the fragmentary records before us. But in this, as in other matters, He sent His Spirit to guide His apostles, and St. Paul in 1 Cor. vii. 8-16 shows that husband and wife alike have a voice in questions of the marriage bond. Christian society is gradually becoming more awake to the conviction that purity is no less to be demanded of men than of women.

V. 33-7. REVISION OF THE LAW OF OATHS

Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.

33. *Thou shalt not forswear thyself* (Lev. xix. 12), *but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths* (Num. xxx. 2; Deut. xxiii. 21). The oath is a solemn assertion the truth of which is confirmed by an appeal to God who will punish falsehood. It is, of course, intended to enforce truthfulness, but instead of teaching with the Psalmist (li. 6) that God demanded 'truth in the inward parts', the scribes sought for means of evading the obligations of an oath, and found it in the mention of 'the Lord' in the second of the clauses quoted. Oaths that were not in God's name, they argued, would not require to be performed to Him, and therefore involved no inviolable obligation. Among non-Christians in India it is not thought necessary to argue the point at all; the oath 'by God' is used just as lightly as any other.

34-6. Therefore Jesus says, *Swear not at all*. The oath enjoined or permitted for the promotion of truthfulness had in fact in the hands of the scribes caused men to 'stumble' into falsehood, so it should be put away. It is noticeable that Jesus, in the oaths here referred to, does not mention the oath 'by God', but He lays stress on the principle that all oaths, if they mean anything at all, involve an appeal to God: *heaven is His throne; earth is His footstool* (Isa. lxvi. 1); *Jerusalem is the city of the great King* (Ps. xlviii. 2); *your head*, which tells of youth or age, is His instrument. Every one of His creatures is ruled and indwelt by Him; there can be no asseveration to which He does not bear witness, and the breach of which He will not visit. Hence the prohibition of swearing is

addressed to the disciples in their capacity as citizens of the kingdom of heaven who live in the continual sense of the divine presence.

37. For such it is sufficient that their speech be: *Yea, yea; nay, nay*. If they want to give assurance, let their way of expressing it be by simple emphasis, here indicated by the doubling of the words, as in the speech of Jesus by His 'verily, verily'. That will be enough to show that you have not misunderstood the question, or are not speaking in jest. *Whatsoever is more than these*, that is, all the casuistic network of fancy oaths spun out by Jewish scribes, and all other ways of using the forms of emphatic truth to convey the substance of falsehood—as well as the need for using special forms, like the oath to enforce the divine sanction of truth—is *of the evil one* (cp. xiii. 19, 38); for 'he is a liar and the father thereof' (John viii. 44). Perhaps the better rendering is *of evil* (as in R.V. margin), that is, all such things come from the evil tendency to deceit, which requires special emphasis to be laid on the penalties of lying, whereas the simple sense of God's presence ought to suffice. Hence Jesus Himself accepted an oath, when administered to Him in a court of justice (xxvi. 63f.); St. Paul repeatedly uses adjurations (Rom. i. 9; 2 Cor. i. 23, etc.) as did the prophets in the name of God (Isa. xlv. 23; Luke i. 73). Hence also 'the Christian religion doth not prohibit swearing for justice, judgement and truth' (Article 39); for the substance of forwarding the cause of truth is more than the form, even the ideal one here set forth, according to which every Christian man's word is as good as his bond.

V. 38-42. REVISION OF THE LAW OF RETALIATION
(COMPARE 39-48 WITH LUKE xi. 27-36)

Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

This section brings into very great prominence the proverbial, and even paradoxical, form our Lord's teaching, when He wishes to enforce a moral truth with startling emphasis. He has confirmed the principles of legal justice and equity contained and applied in the Mosaic law, in *vv.* 17-20, but with the reservation that the morality of His disciples must go further than state law which can only take note of motives to a very limited extent. It is clear that our Lord did not wish to abolish the supports for the framework of society provided by criminal justice. He Himself in the Court of the High Priest reproved a disregard of its rules (*John xviii. 23*); and He bids subjects to render to rulers their dues (*xxii. 15-22*) which would include the maintenance by force of public security. It is the object therefore of this section to set forth graphically the disposition which should govern the conduct of Christ's people in the matter of redressing their wrongs. It may well be their

duty to rebut, as our Saviour and St. Paul did on occasion, injustice inflicted on them; only the guiding principle for the Christian is to vindicate not *my* right but *the* right.

38. This law of retaliation contained in Exod. xxi. 24 was part of the most primitive legislation of the nation. It was useful in impressing on a rude and disorderly community the idea of even-handed retribution by rulers for criminal assaults, in place of the old rule of private revenge. Lev. xix. 18, and other passages showed that the law as a whole was not intended to promote or allow a spirit of revenge. But the 'lawyers' (xxii. 35; Luke vii. 30, etc.) of those days, like some of their successors, were ready to profit by the desire for retaliation among their clients and to interpret the law accordingly.

39. Jesus first gives an unqualified precept, in the proverb style. *Resist not him that is evil*, the malignant man who would oppress or wrong another. This He illustrates by three plain examples of the misuse of personal force, litigation and official authority. *Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek*, etc., probably with the back of the hand, intending to deliver a harder following blow with the palm on the left cheek. This the victim is to anticipate. The form of this precept is sufficient to show that its literal acceptance is contrary to the meaning of Jesus, for He Himself did not follow it when struck by the servant of the High Priest, but remonstrated, though more meekly than St. Paul in a similar case (Acts xxiii. 2-3). It is the readiness to accept an insulting injury rather

than to indulge in the spirit of revenge which is inculcated.

40. The same applies to the second instance, that of vexatious and oppressive litigation. The *coat* (*kurtá*), or tunic, was less valuable than the *cloak* (*choga*), yet the latter, too, is readily to be abandoned, leaving the man practically naked, although the law forbade the creditor to keep a poor man's *choga* over night (cp. Exod. xxiii. 26; Deut. xxiv. 13).

41. The Greek word here translated *compel* exactly corresponds to the Hindustani *begar*, or to the 'requisition' or 'commandeer' of military operations; only like *begar* it refers to forced labour done in the ordinary course of administration. The abuse of this power was much more common in the Roman empire than in the British, and payment for such labour was unknown. The disciple is voluntarily to offer the double of unjustly exacted service, not to escape from it by means of a bribe.

43. Not only are the common bully, the legal harpy, and the rapacious official to be treated in this spirit of meekness and benevolence, but a yet more irritating class of persons—the persistent beggar, even if he helps himself to your property (Luke vi. 30) and the sponging borrower. This makes the application clearer. To follow out this precept literally would mean, as shown by history and personal experience, the economic ruin of society and of the individual; but the best schemes of public charity, without the spirit of unselfishness, benevolence, and personal service here indicated, have proved no real cure for the sufferings of poverty.

v. 43-8. LOVE TO ENEMIES, LIKE THAT OF GOD

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you: that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

43. In this section our Saviour again fulfils the ideal of the Old Testament which leads beyond itself. The command in Lev. xix. 18, *Love thy neighbour*, is there followed by the words *as thyself*, showing that the point of it was not *whom* we are to love, but *how*. This the scribes had disregarded, and cast about for an answer to the question: Whom may I hate without breaking the law? And in this spirit one of them asked Jesus: Who is my neighbour? (Luke x. 29). In the same context it is evident that the word neighbour is meant to signify all, without distinction of high or low. The stranger is not to be wronged (Lev. xix. 33) he is to be loved as one's self (Lev. xix. 34) and provided for charitably (Lev. xix. 10). True, in certain Old Testament passages hatred to the enemy of the nation is enforced; e.g. to Amalek (Deut. xxv. 17-19) and to Edom (Ps. cxxxvii. 7-9) but this was the spirit which Jesus would not have in His disciples (Luke ix. 55). In any case to make this

cover hatred of the private opponent was contrary to the law (cp. Exod. xxiii. 4-5) and to the prophets (cp. 2 Kings vi. 22; Prov. xxv. 21). *Hate thine enemy* was a maxim of Greek moralists, and is in effect that of Islám now; but Jesus has abolished it and freed the command to love from all limitations.

44-5. The true conclusion from the command to love your neighbour as yourself is to *love your enemies*, and when enmity shows itself in persecution, to *pray for* the persecutors. And this is based on the privilege which the disciples have acquired in being made *sons of God*. They must prove themselves as such, this is the sense of the words *that ye may be*, by behaving as He does who continually suffers despite at the hands of sinners, yet requites them with benefits of sunshine and rain. God does not thereby weaken His moral law, but rather draws men to repentance (Rom. ii. 4), and to know and serve Him (cp. Acts xiv. 17). The Hindu still thinks, as the Jew once did, that each physical calamity is the consequence of some definite sin, and each physical good the reward of some act of merit, probably in a former life. Christ teaches that this is not so. Both are connected with the impartial love of God to all His children, whether He cherishes or chastises (Heb. xii. 7) for He is seeking the same disinterested love *from* His children. Be in act, Jesus says, what you are by vocation. It is the loftiest inducement which He could hold out. Our love is based on the forgiving love of God (xviii. 27; 1 John iv. 10, 19) and is a reproduction of it; for it is God in Christ who has taught us to discriminate between the sinner

and his sin, discerning in the sinner the possibilities of divine sonship, which make him worthy of our love. This love has been the greatest power in the history of the Church (Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 60) and is so still.

46-7. Another motive for this impartial love. Without it the disciples would be really no better than those whom they reprobate, and with reason. Mere affection among the members of a class whose common interest draws them together, is no more than a form of self-interest, such as is shown by a class like the publicans (see Introduction) who are rapacious and oppressive in their general dealings with their fellow men though ready to favour one another. The cordial recognition, implied by salutation, only of one's brethren of the same tribe or religion, is no better than practical paganism. It is the essence of the caste system, and of that bigoted spirit in Islám which refuses a gracious salutation to a member of another faith. Both are fundamentally opposed to Christianity. Jesus made few allusions to paganism. Three times it is referred to in this sermon, contrasting its spirit with that which should be in the disciples of Jesus. Here is the pagan spirit of caste exclusiveness; in vi. 7 that of formalism in religion; in vi. 32 that of wordly-mindedness; and in xviii. 17, the Gentile is referred to as one who is outside the spiritual privileges of the Church. The professional guild and the fellowship of the brotherhood (1 Pet. ii. 17) have their moral value within limits; but only while they are under the supreme control of the Christian love that knows no limits.

48. The conclusion of the whole matter; the Christian character is to be formed on God's. Ye (in contrast to those others) *therefore*, because God is what He is (v. 45) *shall be perfect*. The same command had been given to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 1) and to the Israelites generally (Deut. xviii. 13). The word is not used in the sense of sinlessness, nor even of complete development of all one's faculties, but of wholeheartedness, or singleness of purpose, in contrast to the legality of the scribes who higgled with God as to the exact value of each right action, in order to give as little as possible to Him and to keep as much as possible for themselves. It is also contrasted with the pagan view which regarded the world as partly under the authority of God, partly of other powers, and so accorded Him a half-hearted and mechanical service. *As your heavenly Father is perfect*. God's perfections in Himself, that is, His infinite attributes of power, wisdom and goodness cannot be attained by the finite creature; but as the Psalmist had said (Ps. xviii. 25): 'With the perfect man thou wilt abow thyself perfect.' To those who have the singlehearted desire to be like Him, He manifests the same outgoing of His being as far as it can be manifested in humanity; and that outgoing is His love in Christ. His Fatherhood not only constitutes a claim on us to be like Him, but also an assurance of help to those who desire to be so. The demand of Jesus in these words is the echo of the Old Testament message: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy' (Lev. xi. 44). He who satisfies it is not one who has the conceit of

attainment of an infinite ideal, but one who is perfect, because he is minded to 'press on toward the goal' of this high calling (Phil. iii. 14, 15) loving as God loves. To be like the Godhead was an ideal of Plato's; it is the aim of at least some Hindu and Śūfi teachers; but they miss the ideal of God as the heavenly Father, and of love to all men as the specific and attainable feature of His likeness which has been rendered possible through His revelation in Christ.

NOTE ON THE SANHEDRIN

Its title, as commonly used in the New Testament, is the Hebrew form of the Greek word *Synedrion*, meaning assembly. It was known in Hebrew as *Bet Din* or Court of Justice; it is also called the 'assembly of the elders' or presbytery (Luke xxii. 66; Acts xxii. 5). The President was the High Priest. The members consisted of (1) the priestly nobility, called 'rulers' or 'chief priests' (these were generally of the Sadducee party); (2) the elders, who seem to have been taken from among the laity, and also belonged to the Sadducees; (3) the scribes, or theologians and lawyers (Mujtahids, Muftis, and Qazis). These were mainly Pharisees, and they were the more popular party in the Sanhedrin. At the time of Christ considerable power was conceded by the Roman Government to the Sanhedrin, to some extent in matters of police and taxation, but especially as a court of judgement. It had power to carry its decisions into effect, as is implied in v. 22 (cp. x. 17); only the sentence of death required the sanction of the Roman Procurator (John

xviii. 31), and he could withdraw a prisoner from the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin (Acts xxii. 30; xxiii. 23ff). The stoning of Stephen was an irregular act, and would have to be hushed up by a bribe to which the Procurator was seldom inaccessible. Generally the proceedings were conducted according to strict rule; twenty-three members formed a quorum; a bare majority might acquit; a majority was necessary to condemn. The trial of our Lord seems to have been conducted more or less irregularly.

CHAPTER VI

vi. 1-vii. 23. THE NEW LIFE OF THE KINGDOM

Here, as in the case of criminal and civil justice, Jesus does not concern Himself with detailed regulation of almsgiving, prayer and fasting, but with the inner spirit which is to animate His disciples in their observance. At the same time He describes this inward spirit in terms of outward gesture or behaviour (enter into thine inner chamber; anoint thine head, etc.) the essence of the matter being that every such act is to be done with overruling reference to the Father. As the new law of Christ was contrasted with the exposition of the scribes, so the new life is contrasted with the religious practices of the Pharisees on the three great lines of religion: alms, which show benevolence to man; prayer, which stands for worship of God; and fasting, which should mean control over self.

vi. 1. ACTS OF DEVOTION

Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven.

1. This is an introduction to the subject of the due performance of religious acts. Compared with

the words of v. 16 ('let your light shine before men') this is a paradox, that is, a contradiction in form, which draws attention to the union of two opposite aspects of truth. Men are to see our good works, yet *take heed* (an urgent injunction) *that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them.* The former command deals with the *form* of the action, as affecting its result: let your light shine, so that men may not be able to say that the Christian profession is all words, but may see your good works. The latter command aims at the *inner motive* of the action; it must not be done in order to be seen. And in that respect it must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes. Both commands have equal reference to the heavenly Father; first to the praise which men will give Him; next to the praise which He will give His child. In the religious life timidity is to be avoided equally with ostentation. Take, for instance, an Indian Christian who steadfastly keeps the Sunday amidst non-Christian surroundings. The light of his undaunted Christian profession will be seen, but the sacrifice which his faithfulness has entailed will only be known to him and to his Father. Christians are light bearers (Phil. ii. 15) or lampstands (v. 15); their shining is to make men think, not of the torch or of the lampstand, but of the hand which has kindled the flame. *Else ye have no reward*: though, if looking for God's approbation only, they will have one, and to desire it is not only permissible but right, though it is not to be sought for its own sake (see v. 12, 46; 1 Cor. iii. 8-14). Its

value is that it is *with your Father* ; laid up by Him to give you in due time (1 Pet. i. 4) and bringing as its chief value entry into His joy (xxv. 21).

vi. 2-4. ALMSGIVING

When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

2. *Alms* comes from the Greek word here used which means compassion, and hence charitable gifts, as in the case of the word 'charity', originally meaning love. *Sound not a trumpet*: probably a figurative expression, meaning, 'do not call prominent attention'. It was and still is customary, among Jews and others, to give public notice of the distribution of alms from motives of vanity. Nowadays we might say: 'Do not have your charitable acts noticed in the press.' Distributions of this ostentatious kind sometimes took place *in the synagogues*, sometimes *in the streets*, always with a view to the greatest possible publicity. *Hypocrites*; literally stageplayers who take sometimes one part, sometimes another, according to the gain or applause which they expect. The essence of the sin of hypocrisy is the endeavour to appear to be one thing while really the actor is another, and that for the sake of some private end. It is the most repulsive of all sins, because it makes good the means of

evil, a mere feeder to selfishness, and thus excludes repentance. For this reason it was so severely dealt with by Jesus (see xxiii. 13, and cp. Acts v. 1-11; viii. 22-3). *They have received their reward*, and what a reward! *Glory of men* which passes away with the breath that has uttered it, and often enough turns into contempt; at any rate leaving the recipient no more to hope for.

3. *Let not thy left hand know*: that is, do not even be thinking of your own merit, much less allow others to know of it.

4. *In secret*: with no thought but the love of God and His approval. The word used for liberality and singleness by St. Paul is the same in Rom. xii. 8 and 2 Cor. viii. 2 (see R.V. margin). Here again we have a possible paradox. To make almsgiving known may be a necessary *means* for ensuring its proper bestowal, or for stimulating others; but it must never have for its *object* self-praise. In either case, the *Father which seeth in secret* will recognize the motive and reward accordingly.

vi. 5-15. PRAYERS

And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee. And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard

for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one*. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

There are four distinct subjects in this section: *vv.* 5 and 6 secrecy in prayer; *vv.* 7 and 8 avoidance of mechanical prayer; *vv.* 9-13 the model prayer; *vv.* 14 and 15 the condition of forgiveness. Verses 7-15 interrupt the structure of the discourse and were probably spoken on another occasion, but their insertion here gives a fuller view of Christ's teaching on this all important subject.

5. *They love to stand and pray* (cp. Mark xi. 25; Luke xviii. 11) referring to the prayers at stated hours customary among the Jews (cp. Dan. vi. 10-11; Acts iii. 1; x. 30) from which the Muhammadan hours of prayer took their rise. These they would observe in *the synagogues* to which people could see them going, and if detained on the way, they would pray *in the corners of the streets*, choosing the most conspicuous place where one bazaar crossed another. The thing was not in itself wrong; the public prayers offered by Peter and John, and doubtless by many other Christians of Jerusalem (Acts ii. 42, 46), in the temple were

acceptable to God, and commended by the sacred historian. *They have received their reward.* Its immediate bestowal is in proportion to its pettiness. The answer to prayer to God is to be admired of men! The reward has vitiated the prayer.

6. *When thou prayest* (in private devotion) *enter into thine inner chamber:* Let the desire for secret communion with God dominate all you do in ordering your devotions. Daniel was not wrong when he prayed three times a day with his window open towards Jerusalem (Dan. vi. 10) for he had to confess his faith among idolaters, and ran little risk of being spoiled by admiration. The soul must be alone with God, and this may be attained in a crowd as in a desert, if we cannot escape from the former. But actual solitude, such as our Saviour Himself loved and sought (xiv. 23; Mark i. 35) is the greatest help to private prayer, and we need to cultivate it more. By example and precept Jesus made His religion emphatically the religion of private prayer. *Thy Father which is in secret;* God is a God who hides Himself (Isa. xlv. 15) yet dwells with the humble who seek Him (Isa. lvii. 15) and He answers their prayer.

7-8. Against formalism. This and ostentation equally spring from a neglect of the spiritual reality of prayer. In devotion we are to avoid *vain repetitions*, that is, formulas rattled off as a matter of merit regardless of their meaning or appropriateness, like the *Rām, Rām*, of the Hindu, the *sikr* of the Muslim with endless repetitions of the name Allah, the *Om mane padme hum* of the Buddhists. This idea of

prayer essentially belongs to the *Gentiles*, that is, pagans who have no idea of a living God (cp. 1 Kings xviii. 26; Acts xix. 34; and 1 Thess. i. 9). They attach a magical value to the recitation of the words, and therefore *think that they shall be heard for their much speaking*. The Roman phrase for such prayers was *fatigare deos*, to tire out the gods. Of course this does not apply to the repetition of the same sentence a number of times to express heartfelt earnestness and persistence (cp. Matt. xxvi. 44). The character of God as revealed by Jesus forbids mechanical repetition; *for your Father knoweth*. Why then ask at all? Because we are not able to receive the best blessings unless we really desire them; and if we desire them from God we shall certainly express that desire to Him; in other words we shall pray. Without the longing expressed in prayer, the things we need would not be benefits helping to nourish the soul, any more than food crammed down a throat without appetite: would be good for the body. As we pray, then, we must honour God by believing Him to be a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness who will neither refuse what is truly for our good, nor be pressed by our importunity into giving us what is harmful.

9-12. The Lord's Prayer. In all probability the historical occasion of this prayer is that described by St. Luke xi. 1: 'As he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.' It was the example of Jesus that led up

to this prayer; He began it with the word which He Himself used in addressing God, Abba, that is, Father, (see Mark xiv. 36) and it embodies His own practice and precept, to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness in the assurance that all other needful things will be added (v. 33). It is the prayer that teaches to pray; The prayers which John taught his disciples were doubtless forms of words, such as those which the ordinary Jew was expected to commit to memory, and Jesus says: 'When ye pray, say', etc. (Luke xi. 2). Hence we may gather that our Lord intended His disciples to recite the words which He taught them frequently, though in no mechanical spirit. St. Matthew very suitably introduces the prayer into the collection of the teaching of Jesus on devotion at this place. It balances the preceding warning against formalism, by showing that order and system is needed in public and private worship, though the best order without the Christian spirit (vv. 13-14) will avail nothing. St. Luke gives the prayer in a shorter form according to another tradition. It may well be that Jesus expanded it after the first occasion, either during His ministry, or during the forty days before His ascension (Acts i. 3). In the work known as the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which was written about A. D. 100, the Christian worshipper is told to recite the Lord's Prayer three times daily. But it is an abuse of the Lord's Prayer when its mechanical recitation by the score or the hundred is made an act of religious merit. It is the prayer of the Church, not of the world, and to teach non-Christians

who have no intention! of following Christ, to use this prayer, most of all together with Christians, is in the highest degree unsuitable. The contents of the prayer offer analogies to Jewish prayers in use at the time of Christ; for instance, the prayer 'Qaddish' opens with the words: 'May His great name be magnified and hallowed.' True devotion is the same always and everywhere, and especially the devotion of the Old Testament led up to Christ, and its book of Psalms was used by Him to express His own feelings as the Church still uses them. But He added to them the 'our access in one Spirit to the Father' (Eph. ii. 18) through Himself, and with this the certainty of the answer of the prayer, when offered in the spirit of love to the brethren (vii. 7-12).

The structure of the prayer is rhythmical, as shown below:—

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
As in heaven, so on earth.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors,
And bring us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

The first three petitions are for the fulfilment of God's purposes, and the clause 'as in heaven, so on earth' refers to all three, and should be recited separately. The last three are for the supply of our

own needs, beginning with the present support of the body, going on to forgiveness of past sin, and finishing with deliverance from sin in the future and from the dominion of evil. The doxology which is given in the Authorized Version is omitted in the Revised text. It is not part of the original, but a very early form of worship, which occurs in the above quoted *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, and is formed on Jewish models. Its use in public and private prayer is suitable and helpful, like that of the somewhat later 'Gloria' (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, etc.).

9. *After this manner*: St. Matthew draws attention specially to the *manner* and spirit of the prayer, as he was concerned to give a balanced view of our Lord's teaching on the subject. *Pray ye*: not with long and ostentatious prayers as the Pharisees (Mark xii. 40) nor with vain repetitions as the pagans (1 Kings xviii. 26; Acts xix. 34). *Our Father*: In spite of the emphasis laid on solitary prayer the model prayer begins with a plural; it is a common prayer, as were those of the synagogue. The true worshipper must ever remember the needs of his brethren together with his own. The disciples of Jesus are taught to address God as *Father*, in the spirit of children, that is with freedom, trustfulness and simplicity. This name for God was not unknown to the Old Testament, e. g. Deut. xxxii. 6; Isa. lxiii. 16, but it is there applied to the relation of God to the nation and not to individuals. In the Apocrypha we find single persons addressing God as

Father (Wisd. ii. 16; xiv. 3; Eccclus. xxiii. 1 and 4; li. 10) and in rabbinical prayers the term is fairly common. But our Lord made this the very basis of His teaching, and more than this, He brought His disciples into a new and living relationship to God as their Father through His Spirit (John i. 12 and 13; Gal. iv. 6). The words *in heaven* express the sense of reverence in the realization that though God is affectionately near to His children, yet He is also infinitely exalted above them (cp. Eccles. v. 2). Thus in the opening words of this prayer the two conceptions of God's relation to man, which are separately and one sidedly emphasized by Hinduism and Islám, are conjoined in their true unity; He is unspeakably near to us, but He is not identified with man, for the nearness is conditioned by a moral choice on the part of the child of God (as many as received him; John i. 13). He is likewise infinitely exalted above us, yet not so that we cannot, in a real sense, become partakers of His nature (2 Pet. i. 4).

Hallowed be thy name. It is not to be used like those of the heathen gods who are called on with mechanical repetitions, and whose names thus become degraded into mere formulas of common speech; for the name means much more than the sounds or letters of the word for God. As was the name Jehovah (Exod. iii. 15) so in a more intimate sense is the name Father a revelation of the nature of God and His relation to men (John xvii. 6 and 11; Matt. xxviii. 19). If His children behave unworthily of Him, His holy

name (Isa. lyii. 15) is profaned and discredited (Ezek. xxxvi. 23). When they walk worthily of Him (1 Thess. ii. 12) His *name* is *hallowed*, its sacredness is vindicated as effectual, and not merely nominal. This argument for the truth of Christ's revelation of God as the Father is one which the simplest believer can bring forward, and which the subtlest opponent cannot refute.

10. *Thy kingdom come.* The tense of the verb here conveys the sense 'come once for all'. By itself the petition would express the longing of every pious Jew (cp. Luke xvii. 20; xxiii. 51) that Jehovah might manifest His rule over all the world and that His people might reign with Him. But Jesus puts the idea and the longing in its true light. The kingdom is the kingdom of our Father (xiii. 43) into which we enter by being born as His children (John iii. 5). True, the kingdom of power is already His and eternally established, but for His sinful children, He has established a kingdom of grace through Jesus into which He invites all who repent and believe the gospel (Mark i. 15). This kingdom is in process of coming, and when complete it will be manifested as the kingdom of God's glory (cp. Luke xvii. 21; Matt. xii. 28 with Matt. xxv. 31). It is only as we pray and labour sincerely and ardently for the coming of God's kingdom of grace in all nations, as well as in our own hearts, that we can hope to have a share in the kingdom of glory.

Broadly speaking, though not exclusively, we may refer the first three petitions to the purpose of God in revelation (*name*) in the body corporate (*kingdom*)

and in the individual (*thy will be done*). This commanding will of God is the law of His kingdom; this will Jesus came to fulfil (John vi. 38; Luke xxii. 42) and as through His Spirit the kingdom of grace goes forward the effect of it is seen in the performance of God's will by each member of the kingdom, whether it be in the doing of His commandments (vii. 21) or in abstaining from sin (1 Thess. iv. 3) or in suffering what He sends (1 Pet. iii. 17). It is a prayer for strength for self-control, and for patience.

As in heaven, so on earth. This clause applies to all three petitions: the name is revealed from heaven; the kingdom is the kingdom of heaven, and the will is done perfectly in heaven by the holy angels and by the spirits of just men made perfect (Ps. ciii. 19-21; Rev. xxii. 3).

11. This petition and the two next are conditioned by the previous one (cp. Acts xxi. 14; Jas. iv. 15). Pious men may starve; not all who utter this prayer will have their sins forgiven; God's children are brought into temptation as Jesus was. But each of the things prayed for is an object which we are created by God rightly to desire, and therefore to pray for in subjection to His will. The first is bodily sustenance, designated by *bread*, the most common element in it. The word for *daily* in the original is unknown in any other Greek writing, but by analogy from the Aramaic (from which this must have been translated) it would appear to mean 'for the coming day', as the margin has it. The petition, of course, includes the strength to labour; and by the labour of

to-day we gain the provision needful for our support the coming day. Here we have believing prayer, (including work) for the morrow, as contrasted with unbelieving anxiety (cp. vi. 34). The spirit of trust or mistrust does not depend on the arithmetical measure of the time for which provision is made. We are to regard our bodily sustenance as the necessary requisite for doing God's will on earth, for this is the real aim of our life.

12. The next great need is the forgiveness of our failures to do God's will and our transgressions against it. These are here comprised under the word *debts*, because our obedience to His will is due to God from us, and if we fail to render it, we are His debtors. Sin, which is the word used by St. Luke in this connexion (xi. 4), is a failure to give God His due or a taking of that which He, for good cause, has withheld. To forgive a debt is to treat the defaulter as a non-debtor, or, in the language of St. Paul, to treat the sinner as righteous, or, to justify him (Rom. iii. 26). To do this, the creditor must himself bear the loss. How this was done when 'God was in Christ reconciling, the world unto himself not reckoning unto them their trespasses' (2 Cor. v. 19) was afterwards shown by the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Without this divine forgiveness we cannot do the will of God, for that means the offering of ourselves to God who cannot accept a polluted sacrifice (Ps. xl. 6-8; Rom. xii. 1 and 2). Like all the benefits sought in this prayer, forgiveness cannot be obtained for one's self without regard to others; it is conditioned by a

forgiving spirit which gives what it receives ; *as we also have forgiven our debtors*. The worshipper, in accordance with vv. 23 and 24. presents his forgiveness of others as an accomplished fact, as a part of his offering. It is not the ground of his forgiveness, but the condition of it (see xviii. 23-35).

13. Delivered from the burden of past sin, the worshipper sets out to do the will of his Father in the future, but for this too he needs His constant help, both negative and positive. *Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, or from evil*. The petition against temptation presupposes that God may sometimes, in His love and wisdom, see fit to bring us into temptation, that is, into a condition in which the world, the flesh or the devil solicit us to sin with especial force. We may note here the different senses of the word rendered 'tempt' or 'temptation'. (1) It may mean simply to try or attempt (Acts ix. 26; assayed). (2) To test or prove; in a good sense, as John vi. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 12 or in a bad sense, in order to discredit, as Matt. xvi. 1. (3) To test by enticing to sin; as Matt. iv. 1 and 3 (1 Tim. vi. 9) (4) To put God to the test, in a spirit of distrust or disobedience, by challenging His perfections to bring about what we selfishly desire, as iv. 7; Acts xv. 10; Heb. iii. 8. Enticing to sin is denied of God (Jas. i. 13). Testing with a view to our perfection is His work (1 Pet. i. 6f.; 1 Cor. x. 13). Yet any given testing, may through our weakness, result in our fall; therefore we rightly shrink from it and pray against it, as Jesus did (see Luke xxii.

40-2; John xii. 27-8). But if we know it to be sent by God in the way of duty, we may rejoice in temptation (see Jas. i. 2 and 12). What God's people, however, chiefly desire is the fall of Satan's kingdom, and complete deliverance from the slavery of sin; *deliver us from the evil one*, who is our tempter, as he was the tempter of Jesus (iv. 3). The words may also mean *from evil*, which is his work (2 Tim. iv. 18); at any rate this rendering will probably so remain in the prayer as offered in Christian Churches. In either case the prayer leads up to that moral perfection in the will of our heavenly Father for which Jesus bade His disciples strive (v. 48).

14-15. An unforgiving spirit bars the entrance into the heart of the forgiving love of God. This is repeatedly urged by Jesus (Mark xi. 25; Luke vii. 47) and by St. Paul (Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13). Imperfect as we are, non-Christians in this country have learned to expect from Christians a forgiving spirit, such as they would not show themselves. And the refusal by the Chinese missions to accept the blood money offered by the Chinese government as compensation for the massacre of Christians in the Boxer rebellion has powerfully affected the feelings of the Chinese people towards Christianity.

vi. 16-18. ON FASTING

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou

fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall recompense thee.

In the Law of Moses only one fast was expressly ordained, that of the Day of Atonement (see Lev. xvi. 29; xxiii. 27ff). In our Lord's time there were five or six public fasts, but strict Jews were accustomed to fast twice in the week besides, on Thursday, the day when Moses ascended Mount Sinai, and Monday, the day on which he came down (see Luke xviii. 12). Jesus does not here treat of the public fasts, which doubtless He accepted, as He did the other observances of pious Israelites. Here and in ix. 14 and 15 He deals with the extra fasts which a man might either keep or omit. Here He lays stress on the unostentatious form which such fasts should assume; in ix. 14 and 15 on the genuineness of fasting as expressing a true religious feeling. In both He develops the teaching of Isa. lviii.

16. *Be not . . . of a sad countenance, as so often in the case of the Ramadán fast, when a man excuses himself for bad temper on the ground of his fasting. They disfigure (or conceal) their faces, that they may be seen of men.* The Pharisee during his fast would put ashes on his head, or abstain from washing his face, or actually veil it, to attract attention. A sarcastic expression, as if we should say, disfigured himself in order to figure before men.

17. Here again the inward disposition is described in terms of outward behaviour. *Anoint . . . wash:*

prepare as if for a feast or at any rate for the ordinary occupations of the day. This applies to all asceticism or acts of self-denial ; those which no one suspects are those which carry most of the divine blessing with them.

vi. 19-34. THE AIMS OF THE NEW LIFE

The first part of this chapter has contrasted spurious piety in religious duties as shown by hypocritical Jews with the true spirit that should animate them. Now Jesus turns against the worldly spirit, evidenced especially by the pagans, which demands precedence as a matter of common sense, for the things that are seen (cp. v. 32). We often enough hear it expressed in such phrases as, 'the belly must be nourished.' This spirit operates in two directions ; 19-23 greed in the acquisition of riches ; 25-34 caring care for the necessities of life ; and both have a common root, the desire to serve two masters, v. 24 ; neglect of the single mind, v. 22 ; a half belief in God ; for the whole is addressed to professing disciples. Hypocrisy and ostentation in religion, and the worldliness which dignifies itself by the name of common sense are both snares on the right and left of the disciples' way, and both are equally against the mind and example of the Master.

vi. 19-21. THE TRUE TREASURE

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth,
where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves

break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

19. *Lay not up for yourselves* : the last two words are emphatic; suitable provision for those dependent on us is not against the Christian spirit (cp. 1 Tim. v. 8) but we are not to make the amassing of wealth the object of our lives. For this the Saviour gives first a prudential reason, like that of the wise man in Prov. xxiii. 5: such treasure is perishable; *moth* will attack the stores of costly garments which people love to accumulate; *rust* (literally anything corroding, like the rust or mildew of wheat) will spoil the stores of grain (v. 26) however many and large barns be built for them (Luke xii. 18). Further, they may be taken from us by *thieves* who *break*, or rather dig *through* the wall of a kacha house, or under the wall into the house-floor.

20. Therefore get what is imperishable and inalienable. *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven* : by using the world for God's service as your supreme aim ensure the possession of those blessings and joys which are reserved for Christ's faithful followers to be given at His coming (cp. Luke xvi. 9; Matt. xix. 21; 1 Tim. vi. 19; 1 Pet. i. 4 and 5).

21. A reason for so doing. *For where thy treasure* (any earthly possession or gratification which you make the object of your desires and efforts) *is, there will thy heart be also*. If in the centre of your being you are bound to the perishing goods of earth,

how miserable will you be when they disappear!
(Cp. Col. iii. 1-4).

vi. 22-4. SINGLE-MINDED SERVICE

(LUKE XI. 34-6; XVI. 13)

The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

How can we be sure that we are following the supreme aim of laying up treasure in heaven? This our Saviour answers by a parable, in which he compares the eye in its office of lighting and guiding the body to the conscience which is the eye of the moral being.

22-3. *The lamp of the body is the eye*: light is diffused everywhere, but it only reaches the body for purposes of vision and guidance through the eye. Hence to keep the eye in good working order is of supreme importance for the welfare of the body; to have a distorted vision, which gives a false view of objects may be even more dangerous than blindness. Our Lord applies personal adjectives to the eye: *if therefore thine eye be single*, literally sincere, that is, not seeing double, or otherwise wrong; and again *evil* or wicked, doing its work badly. In the one case

the whole body, with all its organs and powers, is enlightened and benefited; in the other case the whole body is as if imprisoned in darkness. How important then to keep the eye free from distorting influences! But how much more important to keep the moral judgement clear from obscurity or disturbance! It is *the light* (not only the lamp) *that is in thee*, placed there by God. If the heart be not fixed steadily on the supreme aim, the conscience becomes obscured by the desire for earthly good, and is a false guide instead of a true one, and then, *how great is the darkness!* If the compass that should guide the ship points to the wrong quarter, how shall the ship escape destruction? Our conscience needs to be regulated by the standard of single-minded devotion to God, as taught by and embodied in Jesus. Otherwise, to follow an ill-regulated conscience may involve men in moral darkness and ruin.

24. What is true of our moral judgement, as typified by the eye, is true of our moral practice, as typified by domestic service. This is expressed in an acknowledged maxim found in the sayings of Æsop (or Luqman) and elsewhere. No *man* (in Luke xvi. 13 'no slave') *can serve two masters*. In ancient and modern times it has happened that two men have had shares in the possession of a slave; but the result is sure to be unsatisfactory. Either personal preference (*hate* and *love*) or personal interest (*hold to* and *despise*) will upset the balance and make one of the owners dissatisfied. In practice we are sure to love better either God or the

world, and to make the service of one or the other our chief concern. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*, in the capacity of slave; when the right master has been chosen, you may do your duty by both in due proportion. *Mammon* is an Aramaic word for wealth, (cp. Luke xvi. 9 and 11, where the true relation is set forth, that we are to be the slaves of God, and His stewards to administer earthly property). The impossibility of this double service is most strikingly illustrated by the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts v. 1-11 (cp. Jas. iv. 4).

vi. 25-34. THE CHRISTIAN'S FREEDOM
FROM WORLDLY ANXIETY

Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these

things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all: these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

25. The single-minded service of God may be impaired from the quarter opposite to the greed for wealth, namely, the carking cares of poverty. It was this which the disciples were, in common with the majority of mankind, most likely to suffer from; *therefore*, the Saviour adds, *Be not anxious*, and He devotes more teaching to this than to the preceding danger. The Greek word for *anxious* signifies a divided, or as we might say, distracted condition of mind, which prevents one from attending to duty (cp. Phil. iv. 6; Jas. i. 8). The Saviour does not forbid planning or working for our needs. The true contrast to the divided mind of anxiety is the 'carefulness' or thoughtful planning, to maintain good works, inculcated by St. Paul (Titus iii. 8). St. Jerome says: 'Labour is to be followed, anxiety to be avoided.' It is not to be yielded to even for the sake of *life* which is the thing on earth that all most value (xvi. 25 and 26) much less for the things that go to support life, such as food and drink. He who bestowed the gift of life without our help will grant the food that He has taught us to pray for (vi. 11) without our worry. The same holds good of the body and the clothing which it needs.

26. To enforce the lesson, Jesus points to *the birds* flying above the hearers on the mountain side. No doubt they are busily seeking their food, but they take day by day what is provided for them in the storehouse of nature by God (Ps. cxlvii. 9; civ. 28) for they cannot store it up as does the husbandman. And when they perish, it is not without the thought of the heavenly Father, nor until they have reached their allotted span of life (x. 29-31). If the insignificant creatures are thus cared for much more the children of the Father (cp. vii. 11); for these are of *much more value*. The Christian view of the lower creation, which involves kindness to all sentient beings, is not based, like the Hindu, on the identification of the living principle, or *jivatma*, in all. It recognizes the indelible difference between the human soul, joined with a spirit that has relations with the divine, and the animal soul which is bound, so far as we know, to matter, but each is embraced in the operation of the divine love which cares for, and will at last deliver, the groaning creation (cp. Rom. viii. 19-23).

27. Anxiety about worldly needs is as futile as it is wrong. *Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature?* or rather to his age; time being expressed in the measure of space (cp. Ps. xxxix. 5). Very few would wish to add half a yard to their height, and no one would expect to do it by anxious forethought; but in this way many do try to lengthen their 'span' of life. In reality, however, such worry tends to decay of the powers.

28-9. What the birds above us teach about care for life, the flowers around us teach about anxiety for clothing. The Saviour points His hearers to the *lilies of the field* growing around them. The exact species of the flower is uncertain; several kinds of gay wildflowers grow on the hill sides of Galilee. *How they grow*, not by a process of anxious forethought, but by following simply the laws of their being implanted by God. *They toil not*, as does the man in the field where they grow; *neither do they spin*, as does his wife at home, the flax or cotton that he has raised. The result of that human industry is usually very homely raiment. How different the fabrics in which God has decked the wildflower! *Even Solomon in all his glory* (1 Kings 10) *was not arrayed like one of these*. He points to one of the flowers growing round Him. Our Saviour is a lover of nature; He sees the wisdom and goodness of His Father working in birds and flowers with a skill and beauty far beyond the highest human efforts. Christian culture, beyond any other, has fostered the feeling for the beauty and wonder of nature.

30. Yet the ethical motive is ever predominant. Compared with God's children these glorious flowers are but *the grass of the field*, with which they are cut down and used. The destiny of the one is eternal, while the other, when their transitory bloom is past are used for supplying the daily bread of men. *The oven* is the kind which we often have in India; a cavity dug in the earth with a narrow opening, which is first heated by burning fuel inside it, and then used

for baking. Dried grass in Palestine was used for this purpose. *Ye of little faith* : Jesus must have perceived that some of His disciples were troubled about the prospect of temporal support, though they had left all and followed Him. He uses the same expression in the storm on the lake (viii. 26) to Peter sinking in the water (xiv. 31) and to the questioning disciples at the second miraculous feeding (xvi. 8). They and we can only enjoy the benefit of being God's children, if the heart responds to the Father by faith.

31-2. *Therefore* : because God is what I have told you, *be not anxious* ; for that involves a double sin ; it shows a heathen spirit, like that of the Gentiles who professedly make this world the chief object of their life ; and it is a misjudgement of God. If he is God, He knows your needs ; if He is Father, He cares about them. Even in the nobler forms of ethnic faith these aspects of the divine nature are separated. In the Vedas Dyaushpitar, the Skyfather, and Indra, the raingod who dispenses the life-giving moisture, are separate entities. In our heavenly Father the power and the will to help are one.

33. Hence there is one thing needful which we must seek first, and that is our Father Himself, as revealed in His kingdom and His righteousness ; membership in the society that Jesus came to found, and individual fitness for it. This order of our life effort has been already indicated in the prayer that Jesus has taught. If our desires are directed as in this prayer, our life will fall into correspondence with it. The righteousness of God is that which has its

origin in Him (Jas. i. 20) in contrast with that of the scribes and Pharisees (v. 20) which looks first and foremost to human judgement and approval. *All these things shall be added unto you.* However much the disciple may be called upon to deny himself, the other side of the truth remains that Christian righteousness tends to outward prosperity (cp. 1 Tim. iv. 8).

34. Summing up. The *day* is the immediate future; it is sufficient for us to cope with its evils and difficulties. The *morrow* is the distant future; for this we are not to be anxious in respect of any earthly good. To care for the next thing is to master anxiety. The morrow with its task will bring its strength, with its need its gifts.

CHAPTER VII

vii. 1-12. THE CONDUCT OF THE NEW LIFE

THE connexion of thought is less close in this chapter than in the preceding. The teachings of these verses, however, group themselves naturally under the headings given below, and, for practical purposes, they are summed up in the Golden Rule of v. 12. The governing idea is the practical love of one's fellow men, as children of the One Father.

vii. 1-5. CHARITY IN JUDGING THE BROTHER

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

This is the counterpart to reconciliation with the offended brother, v. 23-4.

1. A high ideal, such as that enforced in vi. 33, and its earnest pursuit involves the danger of censoriousness towards others who may seem to be less earnest. Therefore *judge not*. Here again, as in the case of 'temptation', we have a general expression used in a particular sense. In itself 'to judge' means to pass a judgement on a question of right or wrong, whether it be to approve (Luke vii. 43) or to condemn (Luke xix. 22) or simply to discriminate (Luke xii. 57). In the sense of discrimination to judge is commanded (cp. 1 Thess. v. 21); in the sense of condemnation we are here forbidden to judge (cp. Luke vii. 39). Jesus condemns the censorious officious spirit which sets up one's self as the tribunal and his always trying to bring others before it and to pass sentence on them (cp. Jas. iii. 1; iv. 11, 12). Even if such judgements are logically correct, they are vitiated by our failing to take account of our own imperfections (see v. 3-5). The contrary quality is the 'gentleness of Christ' (2 Cor. x. 1) that sweet reasonableness which takes account of all that is good or that may become good in another. *That ye be not judged*: to neglect to cultivate the merciful spirit which God prizes in His children, is to expose ourselves to the judgement of His tribunal on the footing of mere justice without mercy (cp. Jas. ii. 13) that is, to condemnation.

2. The truth is enforced by a Jewish proverb which holds good alike of ordinary life and of the divine tribunal. The *judgement* is the sentence passed, and the *measure* is the standard by which it is arrived at; both will correspond (cp. xviii. 23-35).

3-5. Further enforcement by the simile of the *mote* and the *beam*; also based on a Jewish saying, embodying a popular hyperbole like that of the camel and the needle (xix. 24). The *mote*, any small dry body, like straw or chaff, stands for a small fault; the *beam*, which would more than blind the eye, points to the greatest fault of all, producing spiritual blindness and hypocrisy (v. 5) and that is the loveless censorious spirit, which utterly disqualifies for a sound moral judgement (cp. Rom. ii. 3, 21-4). Though it involves a gross moral absurdity, this temptation is also a subtle one, for the critic may imagine himself to be doing his brother a thankworthy benefit, by casting the mote out of his eye. Yet he stands a hypocrite confessed, for he pretends to a position which only a sinless, or at least a humble forgiven man may occupy. But if he will *cast out first the beam*, begin, that is, by self-amendment, this may result in his being able to render help to others by the lessons drawn from his own failings.

vii. 6. DISCRETION IN DEALING WITH OUTSIDERS

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.

6. The treasures of the kingdom of heaven are indeed entrusted to the disciple, not merely for his own benefit, but also to be imparted to others; yet he will not effect his end by indiscriminate scattering of his gifts, but must use discretion. The *brother*,

however blinded by egotism, still acknowledges the same standard of moral value, but there are those who do not, and in whom one can appeal to no higher sense. Such one must recognize and simply avoid, even with the offer of that which might be for their highest good. Thus the Christian must be judicious, though not judicial. The thing to be withheld, and the people incapable of appreciating it are the same in the two first clauses, but characterized by two different metaphors. The thing is the good news of the kingdom (iv. 23, etc.); it is comparable to *that which is holy*—a term for the flesh of the sacrifices offered to God, of which the priests and worshippers afterwards partook (Exod. xxix. 33)—in respect of its sacredness; it resembles *pearls* because of its preciousness (cp. xiii. 45, 46). The unreceptive hearers may be like dogs (Phil iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 14) who would make a shocking use of the sacred food as they fight over it and drag it to and fro in the dust before swallowing it. Or, they may be like *swine* (2 Pet. ii. 22) who cannot recognize the precious spherules, and finding them not eatable trample them in the mire and turn to attack those who have offered them what they had not sense to recognize. St. Paul repeatedly experienced such treatment on the part of his Jewish hearers (Acts xiii. 45; xviii. 6). It was largely on the ground of such sayings that the early Church carefully guarded the knowledge of the more intimate rites and truths of the Faith from the knowledge of the outside world; for they were indeed ready enough to turn and rend the Christian preacher. In the missions of the

reformed Churches we might do well to consider carefully whether we sufficiently follow out the principle here laid down by our Lord. To teach non-Christian children who have no intention or prospect of becoming disciples of Christ to recite the creed or to sing hymns to Him as Saviour, seems scarcely in accordance with this passage. If outsiders were made conscious that participation in such things is a privilege conditional on belief in Christ and incorporation in Him by baptism, they might come to think more highly of fellowship in His Church.

vii. 7-12. PERSEVERANCE IN RECOURSE TO GOD

(LUKE XI. 9-13)

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

How are we to attain such discretion and such charity combined? By treating God as really our Father, and going to Him to supply our need in the assurance that He will do it.

7. The urgency with which the believer should pray is expressed in a three-fold climax: *ask . . . seek . . . knock . . .* for what you lack, for what seems to be lost or distant, at the door which is closed. When the answer to prayer is not given at once, this should not lead to cessation or slackness, but to greater earnestness.

8. This is enforced by a general law, which applies especially to Christ's kingdom: *every one that asketh receiveth*. The desire for our Father's best gifts, which is so real and strong that it refuses to be balked by delay, and which is directed to the true end (vi. 33) cannot fail of its satisfaction (v. 6).

9-10. A further argument from the less to the greater (cp. Isa. xlix. 15) from the imperfect earthly father to the perfect Father in heaven. Whatever there is of good in the former must exist in fulness in the latter. The divine attributes are the same as the human in kind, though they vary in degree. This is the basis of the Christian idea of God. The Hindu, on the other hand, tries to reach the infinite by denying whatever is in the finite, and so he thinks of God as *nirgun*, without attributes, which means practically that for us He is nothing. The gift of a *stone* for a *loaf* would be mockery; a *serpent* for a *fish* would be a cruel injury, though there might be outward resemblance between the two.

11. In contrast to such unnatural conduct the average father is kind and discreet enough to give to his children what is good for them, though he is *evil*, that is tainted with sin, which clings even to the

disciples, and in others occasionally brings forth the fruit of unnatural cruelty to offspring. Our heavenly Father's knowledge of our needs is perfect (vi. 32); necessarily, therefore, He will *give good things* (Jas. i. 17) or as Luke xi. 13 has it, the Holy Spirit, the sum and crown of all good gifts, *to them that ask Him*.

12. The golden rule, resulting from all that has gone before. It forms the standard for judging, and for imparting or withholding the gifts of the kingdom; it is the answer to the prayer for wisdom; the royal law of liberty (Jas. ii. 8-12) which governs all the citizens of the kingdom. In Job iv. 15 we read: 'What thou thyself hatest, do to no man,' and a similar saying is ascribed to the great Rabbi Hillel in the Talmud. Jesus changes the negative into a positive; He raises His disciple from the level of justice to that of generosity. The rule sums up specially the results of v. 1-11. Such being your attitude in the matter of judging others, and such God's attitude towards you as a wise and bountiful Father, *therefore whatsoever ye would, etc.*, though that may involve the withholding of things not suited to them (v. 6). *For this is the law and the prophets*, going back to v. 17 and the subsequent exposition of the righteousness of the kingdom.

vii. 13-23. THE PERILS AND THE TEST OF THE
NEW LIFE (LUKE xiii. 24-27)

vii. 13-14. THE NARROW GATE

Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and

many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it.

In the parallel passage the Saviour is replying to the question, Lord, are they few that be saved? But with this image He couples another in Luke xiii. 25, and adds the substance of vv. 22, 23 of this chapter. It looks as if on a later occasion our Lord had quoted His earlier words with addition and modification. Jesus does not pronounce as to the number or proportion of those who are eventually saved, but He does say that in this world the majority do not choose the narrow way that leads to life. The serenely trustful Christian life must also be strenuous. The disciple must be sure that he has made the right beginning: *enter ye in by the narrow gate* of repentance (iv. 17) and the new birth (John iii. 5). That gate admits to a way (cp. John x. 7, 9) which leads to a goal, namely, life. It needs effort to enter this gate, for it is narrow, and to walk in the *way*, for it is *straitened* by various obstacles and pitfalls. The other *gate* costs no effort to enter, nor the *way* a difficulty to walk on. It has the larger choice of society, for *many* are using it; but it leads to *destruction*. It is the contrast between following one's own selfish desires and popularity among men, and losing one's life for Christ's sake to find it (x. 39).

vii. 15-23. FALSE TEACHERS

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits

ye shall know them. Do *men* gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

15. The disciple may be honestly striving to walk in the narrow way, yet he will run a risk from misdirection by false guides who profess to speak as from God. Hence *beware of false prophets which come to you*. The first implicit prophecy on the part of the true Prophet that many spurious guides would appear in His Church; see xxiv. 5, 11, 24; Acts xx. 29, as there had been in Israel (2 Pet. ii. 1). *In sheep's clothing*, as if they were true members of the flock (xxvi. 31).

16. The test of such is explained by another metaphor. *By their fruits ye shall know them*. They too are apparently trees of God's garden, but they are not really planted by Him (cp. xv. 13, and Isa. v. 2). They will be judged by the moral results of their teaching in their own lives and those of others. Unless the official status be confirmed by the personal character, it can effect little good.

17-20. Our Lord re-echoes and confirms the Baptist's teaching (iii. 8-12). Not merely must the fruit conform to the species of the tree (grapes and figs, v. 16) but to its condition, whether *good* or *evil*; if the fruit turns out persistently bad, the tree is cut down and used for fuel, for the fruit tree generally is of little value as timber. Holiness and especially unselfishness is the mark of the true teacher; failing this he is preparing himself for hell. In the *Teaching of the twelve Apostles* we find very emphatic warnings against the prophets who went about among the early Christians, if they showed any inclination to make a gain of their calling. Remember that the prophet here corresponds to the teacher of our own day, be he called reader or catechist or *padri*. The test is one that is based on the nature of things, yet its application requires wisdom (x. 16).

21. Now the same truth is taught without simile. The testing, even by the standard of moral fruits laid down by the Saviour Himself may go wrong, but the day is coming when the real nature of the work of each will be determined. It will be manifestly measured by the standard of the will of God where it is done perfectly, in heaven; and what fails by that test will be stamped as *iniquity*, whatever the human estimate of it may have been. The discourse comes to a climax in these words in which the Lawgiver guarantees the sanction of His precepts in the judgement which He Himself will execute. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord.* The double title expresses emphasis and fervency of profession. It is indeed indispensable

to recognize Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. xii. 3) and in the apostolic age, as often in India, to do so was no safe or easy matter, not merely to believe, but to confess Him. But the greater test comes afterwards. Have we not seen those who have confessed Christ in the face of much opposition and at the cost of not a little suffering, who yet have failed to *do the will of my Father 'which is in heaven* persistently till the end (xxiv. 13). Only thus is the profession realized (cp. xxi. 29 ; Rom. ii. 13 ; Jas. i. 22). On the other hand they may do His will despite many failures (vi. 12) provided only that they are always hungering and thirsting (v. 6) and seeking after His righteousness (vi. 33). As man Jesus Himself passed that test (John iv. 34 ; v. 30). But in the words *my Father*, here for the first time, He indicates a unique relationship to God which justifies the claim made in this passage. For the words *enter into the kingdom of heaven* here signify the attainment of the final bliss of the kingdom after the judgement.

22. *In that day* of divine judgement, expected by the prophets (Mal. iii. 17, 18 ; Isa. ii. 11, 17) executed by Jesus (iii. 12), *many* such false prophets will not only profess faith as they did in this life and appeal to their words (*prophecy*) but even to deeds of a sort ; *many mighty works*, such as exorcisms and miracles (cp. 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3). And all that *by thy name*. What can be wanting ? The one thing needful.

23. In the answer of the Judge there is a dreadful irony. *Then will I profess*, or confess ; I who ought

to know men who can say so much for themselves; *I never knew you*, to recognize you as indeed my disciples (cp. John x. 14; 1 Cor. viii. 3). Such knowledge involves true inward sympathy and unity of will. The lack of this inward nearness will then be manifested by outward separation: *Depart from me*. Nearness to Him is salvation; separation from Him is perdition. The *works* to which such double-minded ones appeal may seem righteous to men, but the working of them, lacking the true motive, counts before the supreme tribunal only as *iniquity*, or lawlessness, for it was against the fundamental laws of the kingdom, as here set forth. Their fruit has been evil.

vii. 24-7. THE TEST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Every one therefore which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.

24-5. The previous section dealt with prophets; this with all disciples; *every one therefore which heareth these words of mine*. The connexion between profession and action being as above laid down, consider how fateful a thing it is to be under my

instruction, for this rule brooks no exception. The hearer in this connexion is not merely the casual hearer of a discourse by Christ or His messengers, for even the mere hearer is likened in *v.* 26 to one who builds a house that is makes himself what he regards as a permanent habitation; this hearing includes acceptance of the teaching of Christ as the true foundation for the life structure. Within the territory of acceptance there is, as it were, a distinction of soil. The whole is indeed, liable to floods, for there is no Christian life without a testing. But the wise man is he who has regard to this, and selects the *rock* which will stand firm in flood-time; he adds doing to hearing. The latter without the former only makes a man's character *kacha*, and less able to withstand temptation than before. Every disciple is building a structure of character, in which he must abide not for time only but for eternity, and the only true foundation of this is the *rock* of obedience to Christ (*cp.* 1 John ii. 17). Verse 25 almost describes the burst of the monsoon: the house is tested in every possible way; the rain on the roof, the fierce hurricane wind against the walls, the flood on the foundations; but if the foundation holds firm, the house will stand, for it is knit to the rock; the character confirmed in obedience is proof against the assaults of evil and the tests of judgement.

26-7. The 'doer that worketh' (Jas. i. 25) and the wise builder alike have indeed only exercised common sense, but, while the builder on sand or

shifting soil is not unknown in India¹, he is much rarer than the corresponding person in the spiritual world, who tries to build his structure on the shifting sand of emotion or opinion which does not go deep enough for action. In either case, the greater and more costly the superstructure, the more complete its ruin. The sermon begins with being, but it ends with doing.

vii. 28-9. THE EFFECT OF THE SERMON

(CF. MARK i. 22, 27 ; JOHN vii. 46)

And it came to pass, when Jesus ended these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

28-9. The hearers are shaken by these solemn words, and feel that they are in the presence of the king of truth (John xviii. 37). *He taught*: this is an emphatic imperfect; He was teaching habitually and repeatedly, this was no isolated instance of the authority with which He pronounced on the conduct of the life that is and the destiny of the life that is to come (cp. xi. 27-30 ; xxviii. 19, 20). How great and

¹The former palace of the Nawab of Mamdot on the Satluj was built on the sandy cliff overlooking the river, which, in the course of generations, had shifted and eaten into its left bank. One day during the floods of the rainy season, while the inmates were on its roof, the building suddenly gave way, and several perished, while much property was sucked down into the sands of the river. The present condition of Dera Gházi Khán on the Indus is an illustration of the same thing.

refreshing must have been the change to the people, harassed by the burden of minute observances (xxiii. 4) and the claims of various rabbis, to be taught, *not as by their scribes*, but by one who Himself was the fountain of *authority* (cp. Luke iv. 32-6). To how many in India has the message of Christ through this sermon come as a draught of the clear water of life after the warring sects and endless observances of Hinduism or Islám!

CHAPTER VIII

viii. 1-ix. 34. THE ACTIVITY OF JESUS AS WORKER ESPECIALLY IN HIS HEALING MINISTRY

THE self-revelation of Jesus by teaching is followed by His manifestation through action (cp. John ii. 11) in which is shown His compassion for every form of suffering, and His power to help both body and soul. The arrangement is topical rather than temporal. The first triplet of miracles in viii. 1-17 (the leper the centurion's servant, Peter's mother-in-law) leads up to the prophetic quotation in v. 17, and is followed by works of various kinds, not excluding teachings. This section exhibits Jesus in the earlier period of His work in Galilee, when His popularity is yet great, but the first occasions of opposition on the part of the Pharisees are appearing (cp. x. 3, 11, 34).

viii. 1-4. HEALING OF A LEPER (MARK i. 40-4; LUKE v. 12-14)

And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came to him a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt,

thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

1. Having taught with authority, Jesus heals with authority, and having asserted His respect for the law (v. 17). He now bids the healed leper fulfil its provisions by making the regular offering.

2. *Behold*: here, as elsewhere, drawing attention to the introduction of a new subject. The event may have happened on the same day on which the sermon was delivered, or on another. *A leper*: in iv. 24 lepers are not mentioned among those who were healed in the early days. Perhaps this was the first leper of the many who were afterwards cured both by Jesus and by His apostles (x. 8; xi. 5, etc.). Besides the loathsome and incurable nature of the disease, with which we are familiar in India, and the separation from one's fellow-creatures which it entails, leprosy under the Jewish law was treated (see Lev. xiii and xiv) as a cause of special religious defilement; the seclusion of the leper was very strict; when his disease had been identified by the priest, he was ordered to go about with torn clothes, covered upper lip, crying 'unclean, unclean!' to warn others from defiling themselves by coming near him, and to dwell apart from other human habitations. If healed by God's mercy, he was to have his cure in like manner certified by the priest, and to offer cleansing sacrifices. This unfortunate dares to come

near to Jesus, and instead of warning Him off he worships Him, that is prostrates himself, in token of his presentation of an urgent and humble request. *Lord*, as possessing authority and power, *thou canst*. He was full of leprosy (Luke v. 12) but also full of faith, like the centurion (v. 9) and unlike the disciples on the stormy lake (v. 26). Even the ordinary physician, if his patient has no faith in him, will often effect little; in the case of Christ and His apostles the need of faith which meets and appropriates the healing power that goes forth from them, is often mentioned, see ix. 22; Acts xiv. 9. *If thou wilt*: this appeal to the compassion of Jesus went home; it was the very thing that He was there for.

3. The eagerness of our Saviour's answer is shown in His gesture and word; instead of shrinking from the leper *he stretched forth his hand and touched him*, by the letter of the law contracting defilement, by the power of the Spirit removing it, saying, *I will; be thou made clean*, by the healing virtue that goes with the word and touch.

4. At the same time, ready as He was to heal, Jesus did not wish to have around Him a miscellaneous crowd of patients and onlookers who would be receiving a false impression of the work He laid the chief stress on, namely, the healing of the soul. He would rather have the healed man give the practical proof of his cure in the way ordained in the law, *for a testimony unto them*, that is the priests, of whom many after Pentecost believed (Acts vi. 7). The leper would first show himself to the priest who was most easily accessible, for

they were scattered throughout the country. He would pronounce the man clean, offer the preliminary offering, and restore him to the society of his fellows (Lev. xiv. 1-9). Then, after eight days, he would offer the prescribed sacrifices in the temple at Jerusalem (Lev. xiv. 10-32). From this it was evident that Jesus was no deceiver who sought to attract crowds to Himself for His own advantage by magical arts, as His enemies affirmed (cp. xxvii. 63) nor yet one who despised the law of Moses (see Acts xxi. 21, 28). Brief as is the story of this miracle, we see in it the qualities of Jesus reflected: His sympathy, power, reverence for order, and care for the future good of those whom He healed.

viii. 5-13. HEALING OF A CENTURION'S SERVANT

(LUKE vii. 1-10)

And when he was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth in the house sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And he saith unto him, I will come and heal him. And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east

and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour.

Luke also relates this close upon the sermon. In the time of Christ, the unit of the Roman army was the legion, consisting of 6,000 foot soldiers and commanded by an imperator or general. This was divided into six cohorts of 1,000 each, which corresponded to our regiment (paltan) and were commanded by a tribune or colonel. They are referred to in John xviii. 12 and Acts xxi. 31, as the 'band' and the 'chief captain'. A regiment of this size was stationed in the Castle of Antonia above the temple in Jerusalem to keep order there. The cohort was divided into ten maniples, or centuria of one hundred men, each commanded by a centurion, who thus corresponded in authority to the captain of a company. His social position was something between that of a present day captain and a non-commissioned officer. The centurions were considered to be the backbone of the Roman army. Those mentioned in the New Testament appear in a favourable light (cp. xxvii. 54; Acts x. 27; xvii. 1). As in the case of civil and criminal justice, so with the military profession, our Lord did not pronounce any opinion as to the legitimacy of their methods, more especially as to the rightness or wrongness of war. He left the principles which He implanted in the

hearts of men to do their work in modifying social and political institutions.

5. In *Capernaum*, where Jesus had settled (iv. 13) there was a military garrison, but whether of imperial Roman troops, or levies of Herod Antipas, we do not know for certain. The centurion came to Jesus, as St. Luke tells us, through the agency of friends from among the elders of the Jews whose religion he favoured, and for whom he had built a synagogue; probably he was a 'proselyte of the gate' who believed in God but had not received circumcision.

6. He is concerned on account of his *servant*, literally 'boy', which term was applied to domestic servants, as often in India; perhaps a soldier orderly. *Palsy*, or paralysis (cp. iv. 24; ix. 2). This was an especially bad case, for he was *grievously tormented*, that is in great pain through the contraction of the muscles or otherwise.

7. Jesus (as shown by St. Luke) recognizes the force of the plea of the friends and the faith of the centurion, and replies, *I will come and heal him*. He does not hesitate to predict the cure, and word is sent to the centurion, whose answer proves his faith to have been even greater than at first seemed.

8. *I am not worthy, etc.* The Jewish elders who were accompanying Jesus must have felt some surprise at His willingness to go into the house of a Gentile, which would be held to involve ceremonial defilement (John xviii. 28) and something of the same feeling seems to have been in the mind of the centurion when he heard that Jesus was actually coming; he

esteemed the Jewish nation and felt himself unworthy as a heathen to receive under his roof an Israelite rabbi; but still more he felt himself a helpless man before one who commanded the vital powers of the world, and for whom it was enough to *say the word* of healing.

9. Having such complete faith, why does he think it necessary to give Jesus a reason for it? He is overwhelmed at the condescension of Jesus, and has sent a second deputation of friends to him, begging Him not to trouble Himself (Luke vii. 6). He now with submissive courtesy, gives the reason why he has refused so kind an offer. He regards the position of Jesus in the sphere of life-giving powers as analogous to his own as a military officer and householder. He commands his soldiers to go and come on military duties, or his household slave to do domestic services; and Jesus can do the same to those forces over which He has been given authority by Jehovah of hosts, Lord of the armies of heaven.

10. This straightforward and unhesitating confidence on the part of the centurion calls forth the admiration of Jesus. Such faith He might well have looked for in his own people, and the absence of it excited His wonder (Mark vi. 6). In these ascriptions to our Lord of surprise, whether glad or sorrowful, we clearly see the reality of His humanity, in virtue of which He had emptied Himself of the exercise (not of the possession) of His divine wisdom and power, so that He could be surprised or weary. Our Lord regards the man's faith as *so great*, not because he had

penetrated the mystery of His nature, but because it was so complete on the level on which he stood; the effect of orders from a distance in military discipline led him to a belief in divine telepathy, and such a conviction had not as yet been shown by any Jew, not even the disciples, so far as we know.

11-12. This sorrowful side of the glad spectacle draws from Jesus the reflection that, after all, the lack of faith in Israel is only the prelude to an untold manifestation of it among the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 11, 12); *many shall come and shall sit down*, etc. (cp. Isa. xlv. 6; Mal. i. 11). *Sit down* is literally 'recline' as was the custom in the time of Christ when eating at table (ix. 10). The Rabbis taught that the kingdom of Messiah would be ushered in with an immense banquet, about the details of which the Talmud contains many puerilities; but the image itself is a vivid one denoting enjoyment and fellowship, and was adopted by our Saviour here and in several parables (cp. also xxvi. 29; Luke xiv. 15; xxii. 30; Rev. xix. 9). The Jew, if faithful, had as a son of the kingdom the first claim to its privileges (Rom. ix. 4, 5) but if faithless he might become a son of the evil one (xiii. 38; John viii. 44) and as such no earthly descent would secure for him a part in the joys of the kingdom, but he would *be cast forth* from the brilliantly lighted banquet hall, *into the outer darkness*, in which he had imagined the Gentile to be; and *there*, in that darkness, *shall be the weeping*,

unavailing grief for the loss of the kingdom, and *gnashing of teeth* (Ps. cxii. 10; Acts vii. 54) equally futile rage at the happiness attained by others whom they had despised, a token that they are in their 'own place' (Acts i. 25). The article in the phrase *the weeping* and *the gnashing*, etc., indicates the well-known lamentation and fury of the lost soul, described in Jewish writings and repeatedly referred to by Jesus (xiii. 42, 50). This assertion of the future admission of Gentiles on equal terms (for the one specially in evidence was uncircumcised) to the kingdom, and the exclusion of Jews, must have been startling to the Pharisees, and even to the disciples; but it simply expands the message of the Baptist. 'Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham' (iii. 9). At the same time it had to be taught gradually, lest the disciples in their inexperience and carnality should have thrown back the promised extension of the kingdom by unwise and precipitate action. Here the incident of the centurion follows aptly on that of the leper. The first is a Jew, and the attitude of Christ in healing him is one of respect to the law, though its regulations as to touch, etc., must not limit God's purpose of mercy. Here Jesus has to do with a Gentile, and is equally ready to undergo technical defilement. He uses Jewish imagery to set forth a thought which goes far beyond the horizon of Judaism.

viii. 14-17. PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW CURED OF FEVER,
AND MANY SICK HEALED

(MARK i. 29-34; LUKE iv. 38-41)

And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother lying sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose, and ministered unto him. And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.

14. Comparing the parallels, we learn that Jesus had just healed a demoniac in the synagogue at the time of service, and that James and John came along with Him *into Peter's house*, which was also that of Andrew. It was the evening of the Sabbath, and He would be expecting to find the evening meal ready, but Peter's mother-in-law is *lying sick of a fever*, and his young wife, if at home, is doubtless attending to the patient; for St. Luke's expression (iv. 38) 'holden with a great fever' shows that it was a severe attack, and probably of chronic fever, such as was not uncommon on the hot and damp shores of the low-lying Lake of Galilee. Andrew and Peter were of Bethsaida (John i. 44); probably they had moved to Capernaum when Jesus settled there. From 1 Cor. ix. 5 we learn that Peter's wife used to accompany him on his missionary tours in later years.

15. *And he touched her hand*: grasping it to raise her (Mark) and commanding the fever to leave

her (cp. Luke v. 9); *and she arose at once* (Luke) *and ministered unto him*, preparing and serving the meal (cp. Luke x. 40; John xii. 2).

16. On a Sabbath evening, work might begin half an hour after sunset; so *when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with devils*, such as he had healed in the synagogue that day (Mark i. 23-7). Jesus had compassion not only on them but *healed all that were sick* in that crowd, by laying on of hands (cp. Luke iv. 40, where we also learn that some apparently anticipated the proper time, coming 'when the sun was setting', but it would seem that Jesus did not refuse them, any more than He had the man in the synagogue).

17. This free and overflowing compassion corresponded to a trait in the picture given in Isa. liii. 4 of the righteous yet suffering servant of Jehovah. The translation is free from the Hebrew. *Himself took away from us our infirmities, and bare, as a burden laid on Himself, our diseases*. He relieved others at the cost of suffering to Himself (cp. xvii. 42). In His healing work, whether in laying on hands, or otherwise, 'power came forth from him' (Mark v. 30; Luke vi. 19) and that not without physically exhausting effects on Him, to say nothing of the suffering of sympathy.

viii. 18-22. ASPIRANTS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. And there came a scribe and said unto him, Master, I will

follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And another of the disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus saith unto him, Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their own dead.

This is placed later by (Luke ix. 57-60), who also adds a third (v. 61, 62). From here onwards to ix. 34 is depicted the busy life of Jesus as He moves from place to place.

18. A new scene abruptly introduced. Jesus sees *great multitudes about him*, implying that the continuous pressure of the crowds who followed for healing and teaching had become a physically intolerable strain; He therefore gives commandment to one of His fishermen disciples *to depart unto the other side*. Apparently He was in Capernaum on the north-west side of the Lake, and He wished to cross to the east side which was less thickly populated and had more pagans among its people; hence the pressure of the crowds would be relieved.

19-20. As they are starting, two men come up, offering discipleship. The first is spoken of literally as *one scribe*. He like the second (v. 21, *another of the disciples*) was a disciple in the more general sense though not yet a close follower; and he also belonged to the class of scribes of whom not many joined our Lord; hence, from the human point of view, the offer was a tempting one, like that of a pandit or a maulawi coming to the missionary. He acknowledges

Jesus as *Master*, that is, Guru or teacher, and he is ready to follow Him everywhere, even in this wandering life. Yet Jesus, as in the case of Nicodemus, first gives a testing reply (cp. John iii. 3) to show that neither the impulse of the moment nor mere intellectual conviction is sufficient to endure the strain of discipleship. Jesus puts before him trenchantly the homeless life which He was then leading, in contrast even to beasts and birds. *Nests* should be translated roosting places, for, of course, birds do not live in their nests. This homelessness was not because Jesus had not friends or relatives who would gladly take Him in, nor yet was it from a conviction like that of the Indian *sadhu* that the *bairagi* life is meritorious in itself, but it was the drawing of divine compassion for the needy multitudes which would not suffer Him to call any place home, but thrust Him forth, as He would have His disciples go, into the great harvest field (ix. 36, 38). Happy are those who, for the greater joy of walking in the footsteps of Christ, have renounced the joys of home; for they do it not to gain merit, but to pay a debt of love (cp. 2 Cor. viii. 9; Rom. i. 14). On *the Son of man*, see note below. What the result of the incident was, is not told; the object of recording it was mainly to lend vividness to the picture of the life full of incident which Jesus led in Galilee at this time.

21-2. The second of these men had been summoned by Jesus, as were the apostles, to follow Him with the inner circle (Luke ix. 59). He is of the opposite disposition to the first, and excuses himself on

the plea of filial duty—*suffer me first to go and bury my father*. These words by no means imply that his father was lying dead, and the funeral duties immediately imminent. It is the time-worn excuse with which we are so sadly familiar in India in the case of those who have heard and acknowledged the call of Christ to follow Him and join the circle of His disciples. 'I cannot do it while my father,' or more often, 'my mother is living. Let me wait till they are gone; then I will become a Christian.' The almost invariable result, too, we know sadly well. It is, indeed, a hard and grievous matter now, as it was in Galilee, to break up family relationships, or urge one to come away from filial duties, yet there are *the dead*, who have experienced no movement of the new life, and the new disciple must be content to let them discharge the duties of family piety, from which he is hindered by a higher sonship—*leave the dead to bury their own dead*.

NOTE ON THE TITLE 'SON OF MAN'

The meaning of this title or term applied by our Lord to Himself so frequently in the Gospels but never found elsewhere in the New Testament except in the last words of Stephen (Acts vii. 56) has been much discussed of late years. We give what seems to be the reliable results.

(1) The title is clearly a third person substitute for the first personal pronoun, such as *banda* (the slave, i. e. of God) *raqim* (the writer, i. e. of the letter

in question) so often used in Urdu and other Indian languages. On the analogy of these uses the term would be intended as a modest designation of the speaker.

(2) Accordingly in the Gospels it is used only by Jesus (in Matthew thirty times; Mark fourteen; Luke twenty-five; John twelve) to designate Himself, never by any one else of Him, with the one exception of John xii. 34, where the people are quoting Christ's own words and asking Him to explain the meaning of the term. In the Church subsequently the title never became a current designation of our Lord, notwithstanding its use by Stephen already quoted, and by James the Just at His martyrdom (with reference to the words in xxvi. 64; recorded by Hegesippus in Eusebius' Church History, II, 23, 12). Furthermore, Jesus used this term of Himself throughout His ministry the first recorded instance being His mention to Nathaniel of 'angels . . . descending upon the Son of man' (John i. 51). From this we may conclude that it is not a synonym for Messiah, since Jesus did not explicitly accept this title till a late period in His ministry (xvi. 16).

(3) The use of the article with the term Son of man in all the Gospels indicates that Jesus intended to emphasize its unique meaning, as applied to Himself. True we cannot be sure that He used any article with the Aramaic term *bar nasha*, but we know that in Urdu and other Indian languages it is possible to convey the force of the article, though the language

does not possess one, whether by position, intonation, or otherwise. In the case of John xii. 34, Jesus may well have been speaking Greek, as the discourse there recorded was occasioned by the presentation to him of Greek inquirers. In any case the rendering of the term by all the interpreters of the early Church with the Greek article makes it practically certain that Jesus did so emphasize it.

(4) Taking these two aspects, a modest self-designation and emphasis on its unique meaning as applied to Him, we turn to the Old Testament use of the title Son of man, a familiarity with which Jesus would certainly expect in His hearers. In the Psalms which Jesus and the apostles so much used the term, where emphatic, denotes the frailty of man (cxlvi. 3) and especially in contrast to the presence of God with him (viii. 4; cxliv. 3) and strengthening him (lxxx. 17). It is also addressed to the prophet Ezekiel (whose name means God shall strengthen) some ninety times after his opening vision of the likeness of a man upon the throne (i. 26, 27). It is a title reminding him of his frailty in connexion with the wonderful and crushing revelations vouchsafed to him. In Daniel vii. 13 the application is of a different kind. The prophet, after the vision of the kingdoms of the world, represented by beasts because they are founded upon brute force, sees 'one like unto a son of man' to whom the kingdom is given, indicating that the final sovereignty of the world will vest in one in whom the ideal of humanity is realized. This prophecy Jesus at the crisis of His life, when He

stood before the High Priest, applied to Himself (xxvi. 64) thereby sealing His death warrant. We may conclude, then, that our Lord by the use of the term 'Son of man' intended to convey the impression of His lowliness, in contrast with the tremendous revelations entrusted to Him, and to lead up His hearers to the idea of a unique humanity in which the truth of human nature is realized, and finally 'crowned with glory and honour' in the universal dominion over humanity which is His right. This agrees with the various connexions in which the term is used, e.g. His poverty (in this passage); His familiar intercourse with men (xi. 19); His authority to forgive sins (ix. 6); lordship over the Sabbath (xii. 8); and His second advent in glory (x. 23).

viii. 23-7. **THE STILLING OF THE STORM ON THE LAKE**
(MARK iv. 36-41; LUKE viii. 22-5)

And when he was entered into a boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the boat was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Save, Lord; we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

23. Jesus and His disciples enter *into a boat*, which had been got ready according to His order

(v. 18). St. Mark (iv. 36) mentions that the boatmen take Jesus as He was wearied out with toil and strain.

24. *A great tempest*: from a sudden *andhi* or windstorm, sweeping down on the low, hot lake from the snowy heights of Hermon. *The boat was covered with the waves*, or as we should say, was shipping water, and likely soon to sink, as many have done in that lake. *He was asleep*, rocked by the storm in His deep weariness.

25. In contrast to the quiet rest of Jesus the three words of the disciples are curtly picturesque, jerked out in the excitement of danger. *Save, Lord: we perish!*

26. *Why are ye fearful?* Such cowards; the words imply blame (cp. Rev. xxi. 8) of their *little faith*, seeing that they had already had sufficient opportunity to learn faith in their heavenly Father and in Jesus. But they needed up to the end to learn this lesson (John xiv. 1). They could trust His help waking, but they were not sure that they were safe under the Father's care with Him asleep. The faith of Jesus Himself stands out in contrast (cp. Luke xiii. 32); for He is the captain of our faith, (cp. Heb. xii 2 margin). He does not demand the apathy of the Yogi, but the trust of a child. Having quieted the minds of the disciples by these words, He arises and quiets the stormy lake by His authority. *He rebuked the winds and the sea*, treating the elements as He did the fever (Luke iv. 39) and the demon of disease (Mark ix. 25) as hostile

powers to be forcibly restrained. The *calm* that followed was *great*, sudden and complete, like the tempest (v. 24).

27. *The men who marvelled* were probably the boatmen, who were taking the Master and his disciples across the lake. They felt that He was an extraordinary man; the disciples in the light of Christ's rebuke, and this experience were advancing towards a deeper faith.

viii. 28-34. HEALING OF THE GADARENE DEMONIAK

(MARK v 1-17; LUKE viii. 26-37)

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming forth out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? Now there was afar off from them a herd of many swine feeding. And the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And they came out, and went into the swine: and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that fed them fled, and went away into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to them that were possessed with devils. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their borders.

This seems to have been the most outstanding healing of a demoniak, and is therefore recorded by

all the Synoptics, St. Mark being the most detailed and vivid in his description. St. Matthew speaks of two demoniacs, the others only of one; we may suppose that this evangelist, as an eyewitness, was the more strictly accurate, but it may well be that one of the men was the leader and more in evidence. The disease, in this case ascribed to demon possession, was insanity; the men were raving and dangerous maniacs, and were treated, after the barbarous custom of the age, only by forcible confinement; but such was their fury and strength that they escaped from their fetters, and so were free to roam at large and block the roads of that countryside till the healer came that way. It is the influence of His example and new life which has taught men the humane treatment of the insane, by which many now recover, and all are properly cared for in Christian lands, or at least under a Christian government. How different was the old *pagalkhana* in India!

28. *The country of the Gadarenes.* The other evangelists mention the landing place as the country of the Gerasenes. Gerasa answers to the modern Khersa, a place on the east of the lake, where steep shores come down to its edge. Matthew probably speaks of the Gadarenes because Gadara was the most notable town in that direction though it was some distance further south. It was celebrated for its hot springs, which were frequented by the upper classes, many of them Gentiles, for whose benefit the pigs of this story would be kept. The district called Gadaritis belonged to the Decapolis, already

referred to as a largely Gentile region (iv. 25). As Jesus mounted the steep shore after landing the two demoniacs met Him. They were *coming forth out of the tombs*, which they had selected as their dwelling, these rock-hewn sepulchres being safe retreats from those who would have caught and confined them. To a Jew these rocks were a dwelling of unspeakable defilement; it was as if a Brahman should subsist on other peoples cast off food, a strong symptom of insanity. *That way* was the road to the town, represented now by a ruin on a spur going towards the lake, about 300 feet above its level. The road had been deserted by wayfarers, but Jesus was not afraid to take it.

29. The madmen speak in the persons of the demons inhabiting them, with a mixture of terror and repulsion: *what have we to do with thee?* and the demons recognize Him as the *Son of God*, i.e. the Messiah, earlier than did men, even the disciples (xiv. 33; xvi. 16). Compare the girl with a spirit of divination, Acts xvi. 16, 17, and Jas. ii. 19. Conviction and confession of the truth about Jesus does not necessarily bring salvation. They feel that He has come to destroy their power over men, and suppose that this means tormenting them as they did others, before they had had the chance of exercising their power to the full (op. xviii. 34; Luke xvi. 28; Rev. xiv. 10; xx. 10). No doubt the report of the works of Jesus had reached those parts from time to time.

30. *Afar off from them*: or as Mark says, 'there on the mountain side,' visible some way off on the slope.

A herd of many swine : the demand for swine's flesh was large, for Gadara had two amphitheatres and a long colonnaded street, implying a considerable Roman population.

31. *If thou cast us out* : according to Mark v. 8 Jesus had already given the command. *Send us away into the herd of swine* : this seems to indicate a desire to control some kind of bodily organism, even if it could not be the highest.

32. *Go* : the word does not necessarily imply permission, being exactly the same as that addressed to Satan after the last temptation (iv. 10) and there translated, 'Get thee hence'. But Mark and Luke say that He gave them leave. As a result, *the whole herd rushed down the steep hillside* into the lake and were drowned.

33-4. The swineherds would be too frightened to try to save any of the pigs lest the demons should catch them. So they fled away to the city (Gerasa, not the distant Gadara) and told the owners of the great Jewish magician who had now actually visited their parts with such dreadful effects. *All the city came out to meet Jesus* : they were afraid to assault one who could wield such powers ; the loss sustained in the death of the swine was very considerable and they could not understand His estimate that the human souls and bodies delivered from bondage were far more valuable than many swine, so *they besought him that he would depart from their borders* or territory. Their prayer was answered to their own loss ; not so that of the healed demoniacs who desired to

remain with Jesus, but were bidden to go and proclaim His goodness in the neighbourhood, where among the Gentiles there was little danger of arousing a spurious Messianic enthusiasm, and when next Jesus came there people were ready to bring the sick to Him for healing (Mark vii. 31-7). Since then Christendom has learned to expend the value of many thousand herds of swine on the kindly care and cure of the lunatic.

CHAPTER IX

ix. 1-8. HEALING AND ABSOLUTION FOR A PARALYTIC (MARK ii. 3-12; LUKE v. 18-26)

And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city. And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven. And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven, or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

The account given by Matthew is brief. From the others we learn in addition that Jesus was teaching in a house (Mark ii. 1; Luke v. 17); that a crowd of listeners had gathered who filled up the courtyard to its gate (Mark ii. 2); that among them were Pharisees and doctors of the law, not only from Galilee, but

from Judæa and Jerusalem, and that special manifestations of healing power had taken place which increased the desire of people to profit by His presence (Luke v. 17); that the bearers of the sick man uncovered the roof above the apartment in which Jesus was (Mark ii. 4). The mention of the scribes from Jerusalem is one of the indications in the Synoptics of an earlier ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem, to treat of which did not lie within their plan (see John ii, iii, v). They were ready to carp at and vilify the rising teacher. Matthew relates only the main features of this incident, sufficiently to bring out the occasion of the first accusation of blasphemy, which is the keynote of the Pharisaic opposition to Jesus. This accusation was steadily and craftily followed up to the final sentence of the High Priest (xxvi. 65) which sealed His doom. Here we see also the lines on which Jesus answers the repeated slander by showing that His works correspond to His words, the opposite of the infallible sign of the false prophet (vii. 15-20; op. vv. 5, 6; John v. 36; x. 37, 38).

1. Jesus *crossed over* from the eastern to the north-west shore of the lake to *his own city*, namely, Capernaum (iv. 13) where He had been received when rejected at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16-30) and made His home. Yet all the severer was the condemnation of the people of Capernaum, who did not as a whole turn to God though His Son dwelt among them (xi. 23, 24). There may be a presence of Christ without the salvation of Christ.

2. *They brought*: or rather were bringing, as detailed in the parallels. It is specially noteworthy here that

the Saviour has regard to *their faith*, and in response to it addresses the kindly words to the paralytic, whom we may suppose to have been suffering from the effect of his sins, which the sickness with a salutary effect had brought to his mind, as in the case of the Psalmist (xxxii. 3-5). The friends are willing to risk a laborious and trying effort, with the prospect of paying damages and the risk of embroiling themselves with the house owners, because of their absolute trust in the power and willingness of Jesus. How often has the faith of others helped the penitent sinner! To him, as a man of a broken and contrite spirit Jesus says, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven*, that is by God, a fact which the Speaker has power to discern. Note the occasions on which Jesus uses the word translated, *Be of good cheer*: in ix. 22 to the woman healed of her issue; in xiv. 27 to the disciples in the storm; in John xvi. 33 to the disciples whom He is leaving them; in Acts xxiii. 11 to St. Paul imprisoned in the castle at Jerusalem.

3. *Certain of the scribes said within themselves*: probably betraying their thoughts by expression or gesture, *this man blasphemeth*, which would have been true if Jesus had not authority from God (v. 6). They had made a similar accusation against Him in connexion with the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda not long before (John v. 18).

4. *Knowing their thoughts* (op. xii. 25; John ii. 25). The spirit abode on Jesus (John i. 32-3) and the divine insight granted to prophets as occasion arose (2 Kings v. 26, etc.) was His always. This insight

is still one of the gifts of the Spirit to believers (1 Cor. xii. 10) but it is the word of God which is *the* discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. iv. 12). *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?* A solemn warning, in view of the attitude of hostility to the light which they were assuming. Their inward light was in danger of being darkened (vi. 23); they were accumulating an 'evil treasure' in their hearts (cp. xii. 35).

5. *Whether is easier?* The healing and the absolution are equally difficult without divine power, but it is easier to profess to give the latter, which cannot be tested, and so unfaithful priests have done in all ages. The effect which can be seen serves to prove that which cannot.

6. The sentence *but that ye may know (then saith he)* is broken, but its drift is clear; at the parenthesis Jesus turns from the scribes whom He has been addressing to the sick man. *The Son of man*: here again the contrast of outward lowliness with the exercise of divine power (cp. viii. 20). *He hath power (or authority)* from the Father who has anointed Him with the Spirit (Luke iv. 18). *On earth*: the scribes say, God the Absolver, is in heaven; yes, but the Son of man on earth is the link with Him. *Arise, and take up thy bed*; as in John v. 8, which describes an incident that these scribes knew of.

8. *The multitudes*, not yet affected by the party spirit of the scribes, were awed by the sense of the divine presence (cp. Luke v. 8; vii. 16) which was brought so near to them by the authority given unto men, represented by this Son of man.

ix. 9-13. THE CALL OF MATTHEW; JESUS AND THE
OUTCASTE CLASSES

(MARK ii. 13-17; LUKE v. 27-32)

And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners? But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what *this* meaneth. I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

The opposition between Jesus and the Pharisees increases. On the godward side they stigmatized His claim to be the Forgiver of sins, as blasphemy. Now on the man-ward side Jesus shows that His kingdom far exceeds the limit which they would place to the divine favour. He not only calls to His discipleship a publican (see Introduction), the representative of a class held to be religious outcastes, but he enters into social fellowship with them and sinners of other kinds; and He justifies His action against the Pharisees' cavil by reasserting the prophetic teaching which the Scribes had ignored, that where ceremonial observance clashes with the love of man, the former has no value in God's sight. This cuts away the basis of caste as a religious ordinance,

since no rite or observance can be acceptable which prevents the free exercise of brotherly sympathy between man and man. As a philosophic doctrine it had already been abolished by the teaching of Jesus that all men are children of the one Father in heaven.

9. *Matthew*: (x. 3) the other Gospels call him Levi. Like Simon he seems to have added a new name at or after the time of his call. It was important for the evangelist to designate himself by his best known name in this passage, as his choice was connected with a vital principle of His Master's. Neither in His discipleship, nor in His ministry will He allow any disabilities of origin. For Christians of a higher origin to refuse the ministrations of a pastor of lower is flatly against the attitude of Jesus, and so too for a minister of 'higher caste' to decline to occupy himself with low-caste people who need his help. Matthew had doubtless heard and believed the message of Jesus before this; hence, no sooner does he hear the words, *Follow me*, than he at once gives over his work to an assistant and goes with Jesus. He was *sitting at the place of toll*: like an octroi post at a town gate by the busy lake road that passed through Capernaum.

10. *As he sat* (or reclined) *at meat in the house* (op. viii. 11; xxvi. 20). From Luke v. 29 we learn that Levi (Matthew) 'made him a great feast in his house', a very natural thing to do by way of expressing his joy and taking leave of his old circle as he began the new life. At this feast he is joined not

only by his old professional friends from among the publicans, but by others, persons of bad life. In London and other great towns of England, Christian workers sometimes hold 'thieves breakfasts' to which all kinds of bad characters are invited, and the result now as then is to increase the number of the followers of Jesus. St. Mark says (ii. 15) there were many and they followed him.

11. *The Pharisees . . . said unto his disciples.* They do not venture to address the Master, but they turn with looks of disgust to His disciples, and perhaps hope to convey the same feeling to their minds. *Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners?* It was not forbidden expressly in the law, but by implication it was held that a Jew who ate with a person living in disregard of the law would be sure to infringe the regulations of the law about clean and unclean food and various defilements.

12. In reply Jesus argues from their standpoint. There is a certain value in the distinction between the average morality of society and the abandoned life of the openly immoral. It is a barrier against the common prevalence of vice. But for the physician who has power to heal it, the sickness of sin is an appeal for help, and the consciousness of it on the part of the sick is the condition of its healing. *They that are whole, etc.*

13. *Go*: the 'whole' Pharisees are no subjects for His instruction till they have learned the lesson of their own prophet (Hos. vi. 6) *I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.* God will not have a religious performance which conflicts with a moral obligation; the sacrifice as a means of

-serving God may be good enough in itself, but it must be put aside if it conflicts with the service that it is intended to promote. That the prophet does not reject sacrifice is clear from the following words: 'and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.' In our time, too, those are wrong who undervalue religious ordinances on the ground that the most important thing of all is righteousness. But this is nevertheless a pivotal saying of Christ. A religion that has ceased to make unselfish love supreme is corrupt; and this is the great test for all non-Christian religions. Religious ordinances are to be carefully maintained. Christians, especially the young, should eschew the society of the dishonest and the dissolute. Yet if such a virtuous condition becomes the nurse of pride, or prevents self-sacrifice for the rescue of the vilest, it has ceased to be pleasing to God, and will soon decay in itself. Jesus came to *call sinners*, for they find in Him that which meets their greatest need. When *the righteous* come to Him, He points out the difficulties of following Him (viii. 20; xix. 16-22) to show them how inadequate their righteousness is for God's service.

ix. 14-17. ON FASTING

(MARK ii. 18-22; LUKE v. 33-8)

Then come to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast. And no man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment:

for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made. Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins: else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved.

The disciples of John had not all of them understood their master's witness to Jesus, and maintained themselves as a separate body now and long after (Acts xix. 3). They still occupied the Jewish position as to fasting and other ascetic observances, and it would seem as if they allowed themselves in this case to be made the instrument of the Pharisees, for the tendency of their question was to hold up the apparent laxity of Jesus and His disciples to reprehension, and to produce a breach between John and Jesus, or at least a contradiction between their teachings. Jesus replies by three similes: (1) the friends of the bridegroom; (2) the patched garment; and (3) the new and old wine-skins. Each of these containing an important principle of missionary development.

(1) The wedding guests who should fast as if for a mourning while the bridegroom whose joy they share is with them, would be acting in a foolish and unseemly manner. True, if the bridal party were suddenly attacked by enemies (as sometimes happened) and the bridegroom violently taken away, they would have cause and right enough to fast. The frequent fasts (Luke v. 33) of John's disciples and the Pharisees would be utterly out of place while Jesus was with His disciples; but the time would come when Jesus would be violently removed from them,

and then fasting would be a true expression of their feelings. The outward forms of religious life must be a genuine expression of its inner reality. When they cease to be this, they cease to be useful.

(2) By putting a patch of undressed cloth on an old garment nothing is gained; but the contrary there is loss, for the strong new patch shrinks with wet and wear, and pulls the rotten old cloth so that it tears on the slightest strain more disastrously than if it had never been patched; or, as Luke puts it, a piece of new cloth actually taken from a new garment spoils that as well as the old which it patches. That in effect is what the disciples of John were doing. The new elements in the teaching of John, such as the acceptance of repentant publicans and sinners, were embodied in the teaching and work of Jesus; but to take the new teachings of John, and with them to patch the old ceremonial Jewish system, more particularly in this matter of fasting, would be to destroy the latter. The newer and stronger web of Messianic doctrine would draw to itself and rend the old system. The position of John's disciples was inconsistent and self-destructive, and the same criticism applies to all attempts in India in our own day to patch the old garments of Hinduism and Islam with fragments of the teachings of Christ. There are those who would have us Christians believe that such reform movements render it unnecessary to press the claims of Christ, as the only Saviour, upon them. But the truth is that these patchings of the old garments are preparing the way for their complete rending asunder

by the new stuff of the gospel, which will show that the full robe of Christ's righteousness is the only one in which we can stand before God.

(3) Christ has brought the wine of new life to His disciples to be kept and used for their own good and the good of others. Old wine-skins are good enough for keeping old wine; and as Jesus indicates (Luke v. 39) He does not severely blame those who drank out of them—that is received benefit from the religious life in its old forms—for personally preferring the old. But for the new wine fresh skins are requisite, which will not crack so quickly, if there should be traces of fermentation; and for the new life of His gospel there must be new forms which will be adapted to a period of transition. While the Christian Church most carefully kept its continuity with the Church of the Old Covenant, and rejected all heresies which taught that the God of the Old Testament was a different Being from Him of the New, yet it also carefully developed the new forms that were necessary, and still brings out of its treasure things new and old (xiii. 52). So, in the formation of new national Churches, as here in India, the main point is the preservation of the *wine* of the gospel, and we have to find the form which will best do this in the period of transition, which cannot be without its traces of fermentation. Only we have to remember that this is not the work of a day or a year, any more than it was in the first centuries of the Church.

14. *Then* may mean soon after the foregoing, or perhaps, about this stage in our Lord's ministry. It

is very likely that among the readers or learners of this Gospel there would be disciples of John, to whom the words would come home with much force. *Fast oft* (see vi. 16). From Mark ii. 18, we learn that they were actually fasting then; possibly while Matthew's feast was going on.

15. *The sons of the bride-chamber* are the wedding party, comprising the intimate friends of the bridegroom. The simile was not new to the disciples of John, who had heard him say (John iii. 29) that he was one of the friends of the bridegroom, namely, the Messiah, who rejoiced to hear His voice calling to the bride whom He had now won. The comparison of Jehovah with the bridegroom of the people whom He has redeemed was familiar from the Old Testament, e.g. Isa. lxii. 5. This is a further development of the image, indicating that the Messiah is the manifestation of Jehovah, and it is enlarged upon by Jesus (xxii. 2) Paul (Eph. v. 25-7) and John (Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 2). But the joy of this Messianic wedding feast will be for the present rudely interrupted. *The bridegroom shall be taken away from them*, as John had been from his disciples. The words signify a forcible or violent removal, and they form the first intimation recorded in this Gospel of the impending death of Jesus. The prediction given in John ii. 19-22 is earlier. *Then will they fast*. So the Christian Church in all ages has approved of fasting as a spiritual exercise, but the manner and forms of its observance have varied greatly, and do so still. Besides the expression of spiritual sorrow fasting also has its value as a means

of discipline (1 Cor. ix. 27) and of communion with God (vi. 18 ; Acts x. 30 ; xiii. 2, 3). The appointment of special times and seasons for its practice under all or any of these aspects is a matter of Church order under the guidance of the Spirit, who works according to the law of congruity here laid down by Christ.

18-26. THE RAISING OF A DEAD GIRL AND THE
HEALING OF A SICK WOMAN
(MARK v. 22-43 ; LUKE viii. 41-56)

While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead : but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And behold, a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment : for she said within herself, If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole. But Jesus turning and seeing her said, Daughter, be of good cheer ; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute-players, and the crowd making a tumult, he said, Give place : for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the crowd was put forth, he entered in, and took her by the hand ; and the damsel arose. And the fame hereof went forth into all that land.

This is the first of the three raisings of dead persons recorded in detail of our Lord, the others being the raising of the widow's son of Nain (Luke vii. 11-17) also in Galilee, and the raising of Lazarus (John xi.) near

Jerusalem. From the words of Jesus (xi. 5) we gather that there were many other such events, but that these have been recorded as typical instances; first a little girl just dead in her bed; then a young man being carried out to burial; then a man of mature age, four days in the grave. In St. Matthew's arrangement the present miracle contrasts with the rising enmity of the Pharisees. A synagogue official of standing comes as a suppliant to Jesus, and is comforted in his bereavement by this great work of mercy, the same sympathy being shown to him as to the notorious sinners raised from their degradation. Again, on the way to this deed of impartial love, Jesus is secretly approached by one who had a distressing complaint which caused ceremonial defilement, and she is met with equal kindness.

18. *While he spake these things.* The other Gospels connect this incident directly with the return from the eastern shore of the lake, Matthew arranges, as is his wont, rather according to affinity of subject. A ruler of the local synagogue (see Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 41-9). It was the duty of this official to see that the synagogue services were properly conducted (Luke xiii. 14) and to select persons to take part in them (Acts xiii. 15). In a large synagogue there would be several rulers. Possibly this man may have been one of the elders of the Jews who came to plead the cause of the centurion (Luke vii. 3). He was a forerunner of later converts from the same class (see Acts xviii. 8, 17; 1 Cor. i. 1). He like the leper (viii. 2) prostrates himself as an urgent suppliant, saying, *My*

daughter is even now dead. Compare the phrase in Urdu and other India languages, *abhi mari hai*, meaning, she is on the point of death. Even if she should have died in the meanwhile Jairus is confident that the hand of Jesus can raise her up.

19. *And Jesus arose*: i.e. started from where He was, to help this ruler, as readily as He had sat down with the publicans.

20. On the way He is approached from behind, as feeling conscious of shame and ceremonial uncleanness, by a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years: such long continued hæmorrhage must have reduced her to a state of extreme weakness. Timidly she touches the border, or fringe, of his garment. Jesus wore much the same dress as is now worn in Syria; a shirt of linen, a long coat, reaching to the ankles, and woven in one piece (John xix. 23) gathered in at the waist with a girdle; and over it a mantle, at the four lower corners of which was a cord with tassels the threads of which were supposed to be as many in number as the commandments of the law, of which they were to remind the weaver (see Num. xv. 38-40). The colours of this fringe were bright blue and white, and it was considered the holiest part of the clothing, for which reason the Pharisees wore their fringes large (xxiii. 5). Our Saviour neither rejected symbols which had a holy meaning, nor did he discard His national garb, as some Jews did, in favour of western clothing, whether Greek or Roman.

21. *If I do but touch*: she selected the sacred tassels as probably the most effectual part of His

clothing. There is an element of superstition in her idea of the healing power of Jesus, but the ruling conviction is that His power to heal is absolute and ready to be called forth by a trustful touch (cp. Acts xix. 12).

22. This verse relates briefly what the other Synoptics give more at length. The healing having taken place Jesus, with a word of kindly encouragement, points her to the true reason of her cure, faith in Him. Her ignorant faith must become an instructed one, and she is assured of the permanence of her healing (Mark v. 34). This story is a mirror of the spirit, in which the gospel has treated and healed the ills of womanhood, and does so still. It further reminds us how many a one there is who, coming to Christ with a desire for bodily benefits, is accepted and led on by Him to spiritual faith, as we often see in the mass movements towards Christianity in India.

23-5. Jairus' daughter raised. This narrative again is shortened by St. Matthew. First the messengers have come, announcing the child's death; then Jesus arrives at the house and finds it crowded with the usual rabble of hired musicians and wailing women, for the Jews were no less particular to do this honour to the departed than are Indians now. According to the customary law even the poorest man should have two flute-players and one mourning woman at the death of his wife. *Give place*: this hired mourning, with its incongruous noise and bustle, must have been alien to the feelings of Jesus, and it was more

especially out of place, because He was about to exercise His life-giving power, for which a holy stillness was needed. The girl is *not dead*, but sleeping, because her state of death is to give way to resurrection (cp. John xi. 11; 1 Thess. iv. 13). The view of death as sleep was not unknown to the Jews (Job vii. 21; Dan. xii. 2) but Christ, by His own resurrection and the hope communicated to His people, made it emphatically a Christian phrase. The hired mourners are annoyed at the prospect of a funeral in full view being cancelled, and they show the hollowness of their grief by scornful laughter. They are *put forth*, literally cast out, by the tone and manner of Jesus, and the girl is raised. The details are given elsewhere.

26. *The same hereof went forth*: though Jesus had forbidden the parents to talk about it (Mark v. 49) probably with the purpose of preventing a tumult.

ix. 27-31. THE HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN

And as Jesus passed by from thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, Have mercy on us, thou son of David. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened. And Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they went forth, and spread abroad his fame in all that land.

Related by Matthew only. Blindness, often from ophthalmia, was as common in Palestine then, as it

is in India now, and the few healings recorded (xii. 22; xx. 30; xxi. 14; John ix.) are doubtless only examples from among many. In John ix. 39 Jesus teaches the inner meaning of the restoration of physical sight; 'that they which see not may see; and that they which see may become blind.' So it proved in this instance. Despite this and other works of mercy, the enmity of the Pharisees increased (see v. 34).

27. The blind man is the most loud-voiced of beggars, and applies the most high-flown titles to his patrons. These men call Jesus *son of David*, as did the Canaanite woman, and the blind men at Jericho (xv. 22; xx. 30). The fame of Jesus having spread widely, doubtless there were those here and there who canvassed His claims to be the Messiah. The title was at this period unwelcome to Jesus, as its acceptance might have resulted in a political movement, and He did not allow it till the risk of that was past. Apparently He disregards the style of address till they are in the house.

28. There He asks them the crucial question: *Believe ye?* As in each of the previous signs He would arouse personal trust in Himself as the Healer sent by God.

29. The cure is accompanied by an outward gesture, *he touched their eyes*, by way of helping their faith (cp. xx. 34).

30-31. *Jesus strictly charged them* to keep the matter quiet, but they disobeyed. The word implies displeasure at their garrulous joy, which thought more of the wonder than of the source of blessing

(cp. xii. 16-21). It was natural that they should *spread abroad his fame in all that land*, but we cannot doubt that the work would have been deeper, if it had not been trumpeted. Many a work of spiritual healing in this land would have benefited by not being made the subject of a report. In one place, however, the Lord commands a healed man to testify (see Mark v. 19).

ix. 32-4. THE HEALING OF A DUMB DEMONIAIC

(LUKE xi. 14, 15)

And as they went forth, behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb man spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, By the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

Here it is the last of the examples of our Saviour's activity as a Healer in the earlier part of His ministry in Galilee. Luke gives it in another connexion, probably its actual historical one.

32. As *they* (the blind men who had been healed) *went forth*: an indication that a constant stream of suppliants came to Jesus. This one was a *dumb man possessed with a devil*, or, as we should say, a case of melancholia which produces dumbness.

33. The exclamation of the people that *it was never so seen in Israel* must have reference to the general impression made by the healing activity of Jesus at

this time. This work in itself was by no means the most striking of the series.

34. Similarly this verse summarizes the attitude of the Pharisees towards the wonderful works of Jesus, as it had already shown itself with regard to His intercourse with the outcast section of society (v. 11). As later on, in the case of the apostles after Pentecost, they were unable to deny the wonderful character of the works (Acts iv. 16, 17) they, therefore, had recourse to the diabolical suggestion that these works of divine mercy and human sympathy were done *by the prince of the devils* (see xii. 24). It amounted in effect to calling Jesus, Beelzebub (cp. John vii. 20; viii. 48). The Jews of Lystra must have used much the same argument with the ignorant pagans of Lycaonia, to persuade them that St. Paul's work of healing the lame man was the deed of an evil power (Acts xiv. 19). They distorted the truth that Satan may appear as an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14) by ignoring the test of the goodness of the fruits (vii. 16-20) which Jesus applied even to those who did not follow Him (Mark ix. 39, 40).

ix. 35-xi. 1. JESUS AS THE LEADER OF HIS DISCIPLES

We have seen the admiration of the multitudes bring out the definite opposition of the Pharisees, which thenceforth increases up to its climax in the death of Jesus. Jesus therefore enters on a fresh stage of His work which is prefaced with words identical with those in iv. 23, except that the phrase 'in all

Galilee and among the people' is here omitted. Jesus now begins to prepare for the extension and consolidation of His work after His departure, and because He is filled with the deepest compassion for the people who have such tyrannous shepherds (Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 8) He bids His disciples pray for true helpers who shall gather in His people, and then He chooses them. Before the solemn choice, we know from Luke vi. 12, 13 that Jesus Himself spent a whole night in prayer to God (see p. 136). He then gives the twelve their instructions for this, the first attempt at work apart from Him, in x. 5-42. By sending them away He binds them closer to Himself and to one another, but He confines their present mission to the Jewish nation which was to decide its attitude to the Messiah without complications as to the admission of Gentiles. The teaching of Jesus as to the universal diffusion of the kingdom is left to the subsequent parables (see chapter xiii). Having sent forth His messengers Jesus goes on the same work Himself (xi. 1).

ix. 35-9. THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest.

The repetition in v. 35 of iv. 23 serves to emphasize that the forms of Christ's outward activity proceeded from the inward fountain of boundless compassion. We have already noted how these works of teaching, preaching and healing correspond to the three chief forms of missionary work, educational, evangelistic and medical. Jesus, too, engages both in city and village work.

36. *He saw the multitudes* who surged around Him, as his fame was spread abroad (v. 31), and studied their condition with the insight that came of love. He saw in them a flock of sheep, going to ruin for lack of true shepherds, and a harvest running to waste for want of reapers; he felt their sufferings, their need, and their possibilities. Above all *he was moved with compassion*. This was the motive power of His incarnation and atonement, as it is of all true work for the salvation of men. It extended both to spiritual and bodily needs (cp. xiv. 14; xv. 32; Mark vi. 34; viii. 2). Regarded as a flock, they are *distressed*, i. e. worn out and hungry, and *scattered* or flung down, having fallen by the wayside when they could go no further. It is a picture of spiritual starvation and neglect, and the reason is that they are *as sheep not having a shepherd*; their leaders are false to their trust and care not for the outcast (ix. 11); and as yet they are without the knowledge of the true Shepherd who has come to care for them (John x. 11).

37. Turning to the disciples the Saviour presents the hopeful aspect of even this sorry condition by

a change of metaphor; and He also appeals for their sympathy and co-operation (compare the parables of the Sower and the Tares xiii. 3, 24). *The harvest truly is plenteous*: all the preparatory work of the law and the prophets has not been in vain; the seed which they had sown has sprung up; the need is of a living company of reapers. At present *the labourers are few*; much has been attempted but little accomplished, because of selfishness (Luke xi. 52) on the part of leaders. There are many loiterers, too, and as yet only one true Workman, but He has begun His training of a chosen band, and He is about to commit authority to them and to use them.

38. But first they must learn to look to the great *Lord of the harvest*: He who has caused this seed to be sown will not leave it to spoil; it is more precious to Him than to you; therefore *pray* to Him to make you fit to receive what He desires to give (vii. 7, 8) by sending forth *labourers*, you included and foremost, *into his harvest*. The true prayer for labourers implies willingness to go one's self if called. The whole applies equally to the home and the foreign field; neither must be neglected for the other. In the case of Jesus, it was the visible Church on behalf of which He appealed, and no Church can be considered faithful to its calling which sets out to evangelize others without bestowing at least equal diligence on the care of its own members.

CHAPTER X

X. 1-4. THE TWELVE APOSTLES CALLED TO HELP

And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the *son* of Alphæus, and Thaddæus; Simon the Cananæan, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

The actual choice and appointment of the twelve is recorded by their disciples Mark and Luke; the apostolic evangelists Matthew and John take this for granted in iv. 18-22 and ix. 9, we have seen the call of five of the number to follow Jesus; and in Luke vi. 13 we have the selection of the apostles before the Sermon on the Mount. The calling of the apostles is the first act in the corporate organization of the Church of Christ; hence the number twelve, as patriarchs of the tribes of the new Israel (see xix. 28, cp. Rev. xxi. 12-14; Eph. ii. 20). Jesus was not only a Teacher, but the Founder of a Society, and when

this was definitely extended to the Gentile world another apostle was chosen and recognized (Gal. ii. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 7-10). The chief feature in the first sending of the apostles or messengers is the authority conferred to do certain signs which should establish the truth of their proclamation. The apostles had, indeed, received a certain amount of training before their call and first sending, and between these two also there seems to have been an interval, as in the case of the apostle Paul; but now Jesus gives His chief attention to their education as messengers of His kingdom till He is able to send them forth as the Father had sent Him (see John xx. 21). He Himself is *the* Apostle of our confession (Heb. iii. 1); their sending and office is a reflection of His.

1. *He called unto him*, after the night of prayer (Luke vi. 12) *his* already known *twelve disciples*. The name 'apostle' already designated them as having a message, to this is added the *authority* to heal soul and body. Direct healing by the power and name of Christ has never ceased in the Christian Church, and is coming into more prominence in our day, being acknowledged in some sort even by science, at least under the name of 'suggestion'; and the healing activity of Christ's messengers is especially represented by medical missions. Whether the means used be drugs and treatment, or the prayer of faith, the power which makes both effectual is the same, and the motive which governs their use is one—the compassion of Jesus. *Unclean spirits*: another name for demons (see on iv. 24). *All manner of sickness*: the very

words used of the works of Jesus Himself (iv. 23 ; ix. 35).

2-4. *The names of the twelve apostles* are given with some variations of order and designation in the Synoptics and Acts. Matthew gives them in couples, but in each list they may be divided into groups of four, the first beginning with Simon Peter, the second with Philip, the third with James the son of Alphæus, and the whole ending with Judas Iscariot except in the Acts, where the list is followed by the election of Matthias. The first group in each case consists of the 'chosen three' Peter, James, and John, with Andrew Peter's brother; all four chosen (iv. 18-22) as 'fishers of men'. For the primary position of Peter (see on xvi. 17-18). In the second group Philip is only mentioned in detail by St. John in i. 44 ; vi. 5 ; xii. 21 ; xiv. 8. *Bartholomew* is a patronymic, meaning son of Tolmai; his proper name is Nathanael (John i. 45 ; xxi. 2); *Thomas* means twin (Urdu *tauam*); he may have been the twin brother of *Matthew* as included in the same couple. The latter corresponds to Levi the son of Alphæus in Mark ii. 14. He alone humbly adds the title 'publican' to his name. In the third set *James the son of Alphæus* may or may not have been the brother of Matthew Levi; he is known as James the less (Mark xv. 40) to distinguish him from the son of Zebedee, but he is not the same as James the Lord's brother (Acts xv. 13 ; Gal. i. 19). *Thaddæus* is the same as Judas the son of James in Luke vi. 16. *Simon the Cananean* or Zealot (Luke vi. 15) had belonged to the sect named

Cananaean in Hebrew, or Zealots in Greek. They were followers of Judas of Galilee (Acts v. 37) who bitterly opposed the Romans, and wished to establish the kingdom of Messiah by force. Simon must have been converted from such fanatical views by the influence and teaching of Jesus; yet the presence of such an element in the apostolic circle shows how much care the Master needed to exercise in keeping even His apostles from false hopes and expectations. In the case of Judas Iscariot, Jesus was less successful; the covetousness of the treasurer proved more insensible to the love and discipline of Christ than the fanaticism of the Zealot, and the sombre characteristic of the 'man of Kerioth' (this is the meaning of *Iscariot*) in each Gospel is that of the betrayer. (For Kerioth, a city of Judah see Joshua xiv. 35; Jer. xlviii. 41.) Judas Iscariot is the only one of the apostles who is expressly designated as a non-Galilean.

Of the twelve men in this list, two only, Simon Peter, and John stand out in any detail. Of seven, namely, Andrew, James the son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew (Nathanael), Thomas, Matthew, and Judas Iscariot, we have slight indications as to origin or character. Of three we know only the names, namely, James the son of Alphaeus, Judas the son of James, and Simon the Cananaean. The stress laid upon the record of the names in the three Synoptics, and again by St. Luke in Acts, as well as the repeated mention of 'the twelve' by St. John (vi. 67, 70-1; xi. 24) and by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5) show the importance attached by the earliest Church

to this first beginning of an ordained ministry, trained by Jesus to train others.

X. 5-15. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIS MISSION

(MARK vi. 7-13 ; LUKE ix. 2-5)

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying, Go not into *any* way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: freely ye received, freely give. Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for *your* journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the labourer is worthy of his food. And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth. And as ye enter into the house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement, than for that city.

Here, as usual, St. Matthew combines various discourses. First we have, in this section, instructions dealing with the mission on which the apostles were then being sent; then in vv. 16-42 exhortations which have to do with the dangers and preservation, the self-denial and rewards of Christ's messengers during the later development of their work (cp. Mark

vi. 7-13 ; Luke ix. 2-5). The injunctions of the first of these sections are simple and severe, and their operation is limited to the Jewish towns and villages of Palestine, which Jesus desired to prepare for the reception of His coming and message, while at the same time training His apostles for work in a wider sphere. The words inculcate the qualities of simplicity, disinterestedness, and seriousness. The preaching is to be brief and simple, and the chief work is to be done in the houses of the people. The combination of the two sections was useful for catechists and other Christians of the second generation. The missionary application of these discourses must be made on the basis of the underlying principles, allowing for the special circumstances of the time which cannot now be reproduced.

5-6. Jesus begins by defining the scope of their work. They are not to go into any way of the Gentiles, such as the roads of the Decapolis (see on iv. 25) nor to enter any city of the Samaritans. The first of these limitations throws light on the later request of the disciples that Jesus would send away the Canaanitish woman who was crying after them (xv. 23). The second shows that this mission did not extend beyond Galilee, for to get to Judæa, the natural way lay through Samaria. The apostles were then not fitted to encounter the intrigues and subtleties of the Jerusalem scribes, nor the religious fanaticism of the Samaritans, which even much later roused them to unseemly resentment (Luke ix. 54) ; and still less were they armed to encounter the blasphemies

and uncleannesses of paganism in a spirit of compassionate purity like that of their Master. For them to attempt now to break down the middle wall of partition (Eph. ii. 14) before the coming of the Spirit, would have been to court disaster. In view of such words of Jesus as we have read in viii. 11, prophesying the entrance of Gentiles into the kingdom, it was necessary to make it clear to the apostles that they were apprentices, to be tried first in the little district of Galilee, with the people and conditions of which they were acquainted. How much Jesus must have had to teach them when, after this tour, the apostles returned to Him, and 'told Him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught' (Mark vi. 30). These words of our Lord convey a basal principle of missionary policy, the neglect of which has cost and is costing us dear. We must be content to let beginners and beginnings be beginners and beginnings, not put the work of experts on the shoulder of novices, and not spread out the forces available for evangelization over regions which they are insufficient to reach effectively.

6. Two possibilities lie before them; they are to take the one which can best be realized: *Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. The first thing necessary for them is to learn the compassion of their Master for those who are nearest to them in religion and race, and to realize that without Him, the good Shepherd who is about to follow up their message by His presence (cp. Luke x. 1) they are *lost* (cp. Jer. i. 6; Matt. ix. 36). Thus learning

how to approach their own Galilean countrymen, they would become fitted to bring in other sheep of His (John x. 16).

7. *And as ye go*, from place to place, *preach*, or proclaim as heralds; they would gather the people together at the gate of the city, or at the entrance to the village. Their message would be that of John and of the Master Himself (iii. 2; iv. 17) *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, including the call to repent (cp. Mark vi. 12). As John had indicated that One was coming who would execute the judgement of the kingdom, so they would tell that He had come, adding the tidings of His works of love and mercy, and themselves giving examples of them.

8. The authority to do these saving works of Jesus, of which they had hitherto been witnesses only, had now been formally committed to them (v. 1); but the need is urgent to keep the exercise of such powers free from every taint of covetousness. Unlike Jewish exorcists or pagan magicians, who had paid the price of occult knowledge to their masters in hard cash, they had *freely received* this grace of God, and they are to impart its benefits without hire. While the words apply historically to the supra-normal gifts of healing, which still exist in God's Church, the principle extends to every form of spiritual or material endowment, for all such are divine stewardships. The New Testament commentary on the words is that of St. Paul in 1 Cor. ix. At the same time this freedom in the imparting of spiritual gifts is entirely consistent with the right to maintenance of himself

and family on the part of the evangelist or pastor, (cp. 1 Cor. ix. 4, 5, 14).

9-10. If they are not to look for financial results from their works of mercy on this tour, neither are they to make elaborate provision for their comfort beforehand. For an ordinary journey common sense bids the traveller lay in a sufficient supply of cash; but this is no ordinary journey; they go as heralds of a King, and their wants are to be met by His subjects to whom they minister. *Purses* should be (as in R.V. margin) *girdles* in which the Jewish traveller, like the Indian, carried his valuables. Nor are they to provide food (in the *wallet*) or extra clothing for the journey. The *shoes* mentioned here are a stouter and more comfortable footwear than the sandals spoken of by St. Mark (vi. 9). Why not make this usual provision? Because they are going to their own people, to whom they bring a welcome message, and who will acknowledge themselves bound to supply the needs of those who are doing them good, according to the proverb that *the labourer is worthy of* (that is, has a right to) *his food*. In building up the mission Churches of Asia Minor St. Paul adduces this maxim (in the same form as given in Luke x. 7) to prove the converse duty of the Church to provide for her ministers (1 Tim. v. 18) whereas in the same region, under the apostle John (3 John 7) we learn that the evangelists took nothing of the Gentiles (cp. 1 Cor. ix. 15).

11-13. These verses deal with the domestic side of the mission, which is treated at yet greater length

in Luke x. 5-9. Having started on their journey the apostles are to use reasonable means to secure food and lodging. Like Jesus (ix. 35) they will go to all classes of the population, entering into *city* and *village* alike, neither fearing the culture of the one nor despising the simplicity of the other. They will *search out who in it is worthy*, by inquiring from wayfarers going to the same place, or talking with the townspeople. For Galileans who knew the ways and haunts of different classes among their countrymen this would not be difficult. The test of worthiness would be the possession of such qualities as those recorded of Simeon of Jerusalem (Luke ii. 25); righteousness towards man, piety towards God, and a lively Messianic hope. It is not the rich or influential whom they are to seek to gain first. Hence in Luke x. 7-8 they are exhorted not to be particular about their food, and not to go from house to house choosing and picking the best rooms and the choicest cookery, or as it is put here: *there abide*. Their message is rather to the family circle than to the synagogue congregation for which they were not yet fit. We are reminded of the need that the evangelist has for caution and discretion in dealing with hearers and inquirers, and of the truth that he will get nearer to people by letting them do something for him than by doing everything for them. At the same time the apostles are to make their hosts realize that their visit is bringing a great blessing to the house. This they express by saluting it, saying (Luke x. 5) 'Peace be to this house,' though they

are not to waste time by the elaborate wayside salutations which hinder the traveller on his journey (Luke x. 4). They will show no lack of courtesy as men or of dignity as apostles. Should the householders prove churlish and *unworthy*, they are neither to be irritated nor depressed. *Let your peace return to you*. There is a reflex benefit in unanswered prayer, and they will carry the blessing of their salutation to others who are really fit for it, and suitable hosts and friends for them.

14. The twelve are prophets and they are to enforce their message by symbolism like that of Jeremiah or Ezekiel. *Shake off the dust*, as was done also by Jews coming from a Gentile country into Israelitish territory. It signified a denial to these people of fellowship with that kingdom whose messenger they had rejected. A solemn and terrible action, yet substantiated by Jesus later (see *vv.* 40-2, 'he that receiveth you, receiveth me,' etc.). But for such an assurance, how would the evangelists of the early Church have had courage to stand against the neglect and contempt of the whole world? And those in our own time who have the most vivid sense of divine mission are those who can impress their message most effectively on others.

15. The final sanction of the disciples' claim of a divine mission awaits the sentence of the day of judgement, to which both sinners and saints in *hades* look forward. *Sodom and Gomorrah* were types in the Old Testament of the hardened rejectors of God's message (Amos iv. 11; Isa. i. 9; *op.* Rev. xi. 8).

This stern sentence is an awful contrast to the compassion of the same speaker for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The consuming fire of His wrath (Rev. iv. 16) is the reverse side of the life-giving glow of His love. The responsibility of the evangelist which this implies is a sobering thought for young preachers, and for older ones too (2 Cor. ii. 15-16; iv. 3, 4.)

X. 16-42. A COLLECTION OF SAYINGS

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves : be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men : for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you ; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak : for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child : and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake : but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next : for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household ? Fear them not therefore : for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; and

hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

By way of appendix to the last section, embodying the general principles of evangelization, beginning from

the Holy Land, and reaching out to all nations (cp. Acts i. 8). Verses 16-23 may well have been spoken among the last discourses of Holy Week, and other parts, in the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension (Acts i. 3). For the catechumen and the novice of the first century, it was obviously useful to know how the later instructions of the Saviour as to the spread of the faith in the world at large supplemented the earlier ones intended for Galilee, and how they fitted the circumstances in which He was. The full commentary on these verses is to be found in the Acts of the Apostles, the history of the Church, and in present day missionary work.

The contrast with the foregoing is abrupt. Instead of hospitable entertainment in peaceful homes there will be deadly enmity in public and private, but the aid of the Holy Spirit will not fail them, and their work will be accomplished (16-23); amid all troubles faithful confessors of Jesus will be protected by their Father (24-33); but they must be prepared to be torn from their nearest and dearest and to go readily to painful death (34-9); yet not only they but their helpers have a sure reward (40-2).

16. In the first clause the word *I* is emphatic; it is *I* who *send you forth*, *I*, your Teacher, your Protector, your Example; otherwise the shock of the world's enmity would be crushing. *As sheep in the midst of wolves*: the expression *in the midst of* in the original conveys the idea that such is their habitual condition. The attitude of ferocious enmity on the part of the world towards the kingdom of

God and its messengers was depicted by Daniel under the image of wild beasts (Dan. vii. 3-7) and the disciple who read these words could see that enmity coming out ever more clearly in the attitude of the Roman Empire, no less than in that of the Jews. He must learn the paradox of the Christian character, compassion for the lost sheep, side by side with watchfulness against the ravening wolf (cp. John x. 12; Acts xx. 29). *Be ye*, or prove yourselves to be. The paradox will be manifested in two opposite aspects of your behaviour; first the wisdom of the *serpent* (Gen. iii. 1) the adroitness which can worst the enemy on his own ground (cp. 2 Cor. xii. 16; 1 Cor. ix. 22) and then the harmlessness or simplicity of the *dove* (cp. Rom. xvi. 19; Phil. ii. 15; Hos. vii. 11). In their resistance of evil they will hurt no one. The evangelist must be one who can unite opposite excellencies in his character. The one-sided man or woman will not do.

17-18. The wisdom of the serpent is shown by its wariness in the presence of danger, hence, *Beware of men*, for much as you may love and compassionate them, the 'men of the world' (Ps. xvii. 14) are your inveterate enemies (cp. John xv. 19; xvii. 14). They will employ all the powers of the world, religious and secular, for your destruction. First the Jewish *councils* (used here and Mark xiii. 9 of the local councils; generally of the central Sanhedrin) who had authority to inflict the punishment of scourging *in their synagogues* (cp. note on Synagogues iv. 23; also Acts xxii. 19; xxvi. 11; 2 Cor. xi. 24).

Next come the Roman authorities: *governors*, in the original the term for proconsuls (e.g. Felix and Festus), procurators, and proprietors; officials representing the Senate or the Emperor in charge of Provinces. *Kings*, originally rulers in their own right, though many of them, like Herod Agrippa, were vassals of Rome. The term would cover 'the Emperor' (Acts xxv. 21). *For a testimony to them (the Jews) and to the Gentiles*, as in the case of Stephen before the Sanhedrin (Acts vii) and Paul before the Emperor (2 Tim. iv. 17). The same thing happened again and again in the case of earlier and later martyrs of the Church, and it has not been unknown in Native States in India. Persecution by rulers is in itself an evil, but if met in the spirit of suffering for Christ's sake, it will subserve the spread of the gospel (cp. Phil. i. 13, 14).

19. From this to v. 22 the disciple learns how he is to behave when the wariness has failed, and he has been unexpectedly caught and delivered up to the magistrate, before whom he will have to make his defence, with little or no help from others (2 Tim. iv. 16); He is not to be anxious (cp. vi. 25) either about the manner or the matter of what he shall say. He is seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and this among other things shall be added to him (cp. vi. 33). This, of course, applies to those who are so arrested as to have no time or opportunity to make or procure a suitable defence. It offers no excuse for laziness or carelessness

20. Why thus untroubled? *For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.* So speaks the Son of God who sends them forth; their mission is protected by the Father (vv. 29, 30) and inspired by the Spirit. This word is parallel to the command (xxviii. 19) to make disciples by baptizing into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Through that Spirit Jesus was conceived (i. 20) by Him anointed (iii. 16; Luke iv. 18-21) and sent upon His mission (iv. 1; Luke iv. 14); and the words of Jesus are not His alone, but those of Him that sent Him (John xiv. 10, 24). The same Spirit is given to the children of the heavenly Father who ask for Him (Luke xi. 13) at the time of need.

21. A yet harder trial is family treachery (cp. Mic. vii. 6) when near relatives conspire to injure those who confess Christ. If this was frequent in the early days of the Church, it is still more so in India where the family is ruled by the caste.

22. This disturbance of family relations especially will produce universal unpopularity; *ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake* (cp. Acts xxviii. 22). Without knowing this saying of Jesus, the Roman historian Tacitus wrote of Christians as 'proved to be odious to the human race'. In India we have often enough seen how men of creeds, otherwise at deadly feud between themselves, will unite in opposition to the followers of Christ. But we must remember the words *for my name's sake*. The Jesuits and their followers in Japan were hated because

they intrigued for political power. We too need to remember the warning given by St. Peter (1 Pet. iv. 15, 16) and be sure that Christians are never unpopular as evildoers or meddlers in other men's matters. Such unpopularity, with the social ostracism and other manifestations that accompany it, is only to be met in one way, and that is by endurance (cp. Jas. i. 4). This includes patient suffering of evils, and also unwearied persistence in well-doing (Gal. vi. 9). Such was the conduct of the early Christians, and such must be ours. This endurance brings eventual salvation both from the persecution of men, and from the condemnation of God (2 Thess. i. 4-7).

23. At the same time, the disciple is not to court martyrdom, as was often done by mistaken enthusiasts in the early Church. Persecuted in one city, he is to *flee into the next*, as St. Paul frequently did (cp. Acts viii. 1; xiv. 6, etc). Through this exercise of the serpent's wisdom, the object of the enemy is frustrated, and the gospel more widely spread (Acts viii. 4; xi. 19, 20). There will always be enough places left to flee to which have not rejected you and your message, *for verily I say unto you—* an announcement of special moment to the original readers and learners—*ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, as the messengers of the kingdom, till the Son of Man be come to execute the judgement of the kingdom in respect of Israel, and to deliver His own people from it.* (For further detail on this point, see introduction to chapter 24).

These words show that the writer was still looking forward to the destruction of Jerusalem, so that he would be writing not much later than the beginning of the Jewish war in A.D. 66. Jesus has already spoken of Himself as the Judge; He now, for the first time mentions His second coming; in xvi. 27, 28, He connects the two, and again speaks of their nearness. As the opposition of the Jewish rulers increases, so the announcement of the coming of Jesus to judge them and their disobedient nation increases in clearness. The following are the predictions as given in this Gospel:—

x. 23. The Son of man comes to complete the work of His heralds.

xvi. 27. He comes in glory to judge all men.

xxiv. 30, 31. He comes on the clouds to gather his elect.

44. He comes unexpectedly (as a thief).

46. He comes to test His servants (as a householder).

xxv. 31. He comes in glory as a King.

xxvi. 64. He comes sitting at the right-hand of Power.

24-33. These verses convey the higher lessons of discipleship: likeness to the Master; revelation as His chosen ones; the hope of immortality; the courage of faith; the supreme issue of glory or disgrace.

24-5. First a proverbial saying, the former part of which, *a disciple is not above his master* (or, teacher) is given in Luke vi. 40; the second part, *nor a*

servant above his lord in John xiii. 16; xv. 20, the latter with reference, apparently, to this saying. For the disciple to *be as his teacher*, and to take part in the joy of *his lord* (cp. xxv. 21) is indeed his highest ambition, but that can be realized only through participation in his Teacher's keenest suffering, the imputation of evil motives by those whom He vain would enlighten and help (cp. xx. 22). *Beelzebub*, or *Baal Zabul*, meaning 'lord of flies'; a heathen deity (see 2 Kings i. 2) whose name had been given to Satan, the prince of the demons (ix. 34). By their previous suggestion that the works of Jesus were done by satanic agency, His enemies had in effect called Him *Beelzebub*, and in xii. 24 they repeat it. *The master of the house*, a parabolical designation of Himself, often used by our Saviour, as being the protector and nourisher of His disciples (see xiii. 27, 52; xx. 1; xxi. 33). *How much more them of his household*: He had never done anything in the slightest degree to deserve such a reproach, while they, though faithful to Him, yet have their human imperfections. The pagans of the first centuries called the Christians atheists. Here in India they are called *mlechhh*, *kafir*, or *shaitan*.

26-7. In these and the following verses we have three antidotes to fear. You are not to fear, because the time is coming when your true motives will be vindicated (v. 28) because of the Father's care meanwhile, and (v. 31) because of your value in God's sight. *Fear them not therefore*, however much and successfully they may malign your motives and

characters. Our Saviour did not hide His light under a bushel, yet He *covered* the fame of His works by self-restraint (see xii. 16-21) and the brilliance of His teaching by simple tales (xiii. 10-15); but hereafter they are to reveal those secrets: *what I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light*; they are to work in the blaze of full publicity: *what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops*. This principle of progressive teaching, according to the stage of development reached, applies in many ways, notably to the mission of the disciples, first to Galilee, then to Judæa, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts i. 8).

28. The fear of man is to be swallowed up by the greater fear of God, who to His enemies is a consuming fire (Heb. xii. 29); to His people a loving Father. He only is *able to destroy* (cp. Jas. iv. 12; Matt. xxi. 41; xxii. 7).

29-31. God's care for the least in creation and in human life is as sure as for the greatest, a truth impressed upon us in modern times by the microscope, which reveals His wonderful provision for the minutest things and processes. *Two sparrows*: it is unlikely that common house-sparrows would be worth buying and selling. The Greek word means generally any small bird; the reference here is to some edible kind, like quails. The saying may be proverbial; in Luke. xii. 6 we have *five sparrows*. *Not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father*; what we give little for we are careless about; not so God; His thought and care knows no distinc-

tion of small and great, and He who thus cares is your Father. He has numbered *the very hairs of your head*; that which is most loosely connected with your bodily health, which serves only for comfort and beauty, and is constantly being shed. The divine care extends, not only to the necessities of life, but to its comforts and adornments. *Ye are of more value*, (cp. vi. 26; xii. 12). It is the difference between physical and spiritual worth. One may be expressed in terms of money value; the other in terms of relation to God. Jesus believes in the divine immanence (indwelling) in all things; to Him this is one with what we call 'laws of nature'; and it is consistent with individual care for the least creature, and much more for each reasonable being. This teaching contains all that is true in the Hindu doctrine of the divine pervasiveness, but it excludes the idea that the *jivatma* or soul of life, is one in all, and so identical with the Deity.

32-3. We are not only to fear eternal death, but to desire eternal glory (Rom. ii. 7). *Every one therefore*: because the care of God for each of His children is so sure and minute, therefore the rule here laid down admits of no exception. *Confess me*, as his lord (cp. Rom. x. 9; 1 Cor. xii. 3); in these verses there is a distinct reference to the baptismal confession, which in India is the great testing time for the convert. But the expression covers confession of Christ also by Christians who are often enough tempted to hide their Christian character. *Before men*: that is outsiders (cp. v. 17); it is not sufficient

to tell the missionary or confidential friend. *Him will I also confess.* In vii. 22, 23 Jesus laid claim to the office of Judge at the last day; here He proclaims Himself as the Advocate (John xiv. 16; 1 John ii. 1) on whose intercession the issue of the judgement depends. *Whosoever shall deny:* a warning needed by His apostles, but extended to all (cp. 2 Tim. ii. 12). In this, as in other respects Jesus gave the example of what He demands of His people (cp. 1 Tim. vi. 13; John xviii. 36, 37; xix. 11; Rev. iii. 5).

34-9. Why the need of ordeals, so often painful? In a sinful world peace must come through conflict, life through death.

34. *Think not:* in view of such sayings as *vr. 12* and *13. Not to send peace, but a sword:* not the aim, but the result of the coming of Jesus, which was ushered in with the message, 'on earth peace'. Still he who desires the end desires the means. When the festering wound cannot be healed without the knife, the physician desires the lancet, and not the ointment. Jesus is our Peace (Eph. ii. 14) yet for His own mother He brought a sword (Luke ii. 35). The same holds good of the gospel of peace in this land and in the history of the Church generally. Religious wars and religious persecutions have been the fiercest and bloodiest. But the Saviour reckoned from the first that the peace at which His people arrive through such strife is worth the price.

35-6. *Variance* in the family is the bitterest form of the struggles which the gospel brings because of sin; especially when the young have to set themselves

in opposition to their elders whom they would fain reverence. How many a missionary's heart has been wrung when he has had to strengthen the resolve of a convert to hold out against every appeal to filial love and reverence, when such were directed to make him deny Christ.

37. The supreme standard of worth is Jesus Himself; the supreme good is communion with Him; on that the heart of the disciple must be centred, and every other love will fade into insignificance. Otherwise the disciple is *not worthy* of Him. But, by being sacrificed, family affection is ennobled, as in the case of Jesus himself (John xix. 26, 27).

38. Jesus leads up to His own supreme example, though the hearers may not have understood all the force of the saying at the time. *Take his cross*: expresses personal willingness to suffer a shameful and excruciating death. The Roman custom of crucifying criminals was familiar enough to the hearers. *Follow after me*: an indication that this was to be the fate of Jesus Himself; probably interpreted as a metaphor at the time.

39. The great exchange. It was *life* which the earnest Jew sought (xix. 16) and which the serious Hindu or Muhammadan seeks. Here it is as a personal possession, a part of himself; *his life*: the same word as is often translated 'soul'; the life principle; the inner part of man as distinguished from the outer, his body. Jesus gave it (Mark x. 45); we are love to God with it (xxii. 37); by patience we win it (Luke xxi. 19); it goes into hades (Acts ii. 27);

its salvation is the object of our faith (Heb. x. 39 ; 1 Pet. i. 9). The same word is used ii. 20 and very frequently of the life which subsists in the conjunction of body and soul. The paradox here is based on the difference of the meanings. He who finds his (mere bodily) life, i.e. makes that successfully the aim of his efforts, will *lose it*, because it goes with the dissolution of the body ; but he who, for the sake of Christ, loses that bodily life, will find it, for his soul cannot be destroyed by the powers that kill the body (v. 28). Selfishness is the loss of self ; self-sacrifice is the gain of the true self, if it is for His sake, for so it opens up the soul to the inflow of life from Him. A much needed encouragement to the first readers not to fear martyrdom, and a word to strengthen all who have to confess Christ by word or deed in the face of opposition.

40-2. Against the world's deadly enmity Jesus sets the widespread acceptance and co-operation with which his messengers will meet. The age of the martyrs is the age of the spread of the faith ; where the gospel is most violently opposed it has gained, in modern times also, some of its greatest triumphs ; witness Madagascar, Uganda, and North China.

40. Not only does Jesus make immense claims for Himself ; He is represented by His messengers, and gives of His honour to them. *He that receiveth you receiveth me*. Their apostolate is no less than a divine commission, for *he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me* (cp. xv. 24 ; xxi. 37) ; Jesus Himself is the apostle of God (see Heb. iii. 1 ; John v. 23).

How great is the dignity of the evangelist of Christ!
How necessary for him a true sending by God!

41. Christ is represented, not only by His specially appointed ministers, but by His Church at large in its various degrees; *prophets*, men specially inspired with a message to the Church (Acts xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xiv. 3, etc.); *righteous men*, Christians of established character; *little ones*, the young disciples, who are still children in the faith (1 Cor. iii. 1). In v. 12 we saw that Jesus accounts the persecution of His disciples as on a level with persecution of the prophets; here we have the other side; their reception is that of prophets and its reward the reward of a prophet, to see that his message has been vindicated as true and his character as righteous (op. 1 Kings xix. 14 and 18). *In the name of a prophet or righteous man*: that is, having regard to him as such, for the sake of his divinely given message and moral character (for prophets see xxiii. 31, 34; Eph. ii. 20; iii. 5). The ideal righteous man is Jesus Himself (cp. xxvii. 19; Luke xxiii. 47; 1 Pet. iii. 18); next, His people in the world (op. xxiii. 29; 2 Pet. ii. 8;) for their reward (see xiii. 43; xxv. 46). The *little ones* of Christ's kingdom (xxv. 40) are greater than John the Baptist (xi. 11); they are companions of prophets and righteous men. Service to them is considered as service to Christ, as in xxv. 45, even when rendered by those who are outside the circle of conscious discipleship, provided it be *in the name of a disciple*, that is, recognizing the God-given power of the life which they represent (the exact

opposite of the pharisaic attitude, which attributed the beneficent works of Jesus to Satan). Their *reward* will be manifest at the day of judgement, when their work will not pass unrecognized. It is a comfort to think that there will be many in India, who have not reached the goal of full discipleship, yet to whom this reward is promised. The indirect effects of Christianity have their value, though the fulness of its life is only received by coming to Christ (xi. 28-30).

CHAPTER XI

And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities.

1. This verse links the previous discourse to the following narrative. Having given commands to the twelve, He leads the way by example. The teaching seems to signify more private, the preaching more public, action. *Their cities* : of which the twelve, with one exception, were natives. This increased activity of the Master and His disciples naturally arouses the interest of John.

xi. 3-xv. 39

We now come to a fresh section of the Gospel, describing the impression made by Jesus, for weal or woe, on different classes of people : first in chapter xi, on John the Baptist, the people at large, and the favoured cities. In chapter xii, we see the effect of the work of Jesus on the Pharisees, in their growing enmity, which involves His renunciation of home ties, Hence, in chapter xiii, Jesus adopts the method of teaching by parables, enlightening the disciples, and

veiling the truth from the indifferent, and this is followed by rejection in His own village. In chapter xiv, the impression made by the report of the doings of Jesus on Herod is elucidated by the story of how he arrested and murdered John; then comes the great central miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, the only one related in all four Gospels, followed by Jesus walking on the water and His healing activity in the district of Gennesaret. In chapter xv, we have the controversy on ceremonial purity, the petition of the Syro-Phenician woman, further wonderful healings, and the feeding of the four thousand. Jesus is still popular, but the unreceptiveness of the people to His real teaching is increasing, and so is the enmity of his opponents, though the latter has not reached its climax.

**xi. 2-19. THE DOUBTS AND VINDICATION OF THE
IMPRISONED BAPTIST
(LUKE vii. 18-35)**

Now when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples and said unto him, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me. And as these went their way, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold?

a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft *raiment*? Behold, they that wear soft *raiment* are in kings' houses. But wherefore went ye out? to see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,

Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, which call unto their fellows, and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom is justified by her works.

In iv. 12 already we had the mention of the imprisonment of John; in xiv. 3-12 is related the final tragedy of his career; here we have the spiritual crisis of his prison life. We know from Josephus that he was imprisoned in the fortress of Machærus by the Dead Sea. His was the blessing of those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake (v. 10). He had announced the coming of the kingdom of

God, had commanded men to repent and reform their lives. He himself had led an ascetic life, and taught his disciples both to pray and fast. He had pointed his disciples to Jesus as the Lamb of God, and some of them had followed Him; when others were jealous at the growing popularity of Jesus John had rebuked them, describing Jesus as the Bridegroom of the Messianic people. Then, in the midst of an activity unparalleled in its profound effect upon the nation since the days of Elijah, he had been suddenly arrested by the dissolute ruler of Galilee, and imprisoned. John, as Jesus here shows, was still within the limits of the Old Testament dispensation; he expected the Messiah to reveal His kingdom in power and judgement (iv. 10); but, instead of this, it develops in meekness and quietness as a kingdom of the heart (Luke xvii. 20). The glory of John is his clear, unselfish testimony to Jesus; but, like other Old Testament saints, he fails once in his strong point. He is wrestling with the same problem as the disciples of Jesus later (cp. Luke xix. 11; Matt. xx. 20; Luke xxiv. 21; Acts i. 6) but he has not the Master at hand to help him, and it may well be that his personal questionings were increased by those of his disciples. In his perplexity he turns to Jesus (as Jesus to His Father in the hour of conflict, xxvi. 39) and he is pointed to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in this very matter of the works of Jesus, and a gentle reproof is given in the loving form of a beatitude: *Blessed is he, who shall find none occasion of*

stumbling in me. Then, as the messengers of John depart, the pent up feelings of Jesus break forth, in vindication of His suffering friend, imprisoned for faithfulness to His Father. Though his work was but preparatory, yet how unique his personal greatness! How far-reaching the movement which he had inaugurated! How lamentable and childish the vacillation of a generation that could hear and tremble before John, yet go on trifling both with him and Jesus. Not that the divine wisdom is at fault in this work which had its riddles even for a prophet. Its vindication follows in the next sections; the denunciation of the impenitent cities, the praise of the divine counsel of revelation, the claim to authority for its execution, and the invitation to all who feel the need of it.

The importance of this passage to the first readers is clear, when we consider the wide diffusion of the followers of John, whom St. Paul finds even in proconsular Asia (Acts xix. 1, 3).

2. *John heard in the prison*: through his disciples who were allowed to come and go (Luke vii. 18) who doubtless often heard and saw Jesus, and occasionally referred questions to Him (op. ix. 14). John was treated with a certain amount of consideration, and even veneration by Herod (op. Mark vi. 20). *The works of the Christ*: believed to be so by John and many of his disciples, and confirmed by their works above related. But if these, why not the 'fan' and 'fire' of judgement?

3. *Art thou he that cometh*: the hope of the nation was centered on the coming of the Messiah, and 'the

Coming One' was an acknowledged designation of Him (cp. Ps. xl. 7; cxvii. 26; Mal. iii. 1; Heb. x. 37). *Or look we*: that is, are we to look for another; the Greek word indicates one of a different kind, in whom the lacking works would appear. Faith is not merely an act accomplished once for all; it is a proving of things not seen, an enduring as seeing Him who is invisible (Heb. xi. 27). John repeats the experience of his prototype (1 Kings xix. 10-18). His doubt is not a disbelief, but an acute sense of the difficulty of harmonizing apparent contradictions. His present condition of imprisonment for the sake of righteousness seems to force him into a dilemma: how can the just Judge allow wickedness to triumph, and goodness to be defeated? But going to Him as his friend and counsellor his doubts will be solved.

4-5. *Which ye do hear*: recent miracles, such as those reported above (viii. 2; ix. 6, 25, 27, 33); *and see*: for Jesus was doing such at the time of their arrival (cp. Luke vii. 21). John did no sign (John x. 41) but in these works of the Christ there was the union of power and tenderness which was the crowning mark of Messiah (cp. Isa. xxxv. 5; lxi. 1; lvii. 15; Matt. xi. 29). *The poor have good tidings preached to them*: John had had occasion to rebuke the pretensions of the higher classes; Jesus was already showing what God could make out of publicans and sinners; even one of the apostles was from amongst them. John must revise his ideas of Messiah's working, and advance from his own conception to what God's providence had shown to be the true fulfilment of the

Old Testament. We still have to estimate the work of the gospel according to the contemporary leadings of God.

6. *Blessed is he*: an exquisitely tender reproof, in the offer of a blessing which it was open to John to claim as the result of his struggle with doubt. No less tender is Jesus now to those who have to struggle with doubts and difficulties in a sincere search for Him. *Occasion of stumbling*: that is of falling into sin (v. 29f), for unbelief is sin, as soon as it becomes wilful (cp. Isa. viii. 14, 15; lii. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 8). Julian the apostate wrote mockingly: 'Surely Jesus accomplished nothing wonderful, unless one should regard the healing of some lame and blind people, and the expulsion of demons from possessed persons in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany, as wonderful works.' *In me*: Jesus Himself is the centre around which the controversy between faith and unbelief revolves; every man is either attracted or repelled by Him; hence there will always be the possibility of stumbling.

7-10. *As these* (messengers of John) *went their way*: without impairing the force of the reproof, yet without delay, Jesus eagerly begins to vindicate His friend, as John had done when his disciples complained about Jesus (see John iii. 27-30). *What went ye out into the wilderness* (iii. 1) *to behold?* Those who followed Jesus were those who had gone after John. The words to end of v. 10 are an utterance in prophetic style, ending in a quotation from Malachi, expressing the emotion which stirred our Lord. John was neither

like a *reed* which bowed to the breeze on the banks of Jordan where he had often baptized; nor was he a votary of luxury (*a man clothed in soft raiment*) like the courtiers of the King who held him captive. What a contrast his hair garment to the *soft clothing* of those who moved in the king's palace! How many spheres removed his stern word, 'It is not lawful for thee to have her', from the flatteries of men who swayed with every breath of the royal caprice! His misgivings came of no instability of will, nor from any desire to change his prison fare for luxurious living, but rather from an impetuous longing to see the kingdom of God suddenly established. It was an error, but a noble error. *A prophet?* All acknowledged John as such (Mark xi. 32). *Much more than a prophet*: for he was in his own person the fulfilment of prophecy, and able to point to the Christ, the Fulfiller of the law and the prophets (John i. 29) and he was willing to be merged in Him (iii. 11; John iii. 30). *This is he, of whom it is written*: in Mal. iii. 1, freely translated. The Speaker is Jehovah; the person addressed is 'the Lord (Adonai) whom ye seek', who is to come suddenly to the temple of Jehovah to purify it. He is the 'Coming One' about whom John had just inquired, and John is the messenger who prepares His way for His advent in the sanctuary (op. Luke i. 76). He was a participator in that of which the other prophets had only spoken.

11. *Verily*: introducing a statement on which the Saviour lays special stress. *Among them that are born of women*: in the Old Testament this phrase is used only in

Job xiv. 1; xv. 14; xxv. 4; it connotes the mortality and sinfulness of man as such, from which John is not free. In the New Testament it is used only once (Gal. iv. 4), and then of the Son of God, born without sin, through whom the taint is overcome, when we are born again (John iii. 5, 7). *Not a greater*: of the twelve apostles not one was equal in greatness of character to John the Baptist, yet the Church of Christ is built on the foundation of these apostles and prophets, as St. Paul wrote to the Church of Ephesus, where the followers of John had indeed been its nucleus, but were only a vanishing sect (see Eph. ii. 20; Acts xix. 1-7). In knowledge of God and His revelation John was greater than all the prophets who preceded him; but in the same respect *he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven*, even a neophyte in the Church (x. 42) *is greater than he*, for he has the full revelation of the Father and the Son, though he be a babe (cp. v. 25-27).

12. The reason of this is not the superior ability or merit of the 'little one', but the progressive development of the kingdom. The appearance of John was a signal for the bursting forth of long pent-up forces which were moving, as Jesus spoke, with increasing momentum. Since John's mighty proclamation had been silenced, the form of those forces might have changed, but their essence was still the same, and the kingdom of God as manifested through Jesus was characterized by works of power. John was vindicated as the herald of the mightier than he. *The kingdom of heaven is coming with violence*: this,

rather than *suffereth violence*, seems to be the force of the Greek verb which is translated in Luke xvi. 16 'entereth violently into'. Here the verb has no object, and conveys the idea of 'is forcing itself' into prominence, or on our attention. In accordance with this quality of the kingdom of heaven, it is *men of violence* who succeed in taking it *by force*. They are the importunate who will take no denial (see xv. 22-8; Luke xi. 8, 9); the traders who are ready to sell all they have for the pearl of great price (xiii. 45, 46). Those who lack that violent eagerness go away sorrowful (xix. 22). Jesus had met both kinds, but He could only do with those who, like Gideon's three hundred, were burning to join the fray.

13. Hence John was a dividing line in history. *All the prophets and the law prophesied till John*: the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures are meant (cp. v. 17) the prophets being here mentioned first, because the predictive element is chiefly referred to. Since Malachi, the last of them, just quoted, they had been witnessing of the Christ to come (John v. 39); then came John with the message 'He is here'.

14. It now depends on you to recognize who and how great this man was; *if ye are willing to receive it* he is no less than *Elijah which is to come*, the proclaimer either of salvation through repentance or judgement on those who harden their hearts (cp. Mal. iv. 5, 6; Luke i. 17; Matt. xvii. 12). Faith depends upon the will; when the mind has been rightly informed, self-will may still draw a wrong conclusion. The tradition of Elijah who is to re-appear is as strong, or

stronger, among Jews now than it was in the time of Christ (John i. 21; Matt. xvii. 10; xxvii. 74, 75). A seat is reserved for him at every passover, and in some writings he almost usurps the functions of Messiah. Among Muhammadans he has been identified with Al Khizr, the mysterious wanderer who has drunk of the fountain of life, and appears ever and anon to redress the wrongs of men. The Qadiani pretender, Ghulam Ahmad, has made use of this identification of the Baptist with Elijah to claim for himself the title of Christ, impudently asserting that he has come in the spirit and power of Messiah.

15. Hence *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear* : because what I have just said requires thoughtful attention (cp. xiii. 9; Rev. ii. 7). A phrase used by Jesus both before and after His exaltation, to call attention to a solemn truth which has not yet been fully considered. In this case it emphasizes the lessons to be drawn from the character and work of John.

16-17. Such a warning is necessary. Jesus turns, almost with contempt, to the conduct of his contemporaries in view of this unparalleled epoch in their history. In contrast to the 'men of violence' whom the time demands they are petulant triflers. *This generation* : more especially the Pharisees and their following. They are like capricious children who sit there and expect their fellows to dance or to mourn at their whim, and are annoyed because they will not follow it; they were equally displeased with the Baptist who would not join in their self-indulgence, and

with Jesus who would not share their hypocritical austerity (vi. 16-18).

18-19. Of the ascetic John they said, *He hath a devil*: a reproach sometimes levelled at Jesus (cp. on x. 25) only in this connexion mentioned with reference to John. As a Hindustani might say us 'Kobhūt charb gaya', his conduct cannot be explained by ordinary human motives. *The Son of man*, showing His true representative character, joined in the ordinary festivities of human society (ix. 10; John ii. 2; Luke v. 30) and he is accused of gluttony, drunkenness, and dissolute companionship. In the face of this folly *wisdom is justified by her works*; because the event proves that her teaching has not been fruitless (cp. Isa. lv. 11; Luke vii. 29). In Luke vii. 35 for 'works' we have 'children' (cp. Eccus. iv. 11). This is analogous to the command of St. Paul in Eph. v. 8 to 'walk as children of light'. *Wisdom* is here used after an Old Testament analogy, as a personified attribute of God, regarded as the divine Craftsman (see Prov. viii); only in the New Testament it is viewed as embodied in Jesus Christ (see 1 Cor. i. 30). In Luke xi. 49 Wisdom is spoken of as sending the messengers of God, which was the work of Jesus (xxiii. 34).

xi. 20-4. WOE TO THE IMPENITENT CITIES

(LUKE X. 13-15)

Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe

unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Howbeit I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. Howbeit I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgement, than for thee.

Though Jesus emphasized the works of mercy and pity as characteristic of His ministry, yet He did not overlook the sterner aspect of His proclamation.

20. *Then began he to upbraid the cities*, etc. Hitherto His message had been 'good news'; now this denunciation is brought in to show the fearful results of the trifling with truth, which He had reproofed so scathingly. *Wherein most of his mighty works were done*. Some cities were more favoured in this respect than others; there was enough faith in the people to call forth the operation of Christ's healing power (xiii. 58); but they lacked the first requirement of the message of John and Jesus (iii. 2; iv. 17) for *they repented not*, nor brought forth fruit worthy of repentance (iii. 8) unlike the men of Nineveh (xii. 41). There was no change of mind on the part of the community, though individuals among the people of those cities were saved in body and soul, like the four apostles who came from Bethsaida (John i. 44, 45).

21-4. If our Lord was speaking in Capernaum, the other two cities may have been visible from where He stood. This *woe* is a contrast to the *blessed* in v. 6; these people had seen, yet had not believed with the heart. *Chorazin* is quite unknown. *Bethsaida* means 'house of fishing'. It was a fishing village situated on the north-west shore of the Lake of Galilee, and it was the home of Simon Peter and Andrew, also of Philip and Nathanael. *Capernaum* (see on iv. 13) not far off Bethsaida was the headquarters of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee. All three have perished, and the sites even of the last two are by no means certain. Chorazin and Bethsaida are compared to *Tyre and Sidon* the wealthy and luxurious seaports of Phœnicia; apparently they were marked by worldliness and pride (see Ezek. xxvii. and xxviii). *Capernaum* is likened to Sodom which has given its name to the infamy against which Lot in vain protested (Gen. xix. 7). The merchant princes of Phœnicia would have *repented in sackcloth* (put on as the garment of mourning (cp. Job xvi. 15) and ashes (strewed on the head, for the same reason, cp. Job ii. 8). Sodom *would have remained unto this day*, as having reformed itself; for communal righteousness is no less important in its way than individual. Our Saviour, like the prophets of the Old Testament taught that godliness ought to affect municipal and national life. He was a patriot who desired the welfare of His people. True national and communal welfare will come to India and her people now through following Christ and His teachings. Capernaum expected to be *exalted*

unto heaven because of the presence of such a wonder-working prophet in her midst, but she would *go down into Hades* the abode of the dead, that is, be utterly destroyed (cp. Isa. xiv. 15). The word there rendered 'hell' is in Hebrew 'sheol' which corresponds to the Greek, *hades*. It is different from Gehenna, the place of torment, spoken of in v. 22 and x. 28.

xi. 25-30. A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING, A CLAIM TO AUTHORITY, AND AN INVITATION TO REST

(LUKE x. 21, 22)

At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

25. *At that season*: the juncture above described, when John's end was approaching, the enemies of Jesus becoming more bitter, and the communities most powerfully appealed to by Him unresponsive. *Jesus answered*: not an interlocutor, but the situation. After His disappointment in the cities where He had ministered, He looks on the company of His apostles, immature, uncultured (Acts iv. 13) and unperceptive (xv. 16). Extenuating nothing, He is able to say,

I thank thee : for what appears to be a lamentable failure, is in reality the unfolding of God's counsel of salvation, and that in the only form in which it can be available for all. *O Father* : Jesus doubtless used the Aramaic word *Abba*, as recorded in Mark xiv. 36, which St. Paul seems also to have used in his private devotions (cp. Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6). The word, occurring five times in this passage, denotes a unique relationship (cp. xxviii. 19 and John xx. 17). The Gospels often mention that Jesus prayed (see Mark i. 35; Luke iii. 21; v. 16; vi. 12; ix. 18 and 28, 29; xi. 1) but the only prayers recorded, besides this, are those in Gethsamane (xxvi. 36, 39, 42, 44); at the coming of the Greeks to Jesus (John xii. 27, 28); and in the upper room (John xvii). *Lord of heaven and earth* : it is with the world-rule of God that the following words have to do, and by the great law of receptivity which governs all things moral, *thou didst hide*, as it were by an eternal decree from the first, *these things*, the meanings of the mighty works, and the teachings of the heavenly Wisdom (1 Cor. i. 19-25; ii. 6-9) *from the wise and understanding*, those possessed of learning and insight, meaning especially the scribes and Pharisees, *and didst reveal them*, by the same law as the hiding, *unto babes* : those who, conscious of their ignorance, are humble, trustful and docile (cp. xviii. 2-4; xxi. 16) :—

As a little child relies

On a care beyond his own ;

Knows he's neither strong nor wise,

Fears to stir a step alone.

The contrast between *wise* and *babes* here is similar to that between righteous and sinners in ix. 12; the first has regard to revelation of truth, the second to salvation from sin; in each case a real advantage becomes a positive hindrance through lack of self-knowledge, which prevents the acceptance of Christ. The worldly religions are of exactly the contrary opinion: 'This multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed' (John vii. 49). Their knowledge is dead and decaying; that of the spiritual child is living and progressive; he is being led on to fuller knowledge, as were the apostles through the Spirit (John vii. 39) who is the hider and revealer. God's natural gifts of life must go down to the veriest babe; His spiritual gifts of the revelation of Himself, if they are to be available to all mankind, must be accessible to the simplest. Those who imagine that Christianity is the religion suited only to the more highly developed nations, or to the better classes of society, ignore the essence of its message which appeals to and meets a universal need. No qualities natural or acquired render any one more worthy of this free gift.

26. *Yea, Father*: the prayer of Jesus here, as in John xii. 27, 28 and xvii, is a conversation with the Father; He hears His voice and replies; He is content with the reception of the message for which He came to live and die, discouraging though it may seem *for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight*, as was the sealing of the Son by the spirit for the revelation of the Father's supreme love in the sacrifice of Jesus (see on iii. 17). This 'good pleasure' of the Father's

will was no motiveless choice of an arbitrary despot; it was a revelation, such as we can grasp, under the limitations of humanity, of the eternal nature and counsel of the Father.

27. Hence, in the face of all opposition and neglect, Jesus utters the divine decree (Ps. ii. 7), by which He claims authority over all flesh (John xvii. 2): *All things have been delivered unto me of my Father.* In these words previous utterances are summed up: authority as lawgiver and judge (vii. 29); power to forgive sins (ix. 6); power over nature (viii. 26); power over life and death (ix. 25); and chiefly authority to reveal the Father, in which all else is summed up. Such statements are more frequent in the Gospel of St. John; in this Gospel we have them on a few special occasions: the baptism (iii. 17); the Sermon on the Mount (vii. 22, 23); rejection by the Galilean cities (here); the confession of Simon Peter (xvi. 16, 27); and the trial before the high priest (xxvi. 64). Finally in xxviii. 18, 19 we have the claim to universal authority again asserted, followed by the full revelation of the divine nature in outline, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, on which our Christian creeds are based. This manner of teaching the great mystery of God's revelation in Jesus Christ was more suited to the needs of the learners for whom the synoptic Gospels were composed than would have been the deeper and more mystic presentation of St. John, which was designed to provide an answer to the speculations of Gnostics, that is, heretics who posed as philosophical teachers. The synoptic Gospels

were missionary manuals for beginners; that of St. John a treatise for the growing Church. Now, the great law of revelation is, *no one knoweth the Son save the Father*. The Son had been ignored by His own creatures and people (John i. 10, 11), for, though He is the Revealer of the Father, yet He is also a mystery which needs to be revealed; and this the Father was yet to accomplish through the Spirit. The word for *know* in this passage is the same as that translated 'well-known' in 2 Cor. vi. 9; it denotes here, that essential knowledge of Himself in the Son which is proper to the Father only. The knowledge of God which is competent to human faculty is not only possible, but actual in those who know Jesus, and it is eternal life (John xvii. 3). The one is comprehension, or full understanding; the other apprehension, or taking hold of such knowledge of God as is possible to our human faculties. *Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son*: the relation between the two is a completely reciprocal one; the Son who knows the Father entirely is, like Him, God. Yet there is a participation in such knowledge for those to whom *the Son willeth to reveal* the Father, for through faith in His Name (or revelation) they become sons of God, and in virtue of this relationship they will come to know fully, even as they have been known fully (the same verb as here, see 1 Cor. xiii. 12).

28. Who are these to whom the Son 'willeth to reveal' the knowledge of the Father? He 'declares His almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy

and pity.' This is the source of the most gracious and universal invitation. How many a seeking soul among non-Christians has been drawn by these sweet words to the speaker! There are analogies to these words in the Old Testament, especially in Isa. lv. 1-3; Jer. vi. 16; and in Eccles. li. 23-7; and the last is among the indications that our Saviour was not unacquainted with the Old Testament Apocrypha. But while the note of the Old Testament is generally that of command expressed by 'go', the note of Jesus is that of invitation 'come'; it conveys the sense of personal attraction, *unto me*; it is addressed, not to the native dignity and force of mankind, but to its sense of toil and burden; *all ye that labour and are heavy laden*; and that with the guarantee of satisfaction, *I will give you rest*. The words *labour* and *heavy laden* describe primarily the condition of the conscientious Jew on whose shoulders the scribes and Pharisees had bound 'heavy burdens and grievous to be borne' (xxiii. 4); they toiled to bear these burdens of ceremonial obligation and the like, but found them heavy beyond their strength (Acts xv. 10). But the words describe equally the condition of those who in any religion are trying to work out their own righteousness by acts of devotion or austerity. In complete contradiction to this comes the word *I* (emphasized in the Greek) the gracious divine source and giver of rest.

29. The freedom of this gift does not exclude diligence in the use of it, for the rest promised is not that of indolence, but of relief from a crushing pressure

which enables the man to work with comfort and effect. Christ provides the means and method of doing this. *Take my yoke upon you*, an accepted metaphor for discipleship (Eccles. li. 26) *and learn of me* the knowledge of the Father (cp. John xiv. 7-11). This is in substance identical with seeking the righteousness of God (vi. 33); it results in that which the works of the law could not attain (cp. Rom. viii. 3, 4). *Ye shall find rest unto your souls*: that which is given to start with is also found in pursuing the path of discipleship. All the gifts of God in Christ partake of the nature of eternal life, which is bestowed in the new birth, yet is progressively attained as its powers are exercised and unfolded. So with salvation; now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 2); but also salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. i. 5); meanwhile, we have to work out our own salvation (Phil. ii. 12) or, as it is put here, take on us the yoke of Christ. He gives the reason why He claims this allegiance, and why its acceptance brings rest progressively. *I am meek and lowly in heart*: the same qualification for rule which He demands of His disciples (v. 5) and with the same result. He is absolute Master in virtue of His unlimited service (Luke xxii. 27). St. Paul has worked out this thought in Phil. ii. 5-11: 'he humbled himself . . . wherefore also God highly exalted him.' The greatest rivers run in the lowest places. In the last resort not self-assertion and pride, but meekness and humility are the world-conquering forces. In the service of such an One

we find rest because His *yoke is easy*: a properly fitting yoke, instead of galling, helps the ox to do his work; so the service of Christ is suited to the true capacities of man, and develops them harmoniously. Further, His *burden is light*: His demands cover only the things that are really essential, leaving free room for the play of human individuality in every age and every region of activity, so that the apostle Paul can confidently affirm: 'All things are yours,' coupling it with what Jesus here demands, 'Ye are Christ's' (see 1 Cor. iii. 21-3). His commandments are not grievous (1 John v. 3). That which sums them all up, the commandment of love (1 John ii. 7, 8) is the most inspiring.

CHAPTER XII

xii. 1-8. PLUCKING EARS OF CORN ON THE SABBATH

(MARK ii. 23-8; LUKE vi. 1-5)

At that season Jesus went on the sabbath day through the cornfields; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck ears of corn, and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? But I say unto you, that one greater than the temple is here. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the sabbath.

Again the arrangement is according to subject, 'at that season', in v. 1, being a general indication only that the event here recorded took place at this stage in the development of things. Jesus now proceeds

to show the nature of His easy yoke in contrast with the heavy yoke of the Pharisees in respect of the law of the Sabbath. The untold blessings of Sabbath rest and worship for body and soul had been made a burden and a stumbling block by the dead hand of tradition, and Jesus would fulfil this commandment of the law by removing hindrances which blocked the attainment of its purpose. To His enemies this offers a welcome opportunity. They had made unsuccessful attempts to discredit Him about the forgiveness of sins (ix. 6), fasting (ix. 14*ff*) and eating with lawbreakers (ix. 11). As for His wonderful works, they could only throw out a malicious hint as to alliance with Satan (ix. 34). Now they think that they have found a chink in His armour. Here Jesus meets them on grounds of Scripture (the action of David, and the law of the priests' Sabbath ministration) and in the next incident, the man with the withered hand, on grounds of reason; in both cases extricating the aims of benefit to man's soul and body from the accidental coverings of ceremonial tradition. The physical rest enjoined by the Sabbath law is a provision for the bodily welfare of man, shown to be effectual by long and wide experience, and spiritually it is no less beneficial, in that it gives him leisure to minister to the needs of the soul. Its requirements are therefore not broken by works of necessity (such as preparation of food), or of religion (as ministrations of worship), or of mercy (as relieving the sick); for God prefers mercy to sacrifice. And while asserting these truths, Jesus

claims to be Himself greater than the temple, and Lord of the Sabbath. We cannot be surprised that the Pharisees now definitely resolve to destroy Him. There was no middle course between whole-hearted allegiance and war to the death. Jesus withdraws from the conflict, and while continuing His works of power, He commands silence as to His claims (vv. 15, 16). Thus Jesus exemplifies His world-conquering meekness and lowliness, and the evangelist sees herein an earnest not only of His victory over the opposition of that day, but of His universal rule over the nation (vv. 17-21).

1. *That season* would fall somewhere between Passover, when the first fruits of the barley harvest came in, and Pentecost, which marked the end of wheat harvest; it may have been some time in May. The disciples are following their Master through the cornfields on the Sabbath day; it is likely enough that they are on their way to a synagogue service like that mentioned in the next section, and that they had not yet had their morning meal; if so a few handfuls of grain would help them to join profitably in the service. The plucking of ears of corn by the passer-by was distinctly permitted in the law (Duet. xxiii. 25). Having got enough the disciples would sit down by the wayside to rub out and eat the grain, so that the Pharisees who were coming that way could come up with them and observe their action and comment on it.

2. *The Pharisees* who start this controversy are 'doctors of the law' who had come from various places

to watch Jesus, just as now maulawis or pandits will come from outside places to thwart the work of a successful missionary. *It is not lawful*: they would adduce the analogy of the manna which might not be gathered on the Sabbath. A later teacher wrote, 'To pluck the ears of corn is a kind reaping' and therefore forbidden labour. Similarly the rubbing out of the grains was held to be equal to threshing.

3-4. In His reply Jesus passes by the casuistry as to the different degrees of Sabbath labour, and argues from their own premises. Supposing this to be a kind of labour, what then? He confutes them, first from the prophets (1 Sam. xxi. 6) and then from the law (v. 5 cp. Num. xxviii. 9, 10) both of which He had come to fulfil. He echoes their words, *it was not lawful for David to eat the shewbread* (Lev. xxiv. 5-9), that is the twelve loaves weekly set forth on a table in the Holy Place, as a consecration to God of the food by which the twelve tribes of Israel were supported. Being a kind of sacramental offering, the old loaves were ordered to be consumed by the priests only; they must not be given, like other leavings, to menials or strangers. Yet David, being in urgent need when he pressed the priest to give him the consecrated food for himself and his men, was acknowledged to have committed no sin. Here were the followers of a greater than David, faint with hunger in His service, partaking of the common gifts of God to fit themselves for His worship. With what face could they condemn such?

5. *The priests in the temple*, too, were actually compelled by the law to offer extra sacrifices on the

Sabbath, involving all the operations of a butcher; but for such labour they were held *guiltless*. The positive claim of hallowing the Sabbath must override the negative prohibition of work in the case of the temple service; how much more here!

6. *But I say unto you*, with strong emphasis; *that one greater* (margin a greater thing) *than the temple is here*. That greater thing could only be the Messiah, who was acknowledged to be the Lord of the temple, (see Mal. iii. 1). Work done in His following and service on the Sabbath could not therefore be wrong.

7. As for the law of God, they had yet to learn the a-b-c of it (cp. on ix. 13 and see Hos. vi. 6; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. l. 8-14). The teaching of the prophets goes to show that the ritual and ceremonial of the law was intended to lead up first to love to God and communion with Him as the source of man's life, and then to loving service of man as made in His image, to be His dwelling-place (Isa. lvii. 15; cp. Exod. xxix. 45, 46). Ritual worship is acceptable to God when it embodies and aids the offering of the heart to Him (Ps. li. 19); but when it pushes aside these things God abhors it (Isa. i. 10-17). The means, as such, are good and necessary, but, if substituted for the end, they become pernicious.

8. *The Son of man is lord of the sabbath*: and, as such, entitled to determine in what way its object is to be fulfilled. This authority, like that of the forgiveness of sins (cp. ix. 6 with xviii. 18), He has exercised through His Church, by the promised guidance of the Spirit, who has declared to her the things of

Christ (John xvi. 14). In that Spirit the seer John was on the Lord's Day, when he received his vision (Rev. i. 10); under the same guidance the disciples met on the first day to break bread (Acts xx. 7) and made their weekly offering of alms (1 Cor. xvi. 2); and step by step the Lord's Day became established as the day of rest, fulfilling the objects of the Sabbath rest and worship. As such it is more spiritually dear to the Christian than was the Sabbath to the Jew. As such let us regard and preserve it.

xii. 9-14. HEALING A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH
(MARK III. 1-6; LUKE VI. 6-11)

And he departed thence, and went into their synagogue: and behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, as the other. But the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

See remarks on the previous section. Jesus goes a step further, not only sanctioning the act of His disciples, but acting Himself (cp. John vii. 22-4).

9. *He departed thence*: these words signalize the close of the previous incident. This set of Pharisees, for the time being, had no reply to offer, but on another

Sabbath (Luke vi. 6) Jesus *went into their synagogue*, probably anticipating what would happen. Evidently Jesus was a regular attendant at public worship, though its conduct was not always to His taste.

10. *A man having a withered hand*: Luke, the physician notes (vi. 6) that it was his right-hand. A man thus incapacitated for work would readily draw out the sympathy of Jesus, the carpenter. Noticing or divining this, *they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?* The traditions allowed that danger to life excused from the prohibition of work on the Sabbath; but this was no acute complaint, so they might hope to have a ground of accusation before the local court (see on v. 21).

11-12. Jesus settles the question by another which appeals to the unsophisticated instincts of humanity: *What man shall there be of you that shall have one sheep . . . ?* The Rabbis were divided on this point; some maintained that the beast might be furnished with water and fodder, but must not actually be taken out of the pit till the Sabbath was over. But Jesus well knew that in such a case either humanity or self-interest would be sure to prevail, and make the owner *lift it out*. *How much then is a man of more value than a sheep?* As before, Jesus approves of kindness to the dumb creation, but places human beings on a different level. There was no room for the idea that to feed a cow in the time of famine is better than to save the lives of fellow men. Hence He lays down a positive principle. *It is lawful to do good on the sabbath day* (op. Luke xiii. 14)

where in a similar case the ruler of the synagogue objects to sick people coming for healing on the Sabbath, and wants them to wait for another day, and Jesus makes a similar reply, showing that to delay doing good or relieving suffering without necessity is to do evil (cp. Luke vi. 9; Jas. iv. 17). The service of humanity is never unseasonable.

13. *Then saith he*, as St. Mark tells us (iii. 5) looking round on them with anger; our Lord is revolted by the spirit of callous inhumanity, veiled under the pretence of religious zeal. *Stretch forth thy hand*: here, as elsewhere, with the command comes the power. Here in the commands of Christ are differentiated from those of other teachers, even Moses.

14. The claim of Jesus to be the lord of the Sabbath has been substantiated alike by His compassion, His power in healing, and His wisdom in reply. No argument remains but that of force, as at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16-30), and the Pharisees stick at no means, for they *took counsel* with the Herodians (Mark iii. 6; cp. xxii. 16) otherwise opponents whom they loathed *how they might destroy him*.

xii. 15-21. JESUS WITHDRAWS FROM THE MACHINATIONS
OF HIS ENEMIES

And Jesus perceiving *it* withdrew from thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

Behold, my servant whom I have chosen;
My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:

I will put my Spirit upon him,
 And he shall declare judgement to the Gentiles.
 He shall not strive, nor cry aloud ;
 Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets.
 A bruised reed shall he not break,
 And smoking flax shall he not quench,
 Till he send forth judgement unto victory.
 And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.

A sign of His meekness and lowliness, but also a presage of His victory, and that world wide. He might have answered their resort to force with a yet greater display of power, but such was not His path of conquest, either at this time or later (xxvi. 53).

15. *Jesus withdrew from thence* : therein acting on the counsel which He had given to His messengers (see x. 23) if persecuted in one city, to flee to another, and the words of His discourse, 'Resist not him that is evil' (v. 39). *And many followed him* : and he continued His healing work with as much effect as ever, for He wished to strengthen the reed of His followers' faith which had been bruised by the hostility of the rulers, and to fan into a flame the smoking flax of their loyalty, which was damped by such enmity (v. 20).

16. But He also *charged them* (Mark iii. 12 'charged them much') *that they should not make him known*. How different from pretended wonder-workers in this and other countries, who try to get the widest possible advertisement for their own benefit. The object of Jesus was to benefit sufferers and to draw them on to faith in Him.

17. *Isaiah the prophet* : this is one of six quotations of Isaiah by name in this Gospel (cp. iii. 3 ; iv. 14 ; viii. 17 ; xiii. 14 ; xv. 7) ; once (i. 22) he is quoted without name. Here, and in viii. 17, the subject of the passage is the Servant of Jehovah of whom the prophet draws so moving a picture in chapters xl-lxvi, a picture whose various features are realized in Jesus. In viii. 17 the reference is to the Servant who is suffering for the sins of His people ; here it is to the meek and lowly character of that Servant in whom Jehovah delights, and upon whom He has put His Spirit (cp. iii. 16, 17) in order that He may establish Jehovah's kingdom among the nations. The quotation is freely rendered from the Hebrew text of Isa. xlii. 1-3.

18. The *servant* who is *chosen* by Jehovah for world conquest was probably in the first instance Cyrus, but, as often in the Old Testament, especially in the case of David, the prophet is inspired to draw an ideal picture of all that his subject should be, which goes far beyond the historical reality of the personage whom he is delineating, and is only fulfilled in the Son of man who unites in Himself all the perfections of the race. *My Spirit* : here, as repeatedly in Isaiah, brought into close connexion with Jehovah and His Servant (cp. Isa. xlviii. 16 ; lxi. 1). It is the Spirit by which Jesus does His works, v. 28, and whom He has promised to His disciples (x. 20). The task entrusted to this Servant is to *declare judgement to the Gentiles*, that is, the nations of the world other than Israel. By judgement is

meant, not only the law of God, but the condition of things in which that law prevails, when right has become might. In the fulfilment by Jesus it includes the accomplishment of the will of God and the coming of His kingdom (cp. Acts xvii. 31) xxviii. 19-20 shows how the Servant of Jehovah sets out to realize this prophecy, in the name of the Father who has sent Him and through the power of the Spirit who has been put upon Him.

19-20. The characteristics of this conqueror's action are described in a series of negations. In Himself, He is free from all tendency to wrangling, self-assertion and self-advertisement. Towards others He is gentle, considerate, and hopeful. The *bruised reed* is a worthless, hopeless thing, which few, if any, would take trouble to repair; it represents poor humanity, broken down by sorrow, care or sin. The *smoking flax* is the smouldering wick of a lamp which is going out for want of oil, and which few would take the trouble to saturate with oil and blow into flame again. It stands for the soul in which divine grace has become low, and the divine life all but extinct. Such found no pity from the Pharisee, witness the woman taken in adultery (John viii. 3-11). The publican-evangelist may well have thought of his own experience. Such is the attitude of the living Church towards the outcast and degraded, as in so many parts of India. She, like her Lord is optimistic, and therefore perseveres, as He does, despite cavils and set-backs, *till he send forth judgement unto victory*: for the last two words, the Hebrew has 'in truth'. The victory

of God's righteousness is the victory of the truth (cp. John xviii. 37). *Magna est veritas, et prævalebit.* The 'judgement' which Jesus and His Church declare is being irresistibly thrust forth unto victory. The words *send forth*, as in ix. 38, imply energetic action overcoming obstacles.

21. The result of that victory will be the acceptance of *his name* as the *hope* of the nations. The name stands for the revelation of Christ, as proclaimed to the nations (cp. Rom. x. 13, 14). In the Hebrew the verse begins with the beautiful words, 'He shall not burn dimly' (like the flax) 'nor be bruised' (like the reed) and goes on, 'till he have set judgement in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.' The differences in translation are partly as in the Septuagint, partly, they seem to be owing to the evangelist himself. Inspired men did not hesitate to quote the Scriptures freely, in order to bring out their bearing on the subject in hand.

xii. 22-37. BLASPHEMY OF THE PHARISEES, FOLLOWING
ON THE HEALING OF A BLIND AND DUMB DEMONIAIC
(MARK iii. 23-30; LUKE xi. 14-23; xii. 10)

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Is this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And knowing their thoughts he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every

city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can one enter into the house of the strong *man*, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong *man*? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come. Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

This section again is probably placed in its present connexion topically, rather than strictly chronologically, in order to show the development of the attack on Jesus by His foes. His retirement has withdrawn Him from the range of their malice, but it has not diminished the popularity which His wonderful works

continue to increase. The Pharisees therefore renew more emphatically and persistently their charge of a league between Jesus and Satan. Jesus first shows the absurdity of the accusation, which amounts to saying that Satan had set about to overthrow his own own dominion; for clearly it was to his defeat that the works of Jesus tended. Next He impresses upon them in the most solemn and incisive terms the malicious wickedness of their accusation. Could it be doubted that such works were done through the Spirit of God? If so, then they were within measurable distance, not only of unjustly reviling the Agent of God, but of blaspheming God Himself in His Spirit; and for that sin they knew that there was no forgiveness (Lev. xxiv. 16); nor could they plead the excuse that an idle word had escaped them; words, like deeds, are the fruits of the tree of character, and by them also must a man be judged.

22. *Then*: among the many mentioned in v. 15. This miracle is mentioned by way of introduction, not on account of its unique character. Demoniacal possession was among the most common afflictions mentioned in the Gospels, and its healing was one of our Saviour's most frequent works. It was the kind also to which the Pharisees could most plausibly attach the stigma of satanic alliance. We have already seen a similar case in ix. 32-4 (except that here possession has affected sight, as well as speech) followed by a similar ebullition of spleen on the part of the Pharisees, only that in this case the people are more impressed by the accumulation of mighty

works, and the Pharisees more determinedly venomous.

23. *All the multitudes were amazed*: not at this individual miracle, but at the cumulative evidence of the Divine mission of Jesus, which now brought them to something very near belief in Jesus as *the Son of David* (xxi. 9; xxii. 42, etc.) i. e. the promised Messiah. To us the fulfilment of this promise in Jesus is a commonplace, but to the people of His time it was an amazing possibility. Still they had not got beyond a question. *Is this?* Can He possibly be? From His meekness and unobtrusiveness we should not have expected it; but such power over demons! (Cp. John vii. 26, 31, 41). Such a question, however, meant more than the wheedling address of the blind men (ix. 27).

24. Being unable to deny the fact (cp. Acts iv. 16) the Pharisees are driven to repeat their former slander. *Beelzebub* (see on x. 25). They thus finally commit themselves to uncompromising hostility to the acknowledgement of Jesus to be Messiah. Their diligently circulated slander might have been as successful as their later efforts to persuade the multitude to ask for Barabbas instead of Jesus (xxvii. 20) and they would probably have desired nothing better than the effect which followed similar suggestions in the case of St. Paul at Lystra (Acts xiv. 19); but His time was not yet come, and Jesus energetically and severely repels them.

25-6. Jesus first lays down an acknowledged principle; internal faction, whether on a small or a large scale, in kingdom, city, or household, results in decay and destruction. Then He applies this rule to the

special case of the kingdom of Satan, which He here assumes as a reality, as elsewhere He implies it (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11; cp. 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12). They had insinuated that Satan was disguising himself as an angel of light; but casting out demons is in effect casting out Satan, whose servants they are. Were this work done by his help his kingdom would be tottering to its fall, whereas the action of the Pharisees unfortunately made it only too evident that his power was far from extinct.

27. After the argument on general principles, Jesus uses another *ad hominem*, taken from the practice of their class. The exorcism of demons was an accepted art among the Jews of that time, with its rules and apparatus. The exorcisers used certain herbs and magic formulas, as mantras, or Qur'án verses, are used in India now. They had a special belief in Solomon as the master magician. The results were not equal to the pretensions made, but our Lord by no means denies their reality, nor could the Pharisees afford to let such exorcisms be belittled without loss of income and reputation. *Your sons*: that is either disciples or people of your class (compare the seven sons of Sceva in Acts xix. 13, 14).

28. Casting aside the flimsy and malicious accusation of the Pharisees, there only remains one alternative, *if I by the Spirit of God* (whom He promised to put upon His servant Messiah, v. 18) *cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you* as a conquering power; the preaching of John (iii. 2, 11) and of Jesus (iv. 17) is verified. And if that kingdom with

its duties be not accepted, it will be taken away from you (cp. **xxi.** 43).

29. Luke xi. 21, 22 gives this parable rather more fully. It is possible that the metaphor of the lord of a castle is suggested by one meaning of the Aramaic words *Ba'l Zabul*, namely 'lord of the house'. The meaning of the parable is plain: the *strong man* is Satan; his house is the demoniac; his goods are the faculties of the man which he is turning to his own ends; the binding of the strong man is the mastery of the demon by Jesus; the spoiling, that is, plundering of the house is the forcible taking possession of the man and his faculties, which Satan will not willingly resign (**Mark i.** 21-6) on behalf of God. This conquest of demons presupposes that first battle of the campaign in which Jesus, on His own behalf, worsted the tempter, and each expulsion of a demon was the earnest of Satan's entire subjection (cp. **viii.** 29; **xxv.** 41; **Rev.** **xx.** 10).

30. The messianic claim made in **v.** 28 is enlarged to that of arbiter of the moral universe. It is asserted in two similes which cover the negative and positive sides of the moral life. The first is that of a warfare in which none can be neutral: *he that is not with me is against me*. The second is the simile of a harvest field, in which the wilful loiterer stands on a level with the mischievous destroyer; *he that gathereth not with me scattereth*. In both cases the stress is on the words *with me* (cp. **vii.** 23 'depart from me'); union with Him or separation from Him is the one thing that really matters. Luke ix. 50 records the complementary truth: 'He that is not against you is for you.'

That applies to the judgement of others ; this to the judgement of ourselves ; that was said to the disciples, this to His enemies, though to them also the principle applied ; if you see others do a good work, recognize them therein as being on God's side. Bacon calls these two sayings 'the cross clauses of the league of Christians'

31-2. Jesus has accepted the challenge and entered on the conflict ; for all His meekness and lowliness, His winnowing shovel is in His hand and He is separating the corn from the chaff on His threshing-floor. Therefore, to change the metaphor, He probes the wound to the very bottom ; he shows inexorably the nature of the gangrene which was festering in the hearts of his enemies, and its inevitable fatal consequences. *Therefore* : because of the disposition which you are manifesting. You have been flinging out the most effective slander that occurred to you to undermine my work and influence ; but it is a slander against God and His Spirit, by whom He reveals Himself, and gives life to men. Yet Jesus begins His warning with a promise. *Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men* : though blasphemy was punishable by the law with death (Lev. xxiv. 16) even though one *speak a word against the Son of man*, who is the Dispenser of forgiveness (ix. 6) ; for in such sin there is an element of ignorance which permits of conviction and repentance leading to forgiveness (cp. Luke xxii. 34) as illustrated in the case of Saul of Tarsus who strove to make the disciples blaspheme the name of Jesus (Acts xxvi. 11) and himself did so, but did it

in ignorance, and therefore found forgiveness (1 Tim. i. 13). But when the Spirit of God brings the truth of sin, righteousness and judgement (John xvi. 8-11) home to the conscience, and to escape from this conviction, the man treats good as evil, he takes the position of Satan, 'Evil, be thou my good', and sets his feet on the path of an eternal sin (Mark iii. 29, 30). Other sins may lead to repentance, but this is the essential negation of repentance. It is *the blasphemy against the Spirit*, who alone can lead to repentance and regeneration; therefore in the nature of things, *it shall not be forgiven*. Like the unforgiving spirit (vi. 14, 15) it blocks the avenues of the soul by which God's forgiveness alone can come; it is repulsion of God. *Neither in this world, nor in that which is to come*. The phrase *speak against the Holy Spirit* refers to the word as an index of the state of the heart (vv. 34, 35); the sin here denounced is not a single irretrievable act, which a man might commit in an instant of temptation or perversity, and then be weighted with, as a millstone, for ever. But where there is this condition of heart, there is no prospect of greater light in another world, bringing forgiveness. Where this condition is not obdurate, there may be possibilities of betterment in another world, but of what they are (cp. 1 Pet. iii. 19) we know little. The word here rendered 'world' means a period of world-time and is better rendered 'age'. The age to come is that which follows after the end of the present (xiii. 39, 40). The latter does not necessarily close the development of the personality.

33. An appeal to common sense ; do not pretend that good works can come from a bad source ; the converse of vii. 17. *Make the tree good* : that is declare it to be, or stamp it as good (cp. John viii. 53). Either acknowledge God's Spirit to be working in me, or brand my benefits as crimes. Such loss of moral discrimination would indeed be damnation in this life.

34. The law of the tree and the fruit applies to words equally with deeds, for the one is as much a fruit of the heart as the other, and carries an equal responsibility, of which you cannot rid yourself. *Ye offspring of vipers* (cp. iii. 7). Jesus can be as severe as John when He finds enmity to good masked under zeal for truth. Small wonder that you should so speak when your heart (v. 25) is full of evil.

35. *Treasure* : better *storehouse*. The heart of man is a magazine in which good or evil ideals, desires, impulses, and thoughts are continually being accumulated. The great majority of these are indeed neither good nor bad in themselves, but according to the disposition with which they are used ; they receive their moral impress from the character of the man, bad or good.

36. Accordingly there is no escape from responsibility for the use of the tongue. Words are a kind of deeds, and it avails nothing to say, 'I did not mean it.' The mere *idle word* may be a source of untold injury (Prov. xxvi. 18, 19), no less than the malicious one.

37. *By thy words* : not of course to the exclusion of other elements of life and character, such as faith

(Rom. iii. 28); works (Jas. ii. 24; Matt. xxv. 40). But words are in a very special manner a spontaneous manifestation of the inner man, like a straw on the stream. *Justified . . . condemned*: at the supreme tribunal, which can measure each movement of the inner being with unfailing accuracy.

xii. 38-45. REPLY TO THE DEMAND FOR A SIGN

(LUKE XI. 24-6 AND 29-32)

Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation.

The opponents demand a sign of the great claims which Jesus had advanced, more unambiguous than the cures of demoniacs which they also practised; some of them possibly, not unwilling to be forced over the line into acceptance of Him, but the mass of them in a cavilling spirit. Their ostensible attitude is better than that of malicious misrepresentation; but Jesus sadly answers that the generation (of Israel then living) as a whole is in heart apostate from God, and therefore they shall have no other sign than those recorded in the prophets, whom He cites, and whom they ought to believe (cp. Luke xvi. 31). They have indeed been delivered from one evil spirit (that of idolatry) but unless they give access to Jesus seven worse will come into them, and then their condition will be worse than that of the idolatrous Ninevites and Sabaeans.

38. *We would see a sign from thee*: as much as to say, The works that we have seen so far are under suspicion as to their origin; let us have one which shall prove that they were from heaven (Mark viii. 11) and not from below. In xvi. 4, where the demand is repeated, we read of a sign from heaven; probably denoting some such portent in the sky as all the world might see (cp. Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30). Such a demand was characteristic of the Jew (see John ii. 18; vi. 30; 1 Cor i. 22). The impudence of this special demand, following on what had gone before, explains the severity of our Saviour's reply.

39-40. *Adulterous*: used in the prophetic sense, as equivalent to idolatrous. The covenant between Jehovah

and His people is regarded as a marriage union to which the people are unfaithful when they serve other gods (Jer. xxxi. and xxxii; cp. Jas. iv. 4). As in the case of the apostate Israelites, so these perverse descendants of theirs, instead of trusting the love and power already abundantly manifested, must have an arbitrary request granted. Therefore they should have no sign but that of *Jonah the prophet* (cp. xvi. 4). Here Jesus repeats the prediction of His resurrection, given under the figure of the temple in John ii. 19, 21. That sign would convince those who were capable of conviction. *Three days and three nights*: this may mean in a general way a long time, or it may be a translation of the Aramaic word '*onah*, meaning the space of twenty-four hours, a day and a night, in which case the whole day and parts of two days which our Lord spent in the grave would count as three '*onahs*. If we accept the first interpretation, we shall find that, as often happened, the first prediction is given in more general terms, and the next more precisely (see xvi. 21). *Heart of the earth*: a figurative Old Testament expression for the abode of the dead, in Greek Hades (xi. 23) in Hebrew Sheol (see Jonah ii. 2, 3; Eph. iv. 9). There were those who would harden their hearts even against this sign (Luke xvi. 31; Matt. xxviii. 11-15).

41-2. To shame His hearers, if possible, into repentance Jesus cites two examples of the effect of divine truth from the Old Testament. The example of Nineveh emphasizes the impenitent attitude of the opponents, that of the Queen of Sheba, their neglect

of the treasures of the divine wisdom now offered to them. *Nineveh* on the Tigris, the capital of Assyria, and one of the most persistent enemies of Israel; its people were worshippers of the powers of nature. *They repented at the preaching of Jonah* (cp. *Jonah* iii. 6ff.) at his mere word without a sign. *The queen of the south*, i.e. of Sheba (1 Kings x. 1-13) in Southern Arabia, over 1,000 miles from Jerusalem (*the ends of the earth*). The Sabaeans were sun-worshippers. She prized the wisdom of Solomon, the purest form of divine wisdom then available, so much as to undertake a long and toilsome journey; now those to whose door a better thing is brought will not have it. Yet the Speaker is greater than the prophet, the king or the temple with its priesthood (v. 6).

43-5. Our Lord concludes with another solemn and incisive warning, in the form of a parable, based on the incident of demon-exorcism, with a reference, perhaps, to the imperfect exorcisms of the Jewish teachers, which did not prevent a relapse into the old condition, or rather into something worse. He uses the imagery of popular belief, such as the frequenting of waterless places by demons (cp. *Tobit* viii. 3). The house, as before, is the man's inner being, which has undergone a salutary reformation, but has not accepted the indwelling of God's Spirit. The result is an immensely worse possession than before, seven demons (cp. *Luke* viii. 2; *Mark* xvi. 9) instead of one. But the parable is applied not so much to an individual, as to *this evil generation*. It represents the downward course of the nation of

Israel. Through divine judgements, especially the captivity, it had been freed from the demon of idolatry. Its moral state was improved (it was *swept*); its religious observances perfected (*garnished*); but it was *empty* of that which God chiefly desired, the sacrifice of a humble and contrite heart; and there returned into it the demon of mammon-worship (cp. Eph. v. 5) of divorce (Mal. ii. 14-16); and, worse still, the demons of self-righteousness and hypocrisy. Again there had been the promise of a casting out of these demons when the nation generally accepted John and his baptism (iii. 5, 6; xxi. 26) and many of them approved the teaching of Jesus (vii. 28, 29; xi. 33; xii. 23). But this too was superficial; the true Master had not really entered the house, and there remained the last state, manifested in all its horror at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the hardness of heart which has ever since prevented the Jew from recognizing Jesus as his Messiah, and so fulfilling his true destiny.

xii. 46-50. TRUE RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST

(MARK iii. 31-5; LUKE viii. 19-21)

While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren For whosoever shall do the will

of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.

From a comparison of Mark iii. 31-5 with Luke viii. 19-21 it seems likely that the desire of the mother and brothers of Jesus to speak to Him at this time was connected with the idea that our Lord needed to be saved from the results of His own excess of zeal, for at this time not merely was He neglecting His necessary food, but exposing the interests and safety of Himself, and perhaps of His followers and family, to the hostility of the leaders of the people. If so, it bears some resemblance to the remonstrance of Peter in xvi. 22. In both cases Jesus acts as He had bid His disciples do (x. 37, 39) and sets aside, here the claims of earthly relationship (cp. John ii. 4), and there the preservation of life itself, for the sake of the work which the Father had given Him to do (cp. John xvii. 4). And in addition to this He here greatly encourages His disciples, who might well be dismayed at the attitude of the rulers, with the assurance of His affectionate approval. Henceforth there is only one standard of true relationship to Jesus, and that is the observance of the Father's will which is His life (John iv. 34). If the catechumen among us is called upon to sacrifice much for the sake of faithfulness to Christ, how much is offered him in exchange! I know of no passage which is more strengthening than this to the Indian seeker when called upon to make the great decision.

46. *Brethren*: mentioned in detail xiii. 55-6 (which see). *Stood without*: he being apparently in a house

or courtyard teaching the people, of whom it was full to the doors.

49. *He stretched forth his hand* : one of the characteristic gestures of Jesus, as to the leper (viii. 3), and to Peter on the stormy lake (xiv. 31); a sign in each case of feeling, whether compassion, concern, or affection.

50. *Whosoever shall do the will of God* : that being the source of all life whether physical or moral, and therefore the basis of all natural and spiritual relationships (cp. vii. 21 and 24-7); hence agreement with that 'will' determines them all; it is the one bond which embraces and overrides all family ties; *brother and sister and mother* : the sister is here added, for Jesus had sisters (xiii. 56) to include the whole circle of the nearest relations. The non-mention of a father makes it probable that Joseph was dead, so that Jesus had to provide for the support of His mother (see John xix. 26, 27). It must have been something of a trial for the blessed mother of Jesus to receive this reply, yet it was necessary. The members of His spiritual family would eventually know Him no more after the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16). Compared with the bride (see on ix. 15) even the mother must stand back. Yet what filial love could be truer than that which forgot the agony of the cross in the tender care for the sorrowing mother? To Him who loved His Mother so deeply it must have been a pain thus to put her away from His life, but 'for the joy that was set before Him' He did it. He is the perfect example for those who have to renounce earthly relationships for His sake.

CHAPTER XIII

xiii. 1-52. THE SEVEN PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM

ALL three Synoptics (cp. Mark iv. 10, 11; Luke viii. 9) agree in the importance of this new departure in our Lord's method of teaching, inaugurated by the parable of the sower, but Matthew, according to his manner, gives us a collection of nearly related discourses in parabolic form, plainly arranged with the purpose of setting forth our Lord's teaching as to the growth and spread of His kingdom, as the Sermon on the Mount had laid down its governing principles.

The occasion for this new departure. Jesus had begun His teaching with the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven. He had manifested Himself as the King, or Messiah, by His teaching of a new law, and by His mighty works. To some extent He had been acknowledged, but He had met with increasing opposition, owing (in addition to the selfish jealousy of the rulers) to His insistence on the inward nature of the kingdom, His association with outcasts, and the freedom of His teaching on Sabbath observance. At the two festivals, referred to in John ii. 13-25 and v. 1-47, Jesus had spoken in Jerusalem also of His relation to the temple and the Sabbath; and between these we have the

record of His teaching to Nicodemus on the new birth, and to the woman of Sychar on the spirituality of worship. Now the opposition of the rulers has taken the definite shape of plots against the life of Jesus, and even the less decided are beginning to ask for a sign of His Messiahship different from those which He had hitherto given. It was necessary to answer the question, which must have been framing itself in the minds of His disciples: What is to come of the proclamation of the kingdom? Little fruit has resulted yet, and much opposition. How is it to triumph over opposing forces, and to spread in the world? To have given the answer to these questions in plain words would have been beyond the comprehension of the disciples at their present stage of development, and it would have provoked the vehement hostility of the rulers much more rapidly and irrevocably than was actually the case, besides giving them the opportunity of accusing Jesus to the Roman authorities, by misinterpreting His claim, so evidently indicated in these parables, to be the Founder of a universal dominion. Our Saviour, therefore, for the revelation of these 'mysteries' turns to a new method of teaching, or rather makes a new use of what He had before employed more occasionally and with less system (cp. vii. 24-7; xii. 43-5). He henceforth uses the form of parable as a prominent and characteristic feature of His teaching, more especially to set forth 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven', and St. Matthew gives us later a fresh cycle of these parables in chapters xxiv and xxv.

The nature of the parable. Parable is originally a Greek word which has the same meaning as the Hebrew *máshál*, or Urdu (Arabic) *misál*, namely, a comparison. It presents a spiritual doctrine or experience or event under the form of a happening in the natural world. Hence it has been not unaptly called 'an earthly story with a heavenly meaning'. It differs from the fable (cp. Judges ix. 8-15) in which impossible things are related, and from the allegory in which spiritual realities simply receive names taken from the natural world, as in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Jesus also used allegories, e.g. the Door of the sheepfold, the Good Shepherd, the Vine (John x. 7-18 and xv. 1-6). The allegory and its interpretation correspond piece by piece, whereas the parable and its interpretation correspond as whole to whole. In some cases the parable and allegory are mingled, as in xxv. 31-46.

Interpretation of the parable. For the reason just given it is necessary to find the central point of comparison in the parable. To do this, we must first realize the contents of the story itself, without importing into it anything from the interpretation. The amount of meaning to be attached to details will depend on their connexion, along the line of the story, with its central feature. Thus, in the parable of the sower, we have the central feature of the varied growth of the same seed in different kinds of ground, the corresponding spiritual verity being that the word of the kingdom produces different results in different classes of hearts. Besides the elucidation of this principle given by the Master Himself, we may rightly elicit

the further truth that the word resembles a seed in its inherent vitality, which needs special conditions to call it forth, and that the ministry of the word, like the work of the sower, is generally a necessary condition of its fruitfulness. On the other hand, the fact that the soil has no power over its own condition is out of the range of comparison, and a doctrine as to the responsibility of the individual cannot be deduced from the parable itself, though, by going beyond it, one may fitly draw a moral as to the responsibility of the hearer; for our Saviour does so in the words, 'he that hath ears to hear, let him hear'. A mass of wrong and trivial interpretation of the parables would have been avoided, if the expositor had always kept in mind the distinction between the doctrinal teaching which the parable was intended to convey and the practical application which may be usefully made of it. The need for this distinction is made clear by a consideration of the similes employed in several of the parables, e.g. the comparison of God to an unjust judge, of our Lord to a thief, of His follower to a dishonest steward. The point of comparison in each case is not the moral character of the supposed person, but other qualities or actions: the divine attention to importunate prayer; the suddenness of our Lord's advent, depriving the unready of their fancied possessions; the wisdom required for dealing with worldly possessions so as to make them a help to eternal life. In general we may say that, while the parables were not without an eventual practical aim, yet their immediate object was to convey teaching

rather than exhortation, and this applies especially to the series in this chapter.

The seven parables of Matt. xiii. This series deals with various aspects of the kingdom of heaven, the true nature of which Jesus was striving to impress upon the people. The secret of its apparently slow and ineffective development was that it is, in its essential nature, inward and dynamic, growing from the centre to the circumference, and only gradually manifested in outward power, after its moral forces have taken effect. This was the 'mystery' not realized by rulers and people, and, if it had been realized, it was not acceptable to them, for even by the disciples of Jesus how slowly it was assimilated! Therefore Jesus presents it in parables. They are a penalty for the careless and carnal, because in a measure they conceal the truth, yet they also prevent such persons from 'wresting it to their own destruction' (2 Pet. iii. 16) and thus sinning against the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, these stories were a help to the weak, though receptive, disciples.

Where truth in closest words shall fail,
There truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at open doors.

Those who heard but superficially might thereafter be arrested by a flash of light on the meaning of the familiar words. The parable was like the pillar of cloud and fire which went with Israel, 'there was the cloud and the darkness, yet gave it light by night' (Exod. xiv. 20). It was a hard shell which preserved

the kernel for the diligent, but guarded it from the slothful (cp. Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10).

St. Matthew's arrangement of these parables may be exhibited in the following scheme. It is not the only possible one, but it exhibits a real thread of thought.

1. The seed and the soil.

Why is the message more or less ineffective?

Because of the different kinds of soil (dispositions of heart).

2. The wheat and the tares.

Why are the wicked with the good in the kingdom, and so difficult to distinguish from them?

Because of the different kinds of seed (the contrary principles of good and evil).

After each of these basal parables come the words *He that hath ears let him hear.*

3. Mustard seed growing.

4. Leaven working. The working out of the life of the kingdom.

5. Treasure found.

6. Pearl bought. Choosing and gaining the true value of life.

7. The drag-net.

Practical application. Make disciples of the nations; their judgement is to come (see xxviii. 19; xxv. 31-46).

These parables thus make a complete cycle, from the preaching of the word then actually going on to the judgement of all who have everywhere heard it. But, as with the visions of the book of Revelation, the series is not intended to represent a chain of

historical succession, but so many aspects of the whole process.

xiii. 1, 2. JESUS MAKES A BOAT HIS PULPIT

On that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And there were gathered unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach.

1-2. *Out of the house*: (cp. Mark iii. 19) where His relatives had sought Him (xii. 46). The physical heat and pressure, and the moral atmosphere, laden with controversy and suspicion, made change and refreshment welcome, and He *sat by the sea* (i. e. lake) *side*. But it can hardly have been long before *great multitudes* again gathered round Him, and He is ever ready for those who need Him (cp. xiv. 13, 14) varied as their motives may be; some drawn by the report of His works, some by the notion that He may be the Messiah, some by love for controversy, hoping to hear Him attack the rulers, some desiring to find the way of life. They crowd round Him so that hearing is difficult except for a few, and therefore *He entered into a boat*, as He had done before (Luke v. 3), perhaps often, from which, if taken a little way out, His voice could carry easily over the water to a large number on the shore. The people *stood*, instead of sitting. The *beach* may have been stony or damp.

xiii. 3-9. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed,

some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up, and choked them: and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He that hath ears, let him hear.

It will be best to take this together with its interpretation (*vv.* 18-23).

3. *Many things*: as with the other elements of the Gospels, so with the parables; those actually recorded are doubtless but a few of many. Gladly would we have more, but it is hardly likely that the mounds of Egypt will reveal them. *Behold, the sower*: Jesus, looking up landwards, might well be seeing a sower at his work. The Indian village teacher and preacher finds this the most vivid of parables.

4. *Way side*: this may mean the road side, but a good sower would hardly let his seed go so much astray; more probably the reference is to the beaten path (*pagdandi*) made across the fields, and ploughed up for sowing, but trodden down again before it actually takes place.

5-6. *Rocky places*, common in Palestine as in the Indian mountains the sides of which are terraced for cultivation. On such spots the heat is greater than in the deeper, damper soil and causes more rapid growth, but the plant is dry and stunted, and

withers away before its time, without really forming grain. *No root*: none to speak of; what there was could not send out its shoots into the rock.

7. *The thorns*: low stunted thorn-bushes which grow on the waste land between the ploughed fields. A bit of this soil has been ploughed up with the field, but in it the hardy thorns have the start of the wheat, absorb the nourishment of the earth, and keep off light and heat from the young shoot, so that it never comes to maturity (cp. vi. 24).

8. *Good ground*: moist, deep, weedless soil. A *hundredfold* (cp. Gen. xxvi. 12). Even in good ground the same seed may vary in fruitfulness; for there are degrees of excellence in the true hearted.

9. *Ears to hear*: unlike the impenitent Jews who had ears but heard not (v. 13). Even the disciples required to be warned against such a condition (cp. Mark viii. 18). This parable was specially fundamental (see Mark iv. 13).

xiii. 18-23. THE INTERPRETATION

Hear then ye the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, *then* cometh the evil *one*, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way side. And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth. And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that

heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

18. *Hear then ye*: the *ye* is emphatic; whereas the prophets could not, and the scribes would not.

19. *The word of the kingdom*: the message of Jesus (iv. 17), as we say, the gospel. As we well know in missionary experience, it is in the majority of cases heard with more or less intelligence, but not understood in its quality as a living seed. It is not taken in, but lies on the surface of the heart, like a seed which has not penetrated into the soil, and has no effect on it. The bearing of the message on the affections and will, as well as on the mind, is not grasped. *The evil one snatcheth away*, through the instrumentality of light, foolish or evil thoughts, which swallow up the word, as the birds who follow the track of the sower peck up the loose grains. How often frivolous or critical remarks after the sermon will destroy its effect! Both after Christian services, and after preaching to non-Christians, we do far too little to help the seed to sink into the heart, instead of allowing or even helping it to be snatched away. *He that was* (whose case corresponds to that of the seed) *sown by the way side*: his is a heart hardened by contact with the world and the routine of life.

20-1. The same condition of heart which produces rapid growth may also produce speedy decay, the

reason being that he, whose heart corresponds to the rocky ground, *hath he not root in himself*. The divine life of the seed-word has entered into his being in a measure, and become to some extent identified with him, but the impressions made have not struck deep enough into the will and character, as the plant roots could not develop in the shallow soil on the bed rock. *Tribulation*: troubles in general, such as an epidemic of plague after a group of people have been baptized. *Persecution because of the word*: as a direct result of conversion. In both cases, shallow characters give way and are sifted out. Missionary preaching, revivals, pastoral work, continually illustrate this story.

22. *Heareth the word*: understanding and appreciation are not excluded in the case of this class, as in v. 19. But *care and riches choke the word*. The two sides of worldliness, fretful anxiety and self-pleasing ease, as in vi. 19 and 25 are equally inimical to spiritual growth (cp. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17). *The deceitfulness of riches* consists in the false promise of satisfaction which they hold out. The word of the kingdom which demands the first place is deprived of its life-producing power, and the weeds that are native to the soil have gained the day.

23. *He that was sown* (see on v. 19). There are three stages in the fruitful reception of the word: *heareth . . . understandeth . . . beareth fruit*; in other words, acquaintance with the message, decision to follow it, and perseverance in well-doing (Gal. vi. 9). The proportions of fruitfulness will be according to the capabilities of the soil; the efficiency of the

Christian life depends, earnestness being equal, on the gifts or talents bestowed, and will be judged accordingly (xxv. 14-31). The four classes of hearers remain—the negligent, the superficial, the double-minded, the whole-hearted.

xiii. 10-17. CHRIST'S REASON FOR SPEAKING IN PARABLES

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? And he answered and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith,

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;

And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:

For this people's heart is waxed gross,

And their ears are dull of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed;

Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,

And hear with their ears,

And understand with their heart,

And should turn again,

And I should heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.

For obvious reasons we now go back to the reasons given by our Saviour for speaking in parables, when they would have liked him to speak to them 'plainly' (John xvi. 29).

10. *The disciples*: that is, the twelve and others who were with them (Mark iv. 10) *came* when He was alone, probably after He had finished speaking to the multitudes. They may have heard expressions of perplexity or dissatisfaction among the people, and they themselves would be expecting a clearer and more trenchant exposition of the destinies of the kingdom. Was it consistent with His compassion for the multitudes to put before them riddles instead of plain truths? So they ask Him the reason for this new way of teaching. The incident is introduced here, because it leads up to the exposition of the first and most fundamental of the parables.

11. Jesus used this veiled form of teaching with no intention of hiding the truth from those who were ready to receive it. *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.* The word *mystery* is used in the Gospels only here and in the parallels. In the contemporary world it signified a doctrine, rite, or symbol which was revealed only to those who were willing to submit to a certain discipline and initiation. St. Paul uses it frequently (cp. Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 26) to signify a truth hidden during preparatory times but revealed in Christ. He Himself is the primal mystery which only the Father can reveal (xi. 25-7; xvi. 17) and His kingdom is in essence a hidden and inward one 'which none of the rulers of this

world knoweth', because they 'cannot hear his word' (cp. John viii. 43). If His disciples, on the other hand, are to advance, they must become conscious how much more is hidden than they know, and strive diligently to learn it.

12. The Jew had a deposit of truth entrusted to him, but it was by way of test (cp. Rom. ii. 17-20) to see what use he would make of it. He had forgotten that to keep it he must increase it, and had come to regard the possession of what his forefathers had once received as sufficient for him; and from such, our Lord teaches, the effective possession of what they have will be taken away. *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given*: in affairs of this life the maxim is true, that wealth attracts wealth, provided always that there is the capacity of acquiring it by prudent use on the part of the possessor. In the spiritual world the capacity of acquisition consists in childlike receptivity (xviii. 4; 1 Pet. v. 5) and the habit of putting into practice the knowledge acquired (v. 19; John vii. 17).

13. The varying fate of the seed in the different kinds of ground indicates that the coming of the word of the kingdom into the heart reveals what is really in it. So it has been with these hearers; they have refused to use the perceptions which they possess—*seeing they see not*—therefore they are punished by this veiled mode of teaching *in parables*, which will produce further loss of perception (see Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10); 'that seeing they may see, and not perceive'. The most terrible punishment of sin

is to be left to sin (Hos. iv. 17), the worst result of voluntary spiritual blindness is that it becomes involuntary (cp. John xii. 37-40).

14-15. *The prophecy of Isaiah* (vi. 9, 10) is quoted thrice in the New Testament: (1) here, when Jesus begins to teach in parables after the blasphemy of the Pharisees; (2) John xii. 40, when these same Pharisees refused to believe after the greatest sign of Jesus, when He raised Lazarus from the dead; and (3) Acts xxviii. 26, 27, when the Jews of Rome refused to accept the message which St. Paul brought them. When Isaiah received his mission after the vision of Jehovah, he was warned that the people in general would harden themselves against his words, but that a remnant would be saved through whom Jehovah's purposes of grace would be accomplished. The same thing was happening in the case of Jesus and His proclamation; the apostles and their companions were the remnant, or 'holy seed' (cp. Luke xii. 32; Isa. vi. 13).

16-17. Therefore Jesus rejoices for and with them. St. Luke (x. 23-4) gives the words in a somewhat different connexion, after the return of the seventy disciples from their preaching journey. Such words may well have been spoken more than once. *Blessed are your eyes*: this is one of the beatitudes outside the Sermon on the Mount. The others are these:—

Matt. xi. 6. He, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me.

xvi. 17. Simon, to whom God has revealed His Son, the Messiah.

- Matt. xxiv. 46. The servant whom his lord finds watching.
- Luke i. 45. She that believed (Mary).
- „ xi. 28. They that hear the word of God and keep it.
- „ xiv. 14. The entertainer of the poor and afflicted.
- John xiii. 17. Ye, if ye do these things (that ye know).
- „ xx. 29. They that have not seen and yet have believed.

But the disciples not only have the gift of spiritual sight and hearing; they also have presented to them the most desirable of sights and sounds. The *prophets and righteous men* (x. 41) of old were men of desires; they saw the promises and greeted them from afar (Heb. xi. 13; John viii. 56; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11); now the promised one is here. With what force do these words come home to the Indian Christian, when he thinks of the saints and sages of this land who saw flashes of the light of the world, but for us some better thing was reserved. What manner of men ought we to be!

xiii. 24-30. THE TARES AND THE WHEAT

Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants of the householder came

and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Jesus had come, not only to sow the seed of the kingdom in individual hearts, but to plant a society of men in the world. Both the nature of that society and its composition were as yet imperfectly grasped by His disciples, and indeed, it has taken His Church millenniums to learn the lesson which He here teaches. John the Baptist had regarded the nation of Israel as representing the people of Messiah, and Jesus as the winnowing fan who would sift out the true children of Abraham from the false (iii. 9, 12). We saw in xi. 2, 3 how he was disappointed when this did not happen at once, and that in this respect he was less than the least in the kingdom of heaven. The disciples had been taught that the kingdom of God was to work out the judgement of the impenitent through the meekness and love of Jesus (op. xi. 20-30). They were now to learn further, how in the course of the kingdom the patient gentleness of God is exercised for working out the purpose of His salvation, no less than His justice, which will eventually vindicate His holiness. At the same time Jesus prepares them to

deal with the stumbling blocks which will come in their way as His kingdom grows.

In the parable of the sower the bad soil is already there; here the evil element is afterwards brought in. The mixture of good and evil persons in the kingdom upon earth is no part of God's plan; an enemy has intruded his own offspring. The analogy with the narrative in Genesis iii-vi. is obvious; the evil seed is sown in the Garden of Eden, its fruit is speedily manifest, but neither Cain nor his descendants are destroyed; God is patient till the Flood, which corresponds to the harvest. The sifting of the good from the bad is to take place, by no premature effort of impatient zeal, but by each working out the law of his own being. The servants who administer the discipline of the kingdom cannot carry out the separation without injury to the good seed. The parable of the leaven supplies the other consideration, that the evil may be changed through the influence of the good. When the time is fully ripe comes the complete vindication of God's righteous government; all causes and agents of temptation are removed; the wicked go to their own place; the righteous attain to their destiny, the inheritance of the saints in light.

24. *Sat he before them* : the verb is usually applied to food, here to spiritual nourishment. *Likened unto a man* : that is, to the experience of a man.

25. *While men slept* : the peasant is not accustomed to watch his crops at night, immediately after sowing. The act of *his enemy* is one of unnaturally refined mischief. *Tares* : *lolium temulentum* or 'bearded

darnel', a weed much resembling wheat in its earlier stages. The kernel is black, bitter, and smaller than wheat. It is poisonous.

26. *Then appeared the tares*: the resemblance to wheat ceases when the grain is headed out; the darnel stem branches into twigs, each with its ears.

27. *Whence then hath it tares?* Their presence in scattered patches would not be surprising, but these are sown over the whole extent of the wheat field. That must have been done purposely.

28. If the act is one of intentional malice, it seems to the servants that it should be immediately counteracted by rooting up what the enemy had hoped to produce, lest the whole produce should be rendered worthless.

29-30. The master forbids. By this time the roots of both have become interlaced, so that weeding out the tares would uproot not a little of the wheat, and thus accomplish, in part at least, the malicious design of the enemy. When both are cut down at the harvest, it will be possible for the reapers to separate them, and to garner the wheat without injury, while burning the poisonous tares.

xiii. 36-43. EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TARES

Then he left the multitudes, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field. And he answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the

sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear.

36. Jesus goes *into the house*, from which He had come out (v. 1). *Explain unto us*: as before (Mark iv. 10). This parable and that of the sower were more complicated than some of the others; it may be that their interpretation was specially recorded by St. Matthew as being fundamental in their teaching about the kingdom of heaven.

37-9. Our Lord takes up *seriatim* each main feature of the parable. The master of the estate who sows the good seeds is Himself, and His seed represents not only the production of a new life, but the begetting of new persons (cp. John i. 12, 13) who are called *sons of the kingdom*, and that true ones, not only nominal, as in viii. 12. This work is opposed by *the evil one*, whose *sons* follow their 'father' (John viii. 44) in showing a caricature of the divine life. *The devil* is here treated as a personal agent (see on iv. 1). *The field is the world . . . and the harvest is the end of the world*: the two words for world,

are different; the first signifies the world-order in space; the second signifies the world-succession in time and is better translated 'age'. The two sentences together assert that the history of the kingdom of heaven is to dominate the world of man, both in time and space; they correspond to the two clauses in the final command of Christ in xxviii. 19, 20, 'Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations' (Mark xvi. 15, 'Go ye into all the world') and, 'I am with you . . . unto the end of the age.' These words clearly show that Jesus regarded the scope of His kingdom as world-wide, and its growth as a process involving a delay of judgement unexpected by his zealous servants. The parable is an implicit negation of the impatience of those who, like the Baptist, who would have had the winnowing fan brought into final action at once. The parables of the leaven, the mustard seed, and the drag-net point in the same direction. But while the drag-net points to the continued duty of ingathering from the sea of the nations, till the end comes, this parable has rather to do with the pastoral task of the Church's leaders. When the good seed of the gospel has been scattered over the world-field, there will be found among the children of the kingdom, who have the seed abiding in them (1 John iii. 9), others who have in them the evil seed which produces corresponding works (xii. 33). This will occasion perplexity and a desire for speedy and trenchant discipline. But, as the evangelizing task of the disciples will not be completed till the bounds of the world-field are reached, so

neither will their work of pastoral discipline be final and perfect, till the limits of the age have appeared, and the work will then be accomplished by intelligences without our human limitations, who may be trusted to fulfil His word (cp. Ps. ciii. 20); *the reapers are angels*. Meanwhile, both wheat and tares are to grow together; the process of moral development is to work itself out in each without compulsion. Here we get to a step beyond the parable; that process will afford the opportunity of deterioration or improvement on the part of the conscious agent, till the great revision of human judgements (1 Cor. iv. 5).

40-3. *The end of the world*, or rather 'age', see above on 37-9. The close of this period of development will usher in another of which the separation of good from evil will be the characteristic. *All things that cause stumbling*: that is, which provoke to sin, whether they be personal or impersonal. In the present age these occasions of stumbling are inevitable (see xviii. 7). Besides the causes of stumbling, the stumblers themselves *that do iniquity* will be removed, and cast into a place of chastisement, likened to a *furnace*, and amid the pain of this fiery retribution there will be sorrow and rage for what has been lost (cp. viii. 12). Note the majesty ascribed to the Son of man in the pronouns, *His angels*, *His kingdom*.

43. *The righteous*: otherwise the 'good seed', or 'sons of the kingdom', have been letting their light shine before men (v. 16), but it has been darkened by the mixture of good and evil in the kingdom of 'this age'. Then they will be vindicated, and

shine forth as the sun when the cloud has passed (cp. Dan. xii. 3; Prov. iv. 18) *in the kingdom of their Father*, which is one with the kingdom of the Son of man (v. 41; see xxv. 34). Then they will attain the goal of perfection at which they are aiming (see v. 48). *He that hath ears*: see on v. 9.

xiii. 31-3. THE MUSTARD SEED

(MARK iv. 30-2; LUKE xiii. 18-19), AND THE LEAVEN
(LUKE xiii. 20-1)

Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

These two parables show the effect of the word in the growth of the kingdom; first outwardly from the smallest beginnings to far-reaching effects; and second inwardly, from almost imperceptible workings to an entire change in the mass of society. The evangelist felt no need of recording an interpretation, and indeed it is sufficiently plain.

31. *A grain of mustard seed*: proverbial for a very small thing, apparently a negligible quantity (cp. xvii. 20). *Sowed in his field*: the idea may be that it is sown in an open place with the object of getting a good seeding plant.

32. *Less than all seeds*: such as are usually sown in a garden. *Greater than the herbs*: that is than the pot herbs generally. *Becometh a tree*: the black mustard of Palestine has been found to grow by accurate measurement to a height of ten feet. In comparison with other garden herbs it is a *tree* on which birds may *lodge*, that is roost, a different matter from nesting (see on viii. 20). The kingdom of God is to extend from the smallest beginnings which appear to the ordinary observer to be out of count, but it will eventually become a great organization which will attract outsiders to it (cp. Rev. xxi. 24). The missionary history of the Church to our own day is a commentary on this parable. In India we find many 'birds of the heaven' driven about by the gusts of modern opinions, and trying to take shelter in the branches of the tree of the kingdom, hoping to support their spiritual life on the moral and spiritual truths of the gospel, though they have not accepted its demands on their full allegiance.

33. *Leaven*. Like salt (cp. Jer. xviii. 6 with Ezek. xlvii. 11) this is symbolically used both for good and evil influences (for the latter cp. xvi. 6, 11; 1 Cor. v. 8; for the former Lev. xxiii. 17 leavened loaves offered at Pentecost). In the one aspect, its fermentation is regarded as a kind of decay; in the other, its action is thought of as ennobling, changing the raw meal into savoury bread. Here the point of comparison is obviously the vital power of the kingdom of heaven which effects a hidden but far-reaching change; the parable is an unfolding of

the truth expressed by Jesus in Luke xvii. 20-21 (the kingdom of God is within you). *A woman took*: it is an ordinary domestic operation which every housewife among the Jews knew. They, unlike Indians, generally used (as Persians, Egyptians, Pathans and others do) bread made with leaven. *Hid in three measures of meal*: a small quantity of leaven will effect a change in many times its weight of meal provided that the growth of the microscopic yeast plants is not checked by cold or any other hostile agency. The word *hid* in place of the more natural 'mixed' is purposely employed to indicate the secret nature of the process of leavening, which goes on by itself for a long time after the mixing is finished. To make the sentence quite explicit, we must insert after the word *meal*, 'and it remained there'. The life of the kingdom works inwardly and silently in the heart and in the community, if not checked by hostile influences, till a complete change of character is effected. How much of this leaven is working, outside any recognized Christian sphere in India, and how much has it changed the moral and spiritual notions of thousands? But its effect should be chiefly found in the 'sons of the kingdom', and in our social, and private and communal life, there is nothing to be excluded from its effect—*till it was all leavened*.

xiii. 34-5. NEW METHOD OF TEACHING

All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them:

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

I will open my mouth in parables ;

I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.

34-5. This new method of teaching was in accordance with the ideal of the divine teacher set forth in prophecy (see Ps. lxxviii. 2). This is one of the didactic, or teaching Psalms. The writer introduces a review of God's dealings with His people, from the giving of the law till David, as a parable conveying lessons of His providential guidance and discipline (cp. Ps. xlix. 4). In a similar way, Jesus uses the happenings of the outer world which are familiar to His hearers to embody the spiritual truths of His kingdom, which were in a deeper sense than that of the Psalmist, *things hidden from the foundation of the world.*

xiii. 44-6. THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE COSTLY PEARL

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field ; which a man found, and hid ; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls : and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

44-6. The disciples had left all for the sake of Jesus (iv. 18-22), but they might be betrayed into regrets or a desire for temporal rewards (xix. 27). They

are here reminded that what they had done was well worth while, provided they kept the disposition with which they had started. In both these parables we see the renunciation of all else for the kingdom which is recognized to be the chief good. It may be found unexpectedly, like *a treasure hidden in the field*. Apparently there was no law of 'treasure trove' in the Roman Empire, which made such discoveries the property of the state, so the finder could become master of the treasure by purchasing the land. It often happens that men come on the truth of Christ's salvation, as we say, by accident; a tract given, a sermon heard; and suddenly the man realizes that this is the supreme spiritual wealth, and gives himself to its acquisition.

Or, again, there is many a man who is like *a merchant seeking goodly pearls*: his life is devoted to the search for the highest things, communion with God, truth, purity, and the like. Pearls were then, as now, among the costliest ornaments, and their value was enhanced by the caprice of the Roman court. They would come by the caravan road from the east which passed through Capernaum, and a pearl-seller might well be there when these words were spoken. The merchant values his stock, and finds that the sum of it is just sufficient to purchase the peerless gem on which he has set his heart, and he gives it all that he may reach his ideal (cp. Phil. iii. 8). At length the seeker comes across what sums up all the worth and beauty which he had found as yet, with more added, and he is gladly ready to give

up all for it. In either case there is joy in the sacrifice made. Here again we have the delineation of two types of disciples of the kingdom whom we have frequently seen in missionary history. In church history we may look on Justin Martyr as a type of the first, and St. Augustine as a type of the second.

xiii. 47-50. THE DRAG-NET

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

47-50. From the aspect of personal sacrifice for the kingdom, the teaching turns to its world-wide gathering in of men. In the interpretation we have to keep to the essential point of comparison. The enclosing in a net of a large number of fish from among the myriads of the sea corresponds to the bringing into the society of Christ's disciples of a large number of persons from among the multitudes of the world. Otherwise the rejected fish would be the best off.

47. *Like unto a net*: this metaphor points to a united, if elastic, organization, into which men are to be brought by the preaching of the gospel. The first hearers would not understand this as clearly as we can see it, but the object of such parables was

to speak the word 'as they were able to hear it' (Mark iv. 33); and the Spirit opened up its meaning as needs emerged. The *sea*, like the 'field' (v. 38), is the world of nations, but here under the operation of the evangelistic work of the disciples. Its cast being limited only by the boundaries of the world, the net must gather of *every kind*.

48. Those who sit down and gather the good and cast the bad away are other than the fishermen who have been labouring all the night.

49-50. *So in the end of the age* (margin): when the labourers who have been gathering in have accomplished their task, *the angels shall come forth*, as in vv. 41, 42. In missionary work we must gather in of every sort, and endeavour to influence all for Christ, of course, with the necessary condition that they are willing to put themselves into the net of the Church's discipline and teaching. If through timidity we fail to do this in the case of large movements, we shall be doing the converse of what the servants were forbidden to do in the parable of the tares. They would have rooted up the good with the bad; we shall leave the good outside the pale of the kingdom along with the bad.

xiii. 51-2. FINAL DIRECTION

Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him. Yea. And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

51-2. The Saviour gives the disciples a final direction as to using the knowledge which they have acquired through the teaching in parables. Their ready *Yea* is the enthusiastic response of the pupil who glows with satisfaction, because he has begun to understand what his master is leading him up to, though he little realizes how far it will take him. After the disappointment among the people, Jesus sees that His chosen ones are beginning to be fitted for the work of teaching, and He therefore opens out to them the dignity and expanse of their office. They are to be *scribes*, men whose business it was to investigate the records of past ages and their revelations, and to explain them to the people of the present in the light of the present. First, however, they have been made *disciples to the kingdom of heaven*, docile learners of a new truth which they must be constantly acquiring; learning, as shown in these parables, its life-giving effect, its preciousness, the price to be paid for its acquisition, the duty of communicating it to all. Hence they will be like a *house-holder* who selects from *his treasure*, or store-room, *things new and old*. He must be constantly getting in new provision of sorts, and giving it out at the proper time, and along with it he must bring out other things that have required time to attain maturity and to be fit for consumption. In the case of the Indian Church we have to remember that she needs to bring out of the store-house of revelation and Christian history entrusted to her, *things both new and old*: *new*, adapted to the new developments

of Indian thought and life, and *old*, linking her to the teaching of the Master, who has not been unmindful of His promise to be with His Church continuously till the end of the age (xxviii. 20 ; cp. 1 John ii. 7, 8).

xiii. 53-8. JESUS SLIGHTED AT NAZARETH

And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

After the majestic survey of the development of the kingdom given in the seven parables, the evangelist returns to his narrative of concrete instances of the effect produced by Jesus on the people of His country, and here gives us a picture of His reception in His own village of Nazareth, which Jesus sums up in the well-known proverb (v. 57). There is no note of the exact time or sequence of events, but it seems on the whole probable that this visit is different from the one recorded in Luke iv. 16-31. The astonishment here expressed is rather at His works, than at His teaching, as in Luke; there is neither the same warm approval, nor the same enraged

hostility. It would be entirely in keeping with the teaching and character of Jesus to make a second attempt to win the members of His native town, and His family who had lately been hindering Him from a mistaken sense of kindness (xii. 46, 47).

53. *It came to pass* : a formula of transition from one subject to another (cp. vii. 28 ; xi. 1 ; xix. 1 ; xxvi. 1). *Departed thence* : from the house (in Capernaum ?) where He was teaching (v. 36).

54. *His own country* : or as we should say, native place. Though Jesus was not born in Nazareth, it would seem that Joseph had been living there as the village carpenter (Luke ii. 4) and that Jesus, till He entered on His ministry, had followed the same trade (Mark vi. 3). On his return from Egypt, being afraid to settle in Bethlehem, Joseph had gone back with his family to Nazareth. Here, too, as was His general custom, Jesus *taught them in their synagogue* (see iv. 23). They were astonished at the *wisdom* shown in His teaching, and the *mighty works*, of which they had heard and now saw a few (v. 58).

55-6. The singular nouns *carpenter's son* and *synagogue*, in the previous verse, suggest that Nazareth was a small place with one place of worship and one carpenter, whose workshop sufficed for the needs of the peasants. The absence of a reference here to Joseph, as well as the phrase 'son of Mary' in Mark vi. 3, implies that Joseph had died. Jesus was his step-son, and in a place where the mystery of His birth was unknown, would be regarded as his actual son. *His brethren* : libraries have been written

on the question whether these, and the 'sisters' mentioned in the next verse, were blood relations of Jesus or not. What we know from explicit statements in the New Testament is soon told. (1) The brethren lived under the same roof with Jesus and His mother, and were regarded as members of the family of Mary. In John ii. 12 we read that, when Jesus went down to Capernaum, His mother and His brethren and disciples went with Him, and in Matt. xii. 46 we find His mother and His brethren trying to gain access to Him, but refused in favour of His disciples. Here, too, the brethren's relationship to Him is spoken of as if it were parallel to that of His mother. (2) The brethren of Jesus were jealous of Him, as we see here, and did not believe on Him before His resurrection (Mark iii. 21; John vii. 5). (3) Hence none of His brethren were among the twelve, though the names of James, Simon and Judas occur in both groups. (4) They were converted to faith probably through the appearance of Jesus to James after His resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 7). This James afterwards became the head of the Church in Jerusalem (Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; Gal. i. 19) and was probably the writer of the Epistle which we know by his name. He and the other brothers joined the company of the disciples before Pentecost (Acts i. 14). The view that these 'brothers' were sons of the sister of Mary, the wife of Cleopas (John xix. 25) is improbable, as it is bound up with the idea that three of the brothers were apostles, and it is unlikely that they would have left their parents to live with the

mother of Jesus. It is possible that the 'brothers' and 'sisters' were children of Joseph by a former marriage, and also it is possible that they were children of Mary and Joseph. *His sisters, are they not all with us?* They had married and settled in Nazareth, and therefore did not go down to Capernaum with Jesus and His mother and brothers. *All* would imply that they were not less than three, probably more, so that our Lord was a member of a fairly large family circle. *Whence then . . .?* They were annoyed at a departure from the commonplace, as many still are; but this question 'touches the spot'. Here is *this man* with His human relationships such as might be in any village in the world, and here are His divine wisdom and His mighty works, followed by His death and resurrection. The former show Him to be a prophet who adds a divine commission to His human powers, the latter point to something behind those relationships, which, besides Himself, his blessed Mother only knew; the perfect manifestation of God in humanity. To lead up to this mystery in dealing with non-Christians we should not begin with it, but with the facts of the wisdom and the works, and press them to find the answer to the question of the Nazarenes.

57. For the time being *they were offended* (or caused to stumble) *in him*: that is they fell into the sin of unbelief owing to the apparent contradiction between what they knew of Him as their relative and townsman, and the great claims made in His teaching and supported by His works. *A prophet is not without*

honour : a proverbial saying, like the modern 'No man is a hero to his valet', or Shakespeare's 'Familiarity doth breed contempt'. Here, and in Luke xiii. 33, Jesus claims a place among the prophets, and by the people generally He was recognized as such (cp. xxi. 11, 46; Mark vi. 4; John iv. 44; Luke iv. 24).

58. *He did not many mighty works* : Mark vi. 5 tells us that He healed a few sick folk. On the previous visit He had done none (Luke iv. 23) but now He returns good for evil, though not to the extent which He would have done but for the *unbelief* which repelled His divine healing power. Jesus ever looked for faith as the opening up of the soul to receive His life-giving influence; and He does so still.

CHAPTER XIV

xiv. 1-12. JESUS AND THE RULER OF GALILEE
(MARK vi. 14, 17-30; LUKE ix. 7-9; iii. 19-20)

At that season Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them which sat at meat with him, he commanded it to be given; and he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; and they went and told Jesus.

In this section we see how the half-Jewish tetrarch of Galilee received the message of the kingdom of God as

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In this section we see how the half-Jewish tetrarch of Galilee received the message of the kingdom of God as

it came to him through the reports of the work of Jesus. The impression made on him resulted in the same hostility as he had shown to John the Baptist (see Luke xiii. 31). At the same time the evangelist gives the story of John's end, and hints that his disciples, after their master's death, betook themselves as a whole to Jesus.

1. *At that season*: again an indefinite note of time; what follows happened at this juncture of the celebrity of Jesus, who had stepped into the place hitherto occupied in the popular estimation by John, when intriguing enemies, too, were active and ready to enter on any combination against Him (see Mark iii. 6). *Herod the tetrarch*, was a son of Herod the Great (see on ii. 1) and inherited from him the fourth part of his kingdom, consisting of Galilee and Peræa, whence his title tetrarch, that is, ruler of a fourth (cp. Luke iii. 1). His first wife was the daughter of the Arabian prince Aretas of Damascus (2 Cor. xi. 32). Being enamoured of the wife of his half-brother Philip (not the tetrarch of that name) he enticed her away from her husband, and married her, after divorcing his own wife. This marriage was flatly against the law, which Herod professed to revere. Except in the case of a man dying without issue (see Deut. xxv. 5-10) it was unlawful for his brother to marry his wife, even after his death (Lev. xviii. 16; xx. 21) much more was it unlawful during his lifetime. Hence John's stern reprobation of Herod's action. Besides this, Herodias was the niece of her new husband, being the daughter of his elder brother Aristobulus. Her action appears

to have been prompted partly by passion, partly by ambition, for her husband was living as a mere private citizen in Rome. *Heard the report*: possibly through the king's officer whose son Jesus had healed (John iv. 46-52), or through his steward Chuza, whose wife was a disciple of Jesus (Luke viii. 3), or through his foster-brother Manaen (Acts xiii. 1).

2. *Servants*: not bond-servants or slaves but courtiers. *John the Baptist . . . risen from the dead*: herein Herod was echoing a popular report (see xvi. 14; Luke ix. 7). Herod was a sceptic and a follower of the Epicurean philosophy which taught men to make the most of the pleasures of this life because there was no hope of any other (cp. 1 Cor. xv. 32); yet he was ready to adopt the superstitious idea of the populace, and to believe a miracle greater than those which he rejected, because he was terrified by a guilty conscience. 'Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all,' unless sin is confessed and forgiven. Herod recognized that *these powers* which worked in Jesus were greater than those which John had exhibited, for 'John did no sign' (John x. 41). Herod was brought face to face with the unseen world, and filled with dread.

3. *For*: showing why such an idea should occur to Herod. *Prison*: the fortress of Machaerus, near the Dead Sea (see on xi. 2). It would seem from vv. 9-11 that Herod's birthday banquet took place not far from Machaerus, in which case we may suppose that the arrangement for it was made through Herodias' machinations, so that the execution might

take place rapidly, before the tetrarch had time to change his mind.

4-5. (See on v. 1). *He feared the multitude*: i. e. the common people (cp. xxi. 46). St. Mark (vi. 20) adds that Herod himself revered John, and was inclined to listen to him. Doubtless Herodias combated such symptoms of what she, like Lady Macbeth, would consider weakness.

6. *Herod's birthday*: the keeping of such festivals, though in itself innocent enough, was a Greek custom, and being connected with idolatrous and often obscene observances, was regarded by pious Jews with abhorrence. *The daughter of Herodias*: Salome by name, who afterwards married her father's brother the tetrarch Philip, *danced* in the lascivious manner customary on such occasions. *In the midst* of the great company assembled (Mark vi. 21) some of whom, like the spectators at an Indian *nautch*, might disapprove of the exhibition, but had not the courage of their convictions.

7. *Whereupon*, in the heat of wine and sensual excitement, *he promised with an oath*: which apparently the girl cunningly made him repeat, as we read in v. 9 of 'oaths'.

8. *Put forward*: the word may mean that it was rather against her will; at any rate she was used as a tool to procure the gratification of her mother's revenge (see Mark vi. 24). *In a charger*: or dish, as if the head were a dainty joint being brought in for the banqueters; a fiendish mockery. The sweetest influence in the world is that of a good mother; the most venomous that of a bad one.

9. *The king* : the title is used in a loose popular sense ; officially Herod was only tetrarch. *Was grieved* : partly from fear of unpopularity (v. 5), partly because his better feelings were roused ; he was conscious of the infamy of the act, and he knew in his heart that John was a truer counsellor and guide than his fulsome courtiers. But he was overborne by two things, first a false sense of honour—*for the sake of His oaths* ; and second fear of men—*them which sat at meat with him*. We are reminded of the rash vow of Jephthah (Judges xi. 30, 31, 36) but in his case the victim, whatever her fate, was at any rate willing, and Herod had clearer guidance than Jephthah. There can be no obligation to do what we know to be wrong ; the plain duty in case of such a promise is to confess one's mistake, and if necessary and possible to make reparation. But in this case the real force of the oaths lay, not in an appeal to divine powers, but in the opinion of the persons in whose presence they had been boastfully and hastily uttered. Herod, the would-be 'king' (like his nephew Herod Agrippa I ; see Acts xii), had been making a brave show of royalty, and could not bear the scorn of the onlookers who might sneer at the petty prince who was afraid of meeting a 'debt of honour' (cp. Prov. xxix. 25 ; John v. 44). *He commanded it to be given* : the turning point in Herod's career. When we meet him again, he is threatening Jesus, in league with the Pharisees whose favour he is fawning to obtain, and Jesus speaks of him as 'that fox' (Luke xiii. 32) ; and when Jesus stands before

his tribunal He deigns no word of reply to the ruler who wished Him to perform as a magician (see Luke xxiii. 8-11).

11. The lascivious dancer has courage to receive the ghastly fee for her performance in the presence of the brilliant company, and goes to glut the revenge of *her mother*. Not long after this King Aretas of Damascus made war on Antipas in revenge for the insult to his daughter (see on v. 1) and inflicted a disastrous defeat on him, from the consequences of which he was only saved by the interference of the Roman government. Josephus tells us that the people regarded this defeat as a divine punishment for the murder of John the Baptist. Later on Antipas went with Herodias to Rome in the hope of receiving from the new emperor Caligula the title of king, but complaints were brought against his administration, and he was banished to Gaul, Herodias accompanying him. He afterwards died in Spain.

12. The corpse of the Baptist was not denied honourable burial; his disciples *came . . . and buried him*: doubtless Antipas was glad enough to make that amount of reparation to his memory. Then *they went and told Jesus*: though there had been some opposition, or at least carping, on the part of some of John's disciples who had not joined Jesus (ix. 14; John iii. 26; iv. 1) they seem now as a body to have coalesced with the followers of Jesus in Palestine, though in remoter places they remained apart for a time (cp. Acts xviii. 25; xix. 3).

xiv. 13-21. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND
(MARK vi. 31-44; LUKE ix. 10-17; JOHN vi. 1-13)

Now when Jesus heard *it*, he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot from the cities. And he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food. But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. And he said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And they that did eat were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

The remainder of this chapter records events closely connected with the death of the Baptist. Without claiming exactness as to the sequence of events we may suppose that the sending out of the disciples to preach (Mark vi. 7-13; Matt. x.) had made Jesus more widely known than before, and that the death of John had taken place during the time of their preaching (cp. v. 1). The news of the martyrdom, and the return of the disciples from their preaching tour (xiv. 12; Mark:vi. 29, 30) were probably not far separated in

time; and both combined caused Jesus to go into retirement. Such goings 'apart' of Jesus with His disciples from this onwards become a frequent feature of the record (cp. xiv. 13, 23; xvii. 1, 19; xx. 17) as do also the withdrawals of Jesus from the machinations of His enemies (cp. xv. 21 to Tyre and Sidon; xvi. 13 to Cæsarea Philippi; xix. 1 to Peræa). Henceforward Jesus devoted Himself more largely to the training of His disciples, preparing them for His passion and the foundation of His new society, the present leaders of the nation being definitely rejected by Him both as to their character and their teaching (cp. xv. 13, 14).

The crisis comes in the great sign of the feeding of the 5,000. It proves conclusively the reality of His power, but also that the object of its exercise is a spiritual one, and that Jesus refuses to be a king after the mind of the unspiritual people of His time. In view of John's death which broke the last link with the Old Testament dispensation of an outward kingdom, Jesus would first have His disciples quietly with Him alone. He then feeds the multitude of Passover pilgrims; manifests His power over nature, and heals the sick.

The miracle of the feeding by reason of its central importance, is the only one related in all the four Gospels. Its results and the special teaching which followed on it, and caused so great a sifting among the disciples of Jesus, are brought out chiefly by St. John, whose narrative explains to us the subsequent attitude of Jesus as depicted by St. Matthew. Besides the creative power manifested in this sign,

it shows the bounty and compassion of Jesus, leading on to the truth that the giver of this provision is Himself the food of His people, as set forth in John vi.

13. *He withdrew from thence*: the place where he had been teaching, presumably on the western side of the lake and within the dominions of Antipas, to a desert place apart. From Luke ix. 10 we learn that this place was 'a city called Bethsaida', not the place familiar to the apostles as the home of Peter. Andrew and Philip (John i. 44), for to that they returned afterwards (see Mark vi. 45). It was probably Bethsaida Julias on the north-east border of the lake, which was in the territory of the tetrarch Philip. This would indicate that Jesus wished to be free from the danger of arrest by Antipas under the influence of Herodias (cp. x. 23); but it also served the purpose of a 'retreat' for His apostles, lately returned from their preaching mission (see Mark vi. 30, 31). *The multitudes*: consisting largely of Passover pilgrims (John vi. 4) in an exalted frame of mind, and ready to acclaim the Messiah. *Followed Him on foot*: between the two places mentioned this was not difficult, as the distance was not more than about six miles, which the boat traversed in sight of land. They came from the cities, that is country towns, where they had been lodging, or were at home.

14. *He came forth*: that is landed from the boat; and saw a great multitude: for the people had been running and overtaken the boat (Mark vi. 33). Jesus was thus defrauded of the quiet which He desired to

have with His disciples ; nevertheless, with characteristic love, *he had compassion on them* (cp. ix. 36) ; indeed St. Luke writes (ix. 11) ' he welcomed them ', with teaching, as well as healing. To accept interruption of our plans, not only without irritation, but with cordiality to the interrupter, is a test of the Christian worker ; and those who have most completely followed the Master in this way have been the most blessed by Him.

15. *When even was come* : the so-called ' first evening ', or as we should say afternoon, from about three to six o'clock ; different from the ' even ' after sunset in v. 23. St. Luke says when ' the day began to wear away '. *The place is desert* : not absolutely barren, but ' out in the jungle ' at some distance from human habitations. Hence *the time is already past* for getting out large supplies of food here ; so the people had better be dismissed to provide for themselves. Probably the speakers were fairly tired out, having recently returned from a strenuous tour, and they may possibly have been a little annoyed at losing their quiet time with the Master.

16. *Give ye them to eat* : the contrast between the words of the apostles (send them away v. 15) and those of Jesus is striking ; the compassion with which He welcomed the unwelcome is in His heart still for the unbidden guests. He had determined already on His course of action (John vi. 6) and He was training the twelve to see that He had yet greater benefits in store for them to dispense than those with which He had at first entrusted them (x. 7-8).

17. Their provision consisted only of *five loaves*, thick leavened cakes of barley flour such as the villagers ate,

and *two fishes* : the word used in John vi. 9 means dried or salted fish (see v. 12) which was eaten as a relish or *chatni* with the coarse bread. St. John tells us that a lad had brought them, possibly a food-seller, the last remains of whose stock the disciples had secured to stay hunger till they came to a place where there were shops:

18. *Bring them hither to me* : this would dispose of their last resource, but they could trust Jesus to supply their needs.

19. *He commanded the multitudes* : this and all the arranging of the meal was done through the disciples (Luke ix. 14) who seated the people in rows of fifty men each, besides such women and children as might belong to them. The arrangement was such as in time of famine relief to facilitate distribution and counting. *He blessed* : Jesus acted after Jewish custom as the house-father at a meal, who would pronounce the Beraahah (*barakat*) or blessing, before distributing the food that was before him. One such form ran, 'May God, the ever-blessed one, bless what He has given us.' Here came in the creative power ; the prayer was straightway answered ; as He broke the provisions so they multiplied.

20. When five thousand people have had a full meal, there will be much broken food. Though Jesus had displayed creative power in providing for the multitude, He was unwilling that anything should be wasted, and made the apostles gather the leavings in twelve baskets, of the kind used by the Jews for carrying provisions for a journey ; doubtless intending that this food should be given to the poor. The apostles would remember this

afterwards when they were called upon to 'serve tables' for the Christians in Jerusalem. Their Master had trained them for this ministry as well as for that of the word. Social service for the poor, and in other ways, is a true and legitimate part of the Church's ministry, as witnessed by the perpetuation of the order of deacons, though it must not, as the apostles guided by the Holy Spirit laid down (Acts vi. 3), interfere with prayer and the ministry of the word.

21. The apostles must have counted one hundred rows of fifty. Only St. Matthew notices the women and children. They would be quite a minority among the crowds who had run several miles after Jesus and His apostles, but the octroi official from Capernaum was accustomed to make accurate estimates of the numbers of consumers in a community.

xiv. 22-33. JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER

(MARK vi. 45-51; JOHN vi. 5-21)

And straightway he constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away. And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is an apparition; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I;

be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters, to come to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

The arranging and feeding of over five thousand persons and the gathering up all their leavings must have carried the apostles on far beyond sunset, but at this time the Passover moon, a few days before its fullness, would be brilliant. The multitude were lingering in the moonlight, and groups of them were planning to seize this wondrous prophet, and compel Him to put Himself at their head to be proclaimed king (John vi. 15). Jesus therefore hastens to send the disciples away first, lest they should yield to such plans. After dismissing the multitudes Himself, and strengthening Himself by solitary prayer, He finds the disciples wellnigh exhausted with the task of rowing in a heavy squall, against which they can make no headway. He reassures them, and Peter's faith is strongly drawn forth by the recognition of his Master, but tested by his own venturesomeness. The whole incident is a further step in the training of the apostles, teaching them that He who had refused the homage of the crowds, was nevertheless the Son of God, and leading up to the

decisive confession of Him as such, as against all fluctuations of popular opinion (see xvi. 13-16).

22. *Straightway*: when all the business of the feeding was done; not allowing them to linger, lest they be thrown off their balance by the excited schemes of the crowd. *The boat* in which they had come, and which probably belonged to their party, must have been of fair size to accommodate Jesus and His twelve apostles at least, if not more persons, and it would probably be a heavy and clumsy craft to handle in bad weather. It also had to carry their twelve provision baskets. The apostles were to *go before him unto the other side*. They would expect Him to come after them under the bright moon by the same land route as the people had used in the day.

23. He, however, feels the need of spiritual strengthening after the ordeal of sending away the people who, in ignorance and with mixed motives no doubt, yet many of them with sincere enthusiasm, had wished to take Him for their king; and so *he went up into the mountain*: that is, the rising ground above the lake shore at that place, *apart to pray*, as He had done when He first chose the apostles (Luke vi. 12), and as He did before His transfiguration (Luke ix. 28). He was doubtless interceding for them now. *When even was come*: the word: rendered 'even' literally means the 'late time', and as noted on v. 15 it is somewhat loosely used. In this, as in other ancient records, we fail to understand the details rightly if we try to measure them with a watch and time-table. In Mark xiv. 17 the same word indicates the time

of the Last Supper, which, in all probability was near midnight; and in John xx. 19 it refers to the time when the disciples were assembled when the doors were shut, which would be fairly late at night. Here also the night was probably well advanced when Jesus was alone on the hill.

24. Meanwhile, the disciples had met with a squall which blew them out of their course, and rendered their sail useless, if they had one. The boat was labouring in a choppy sea, and the disciples were 'distressed in rowing' (Mark vi. 48); after the fatiguing day, with a heavy boat which had to be kept head on to the wind, they were nearly at the end of their strength, and if they let the boat go broadside on to the waves their situation was one of great peril. No wonder that they had only made three or four miles in as many hours.

25. *In the fourth watch of the night*: about three a.m. when the moon would be near setting, and the condition of the disciples likely to be soon worse than before. The height of their distress is the time for His help; *he came unto them, walking upon the sea*: an anticipation, as in the transfiguration, of the power of spirit over body, which was fully manifested in and after the resurrection.

26. *An apparition*: such as the fancy of fishermen, e.g. on the Wular Lake in Kashmir, would freely conjure up, and which they would regard as an omen of speedy destruction. *They cried out for fear* of the worst; their self-control was giving way, and their slack arms would soon let the boat be swamped.

27. Quickly comes the needed reassurance, *Be of good cheer* : a characteristic expression of our Saviour's, not only during His life on earth, but also after His ascension (see on ix. 2).

28. The incident of Peter's walking upon the water is related only by St. Matthew. He gives more details which point to the organization of the Church and especially of St. Peter's leadership than any other evangelist (see chapters x, xiii, xvi, xviii); yet, while he sets forth emphatically the great honour conferred on this apostle as the leader of the twelve, he relates also most unreservedly his great falls, as here, and xvi. 22, 23, and xxvi. 69-75. The revulsion from terror to daring, and again to despair is characteristic of Simon, son of John, who became Peter only by the grace of Christ. *If it be thou* does not convey an idea of doubt, but only the supposition which he has accepted as the basis of his request. *Upon the waters* : plural signifying water in motion, that is, the stormy lake. Despite the danger Peter is ready to do what his Master is doing. He is stumbling upwards to the truth, later expressly laid down by Jesus, that His disciples can do the seemingly impossible so long as their faith is true and firm (see xvii. 20; xxi. 22).

29. Therefore Jesus tests Peter's faith with the invitation, *Come*. *Peter went down from the boat* : which, as we have seen, was one of the larger sort, different from the skiffs used by the people the next day (see John vi. 23, 24).

30. Peter would also go down into the trough of the next wave, and so lose sight of the boat and

of Jesus both; he only *saw the wind* in its effect upon the curling wave-crests which threatened to engulf him. At once the power which had sustained him was gone; *he was afraid*. Lack of faith is one with the spiritual cowardice which excludes from the enjoyment of God's power and blessing (cp. viii. 26; Rev. xxi. 8). The strong swimmer (John xxi. 7) is so paralysed with fear that he begins to sink. He was thoroughly wearied out and would feel the physical reaction when the exaltation of faith was gone.

31. His appeal to the help of Jesus is not in vain, but his Teacher reminds Peter how little progress he had yet made in the lesson in which he thought himself proficient. *O thou of little faith*; he had had the same reminder before; in the Sermon on the Mount (vi. 30); in the previous storm on the lake (viii. 26); and he would need it again, in the matter of provisions for crossing the lake (xvi. 8); and in the incident of the epileptic boy (xvii. 20). The lesson was of course for the other apostles as well. *Wherefore didst thou doubt?* The word rendered *doubt* means to be of two minds, like the 'double-minded man' who St. James assures us (Jas. i. 6-8) will never receive anything of the Lord. It is the opposite of the single eye (vi. 22) the perfectness (v. 48) which Jesus demands of His followers. Our age is accustomed to ask, *Wherefore dost thou believe?* Jesus for His disciples reverses the question. *If we have experienced His nearness and His power, what valid reason have we for doubt?*

33. *They that were in the boat*: the other apostles as distinguished from Peter who had been outside

of it, prostrated themselves before Jesus, as Peter had done on the occasion of the marvellous catch of fishes (Luke v. 8). After the storm (viii. 27) they had asked, What manner of man is this? They have now got further. The conviction that they had heard expressed by demons on the lake shore after the storm (viii. 29), the truth which Jesus had uttered (xi. 25-7), was now accepted by them with full assurance. *Of a truth thou art the Son of God: or God's Son.* This confession still required further testing and confirmation, before it found its confident expression, as against the fluctuating opinions of men in xvi. 16; but it was the goal at which Jesus had been aiming in His works and teaching. The unique sonship of Jesus is proclaimed by the Father at His baptism (iii. 17); it is acknowledged by Satan (iv. 3, 6); it is confessed by His disciples here and xvi. 16 (cp. John vi. 69); it is confirmed by the Father at the transfiguration (xvii. 5); it is claimed before the Jewish tribunal by Jesus (xxvi. 63, 64); it is uttered in mockery of Him on the cross (xxvii. 40, 43); it is acknowledged after His death by the Roman centurion (xxvii. 54). In this last passage and here there is no article in the Greek with the word *Son*, hence some would translate 'a son of God'. This is probably rather too vague, still 'God's Son' is less emphatic than 'the Son of God'; and the present confession, like the faith of Simon Peter, was halting and demanded expansion, especially considering the wonderful manifestation of the power of Jesus which the disciples had just beheld in the feeding of the multitude.

Indeed St. Mark (vi. 52) expressly notes that their 'heart was hardened', implying that they had not grasped its import as they might have done.

xiv. 34-6. HEALING OF THE SICK IN GENNESARET

(MARK vi. 53-6)

And when they had crossed over, they came to the land, unto Gennesaret. And when the men of that place knew him, they sent into all that region round about, and brought unto him all that were sick; and they besought him that they might only touch the border of his garment: and as many as touched were made whole.

34. *Gennesaret*: a little, fertile plain, about one mile by three, along the western shore of the lake which was often called from it; mentioned only here and Mark vi. 53; now known as Al-Ghuweir.

35. The people soon recognized Him, for the place was not far from Capernaum, and Jesus and His disciples must have been there before. Here Jesus found faith which enabled Him to do many wonderful works, in contrast to Nazareth (xiii. 58). All the available sick were brought to Him, and healings were effected by touching *the border* (or fringe, see ix. 20) *of his garment* only, nor was there any failure in these cases; *as many as touched were made whole*: this may indicate that there were cases in which such contact failed of healing effect for lack of faith (cp. Mark v. 30, 31). *Made whole*: the general meaning of this verb in the New Testament is to bring safely through; it implies completeness of cure (cp. Luke vii. 3, the only other place where it is used of healing).

CHAPTER XV

XV. 1-20. CLEAN AND UNCLEAN FOOD

(MARK vii. 1-23)

Then there come to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God said, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God; he shall not honour his father. And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

This people honoureth me with their lips;

But their heart is far from me.

But in vain do they worship me,

Teaching as *their* doctrines the precepts of men.

And he called to him the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man. Then came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees

were offended, when they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit. And Peter answered and said unto him, Declare unto us the parable. And he said, Are ye also even yet without understanding? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever goeth into the mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.

Here we come to a most important stage in the teaching of the apostles, to which work our Lord is now chiefly devoting Himself. In the first part of the Sermon on the Mount He had impressed upon them (v. 21-48) the spiritual nature of the moral law, as expressed in the Commandments and traditions. He now impresses on them the moral meaning of the religious observances embodied in the ceremonial regulations of the law, taking as the outstanding example of these the food laws of Leviticus (chapter xi) as applied in detail to the life of the people by the tradition of the scribes, which played as large a part in the life of the Jews, as do similar regulations in the life of the Muslim and the Hindu in India. Our Saviour does not deny the divine inspiration of these laws, but His teaching is based upon the fact that every formulation of law must contain both an essential and an accidental element; no such formulated

law can claim absolute and eternal validity; even in the Ten Commandments there are traces of the accidental element, as in the prohibition of plastic art in the Second Commandment, which however useful for a time, must eventually give way to the artistic instinct and the demands of life. The law of Moses, as shown by St. Paul, was a schoolmaster of an elementary kind, intended to lead men to Christ, its fulfiller (cp. Gal. iii. 24 with Matt v. 17); and if men insisted on stopping at its beggarly rudiments (Gal. iv. 9), such as the regulations about clean and unclean food, refusing to be led beyond these to its real meaning, they were missing the object of the law, which was to lead them up to the pure love of God and man, and the striving after the likeness of God, as the rule of life, shaping every thought, word and action. That object of the law was perfectly fulfilled in Jesus (John viii. 29) and it was His aim to teach the apostles the same great truth by word as well as example; not, however, by a formal exposition, but by the use of incidents as they arose which conveyed the particular lesson needed at the occasion and embodied principles valid for all time.

We have already seen how the Jewish leaders had once and again accused Jesus and His disciples of transgressing or neglecting the law; they had charged Him with blasphemy (ix. 3); blamed Him for associating at table with unclean persons (ix. 11); for neglect of fasting (ix. 14); for slighting the Sabbath (xii. 2, 10). So far we seem to have a record of the action of the local Galilean rabbis; but Jesus, as we know from

the earlier chapters of St. John's Gospel, had been working in Jerusalem also, and doubtless His doings in Galilee had been reported there, so more authoritative men from the capital are now sent down to observe and report. Like their Galilean brethren, they spy on the domestic usages of Jesus and His disciples, and bring an accusation of neglecting the customary ceremonial precaution against defilement of food by prescribed hand-washings. Jesus first answers them as the exponents and administrators of the law: (1) that their rabbinical tradition has no divine authority, and (2) that, instead of guarding and supporting the observance of the confessedly most fundamental commandments of God, they actually, on occasion, encourage their transgression for personal ends. He then, in vv. 10-20, goes on to elucidate the value of positive ceremonial laws such as the Levitical food-regulations, and shows that their use is a symbolical and educative one. The divine Educator had adopted the conceptions of clean and unclean foods, such as have prevailed and do prevail among many nations, to teach Israel the lesson that holiness should govern the commonest actions of life; but in themselves, those laws have no inherent validity; true purity can only be moral; in reality the only pure thing is a pure heart. How necessary and yet how difficult this lesson was for the apostles we learn from the Acts and Epistles. In Acts x. 14 we find Peter still boasting that nothing common or unclean had ever entered his mouth, and the vision teaching the religious acceptableness of Gentiles without Jewish purifications was

doubtless given in the form of clean and unclean food beasts, because this distinction had become interwoven with the very fibres of an orthodox Jew's being in the same way that the abhorrence of swine's flesh or beef seems essential to the Musalmán or Hindu. Even in Gal. ii. 12 we see Peter still wavering on this point, and it required the keen insight and Spirit-guided energy of the apostle Paul to fully develop the teaching of Jesus contained in this chapter. Through him the Church assimilated it, and since then whatever ceremonial rules may have been made regarding food, such as abstinence from flesh-meat on fast days, have been recognized as useful within a certain sphere, but variable according to the dictates of Christian expediency.

It is self-evident that the principle here laid down by Christ absolutely cuts across the regulations of *haram halal* (clean and unclean foods) which Islám has taken over from Judaism and put on a level with (if not above) the duties of morality, as cardinal precepts of religion, without the corrective supplied by the prophetic writings in the Jewish Scriptures. Hinduism goes even further, making the observance of rules for the preparation and eating of food a primary religious duty, on the principle that man is what he eats. Such rules are, as we know, the chief buttress of the caste system which is flatly contrary to the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Both the caste system and the distinction of clean and unclean food must eventually give way, and meanwhile they cannot be tolerated in the Christian Church in any

religious or social guise, least of all in the Holy Communion or in spiritual ministrations.

1, 2. *Then* : at a time when the popularity of Jesus was still great. *From Jerusalem* : see introduction to section. *Pharisees* : the party of tradition as against the Sadducees (see on iii. 7). *Scribes* : mostly belonging to the Pharisees ; men whose business it was to preserve and interpret the traditions, and whose decisions (or *fatwas*) formed a continually increasing body of precedents. Like the maulawis and pandits of this country, they were interested by conviction, livelihood and status in maintaining the authority of the traditions. *The tradition of the elders* : in the Talmud (or Hadis) of the Jews it is written, 'Moses received the oral law from Sinai and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua delivered it to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the great Synagogue (in the time of Ezra). They said three things : Be deliberate in judgement ; raise up many disciples ; and make a fence for the law.' By 'a fence' was meant the additional regulations added from time to time to the commandments of the law, in order, as it were, to prevent the Israelite from going anywhere near a breach of them. Gradually these fence rules came to be considered as practically more important than the original commandments, because if they were observed, the others could not be broken. The result was that the law was obeyed, not on account of its divine authority, but on the credit of the human accretions to it, so that the teachings of men took the place which belonged to the

commandments of God. *They wash not their hands when they eat*: the duty of regularly performing such ablutions was deduced from the law regarding clean and unclean foods (Lev. xi. ; Deut. xiv. 1-21). In the interval between meals the Jew might have unwittingly touched unclean food, or that which had been defiled by contact with the unclean (Hag. ii. 13), and thus his own food, however properly prepared, would become unclean, and he himself, a transgressor of the law. In the Mishna, or great collection of Jewish traditions, the entire sixth section, entitled *Toharoth* (Tihárát) or purifications, is occupied with these matters, and the six great 'waterpots of stone' at the marriage feast in Cana (John ii. 6) remind us what plentiful provision had to be made for these washings in an orthodox Jewish household. The Muḥammadan *wuzú* before prayers, in which the worshippers 'wash their hands up to the elbow' (Mark vii. 3 margin) and other purifications in Islám, are directly descended from these Jewish rites. In both cases the shrinking is not from dirt, but from ceremonial defilement.

3. *Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?* This is not merely an *argumentum ad hominem* (*ilzami jawab*) as much as to say, You are just as bad, or rather worse. It touches the principle at issue. Are these ceremonial observances, in their present form, promoting moral goodness? The answer was, No, for some of these observances (all of which rest on the same human authority, that of the scribes and their predecessors), are actually running counter to the divinely inculcated principles of

elementary morality (cp. xxiii. 16-28). Ceremonial observances are a useful, and even necessary element in religious life; but when, by inversion, they become hindrances to real righteousness, they must be modified, or put away. It was on this principle that the Church of England acted at the time of the Reformation, when some ceremonies were put away, as being burdensome and misleading, and others retained, as being profitable and enlightening (see the Preface of the Book of Common Prayer—'Of Ceremonies, why some be abolished, and some retained'). Whatever the line taken by the Indian Church in the future regarding this matter the same principle will be our guide.

4. *For God said*: the supreme test is His moral law, most clearly expressed in the Ten Commandments, of which our Lord cites the fifth from Exod. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16, together with the penalty of its breach, from Exod. xxi. 17; Lev. xx. 9; Deut. xxvii. 16. *Die the death*: means 'surely die', as in the margin.

5-6. You, on the contrary, abuse a professedly religious vow, to escape the performance of a plain moral duty. This involved the same divorce of religion from morality which was shown in the reverence of Herod Antipas for his criminal oath (xiv. 9, 10). *Is given to God*: rather 'is a gift', as in xxiii. 18 where special sanctity is ascribed to the gift that is upon the altar. St. Mark vii. 11 gives the original word used by our Lord on this occasion, *Korban*—*qurban* or offering—which was used especially of the fund consisting of offerings given to the temple treasury (see xxvii. 6). Property of any kind might be

withheld from ordinary claims, even the most urgent, by devoting it to this treasury. Moreover, expedients were devised to facilitate such vows, which, of course, brought emolument to the priesthood, by postponing their payment, even till after death, so that the donor could enjoy during his lifetime what he was unrighteously withholding from others. If, however, he wished subsequently to cancel the vow, he was not permitted to do so; hence Jesus says, *he shall not honour his father* (cp. Mark vii. 12); in God's name he is forbidden to keep God's commandment; *ye have made void the word of God through your tradition*.

7-9. Unreality could hardly go further, and it excites the scathing indignation of Him whose great aim was the true fulfilment of the law (v. 17) by writing it in the hearts of men, whatever outward modification that might involve, whereas these *hypocrites* (see on vi. 2) repeated with their lips, and enforced by their authority, the old formulas, while their hearts were far from the God who had given those precepts as a guide to holiness. They were well described by Isaiah (xxix. 13) who eight hundred years before had been called to combat the same tendency to substitute outward ceremonial service for heart devotion and purity of life (see Isa. i.). In every age such worship is vain, because the worshippers *teach as doctrines* (of religion) *the precepts of men*. We have to see to it lest any human theories about religion interfere with its spiritual reality or its moral efficacy.

10-11. The positive side of the question was the most vital, and Jesus therefore was determined to push

it at all risks. Hence, *he called to him the multitude*, that he might impress upon them all the Christian rule of liberty and service; food (*whatsoever goeth into the mouth*) is indifferent; word (*that which proceedeth out of the mouth*) which comes from thought and leads to act, is the real test of a man's moral condition (cp. xii. 36, 37). Our Saviour purposely states the principle in a sententious phrase, suited to arrest the attention of His hearers, and intended to elicit inquiry (v. 15). *Mouth* is employed with a different connotation in each member of the proverbial saying; first as the organ of eating, and second as the organ of speech. It has proved possible for the density of traditionists to miss so plain a distinction, as shown by the application of doctors of the Greek Church, who hold that to drink wine does not defile, because it goes into the mouth, but to smoke does defile, because the product goes out of the mouth!

12-14. These words are peculiar to St. Matthew. The disciples, who, as the following narrative shows, had hardly grasped the import of the teaching given, were alarmed at the attitude of the Pharisees, who were shocked at it. The reply of Jesus is, *Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up*. The theocracy is a garden in which, as in the field of the parable of xiii. 24-30, there are plants not set there by the lord of the garden, and their eventual fate is certain. *Verse 14* applies this to the Pharisee party in another metaphor: *they are blind guides* (cp. Mal. ii. 8; Matt. xxiii. 16, 17, 24); they have undertaken a work, the very first qualification

for which they lack; nor does it make their position any better if they have many followers, for falsehood does not become true, however many tongues repeat it; the only, and lamentable result is the destruction of the greater number; *both shall fall into a pit*. The blindness thus liable to penalty is wilful blindness, which stubbornly refuses to see what might enlighten it, or which carelessly neglects an available cure.

15. *Declare unto us the parable*. These words of the Apostle Peter show how difficult it was from the first for him and the others to learn the great lesson which the Saviour was teaching. The simple sentence of v. 11 seems to him a *parable* or obscure saying.

16. The answer of Jesus shows how acutely He felt this obtuseness on the part of His learners: *Are ye also even yet without understanding?* You who have been my constant companions, and whom I have taught for so long. These words and John xiv. 9 point to the longer estimate of the ministry of Jesus, say between three and four years, rather than the shorter one of little over two. The Christian teacher may take courage from the example of his Master. If our learners are slow, what were His? Though He deeply felt their limitations, yet His loving perseverance knew no bounds and with what glorious results!

17. *Whatsoever goeth into the mouth*: the process of assimilation and excretion is governed by the physical laws of God, which leave it non-moral, to be regulated by physical means, though it may be used for moral purposes.

18. These words explain the maxim of *v. 11* more in detail; its second part refers to the words by which the mouth manifests the condition of the heart, which requires to be kept with all diligence, because out of it are the issues of life (see *Prov. iv. 23*).

19-20. Hence it is morally unclean things issuing from the heart against which we have to guard, not symbolically unclean things going into the mouth. Our Lord mentions some of the most obvious sins of thought (*evil thoughts*); act (*murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts*); and word (*false witness, railings*). As purposeful actions, coming from *the heart*, that is, man's inner being, these *defile the man* essentially, whereas food can defile at most his body, not himself.

XV. 21-8. THE CANAANITISH WOMAN

(*MARK vii. 24-30*)

And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

The feeding of 5,000 had been followed by a sifting of the disciples and the lapse of many (see John vi. 66) and the subsequent utterance of Jesus as to ceremonial purity had put Him into open opposition to the hierarchy. Under these circumstances Jesus finds it wise to retire into non-Jewish territory (Mark vii. 24) making a detour round the north of Palestine through the regions of Tyre and Sidon, with a mainly heathen population. He does not, however, change His attitude towards His own nation, or belittle their genuine privileges as the first recipients and communicators of God's salvation. The evangelist has shown clearly enough the purpose and expectation of Jesus that His kingdom would be a universal one. In v. 13-16 He commands His disciples to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world and to let this influence be felt; in viii. 11, 12 He predicts that 'many shall come from the east and the west', and partake with the patriarchs in the blessings of the kingdom of heaven; in x. 18 He warns the disciples that they will have to encounter the opposition of the world powers; in the parable xiii. 38 he has described the field in which the seed of the kingdom is to be sown, as 'the world'. But the question has not yet been raised how the kingdom is to attain this extension. In this section we see that it is not to be done by a premature appeal to the Gentiles, though in the restless condition of the age and country they might have welcomed a wonder-worker with a new doctrine (cp. Luke xxiii. 18). Such action would have produced contempt and repulsion on the part even of pious Jews

(cp. John vii. 35). Salvation was from the Jewish nation (John iv. 22) and it was to go forth through them, but not till after the great crisis which their leaders all unwittingly brought about in the death of Jesus. Only His cross could slay the enmity and break down the middle wall of partition (Eph. ii. 13-18) between Jew and Gentile; therefore it is the chief theme of all four Gospel records (cp. also John x. 16-18; xi. 52; xii. 20-32). Meanwhile this story illustrates the truth that the healing power of Jesus is nevertheless open to those who occupy in a preparatory dispensation the less favoured position, and that, on the one condition of faith, not of any homage to Judaism, much less of entrance into it (cp. Rom. iii. 30). Similarly on the Christian side, the advantages of hereditary religious privileges are neither few nor small, yet they may become an actual hindrance, if they are looked on in any spirit of exclusiveness.

21. *Jesus went out thence*: from the Galilean territory where we last saw Him (xiv. 34) and *withdrew* from the schemes of His enemies *into the parts of Tyre and Sidon*, the two great Phœnician cities on the Mediterranean coast, north of Palestine (see xi. 21). Tyre was forty-four miles north of Capernaum, and Sidon sixty. In the time of Christ, Tyre was the more flourishing of the two; now Sidon, under the name of Saida, is the more important, but even it is a decaying town, being overshadowed by Beirut, with its harbour and railway, thirty miles further north. Many had come from these great centres to see and hear Jesus in Galilee (Mark iii. 8; Luke vi. 17); hence,

though Jesus took precautions not to be known (Mark vii. 24), 'he could not be hid'. Jesus had spoken of these pagans as more receptive than the people of Galilee (xi. 21, 22) but the time of their visitation as a people was not yet; still individuals were not excluded from sharing in the blessings of His presence.

22. *A Canaanitish woman*: the Phœnicians were of one stock with the Canaanites, who were an object of abhorrence to the average Israelite, especially since the captivity (Ezra ix. 1; Zech. xiv. 21). In Mark vii. 26 the woman is called a Syrophœnician, that is a Phœnician of the Syrian stock, as distinguished from the Phœnicians of Carthage on the north coast of Africa. *Came out from those borders*: apparently from some village as Jesus was entering her country. *Lord*: as a title of Jesus is used by Mark only in connexion with this incident (Mark vii. 28), in Matthew nineteen times, Luke sixteen, and John thirty-eight. *Son of David*: a Jewish title, heard from others, used with the hope of making a favourable impression.

23. Jesus at first gives no answer, but the disciples beg Him to meet her need in order to get rid of her, because they knew that He wished to be quiet, and her clamour would attract a crowd. The contrast between the backwardness of Jesus and the readiness of His disciples shows that Jesus had a purpose in His mind with reference to this suppliant, who, like all such, moved His compassion.

24. This is manifest from His further action. He would not have it supposed that He had left the Jews to come on a mission to the Gentiles, for this

was a work which He had reserved for His followers when they should be equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit. He personally was sent to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*: as St. Peter said to the audience in the temple, after the healing of the lame man, 'Unto you first God sent him' (Acts iii. 26). We feel in the words of the text the yearning of Jesus after those who were repelling the advances of His compassion, on which they had really no better claim than others, for they without Him were but lost sheep (cp. ix. 36).

25. There must have been something in the tone and manner of Jesus which enabled the distressed woman to supply what He had not said. She comes near and falls prostrate before Him as an urgent suppliant (viii. 2) and begs again, *Lord, help me*, with all the passion of a mother's heart.

26. We cannot help imagining the look with which Jesus would say these words, in form so harsh, by which He was drawing forth that faith which He prized more than all in His petitioners. *Dogs*: (vii. 6) a term often enough applied by the Jew to the Gentile, as unclean according to the law. These words are supplemented by those of St. Mark (vii. 27), 'Let the children first be filled', which express exactly the line of our Saviour's action. They lead up also to the woman's reply.

27. *Yea, Lord*: accepting the position, but adding something which modifies the conclusion that might be drawn (cp. xi. 9, 26). With woman's wit, as well as humility and faith, she seizes the parable as an argument to support her plea. The fierce pariah dogs are

excluded, but the little house-dogs (a different word from that in v. 26) have a share in the food when the children are satisfied; they are humble members of the household, and for them, too, the meal time is one of satisfaction.

28. Now, as in the case of His vindication of John the Baptist, the feeling of Jesus bursts forth; and we feel His pleasure ringing through the words, *O woman, great is thy faith* (cp. viii. 10). With reverence we may say: He can let Himself go, and His healing power is now free to act.

XV. 29-31. WORKS OF HEALING BY THE LAKE

And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and sat there. And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel.

From Mark vii. 31 we learn that after a considerable tour (as distances in Palestine go) Jesus returned from Phœnicia through the heathen tract of Decapolis (cp. iv. 25) to the east of the lake. There, day after day (v. 32), He is engaged in works of healing among a mainly heathen population, who in consequence 'glorified the God of Israel', and doubtless in some cases turned to His worship. In the last section we see how Jesus had mercy on a single pagan woman of Phœnicia; here and in the next we note the

sympathy and benefits bestowed on the mixed heathen community of the Decapolis.

29. *The mountain*: the high land overlooking the lake (cp. xiv. 23). He *sat there*, as in v. 1, but then it was for teaching; now it is chiefly for healing, which these untaught Decapolitans could better understand. Jesus treats each class according to their needs and circumstances; and there are times and situations when His servants have to be content with benefiting mainly the bodies of men.

30, 31. *Maimed*: better, cripples or crooked. The word translated 'maimed' in Luke xiv. 13, 21 means deprived of a limb, which is its general meaning in English. *They cast them down*: as they arrived panting in their haste and eagerness. *The multitude wondered*: the excitement was greater than at this period in Galilee, because these people had seen much less of Jesus and His works.

XV. 32-9. FEEDING OF FOUR THOUSAND PEOPLE

(MARK viii. 1-10)

And Jesus called unto him his disciples, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat: and I would not send them away fasting, lest haply they faint in the way. And the disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so many loaves in a desert place, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few small fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves and the fishes; and he gave

thanks and brake, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. And he sent away the multitudes, and entered into the boat, and came into the borders of Magadan.

So great was the astonishment and eagerness of these pagans, that they could not tear themselves away from the Wonder-worker for three days, and many a restored invalid must have been feeling the pangs of hunger. Their condition draws forth the compassion of Jesus, but the disciples are not prepared for a second miracle, and even when He expresses His feelings, they do not venture to suggest such a thing, except indirectly.

32. *Jesus called unto him his disciples*: as if to tell them to make the usual food arrangements; but His thoughts are for others. *I have compassion on the multitude*: He would not leave His work half done, for He is the Saviour of the body (Eph. v. 23), as well as of the soul.

33-8. The work is done as on the previous occasion (xiv. 16-21). The same coarse bread with salted fish for a relish, rather more than before, and for fewer people, yet equally insufficient; the people are seated doubtless in the same way, the giving of thanks is the same act of the house-father as the blessing in xiv. 19 (cp. xxvi. 27). The baskets are of a different kind, such as were used by Greeks, for they were here among Greek-speaking folk. The same kind of basket was

used by St. Paul's disciples to let him down the city wall of Damascus (Acts ix. 25).

39. *He sent away the multitudes*: as the host dismissing His guests, but without the difficulty caused by the desire of the former guests to make Him a king. This time there was no need to send on the disciples in advance, or to help them in the storm; he *entered into the boat* with them. *Magadan* where they landed is unknown, equally with *Dalmanutha* mentioned in Mark viii. 10. One may have been a village, the other a tract of country.

CHAPTER XVI

xvi. 1-xx. 34. JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS SUFFERINGS, AND FOR THE FOUNDATION OF HIS NEW SOCIETY

THE evangelist here begins a new development in the career of Jesus. For the first time the two mutually opposed parties of the Jewish rulers, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, are united against Him. When the Pharisees plotted against His life (xii. 14) Jesus had withdrawn from the sphere of their activity (xv. 21) and though He had repeated the great miracle of the loaves, which must have aroused their apprehension, yet He so did it that there was nothing to be brought against Him on the political score. Probably it was their ill success in getting up a colourable accusation against Jesus which drove the Pharisees to join hands with their hated opponents the Sadducees, as they had before done with the Herodians (see on xii. 14). It is only Matthew who couples together the Pharisees and Sadducees in so many words, though the other Gospels clearly indicate their co-operation, especially in procuring the death of Jesus. Both came to the baptism of John; both came to Jesus to tempt Him. As the high-priestly

family belonged to the party of the Sadducees (Acts iv. 6; v. 17) it was necessary for the Pharisee leaders who had failed to excite popular enmity to Jesus to secure the support of the hierarchical leaders. From their secular point of view the Sadducees (cp. John xi. 48) were ready to join the Pharisees in the endeavour to make Jesus commit Himself by demanding from Him, a sign from heaven. In answering them and in the warning to His disciples, founded on the attitude of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus carries on the teaching given in the controversy on purification—moral issues must be decided by moral judgement. His opponents wished to let the claim of Jesus to be the leader of the people turn on the production of a sign from heaven, which would be plain to all. Against this Jesus sets 'the signs of the times', the tokens of God's moral government, and the divine counsel expressed in the story of Jonah, which he who would judge of the claims of Jesus must be at pains to understand. With the leaven of bread, connoting the idea of mere ceremonial defilement, is contrasted the leaven of doctrines, the convictions and maxims that really guide the life, as distinct from those that are supposed to do so. Jesus demands faith in place of sight, regard for the eternal rather than the temporal. This is what the rulers will not have, and the hostile parties continue to co-operate against Jesus (see John vii. 32-5; xi. 57; Matt. xxi. 45; xxvii. 62).

The learner of the first century would gather from this section wherein lay the true defence of his faith; in life rather than in wonders; and what it was

that he had to avoid; not the social customs that are indifferent, but the teachings which are false. In our day the Indian Christian preacher, and sometimes the Indian Christian layman, is confronted by a not dissimilar demand for a sign to compel belief, and his answer will be on the same lines to those who approach him in the same spirit; though in the case of such as are simply desiring enlightenment, God does reveal Himself, at times, in ways which are above our ways.

XVI. 1-12. THE SIGN REFUSED, AND THE LEAVEN
WARNED AGAINST

(MARK viii. 11-21; LUKE xii. 54-6)

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and tempting him asked him to shew them a sign from heaven. But he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather: for the heaven is red.* And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day: for the heaven is red and lowring.* Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot *discern* the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah. And he left them, and departed.

And the disciples came to the other side and forgot to take bread. And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread. And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither

the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

1. *The Pharisees and Sadducees*: the unusual nature of their alliance is emphasized by the repeated coupling of the names (vv. 6, 11-12). *Came*: probably to a place on the lake where Jesus was teaching. *Tempting him*: putting to the test with evil intent, in the hope of bringing to a fall (cp. xix. 3; xxii. 18, 35; see on iv. 1). *A sign from heaven*: the cunningly implied contrast is to the signs so far done by Jesus, which had been on earth, and, like the miracles of the loaves, had been connected with very common things. Demons were popularly supposed to be able to do signs on earth, but not in heaven. Similarly in John vi. 30, just after the great wonder of the loaves, the Jews at Capernaum ask our Lord, 'What doest thou for a sign, that we may see and believe thee?' Samuel (1 Sam. xii. 18) and Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 38; 2 Kings i. 10-12) had shown such signs; and at the coming of Messiah there would be signs from heaven (cp. xxiv. 3, 30). This request was analogous to the Satanic temptation to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple (iv. 5, 6) and by such a wonder to convince the nation at once. To one conscious of the power to work signs, and desirous of cutting short a wearisome controversy, the temptation was real. But Jesus knew well that the faith which

would be gained by such a sign would not be worth the having. There is no short cut on the road of salvation; it must lead through a consideration and understanding of God's message to the heart.

2-3. You have signs enough, He answers in effect. In interpreting the natural signs of the heavens, you exercise a discrimination born of experience, as shown in your proverbial weather prophecies from sunrise and sunset. Why can you not *discern the signs of the times*? What was happening in the presence of these questioners showed clearly enough to those who had eyes to see, like Simeon, the fulfilment of God's age-long purposes (see Luke ii. 25-32). Jesus steadily refuses to do for men what they can do for themselves, by exercising their God-given faculty of moral discernment (cp. Luke xii. 57).

4. This situation was a repetition of that in xii. 38-40; the same captious demand for a sign, with the same obvious intention to discredit the obnoxious Teacher; and accordingly Jesus returns the same reply, refusing any sign save that of Jonah. Thereupon *he left them*, declining further fruitless controversy. To discern the moment when such retirement has become necessary, because the opponent has become thoroughly captious and malicious, and only wishes to prolong controversy in order to find a favourable opportunity for personal injury, is one of the matters which require the wisdom of the Spirit on the part of the Christian preacher now.

5. The disciples were apparently perturbed by this fresh and violent collision between their Master and

the rulers, and so *forgot to take bread* (Mark viii. 14, 'one loaf' was practically none). This suggests that the place on *the other side* to which they went was one where bread was not available, like the 'desert place' in xiv. 13 where Jesus desired to be in retirement with His disciples. They seem to have gone over again to the eastern shore of the lake. The incident would have mattered little to the evangelist, had it not been for the parabolic teaching which Jesus connected with it.

6-7. Having remembered their omission the disciples would be consulting as to whence they should get a supply of food, when Jesus says to them, taking His imagery, as He so often did, from the present occasion, *Take heed and beware* (the double imperative is solemn and impressive) *of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*. For the latter we have in Mark viii. 15 'the leaven of Herod'. He was a Sadducee, though the Herodian party concerned themselves more with political and social than with religious matters; but they and the Sadducees were very nearly allied (cp. xii. 14 with Mark iii. 6). The disciples receive the utterance of the Master in respectful silence, but begin reasoning *among themselves* as to its bearing, and come to the conclusion, *It is because we took no bread* (R.V. margin), showing how deeply they were still entangled in the Jewish notions of ceremonial defilement and purity, and how necessary the teaching of Jesus in xv. 16-20 had been. Gentile food was unclean to the strict Jew, and they suppose that Jesus is telling them, not only to beware of

that, but to take special care, when they go for more bread, to avoid such as had been prepared by Pharisees or Sadducees. They understood that they must separate themselves from those who opposed their Master so maliciously, but the separation was to be on the basis of the old carnal notions, by regarding their food as unclean. We err similarly when we try to make the distinction of the Christian from the non-Christian consist in costume or customs, instead of in character.

8-11. *O ye of little faith*: (cp. vi. 30; viii. 26; xiv. 31). We cannot wonder at the displeasure which Jesus expresses. The disciples had but recently experienced the provision made for their needs and those of the people by the power of Jesus. Were it a matter of the need of a particular kind of bread in this secluded place, that could at once have been supplied by the same power. The avoidance of pollution by the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees could only be accomplished by moral discernment and free choice.

12. The questions of Jesus had taught their lesson. He is the Prince of catechisers. *Then understood they*. What was the common feature in *the teaching* of these sects that seemed so bitterly opposed? It was worldliness; in the Sadducee blatant (cp. John xi. 49, 50) under the form of avowed scepticism; in the other latent, under the form of orthodoxy (cp. xv. 5-6) an even more deadly poison. Both were equally opposed to Him whose kingdom was not of this world, and equally ready to destroy Him (see John xviii. 36; cp. 1 John ii. 15-17).

xvi. 13-20. THE CONFESSION OF SIMON PETER

(MARK viii. 27-30; LUKE ix. 18-21)

Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

In this section the first century learner is led on to see how, notwithstanding the slowness of even the apostles to assimilate the teaching of Jesus, the faith which the learner confessed had found a definite expression while they were far from perfect.

Before a natural event comes its prelude; birth is preceded by the quickening of the child; the monsoon rains by the storms of the *chhoti barsat*. So with the unique achievement of the founding of the Church of Christ; here we have its germinal outline expressed within those limitations of time, place and person which the Son of God had accepted as His sphere.

Jesus had purposely disappointed the crude Messianic hopes of the Jewish people, more especially when they came to a head after the great miracle of feeding the five thousand. Thereby He had produced so great a sifting and reaction, that after the conversation in the synagogue at Capernaum, He knew that only the twelve remained His reliable followers (John vi. 66-71). Thenceforward He devotes Himself more than ever to their training, for on this tested foundation He is minded to rear the superstructure of His new society. Further, we have seen how Jesus had definitely cut off Himself and them, in the character and outstanding features of His teaching, from the leaders of the nation. Now He inaugurates His constructive work. The apostles must be brought to perfect clearness as to what He is whom they have elected to follow, in contrast with the vague oscillations of public opinion. Therefore Jesus sets Himself to draw out their belief in a definite form. The confession which emerges is the result of experience and discernment on the part of the apostles (see John vi. 68, 69, 'thou hast the words of eternal life', and 'we believe and know') it is also the result of revelation on the part of God (see v. 17). For there were many others who had seen and heard what they had, and had followed Jesus for a time, yet had not grasped His dignity and His claim. The confession of Peter, as the representative apostle, is henceforth the foundation of the new society. He and His fellows are to hand on the authority and teaching of Jesus; to administer His kingdom and to lay down its laws. All this is entrusted to St. Peter as the

representative and type of the apostles, both of their strength and of their weakness, for the truth of Christ works through personality; from the first His word to His disciples is, 'Ye are the light'; 'Ye are the salt'. But for the present this great revelation is to be kept secret. It must first do its work *in* them before it can do its work *through* them.

13. *When Jesus came*: here as often the exact time and the interval between this and the foregoing is uncertain. We may suppose that this journey northwards was a continuation of the withdrawal mentioned in v. 4. *The parts of Cæsarea Philippi*: different from Cæsarea Stratonis on the Mediterranean coast familiar to us in the Acts, where were the chief Roman garrison and the residence of the Roman governor. Cæsarea Philippi was situated among the foothills of the Hermon range, which runs up to a height of 9,000 feet, and near one of the sources of the Jordan, on the site of the earlier city of Paneas (now known as Banias). This was rebuilt and greatly beautified by the tetrarch Philip, and named by him after the emperor Augustus; Cæsarea and after himself, Philippi. The country was mainly pagan, and the disciples were away from the party strife of the Jews. The distance from the lake to Cæsarea Philippi is about twenty-five miles, and the ascent on the road 1,770 feet. The cure of the blind man at Bethsaida Julius (Mark viii. 22-6) probably took place by the way. *Jesus asked*: as they were on the road (Mark viii. 27). *Who do men say*: He wishes them first to realize the contradictions and uncertainties of popular opinion. *That the Son of man*

is? On the title which Jesus used of Himself in the intercourse with His disciples, combining the ideas of lowliness and greatness, see note following viii. 20.

14. Public opinion had not yet arrived at the notion that He was the Messiah, though there may have been partial or tentative guesses at it (John iv. 29, 42; vii. 26). He was believed to be a prophet, though men were puzzled to identify Him, and generally regarded Him as the resurrection of some ancient or modern worthy, John, Elijah, Jeremiah, or some undefined prophet. The two former were connected with the preparation of the way of Messiah. Jeremiah bulks largely in later Judaism. In 2 Macc. ii. 5-7 he hides away the tabernacle till God shall restore the people; and in 13-15 he helps Judas Maccabaeus against the enemy. In 2 Esdras ii. 18, 19 it is promised that Isaiah and Jeremiah will be sent for the help of Israel. His coming again was expected, and he is probably 'the prophet' referred to in John i. 21; vi. 14; vii. 40.

15. The question is very emphatic. But ye, *who say ye that I am?* It is like a chemical, cast into a fluid, which precipitates the essential element before held in solution. Jesus desires to ensure the nucleus of a community whose cohesion is based on a definite recognition of His person.

16. *Simon Peter*: as the leader of the band (cp. x. 2; xv. 15; xvii. 1, 4; Luke xxii. 31). *Thou art the Christ*: this was indeed the first message which Andrew had brought to him, before he had met Jesus and received the name of the Rock (John i. 41, 42).

But it does not seem ever before to have been uttered in this emphatic way, as embodying the conviction to which the twelve were ready to commit themselves, and which might involve danger to life itself, considering the attitude of the authorities. For this reason, doubtless, Jesus delayed eliciting this confession till the hostility of His foes had become evident, for He would have His disciples count the cost (Luke xiv. 28). In the words *the Son of the living God* Peter emphasizes the confession of the other apostles after the storm, recorded in xiv. 33, where, however, the article is not used, as here, *the Son* (see notes on that passage). Peter has taken a step further than recognition of Jesus as Messiah, to that of the Revealer of the Father, making a practical application of the words of Jesus in xi. 25-7 (cp. John xx. 31). The God whom He reveals, and with whom He stands in a unique relationship, is *the living God*. In contrast to the idols of the nations He acts and reacts (see Isa. xxxvii. 4, 17; Acts xiv. 15; 1 Thess. i. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 16); He is the Judge (see Heb. x. 31; Rev. xv. 7); He gives life, salvation and protection (see Ps. lxxxiv. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 3; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. xii. 22).

17. *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah*: The first individual beatitude; a blessing on faith which reaches out further than it can see (cp. John xx. 29) and is perfected by confession (cp. Rom. x. 9). The tone of exalted joy which sounds through the Saviour's words shows how much weight He attaches to such confession of truth which before was latent in the mind. He must have been previously aware what

Peter's convictions were, but He does not utter His beatitude, till Peter utters his belief. The belief which shrinks from confession is lacking in the vital element of trust in Christ, that He is able to deliver, and that, even if He demands sacrifice now, yet to be on His side is worth all else (see x. 32; Luke xii. 8; Rom. viii. 31; Dan. iii. 17, 18). *Flesh and blood*: that is, mortal man, who is weak, fallible, and sinful (see John i. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 50, and dependent on the impressions of sense (John vi. 66). Such was the source of the fluctuating opinions in v. 14. This revelation, though it be the result of a human process, is none the less a divine act, from *my Father*; the Father whom Jesus came to reveal; the Father of Spirits (Heb. xii. 9) who can touch our spirits directly, for in Him we live (Acts xvii. 27-8). In Jesus Peter had found the Father (see John xiv. 9-11) who is in heaven, so exalted, yet so near.

18. *I also say unto thee*: a reciprocal confession on the part of Jesus (cp. x. 32). *Peter* and *rock* are in English different words and in Greek, the genders are different though the root is the same; but in Aramaic there is only one word for both, namely, *Kepha* which designates both the man and the thing. This name was given by Jesus (John i. 42), and it is regularly used of him by St. Paul (see 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 22). The name, long since given, is now confirmed, but in what respect? Not in respect of personal character. Peter remains energetic, affectionate, loyal, impulsive, and occasionally wavering. However much he is trained by the Spirit of God,

we see his weakness appearing many years after (Gal. ii. 11-13). He stands confessed as Peter in respect of his true faith and bold confession, though as Simon he would still need to 'turn' (Luke xxii. 32). That faith and that confession are to be the essential notes of the future community of Christ; *upon this rock I will build my church*. To build His Church is the supreme object of Christ's life and work (cp. xx. 28 with John xi. 52; x. 16); and it has to be carried out through His apostles. At this time of their testing (Luke xxii. 28) Jesus has gone down to the bed-rock of faith and confession, and now begins to unfold to them the plan of His building. The Church, in Greek *ekklesia* (used here and xviii. 17 only in the Gospels), in Hebrew *qahal*, is the assembly of God's people (cp. Heb. xii. 23). In the Old Testament this community is compared to a vineyard (Isa. v. 1-7); a flock (Ps. c. 3; Ezek. xxxiv); a bride (Jer. ii. 2); and a building (Ps. cxviii. 22, 23). It is the last of these images which our Lord here takes up again, after previously employing it (John ii. 19-21) with reference to Himself, and it is carried out in more detail by St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 10; Eph. ii. 21). As the body of Jesus was the temple in which God dwelt, so would His Church be the place of His presence and manifestation (John xviii. 22, 23). The Church like the individual disciples (x. 16-39) will have a long-drawn struggle with the forces of destruction from without and decay from within, but *the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*. Hades, the underworld or abode of the dead, stands for the powers

of death and dissolution; it is imaged as a fortress whose gates form its strength and security (Ps. cvii. 16; Isa. xlv. 1). Against this the victory of the kingdom of God is certain.

19. Our Lord further explains the relation of the representative Peter to the building which He is about to erect, under a change of metaphor. He has spoken of the apostle-confessor as a foundation; now, viewing the building as erected, or the Church as gathered, He speaks of him as a steward of the house, to whom the keys are entrusted for admission, or exclusion, by means of decisions which will be effectual for binding or loosing, that is for forbidding or allowing, as the need may be. We note that *the kingdom of heaven* is here, though not always, identified with the Church as its manifestation on earth, and hence to the Church's earthly decrees is ascribed a heavenly validity. The image of the keys entrusted to a representative of the king doubtless refers back to the prophecy, in Isa. xxii. 22, of Eliakim, son of Hilkiab, who is to succeed to the office of finance minister and steward of the royal household, and of whom it is said accordingly, 'The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open' (cp. Rev. iii. 7). Among the Jewish rabbis, the words 'bind' and 'loose' were regularly employed in the sense of declaring with authority what was unlawful or lawful.¹ This authority was

¹ Cp. the Arabic *haddl*, i. e. loosed or lawful, and *harim*, i. e. shut off or forbidden.

exercised by Peter, in conjunction with the apostles and elders, when they declared gentile Christians to be free from the restrictions of the Mosaic law as to food, but bade them abstain from the flesh of idol sacrifices, etc. (Acts xv. 5, 19, 20). It was carried out much further in the epistles of St. Paul, with their more detailed ethical directions, in which he applies the principles of our Lord's life and death and resurrection, and of His teaching, to the religious and secular life of Christians. It has been carried on ever since by the Church, in accordance with the circumstances and needs of her members, and it is one of the most important tasks of the Churches in the mission field to exercise with insight and discernment this judicial function. They must base their decisions upon the true confession of Christ's person and work, they must regard the differences of time, place, culture and nationality (for even the decrees of the apostolic council at Jerusalem were not permanently valid as then given); but they must conserve the great principles on which Christ and His apostles acted. Such action of the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in fixing the moral standard of Christianity, has an objective spiritual effect; it binds and looses *in heaven*.

Note on the primacy of St. Peter. (1) In this utterance there is no hint or implication of authority to convey this power to a personal successor. Hence it has nothing to do with the question whether St. Peter was bishop of Rome or not. The historical evidence points the other way, but in any case it has to be considered on its own merits, without

reference to this passage. The interpretation of this passage would not be affected, should evidence emerge to establish what has not been proved, that the first bishop of Rome was the apostle Peter. (2) The passage obviously refers to the apostle as the representative possessor of certain fundamental qualities and activities, which he shared with his fellows. In xviii. 15-20 the same powers are conferred on the whole assembly of the disciples (xviii. 1). When the faith of the confessor fails, he succumbs, like any other, to danger or temptation. (3) This commission is enlarged to the forgiveness and retention of sins, such as the Master had exercised, and extended to all the disciples in John xx. 21-3. Hence St. Paul, when using the metaphor of this saying of our Lord, and doubtless with reference to it in Eph. ii. 20, speaks of the Church as built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets in the plural, including the whole apostolic company.

20. Accordingly Jesus *charged the disciples*, who as a company had accepted the confession of faith made by St. Peter, *that they should tell no man that he was the Christ*. The proclamation that the Messiah had really come in the person of Him whom they merely regarded as His forerunner (v. 14) would have come as an electric shock to the crowds around Jesus, and its proclamation would have upset the balance of the disciples themselves. A foundation may have to be covered up after it has been laid to give it time to settle and meanwhile to keep it from the effects of heat or cold. Jesus would not have the genuine work now begun spoiled by premature excitement or popular

misapprehension (cp. xvii. 9). The beams of His temple must first be seasoned before a weight is rested on them.

XVI. 21-8. THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE
PASSION OF OUR LORD

(MARK viii. 31—ix. 1; LUKE ix. 22-7)

From that time began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumblingblock unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

This at once throws light on the foregoing. Before the apostles can become workers for Jesus, they must adjust the true conception which they had gained of His person to a real grasp of His work, and this needed silence and quiet, for it was no easy lesson to learn,

least of all for the rock-confessor, that 'it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory' (Luke xxiv. 26). In this second stage of instruction Peter lamentably fails; he first has to learn again the lesson of his own weakness, and hard upon his commendation as the foundation and ruler of Christ's Church, he stands forth as a representative and agent of the adversary who would hinder the sacrifice of the cross by which the kingdom was to be founded. How he learned the lesson his Epistle shows (see 1 Pet. i. 11; v. 5-9).

21. *From that time began Jesus*: a new departure was now possible. Having satisfied Himself of the absolute loyalty of His apostles Jesus could venture, not only to refuse the secular position of a Jewish Messiah, but positively to test their loyalty by revealing to them His approaching rejection, shame and death, to be followed, however, by His resurrection. *To show unto his disciples*: in Mark viii. 32 we read that He did it openly, that is, without reserve, for He had given hints before (see John ii. 19; iii. 14; Matt. xii. 40). He had had the awful prospect in His own mind; it must have been a relief to Him to share the dread secret with others, if perchance, they might be moved, like Him, to accept the ordeal for the joy that was set before them also (cp. Heb. xii. 2). Though our Lord told the disciples later (Mark xiii. 32) that He did not know the exact time of the final judgement, because He had *bona fide* accepted the limitations of human nature as to power and knowledge, yet He was filled with the Spirit, and his mind was steeped in Scripture as no other. Hence He clearly predicts

His sufferings and resurrection; but later, when he speaks of the judgement His words are less precise (see notes on ch. xxiv). *He must go unto Jerusalem*: in Galilee He could readily retire beyond the machinations of His persecutors, as on this occasion, but a time would come when He must go into the lion's mouth, and then He would not flinch, for He was under a moral compulsion to sacrifice His life (John x. 11-15). *The elders*: heads of the community, who represented it on the Sanhedrin; *priests*: members of the high-priestly families; *scribes*: theologians of note; for the last two (see note on ii. 4). The three represent the administrative, sacerdotal and theological classes of which the Sanhedrin was composed (cp. v. 22). His fate at their hands, after suffering *many things* which showed their malice, would be *to be killed*, as a ransom (xx. 28), and *be raised up*, an assurance that the gates of Hades shall not prevail (v. 18); which, however, was not understood till its fulfilment enlightened the hearers (cp. xvii. 9; Mark ix. 9, 10). *The third day*: Mark viii. 31 'after three days' (see note on xii. 40 and cp. xxvii. 63, 64).

22. *Peter took him*: laying hold of Him by the garment or arm, and drawing Him aside from the road on which they were (Mark viii. 27) to remonstrate with Him privately; *and began to rebuke him*, because Jesus had begun to show them about His approaching death. He actually does what the friends of Jesus had attempted to do, by way of preventing Him from endangering Himself (Mark iii. 21), because they thought Him beside Himself. In contrast to their behaviour Jesus had shortly afterwards designated His disciples

as His true relations (Mark iii. 31-5); now here is one of these very disciples, and he the leader, forgetting his position, and trying to hold back Jesus from His purpose! *Be it far from thee*: literally 'God be gracious!'; *this shall never be unto thee*: it is but a temporary cloud over thy spirit. In his confession Peter had understood what kind of person fulfilled the ideal of the Christ, the Son of God; he had yet to learn what kind of treatment that Man must experience from the world.

23. *But he turned*: wresting Himself free from the apostle's grasp. *Get thee behind me*: different from the rebuke addressed to the actual Satan (iv. 10) 'Get thee hence'. Peter is trying to interpose his personal opinion and wish between Jesus and His goal; he must learn that his place is only that of the follower. Still Jesus calls him *Satan* or adversary (see on iv. 1) because he is opposing the fulfilment of God's righteousness (iii. 15). He is not the 'devil' of John vi. 70 as applied to Judas Iscariot, but rather he is as a hound called to heel; he has ventured to show his Master the way; he is shown his place. *Thou art a stumbling-block unto me*: wouldest put a hindrance in my way, to make me fall into sin by dereliction of duty (cp. Rom. xiv. 13). This is an inversion of the former interpretation of the name of Peter; instead of being a foundation stone he has become a stone of stumbling (cp. 1 Pet. ii. 8). Why this sad inversion? *For thou mindest not*: i. e. you look at things not as God does, but as man does. This is explained further in the following (see vv. 25, 26).

24. For this verse and the next (cp. x. 38-9). The evangelist there gives the saying about the cross and the life lost and found, as summing up our Lord's warnings regarding the trials and persecutions which were to befall His disciples in the course of their mission as His preachers. Here it is the supplement to the foreshadowing of His own suffering and death, and illustrates the method of His following. It was spoken to *his disciples*, but also to the multitude (Mark viii. 34); for Jesus wished it to be widely understood that His following was to bring no temporal gain or ease. *If any man would come after me*, as the twelve had elected to do. The word 'would', here and in v. 25, means 'wills to'; it implies a definite resolve. Those who make this resolve must remember the enmity of 'the gates of Hades' against the Church, and put away the vain imagination that they can be sharers in its privileges, or in the eternal life of the kingdom (xix. 29), without the sufferings and the sacrifice by which Jesus is about to found it and build it up. *Let him deny himself*: not deny the will to live, as the Buddhist or the Hindu teaches, but the will to save life at the cost of loyalty to Jesus (see v. 25). This is to be done deliberately and systematically. *Take up his cross*: accept the most shameful and painful form of martyrdom (as I am about to do) *and follow me*. We can scarcely imagine how harsh and startling these words must have sounded when first uttered, like the saying of eating His flesh and drinking His blood (John vi. 60); so much so, that they were probably taken to be parabolical, as being

too dreadful to be understood in a literal sense. Yet this severe 'Follow me' is the complement of the gracious 'Come unto me' (xi. 29).

25-6. Man's view and God's view of life (see the last clause of v. 23). One is to save life for self in this world; the other to sacrifice it for God, looking to the world to come; and this latter is the negation of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (v. 11). The saying of v. 25 is one of the few recorded in all the four Gospels (Mark viii. 35; Luke x. 24; John xii. 25); and twice in this Gospel. Doubtless it was one which our Saviour repeated; and it was an effectual encouragement to the first readers and learners not to shrink from martyrdom (see note on x. 39). *What shall a man be profited*: the argument from self-love or expediency is not to be excluded, but used in the right way. If our lives have a real and high value in the sight of God, as Jesus has repeatedly assured us (vi. 26; x. 30, 31), then we should value them no less, only on the right basis, which is, in the last resort, to witness for our heavenly Father (v. 16). We therefore do right to count the cost of serving Christ (op. Luke xiv. 28). The Christian life is constructive, not merely negative, like the Hindu and Buddhist; it is intended to produce a profit, that is to issue in something better for each person than what he started with, and this profit is the perfection of the higher self which is like God (v. 48). So the two sides of the account are balanced against each other. *Gain the whole world*: the prize that was within the grasp of Jesus (iv. 8-9): to the Christian it means all that the world can give

more than he has ever had before; a lure often put before the martyrs of the first centuries, and before the Indian catechumen who has to take the final step. Come back to us, say his own people, and you shall have all that the world can give you, family, fortune and fame. But what is the alternative? *Forfeit his life* (see note on x. 39).

27. The disciple need not hesitate to make this supremely difficult choice, for its reasonableness will be made manifest in due time. *The Son of man* (viii. 20) now so humble, who is giving you this teaching, *shall come in the glory of his Father*: in divine majesty (cp. xix. 28; xxiv. 30). To the claim made in vii. 22-3, to be the Judge at the last day, our Lord now adds that He will exercise this office, as of divine right; possessed of the glory of the Father (John xvii. 1, 5), and commanding the 'angels of God' (xxii. 30) as *his angels* (xiii. 41; xxiv. 31). *Then shall he render*: the same judgement which is ascribed to God (Ps. lxii. 11, 12; Rom. xiv. 12) is ascribed to Christ (2 Cor. v. 10). *According to his deeds*: not his professions (vii. 21-3) but his self-sacrifice and endurance. The claim of Jesus to be the Judge of the world is inseparably bound up with the message of His death and resurrection (v. 21) and so we find St. Peter proclaiming it to Jews in Jerusalem (Acts iii. 13-21), and St. Paul urging it on pagans at Athens (Acts xvii. 31). The redemption accomplished by His death and resurrection makes it possible for men to follow Him, and they will be judged by His standard accordingly.

28. To strengthen His chosen band of disciples, whose thoughts and hopes about the kingdom were so intimately bound up with the fate of the Israelitish nation, Jesus uses the formula of emphasis, *Verily I say unto you*. The deadly enmity of their own people, culminating in the crucifixion which He had just foretold, would be a severe stumbling block in the way of the disciples and the well-disposed, but some of those living should see His vindication. *In no wise taste of death*: though many might do so by way of martyrdom, or otherwise. *Till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom*: (cp. Dan. vii. 13, 14) that is, manifested as a king (cp. Luku xxiii. 42). Repeatedly Jesus impresses on His disciples that His authority will be vindicated by divine judgement within that generation (see x. 23; xxiii. 36; xxiv. 34). The second of these passages especially makes it clear that this judgement took place in the destruction of Jerusalem, which, as we shall see, in chapter xxiv, was the earnest and prelude of the final doom. We have already seen, in x. 23, how Jesus sharply distinguishes between His mission to Israel and that to the world; the one must be completed as the necessary preparation, before the other could commence; so too the judgement on Israel had to come before the world-rule of Christ could take effect unhindered. It was the destruction of Jerusalem which finally severed the Church of Christ from the Jewish nation as such, and left it to seek a world-wide sway.

CHAPTER XVII

xvii. 1-13. THE TRANSFIGURATION

(MARK ix. 2-13; LUKE ix. 28-36)

DURING this week (xvii. 1) the sense of the impending conflict which Jesus had for the first time clearly announced to the twelve, must have been deepening in the heart of the Master, as also the feeling how little His apostles were prepared to meet the great shock. At the close of the time St. Luke tells us that He went up into the mountain to pray (ix. 28). Doubtless He would pray for strength for Himself (cp. Luke xxii. 41; Heb. v. 7) as well as for the disciples, especially Peter (Luke xxii. 31, 32) whose unreadiness for the test had been made so painfully manifest. They needed to learn the lesson of glory through suffering; and in answer to the prayer of Jesus, they are now taught it from the opposite side to that which He had recently exhibited to them, by being permitted to see His glory (2 Pet. i. 17). The transfiguration, therefore, is a further step in the training of the twelve, especially of the chosen three, Peter, James and John. These are taken away apart, and permitted to see

the Son of God in His essential splendour, yet conversing with His heavenly companions on the death of sacrifice which lay before Him (Luke ix. 31). The same injunction of secrecy is imposed upon them as after the confession of the Messiahship, and Peter's misconception of the abiding presence of the glory of Jesus is corrected by the overshadowing of the cloud of the divine Presence from which Jesus emerges alone. The effect of this section on the first learners may be gathered from such passages as John i. 14: 'We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father;' and 2 Pet. i. 16-18: 'He received from God the Father honour and glory . . . in the holy mount.' For our Lord Himself the transfiguration was a foretaste of the joy for the sake of which He was ready to endure the coming cross (Heb. xii. 2) and a strengthening for that great ordeal.

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and he was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him. And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise,

and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only.

And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed. Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them. Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

1. *After six days*: Luke ix. 28 'about eight days after'; two different ways of designating the same period; one reckoning the surplus hours at either end as a day apiece; the other omitting them (cp. 'after three days' and 'the third day' xxvii. 63, 64). It was a sacred week, during which many things must have been taught, especially the meaning of 'he must' in xvi. 21; when the disciples had in some measure taken this in, they needed the vision of this section and were ready for it. *Peter, James and John*: the special companions of Jesus at the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark v. 37), and during His passion (Matt. xxvi. 37); the leader of the apostles, the first martyr, and the disciple whom Jesus loved. *A high mountain*: probably one of the Hermon range. *Apart*: with a special view to some revelation or teaching (cp. xiv. 13; xx. 17). From Luke ix. 29-32 we gather that they went up in the evening, Jesus on this occasion allowing the chosen three to be with Him

when He retired for prayer. As He prayed night fell, and the companions slept.

2. But something else happened—*he was transfigured*: an anticipation of the assumption of His spiritual body (1 Cor. xv. 44-5). Essentially He is the effulgence of the Father's glory (Heb. i. 3); and this now shone forth from Him for a time, affecting His material body and even His clothing. *As the sun* (cp. Rev. i. 16; 2 Cor. iii. 7). The same Greek expression for *transfigured* is used of the moral change which takes place in the Christian through his union with Christ in Rom. xii. 2 and 2 Cor. iii. 18. *Before them*: 'when they were fully awake' (Luke ix. 32).

3. *And behold*: in addition, it would seem, to the first vision of the glorified Master they perceive two others approach Him, and hear them address Him as in the converse of friends. Luke (ix. 31) tells us that the subject of the conversation was His approaching decease at Jerusalem (xvi. 21). By what the disciples hear, or in virtue of the state of spiritual exaltation which enable them to behold the vision, they recognize the two as *Moses and Elijah*. They represented the Law and the Prophets, to the fulfilment of which Jesus had pledged Himself (v. 17). Both had departed this life by God's special call (Deut. xxxiv. 6; 2 Kings ii. 11); the one was the mediator of the law (Gal. iii. 19) the other the restorer of Jehovah's worship (1 Kings xviii. 31-2); one was the prophet who typified Messiah, the other was sent to make ready His way (Deut. xviii. 15; Mal.

iv. 5); while Jesus was the end of the law for righteousness (Rom. x. 4) and the fulfilment of the prophets for forgiveness (Acts x. 43). And the subject of their conversation is on the great event to which prophecy pointed (Luke xxiv. 25-7).

4. *And Peter* seeing them ready to depart (Luke ix. 33) *answered*: that is began to say. *It is good*: it must have seemed to Peter as if the difficulties connected with the late announcement of his Master's shameful death were now solved; not only is His glory manifested, but the two greatest of the prophets are here to attest His dignity; may such companions never be withdrawn! Might there not be 'tents of meeting' with them and Jesus, as Moses had with Jehovah in the wilderness? (Cp. Exod. xxxiii. 7-11). They could make booths of the branches lying round on the wooded slope, and be servants to the glorious ones, one for each (Mark ix. 5 and Luke ix. 33). However natural, the idea was, of course, absurd, 'for he wist not what to answer' (Mark ix. 6).

5. Instead of being called upon to provide three tents, *a bright cloud overshadowed them*: the symbol of the Shekinah (*sukinat*) or abiding Presence of Jehovah (Exod. xxxiii. 9), and they were all enveloped in it (Luke ix. 34). *My beloved Son*: (see on iii. 17); there it was addressed to Jesus (thou art) here to the disciples. *Well pleased*: especially in His self-devotion to sacrificial death which Jesus had announced (cp. Isa. liii. 10; xli. 1). *Hear ye him*: as before you heard Moses (cp. Deut. xviii. 15; Acts iii. 22). There is yet much for you to learn when He speaks to you of His cross.

6. *Fell on their face* : in adoration (cp. Exod. xxxiii. 10) acknowledging the presence of God and its awe (Rev. i. 17; Luke v. 8; Matt. xiv. 33).

7. *Jesus came* : for the purpose of prayer He had gone a little way from them (cp. xxvi. 39, 42, 44). *Touched them* : in sympathy, to assure them of His presence (cp. Dan. viii. 18; x. 10; Rev. i. 17). *Be not afraid* : as on the Lake in the storm (xiv. 27).

8. *Jesus only* : that was enough; they must learn to trust in Him without sight of glory.

9. *As they were coming down* : on the next morning, for on arrival they found a crowd gathered who had been some time with the other apostles. *Tell the vision to no man* : the term vision is in Acts vii. 31 translated 'sight'. In both places it means what has been seen, without reference to the nature of the perception. The three apostles may in this case have been in a condition of ecstasy; but in any case spiritual beings can only be perceived by those whose inner sense is open, though by their presence perceptions of sight and sound may be evoked. The reason for reticence was the same as in the case of the Messiahship (xvi. 20) to guard against the expectations, so readily raised, of an outward kingdom. *Until the Son of man be risen* : That event would give them the true perspective, looking back to the death and forward to the ascension of Jesus. The prohibition was understood, but not its limitation (see Mark ix. 10).

10. It is another point which perplexes them. Jesus had forbidden them to mention the vision of

Elijah, as if it were of no present moment. Why then did the scribes think and say so much of it? If Elijah was to do the great work of preparing Jehovah's way, how was it that he had appeared only for a fleeting moment from the unseen world? *Elijah must first come*, before the manifestation of Messiah, of which the transfiguration was surely a prelude (see Mal. iv).

11. *Elijah indeed cometh*: the prophecy is true, but in a wider sense than you imagine. The scribes held that Elijah would settle the ritual questions that were in dispute amongst them, bring back the golden pot of manna which was once in the ark (Exod. xiv. 33, 34), and the like. His work says Jesus will be a greater one, to *restore all things* which were decayed among the people of Jehovah, especially their moral and social condition (Mal. iv. 6), and so make them really fit for the coming of Messiah.

12. Understand also that the prophecy is spiritually fulfilled in the Baptist. *Elijah is come already*. The statement is emphasized by the formula, *I say unto you* (cp. v. 22), indicating a new interpretation which might not easily be accepted, because it went deeper than the old. *They knew him not*: apparently his coming was futile, because he was not recognized as that which he truly was, namely, the forerunner of Messiah. Hence *they did unto him whatsoever they listed*: far from realizing the critical importance of the man and his message, they treated him as a nine days' wonder which might be ignored when it suited them (cp. John v. 35: 'Ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light'). The

common people gave him some attention, but no thorough-going reformation resulted; while their leaders eyed him askance and their prince murdered him. Nevertheless the work of Elijah was done by John, despite seeming failure (cp. 1 Kings xix. 14, 18). *Even so*, in death and apparent failure, but also in the unseen and eventual result, *shall the Son of man also suffer of them*. Our Lord's second prediction of His death.

13. *Then understood the disciples*: (cp. xvi. 12) they were gradually being educated into the method of Jesus, and learning to understand His parables. (On the importance of understanding see xiii. 13, 19, 23, 51; xv. 10). There was indeed a great contrast between the glorious visitant of the night before and the headless prisoner of Machaerus; but John the Baptist had truly fulfilled the office of Elijah (cp. xi. 14; Luke i. 17).

xvii. 14-20. HEALING OF AN EPILEPTIC BOY

(MARK ix. 14-29; LUKE ix. 37-42)

In each of the Synoptics this incident is connected closely with the preceding, suggesting, as is generally recognized, that the true use of seasons of spiritual exaltation is to enable us, with no help but that of 'Jesus only' to meet the ills and sufferings of a sinful world. To the disciples this incident taught the lesson that, however much of power Jesus had bestowed on them (x. 1), and with however much success they had exercised it (Mark vi. 1), yet its effect remained dependent on constant faith in their Master. And further the remainder of the apostles had to

learn how little progress they had made in the practice of faith; while their Master too, had to experience the pain of finding a feeble and sluggish response on the part of those whom He loved best.

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a man, kneeling to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is epileptic, and suffereth grievously: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft-times into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked him; and the devil went out from him: and the boy was cured from that hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast it out? And he saith unto them, Because of your little faith: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

14. *When they were come*: on the day following the night of transfiguration (Luke ix. 37). St. Mark on this occasion as in v. 1-20 (the healing of the Gadarene demoniac) gives us more details. That morning the nine disciples had been greatly confounded by finding themselves unable to heal a case of demoniac possession, connected with epilepsy which, like many others, had been brought to them. The scribes are wrangling with them, taunting them with the powerlessness of their Master's name, and using the opportunity to undermine His influence with the people; and the crowd is looking on with the interest

always taken in a dispute. Many of the people, seeing Jesus approaching, salute Him; the father of the lad is in despair, but Jesus inquires into the case and the man, with renewed hope, comes forward to Him *kneeling*.

15. His son is *epileptic*: literally, moonstruck (cp. iv. 24). Epilepsy when connected with insanity may vary with the phases of the moon. His falling into the fire and the water may indicate a suicidal tendency, or simply the injury to which epileptic patients are subject when the fits suddenly come on.

16. *I brought him to thy disciples*: showing that not only was the fame of Jesus as a Healer widespread, but that His disciples also had the reputation of being able to heal in His name. *They could not cure him*: it may be that the father had brought his boy simply as a forlorn hope without much conviction, but at any rate the apostles had lacked faith in their absent Master, and so had used His name without effect.

17. *O faithless and perverse generation!* addressed to the whole gathering: the wrangling and maliciously triumphant scribes; the perturbed and confused disciples; the gaping and curious crowd. The lack of faith was shown especially by the disciples, perversity by the scribes whose office it was to promote faith in the divine revelation, yet who were doing their best to destroy it. *How long shall I be with you?* The physical effort in ascending the high mountain, succeeded by strenuous prayer and glorious vigil, and again the descent, must have left Jesus wearied. Now even, coming back to His own disciples, He feels His loneliness, with no really kindred spirit at hand.

This dissonance of His environment went through all the earthly life of our Saviour, but was felt with special acuteness at certain times. It was one of the sufferings through which He was made perfect (Heb. ii. 10) and His followers who try to redeem others will often experience it with Him. This expression of pain seems to have been a kind of 'aside'; then He turns to the father, with the ever ready word of comfort, *Bring him to me.*

18. *Jesus rebuked him*: that is the demon to whom the disease was attributed (see note following viii. 28-34). St. Mark (ix. 25-6) gives a detailed account of how, when our Lord turns to the boy, the sight of Him produces a violent fit, which is intensified when our Lord commands the demon to come out, till death seems to supervene, when Jesus raises up the boy, and he is *cured from that hour*: the fits do not recur (cp. Acts x. 38).

19-20. The experience of that day had shaken their faith in the commission received from Jesus, and both to the disciples and to Him it was of the first importance that it should be restored. So after the crowds have dispersed they come to Him *apart* with the question, *Why could not we cast it out?* The answer is no new one; it enforces what Jesus had said before, and what He had occasion to repeat often (see vi. 30; viii. 26; xiv. 31; xvi. 8; xxi. 21, 22); *because of your little faith*: it was real, but it was weak. Lack of faith on the part of the father may have had something to do with the failure (Mark ix. 22-4); but Jesus is concerned to impress on them the weakness

which it lay with them to remove. He expresses the truth in one of His characteristic images. *As a grain of mustard seed*: minute, but with the power of vital growth and incalculable spread (cp. xiii. 31-2). *This mountain*: possibly the great mass of Hermon, the arduousness of whose ascent they had recently experienced; a proverbial designation of an immense obstacle or difficulty; a rabbi skilled in the solution of difficulties was called an uprooter of mountains (see 1 Cor. xiii. 2). *Nothing shall be impossible*: provided that the faith is living. The faith inculcated by Jesus is always exercised on a divine revelation or command, as in the case of the commission to cast out demons, which He had conferred on His disciples. It is not merely a personal subjective conviction, like the Hindu idea of faith, which fixes upon any object that the believer chooses with sufficient determination, and is supposed to make that object effectual for that which the believer takes it to be. The object of the true and effective faith to which Jesus attaches such immense importance and efficiency, can only be that which God has revealed or which He wills and commands. To carry out this is possible to the believer, though all else may seem to be against it. His faith

Laughs at impossibilities,

And says, It shall be done.

Verse 21, omitted by the Revised Version, seems to have been brought in by a scribe from Mark ix. 29. In copying a parallel passage such as this in a Gospel roll, which would be circulated without the others that we have bound up together, it was not unusual

for the scribe to enter on the margin supplementary passages from another Gospel by way of elucidation. When the roll was copied again the next scribe might occasionally misunderstand the marginal addition, and suppose that it was intended to go into the text, and so insert it there. Very many of the varying readings noticed in the margin of the R.V. originated in this way.

xvii. 22-3. ANOTHER ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DEATH
AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

(MARK ix. 30-2; LUKE ix. 43-5)

And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised up. And they were exceeding sorry.

22-3. Often called the second announcement, but in reality the third of those recorded in this Gospel (cp. xvi. 21; xvii. 12). *While they abode in Galilee*: to which they had returned, probably after the last narrated incident; and before the departure for Peræa mentioned in xix. 1. These verses seem to be intended as a summary of the principal topic of our Lord's teaching at that time. The new element as compared with former announcements lies in the words, *shall be delivered up into the hands of men*. The death of the Master is to be brought about through treachery; He will be betrayed—by whom? It is a repetition of the hint given in John vi. 70, 71. The repudiation of earthly messianic dignity and emolument was doing its work in the heart of Judas Iscariot and estranging

him from his Master. Jesus uses repeated occasions to rouse his conscience, and also to warn the other disciples, for, however ready Jesus was to accept the fate that impended, yet He would fain have saved Judas from his sin and the others from the ghastly shock of treachery on the part of an apostle. *They shall kill him*: how, was already hinted in xvi. 24. *He shall be raised*: (cp. Mark ix. 32; Luke ix. 45); these passages show that the disciples were afraid to ask Him the meaning of this prediction; possibly for fear of a rebuke, such as that which Peter had experienced. His and their active opposition to the sad announcement was broken: till they were enlightened only sorrow remained (cp. John xvi. 6).

xvii. 24-7. INCIDENT OF THE TRIBUTE MONEY

It is characteristic that this should be narrated only by Matthew the tax-gatherer. To him the attitude assumed by Jesus towards theocratic taxation would be of special interest, as well as to his readers in Palestine, while the temple was still standing. The union of lowliness and majesty in the earthly life of our Saviour, was a constant puzzle to His disciples, and it became acute when the question was raised how He, the Messiah and Son of God, would deal with a demand for the temple tribute which was levied as a ransom for the soul of each Israelite, regarded as a sinful man (see Exod. xxx. 12). Jesus meets the situation in such a manner as to show that, while He accepts solidarity with his sinful people, yet He does

so freely, without prejudice to His position as the Son of God who has access to all treasures of knowledge and power. His command to Peter must have reminded that apostle of the occasion when he first realized the power of Jesus and fell at His knees, confessing himself a sinful man (Luke v. 8). Thus the incident is a further step in the training of the disciples. Not only was treachery stirring in the breast of Judas Iscariot, but among the others the spirit of ambition and personal rivalry was working (xviii. 1). Before, therefore, Simon Peter can put to Him a question about rank he gives him a lesson on self-repression, which He soon followed by the teachings on humility and forgiveness recorded in chapter xviii. The first learners would be taught by this passage how to bear themselves towards traditional observances and conventions which are not in themselves felt to be binding. If to set them at naught might be a cause of stumbling to others, we should restrict our liberty and accept them, yet let it be known on what ground we do so. There are some, for instance, who hold free views as to what is permissible on Sunday. But if they consider that by repudiating traditional obligations connected with the day of rest, they will cause others to stumble and perhaps turn away from the moral obligations of a Christian, they will think it right to restrict their liberty, and accept what is not in their view actually incumbent on them. St. Paul has developed this principle in Rom. xiv and 1 Cor. viii.

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received the half-shekel came to Peter, and said, Doth not your

master pay the half-shekel? He saith, Yea. And when he came into the house, Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, Therefore the sons are free. But, lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

24. *When they were come to Capernaum*: for a temporary stay after their wanderings. *The half-shekel* was the poll-tax commanded by the law (see Exod. xxx. 11-16); 'every man a ransom for his soul'; it was expended for the maintenance of the temple and its worship. It was payable in the month of Adar or March, and may have been now a good deal overdue, Jesus having been away outside the tax-collector's beat, in Gentile territory. The collectors *came to Peter*, probably because Jesus was making His home with him (see Mark i. 29).

25. Peter hastily answers, *Yea*. He had not reflected on what was involved in his confession of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. To realize what one's beliefs mean in practice is a slow process, and we must not be impatient if it takes the disciples of Christ some time to do so in our own day and place, nor treat inconsistencies with harshness, but rather constructively, as Jesus dealt with Simon. Possibly he had wanted to get rid of the tax-collector quickly, so as to have the way clear for the great question that they were about

to ask (xviii. 1). *The house*: the tax man seems to have accosted Peter on the way, before they had actually reached his house. *Jesus spake first*: so as to anticipate what Peter might have to say by way of introducing the subject, to take him at once to the root of the matter and prepare for what was to come after this incident. By way of analogy, Jesus brings in *the kings of the earth*, in contrast to the 'Great King' (v. 35), for whose house this contribution was intended. *Toll*: (Rom. xiii. 7) taxes on merchandise; *tribute*: (xxii. 17, 19) taxes on persons or land, or, as we might say, indirect and direct taxation.

26. *Sons*: in this and the previous verse it is a generic plural; the royal family is free of taxes. *Strangers*: are not national aliens but those outside the royal family. Jesus plainly implies that He, as God's Son, is free from the impost raised for the maintenance of His Father's house (Luke ii. 49). Compare the argument of St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 1).

27. *Lest we cause them to stumble*: that is repel them and hinder their conversion. Jesus knew that His adversaries had already taken advantage of what He had said about the temple (John ii. 19) to accuse Him of despising it (Matt. xxvi. 61; xxvii. 40); and others less embittered might say, 'He refuses to be our King, but He will not contribute to the worship of God.' So He orders provision to be made for the payment. He might have had the sum paid out of the common fund (John xiii. 29) but He desires to show that He is not dependent upon men. *The sea* is, of course, the lake hard by. The *shekel* or stater was a silver coin, worth about two

rupees. *For me and thee*: no burden was to fall on His host. If Jesus thus accepted the responsibility of the support of God's house and its ministrations, how much more are we bound, as members of His Church to bear our share in doing the same! Yet there are many Christians, not of one race only, who do as good as nothing for this purpose.

CHAPTER XVIII

xviii. 1-14. THE STANDARD OF GREATNESS IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM

(MARK ix. 33-47; LUKE ix. 46-8)

WE see from Mark ix. 34 that, notwithstanding the announcement of the sufferings and death of Jesus (or perhaps as a makeweight to it) the spirit of rivalry had been growing among the apostles, possibly owing to the pre-eminence granted to Peter, followed by the special consideration shown to James and John, who presently displayed their ambition (xx. 20, 21). We see that, during this period of their training, personal self-seeking appears from time to time among the apostles, and is dealt with by Jesus. He teaches them on this occasion that real greatness consists, first in personal humility, and next in service of the lowliest; and that to cause the humblest to fall through selfish pride is in truth the deepest degradation. The root of true greatness is esteem for weak brethren (Rom. xii. 10) as the sheep of Jesus (John xxi. 15-17). Failing this, the disciple is in danger of losing eternal life, and should submit to the greatest personal deprivations to escape the doom.

In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me: but whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh! And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire. See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

1. *In that hour*: immediately after their arrival at Capernaum (xvii. 24). It would seem as if all that

is recorded thence to the end of chapter xviii belonged to one day. Matthew notices only the fact that the disciples brought the following question before Jesus; Mark (ix. 33-4) tells us that they came because called by Jesus, and that He had to elicit the question by His inquiry. The words *who then* imply that there had been a previous discussion of the matter, and that they wished to settle it by reference to the Master. St. Mark says clearly that they had been disputing on the way who was greatest among them. *In the kingdom of heaven*: when it should be fully manifested (cp. xx. 21). Some of them may have hoped and maintained that the preference now accorded to certain members of the circle would then be a thing of the past. Even if the keys of that kingdom were permanently granted to Peter (xvi. 19) still, when it was fully organized, there would be an order of dignity and precedence in the offices to be filled; and generally in such matters one's eventual position depends on pushing one's claims beforehand.

2. But in the kingdom of Jesus the very opposite rule holds good (cp. xx. 25-8; Luke xxii. 25-6). *He called to him a little child*: perhaps one of Peter's own, and not only *set him in the midst of them*, but embraced him as He spoke (Mark ix. 36). This action of our Saviour and His following words form the charter of childhood; they lie at the basis of the consideration and attention which childhood receives in Christian culture, for throughout the passage the thought of childhood is not lost, though 'child' may also mean a weak disciple.

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3. The word *verily* introduces the following as a specially important saying. *Except ye turn*: you are going exactly in the wrong direction by asserting each his claims to the first place; if you wish to reach *the kingdom of heaven* (here a moral and spiritual condition, rather than a society), you must turn round and go in the contrary direction. In other words, you must *become as little children* are, humble, trustful, docile, yielding themselves to their parents to direct and mould (cp. xi. 25; v. 3, 6). Else you can *in no wise enter* the kingdom (cp. John iii. 5) let alone be great in it. This turning, or 'conversion', as it is called in the A.V. is that act of moral decision on the part of man, which corresponds to the gift of the new birth or of restoration from a fall, on the part of God.

4. This turning to become as children must be not only an act done once for all, but a habit and a disposition; *whosoever shall humble himself*: that is from an inward impulse, for mere outward self-humiliation is the most loathsome of hypocrisies (cp. Col. ii. 18). True self-humiliation is first in mind (Pbil. ii. 3); then in word (viii. 8; xv. 27) and in deed (John xiii. 3-17). *The same is the greatest* (xxiii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 5-6); for true greatness lies in the unconsciousness of being great.

Not only personal humility is demanded, but the service of the humblest disciple; by *one such little child* is meant one resembling him in his spiritual development, who is weak and young in the faith (see x. 42). Even such a one is to be received into

brotherly fellowship, with all its claims upon us (cp. Rom. xiv. 1; Matt. xxv. 40).

6. Between the last verse and this Mark (ix. 38) and Luke (ix. 49) insert the complaint of John against a separated disciple who was exorcising demons in the name of Jesus. Matthew, with his method of grouping cognate sayings, has omitted the incident and links on this to the words of the previous verse, by way of contrast. Corresponding to the greatness of the privilege of those who receive a weak disciple for the sake of his Master is the depth of the condemnation into which those fall who cause one *little one* to stumble, that is, repel him from the following of Christ by their haughtiness or lack of sympathy. Rather than incur the penalty of so great a sin it were better that such a person should be remorselessly drowned. *A great millstone*: a millstone turned by an ass, like the large ones here turned by oxen. To drown with a stone tied round the neck was a punishment in use among the Greeks and Romans for certain crimes of great enormity. The idea is purposely heightened by the mention of a stone far larger than any that would ever be used for drowning a man. Better have a stone tied round your neck than put one in the way of your brother. *Which believe on me*: here only in the Synoptics does Jesus explicitly speak of Himself as an object of faith; but often in John (e. g. vii. 38). *The depth of the sea*: here meaning the ocean proper; one of the few recorded cases where it is mentioned by Jesus (see xxi. 21; xxiii. 15; Luke xxi. 25).

7. *Woe unto the world* : this lament of Jesus over the fact of wilful sin gives us a glimpse into His heart. Sin is to Him a thing contrary both to the will of God and to the ideal of creation. This is exactly opposite to the pantheistic idea of sin as presented in Hinduism, which regards sin as a temporary imperfection or ignorance that does not interfere with the perfection of the whole nor cause concern to the deity. The other woes of Jesus recorded in this Gospel are: xi. 21, on impenitence; xxiii. 13, on hypocrisy; xxiv. 19, on sufferers under calamity; xxvi. 24, on the betrayer. *Occasions of stumbling* : hindrances in the way of righteousness, from whichever side they may be viewed, in humanity as a whole they are inevitable, in the individual they are wilful and therefore avoidable. They *must needs . . . come*, for evil as well as good is self-propagating, and has its own laws of working, so that it is as possible to predict percentages of crimes as of diseases. But Jesus avoided all such occasions of stumbling (xvii. 27) and His followers are bound to do so too; therefore, *woe to that man* : the brunt of moral responsibility falls on the individual who chooses so to act. It is a greater sin to lead into evil than to be led.

8-9. Therefore it is of no avail for a man to excuse himself by appealing to the fact that there are and always will be persons and things that tempt us, almost irresistibly, to evil; what each one has to do is to use the most trenchant and effective means for counteracting the temptation. Here, as in v. 29-30, the hand and foot on the one side, and the eye on

the other are used, as being the most necessary and precious organs of action and perception, to indicate the most necessary activities and enjoyments of our life. It is quite in accordance with the intense earnestness of our Lord's moral teaching that He should use this image once and again. In the earlier passage, however, it applies rather to the danger of lustfulness, here to a natural tendency to pride and scornfulness. Whatever fosters the self-centred unsympathetic spirit, we are to cut off remorselessly. A warning needed by the strong and vigorous in this and every land.

10. Not only the danger to one's own salvation from the loveless, overbearing spirit is to be considered, but also the value of the humblest soul in the sight of God. If we are called upon to exercise vigilance or self-denial on behalf of an insignificant person let us not suppose that we are asked to do a trivial act; it is infinitely worth while. Thus the words *despise not one of these little ones* appeal to a nobler motive than that of even spiritual self-preservation; we are to value what, and as, God values; and also we are to remember that 'stumbling' may be caused by neglect and contempt, as well as by positive demoralization. *In heaven*: the unseen world of bliss and purity, in which the presence of God is fully realized. *Their angels*: here, as in xvi. 27 and xv. 31, Jesus adopts the belief in angels which was questioned by the Sadducees (Acts xxiii. 8). The meaning of this and the following words seems to be that, as the angels are regarded as 'sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation' (Heb. i. 14), so those

who minister to the least and weakest of such inheritors *behold the face* of God (Luke i.19) to receive His commands for such service (Ps. ciii. 20-1) no less than those engaged on what might be held more weighty tasks (cp. Acts xii. 15; Matt. i. 20; ii. 13). This shows both the value set on the lowliest by God, and that His mightiest ministers set the example of special care for them. Verse 11 in the A.V. is brought in from Luke xix. 10 (cp. on xvii. 21).

12-13. Not only angels do such service with zeal, but One higher than the angels. This parable, no less than that of Luke xv. 4-7, points to Jesus as embodying the sympathetic love of God. The *little ones*, or weak disciples, are like sheep, easily going astray, but also like them, in being under the care of a true shepherd who will seek such. And inasmuch as this going astray is universal (Isa. liii. 6) the parable has its universal application. The one sheep may stand for the insignificant race of human beings (Ps. viii. 3, 4); the ninety and nine for the countless worlds which God rules; the Shepherd leaving them, for the Incarnation; the 'seeking', for the life of the incarnate Son (Luke xiii. 6; xix. 10; John iv. 23). *And if so be that he find it*: the conditional form of the sentence hints that the fate of the lost one still depends on his choice; not every sought one is found; each must will to come (cp. John v. 40). *He rejoiceth over it more*: the particular emotion of joy is stronger, not because He loves the others less, but because that for which one has made a sacrifice is more keenly appreciated than that which has always been a sure possession (Luke xv.

31-2). If thus to seek the erring is a divine glory, how much more must true human greatness stand in serving them!

14. For this is *the will of your Father which is in heaven*: He would not have them perish; a clear negation of any predestination to damnation. That *will* is the supreme law of the kingdom of heaven (cp. vi. 10; vii. 21; xii. 50; xxi. 31); even for Jesus Himself (xxvi. 42); and it is for the salvation of all (John iv. 34; vi. 39; 1 Tim. ii. 4).

xviii. 15-20. HOW TO RECLAIM THE ERRING BROTHER

The existence of stumbling blocks reminds us that sin always affects the neighbour of the sinner as well as the sinner himself. If I am not to put a stumbling block in the way of my brother, how am I to deal with him if he does so to me? Notwithstanding the parable of the tares and wheat, it could clearly not be the intention of Jesus that evil-doers should be allowed to continue unhindered in the Church. This was a matter of great importance for the earliest generation of Christians, just as it is for us in a land where the Christian Church is in its infancy. The erring brother is to be brought back, and this will be the aim of all true Church discipline, 'if so be that' he will allow himself to be 'gained'; otherwise there must be a method established of separating the sound members of the Church from the unsound. Therefore the evangelist gives here the principles which our Lord laid down on this matter, and by which He prevented the

unity of the twelve, which was then endangered by unbrotherly feeling, from being broken, and eliminated the one diseased sheep from the flock (cp. John xvii. 12). Later we find these principles translated into practice by the great evangelist St. Paul (cp. 1 Cor. v.; 2 Cor. ii. 5-11).

And if thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear *thee* not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

15. *If thy brother sin against thee*: the converse of your putting a stumbling block in his way. There is a possibility of the disciples of Jesus falling from the position of God's children and brothers to one another, as shown in the case of Judas Iscariot; but this ultimate possibility is to be obviated in every possible way; first by the great solvent of misunderstandings, perfect frankness between brother and brother—*show him his fault between thee and him alone*. The law of Moses inculcated the same principle (see Lev. xix. 17). It is the converse of the disciples'

behaviour to the outsider, from whom he is patiently to bear wrong (see v. 39). The word *alone* is very essential; it is the contrary of the talebearing to others about injuries received, referred to in Lev. xix. 16. Thus the way is made easy to show love to the offended brother and for him to confess his fault. Few quarrels will survive this remedy when sincerely applied. *Thou hast gained thy brother*: (cp. 1 Cor. ix. 19; 1 Pet. iii. 1). By his breach of the bond of brotherly love he was in danger of being lost to you, becoming 'as the Gentile' (v. 17); when that bond is knitted again, he is restored in a closer union than before (cp. Philem. 15-16). At this there will be joy such as that over the lost sheep (v. 13).

16. *If he hear thee not*: even then there is a step to be taken before full publicity is given to the matter, in the interests both of brotherly love, so as to make it easier for him to confess and be reconciled, and of prudence, that the grievance alleged may be fully established by competent evidence (see Deut. xix. 15). This stage corresponds in effect to the *panchayat* in our communities. The more differences among Christians can be settled in the *biradars*, rather than brought before a formal court, even of the Church, the better for our happiness and strength. The idea of Christians suing one another in a court of law does not even enter into consideration here (cp. 1 Cor. vi. 1-8), where St. Paul again develops the principles of his Master for Christians in Gentile surroundings.

17. *The church*: (see xvi. 18) the only other passage in the Gospels where the word is used. In the former

passage the foundation of the Church is laid on a true confession; here its maintenance is conditioned by the active spirit of love (cp. Eph. iv. 15): 'dealing truly in love . . . grow up in all things into him'. There will be two stages of discipline: (1) the Church will admonish the offender; *and if he refuse to hear the church*; (2) she will exclude him from her fellowship, leaving him in the position of *the Gentile and the publican*; in the Jewish way of speaking this designates the two sides of estrangement from God—the ignorance of the pagan, and the apostasy of the unfaithful Jew.

18. Our Lord gives His Church the power of sanction for her administration of discipline, repeating with emphasis (verily, etc.) to the company of the apostles as a whole what He had said to St. Peter as their leader in xvi. 19. The Church is to have authority to lay down laws both of prohibition and command (*bind and loose*) and to administer them; and these laws and decisions will carry divine authority, as indicated by the repetition of the words *in heaven*.

19. This divine authority is exercised not by secular means (as in the case of the Jewish courts, who scourged, etc.), but by the spiritual forces of united prayer: *if two of you shall agree on earth*, when gathered together (v. 20) especially for the affairs of the kingdom, . . . *it shall be done . . . in heaven*. The power thus conferred is unlimited; *as touching anything that they shall ask*; but the negation of a limit to the power of united prayer must be understood in the same sense as what our Lord said of the power of faith, which is the mental attitude that

conditions the reality of prayer (see xvii. 20). There is no task or problem, however difficult or perplexing, in the work which God has appointed for His Church, which cannot be done or solved with the help of united prayer: *if two agree* in full purpose of soul (see Jas. i. 5-8).

20. Whence this power of united prayer? From the presence of Christ which is thereby ensured. *Two or three*: the smallest possible number which can constitute a gathering; to enforce the truth that the spirit of love and unity, which Jesus values above all in His disciples, does not depend on large numbers, but on the reality of the harmony. What a strength this passage has often been, and long will be, to scattered Christians in a non-Christian land! *In my name*: according to my command, to do my will, endued with my power (cp. xviii. 19) where the same preposition for *in* (literally *into*) is used in the original, though not in other similar passages. The discipline of those in the Church, and the admission of others from outside are alike based on the name or revelation of God in Jesus (xvi. 16, 17; John xvii. 26). There could be no clearer implication of a claim to divine nature (on the part of One who was certainly no pantheist) than the concluding words of the verse, *there am I in the midst of them*, for it involves an assertion of essential omnipresence. Here the promise has special reference to the maintenance of Church order (cp. 1 Cor. v. 4; in xviii. 20) to the extension of the Church without. It was illustrated by the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection (cp. John

xx. 19-23 and 26-8) and it was fulfilled when He poured forth the Holy Spirit with whom He is one (Acts ii. 33; cp. 2 Cor. iii. 17). The promise was specially suited to the need of the apostles at a time when they had received their first lessons in looking for the removal of the bodily presence of Jesus through His death.

xviii. 21-35. THE STANDARD OF PERSONAL FORGIVENESS
BETWEEN BRETHREN ELUCIDATED BY THE PARABLE OF
THE DEBTORS

Again Peter brings matters to a point, but this time from the ethical side, as before (xvi. 16) from the doctrinal. Lines had been laid down for the treatment of an offending member of the Society, which clearly indicate the necessity of a desire to forgive injuries rather than to visit them with punishment, and the same spirit had been repeatedly enjoined (v. 43, 44; vi. 12, 14, 15). It would be convenient then to know just how far forgiveness must go before discipline should be resorted to, in short to reduce the forgiving spirit to a formula. This Jesus, as ever, refuses; at the same time, after His manner, clothing the refusal of a formula in a formula, as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the demand made by His disciple's unspiritual apprehension. St. Paul later stated the same truth in the words, 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life' (see 2 Cor. iii. 6 and John vi. 63). The parable shows that our forgiveness is to be like that of God (vv. 32, 33) which is infinite. Forgiveness cannot be measured by arithmetic, but by the impulse of the heart (v. 35).

Then came Peter, and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence: and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

21. *Then came Peter*: doubtless after the twelve had discussed among themselves the teaching just recorded, in its bearing on themselves. *Until seven*

times? From Luke xvii. 3-4 it would seem that Jesus had on a former occasion used a phrase which gave rise to this idea, by telling His disciples to forgive an offending brother even seven times in one day. This exceeded the rabbinical demand which was limited to three times, Peter wants to know if they are definitely to take this numerical limit. This desire for a legal and numerical definition of moral duties has been met by the founders of other religions, but is refused by Jesus. Had He given such a limit, we can imagine to what innumerable casuistries it would have given rise—what constitutes an offence and a forgiveness, and the like.

22. *Seventy times seven*: 490 times; in other words, Keep no count. Very likely the number was suggested to our Lord's mind by the couplet in Lamech's song of revenge in Gen. iv. 24: 'If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.' Lamech is glorying in the prospect, opened to him by the possession of metal weapons, of unlimited revenge; the disciple of Jesus is to be possessed by the contrary spirit of unlimited forgiveness.

23. The *king* is God; his *bondservants*, or slaves, ourselves who are God's property, and bound to His service; the day of *reckoning* (cp. Luke xvi. 2) represents a time of conviction of sin.

24. *Ten thousand talents*: over three and a half crores of rupees (£2,400,000). In the Roman empire, as under the Muhammadan kings of India, slaves were sometimes raised to the highest offices. This slave must be regarded as a finance minister or great

official, or possibly as the agent of a very wealthy merchant, who has lost all that was entrusted to him in unfortunate ventures. Sin is represented as a debt (cp. vi. 12) because by reason of it we are unable to give God His due.

25. *His lord commanded him to be sold*: (cp. Lev. xv. 39, 47; 2 Kings iv. 1; Exod. xxi. 2). Even, according to Hebrew law, an insolvent debtor or his children might be sold for payment of the debt, and the Roman law was even more severe. An able man of business would fetch a large price, and his wife and children, being educated and delicately brought up would also be valuable, though only to a fraction of such a debt. Of course the question of the justification of slavery does not come into consideration here; our Lord is simply depicting a scene of contemporary life by way of illustration.

26. *Worshipped*: prostrated himself in most urgent entreaty. The slave promises, if he may have time to realize his assets, to pay in full. A vain hope when such a debt had been accumulated, and his credit destroyed. Equally vain is any hope on the part of sinful man to make an atonement for his sin-debt.

27. The master is *moved*, not by any such hope, but *with compassion*, not only to release him from prison, but to forgive him the whole debt. The divine mercy is without money and without price, and without stint, not conditioned by penances or austerities.

28. The millionaire is now penniless, and in no very good humour at the situation. *A hundred pence*, or rather *denarii* (see on ix. 2), about fifty rupees, is

an object to him now, and perhaps urgently wanted. With irritable brutality he demands payment of his fellow-slave. He had been accustomed to high finance, and to squeezing small people unmercifully, and he does so now without compunction, utterly forgetful of his own standing.

29-30. *I will pay thee* : contrary to the first debtor's case, a reasonable enough promise, but met with heartless refusal and enforcement of the extreme legal penalty. The newly released debtor will not even wait a while to reflect on his own debt.

31. The other slaves *are exceeding sorry* : they are thinking more of the fate of the imprisoned man than of the stony-heartedness of the one just released.

32-4. The slave is just as much his master's property as before, and is dealt with accordingly. He was bound in all decency to follow his master's example, but did the very contrary ; therefore his previous penalty is enhanced, and he is *delivered to the tormentors*, not merely to the gaolers ; he is to be put to the torture, perhaps with a view of discovering his hidden savings or credits, which a man of such a disposition as he had shown himself might be supposed to have. *Till he should pay* : practically, for his lifetime.

35. *So also shall my heavenly Father do unto you* : (cp. Ps. xviii. 25-7). The attitude of God towards us will correspond to our attitude towards our brethren. The unforgiving man chokes up the only channel through which the divine forgiveness can reach him, that is, a humble, contrite, loving heart. Nor is it sufficient to abstain from revengeful acts ; each must

forgive his brother from his heart. And well we may; for though the offences of others against us may in themselves be grievous, yet in comparison of ours against God, they are as nothing. Only if he forgets this, can a forgiven man be unmerciful, and then he imperils his own forgiveness, unless he repent from his heart.

CHAPTER XIX

XIX. 1-22. MARRIAGE, CHILDREN, AND PROPERTY, IN THEIR RELATION TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

(MARK I. 2-22; LUKE xviii. 15-23)

A NEW major section begins. The work of Jesus in Galilee is at an end, and He leaves that province on His last journey to Judæa, passing, however, not through Samaria, but through Peræa, i. e. the country east of the Jordan, and here He seems to have spent some time. Much doubtless, passed on that journey, but only a few incidents are recorded, and after the manner of this evangelist, three sections are first grouped together on kindred subjects. Each is specially dealt with in its connexion with the following of Jesus. The marriage relation is based on monogamy, and is not to be undermined by divorce; the position of the child as a member of the kingdom and a claimant of its privileges, is established; and the institution of property is to be preserved from being a means of spiritual injury, by being held subject to the demand which Christ as Master may make upon it, and in the spirit of detachment.

xix. 1-2. JESUS LEAVES GALILEE FOR PERÆA

a)† c.

And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan; and great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

And it came to pass when Jesus had finished: the formula of this evangelist for making a new departure (cp. vii. 28; xi. 1; xiii. 53; xxvi. 1). *These words*: with special reference to the teaching of His apostles since xiii. 53. *He departed from Galilee*: not to return till after the resurrection (xxviii. 7). The time was probably the late summer of A. D. 28, about six months before the Passion. He came into *the borders*, i. e. regions (cp. xv. 39) of *Judæa beyond Jordan*: that is the region commonly known as Peræa, extending on the east of the Jordan from the Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea. This region was politically joined with Galilee, and was therefore at this time under the rule of Antipas. It was eighty to ninety miles long, and twenty to twenty-five broad. John the Baptist had worked there, as well as Jesus Himself (John iii. 26; x. 40); and many had come to Jesus from that quarter (iv. 25). The population was mainly Jewish, though in the north there were a good many Gentiles about the Decapolis. Here, as elsewhere, *great multitudes followed him*, and Jesus did many works of healing, as well as teaching (see Mark x. 1). It is probable that, during the time of this 'Peræan ministry', Jesus visited Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles (September, see John vii. 2); and again for the Feast of Dedication (December, see

John x. 22); also that the mission of the seventy disciples, and many of the other special events and sayings recorded in Luke ix. 51; xix. 28, belong to this period. The special attention devoted to it by St. Luke indicates that our Lord, who had worked for some time both in Judæa and Galilee, besides paying at least one visit to Samaria, desired to evangelize this remaining part of the land of Israel before His death.

xix. 3-12. ON DIVORCE

The Jewish law of Deut. xxiv. 1-4 was a limitation of the previous practice of divorce, which was based upon the idea that the wife was the property of the husband, whether by purchase or by capture, and could therefore, like other property, be alienated at will. It implied that a husband should not divorce his wife, unless he had a reasonable ground of dissatisfaction at her behaviour as a wife, as it is phrased 'because he hath found some unseemly thing in her'; and even then he was to give her a formal 'bill of divorcement' which would set her free to marry another man; if, however, she was separated from the second husband by divorce or death, the first must not take her again. We find the prophet Malachi denouncing divorce as hateful to Jehovah (ii. 14, 16) but after the return of the Jews from the exile the practice became, or remained, very common. In the time of our Lord the question of the legitimate occasion of divorce was hotly discussed by two opposite schools. The followers of Rabbi Shammai interpreted the 'unseemly thing' to

mean unchaste or at least immodest behaviour. The school of Rabbi Hillel maintained that the words covered anything which was not as it should be in a wife, even if she spoiled her husband's dinner, or lost her good looks. 'The opinion of Hillel was generally adopted as the true representation of the state of the law (Maimonides', see Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iii. 275). Even the stricter interpretation of Shammai left room for various kinds of immodesty, short of unchastity, as grounds of divorce. We have already seen (on Matt. v. 27-32) how our Lord dealt with such divorce as a practical form of adultery when teaching His disciples; now the question is brought before Him by His opponents, and He treats it more fully, and answers the question of His disciples which arises from it.

And there came unto him Pharisees, tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful *for a man* to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh? So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.

The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

3. In Peræa Jesus is still followed up by His Pharisee opponents, who, as on other occasions (xvi. 1; xxii. 18, 35), come to Him *tempting him*, drawing Him on to some utterance which might lead to His fall. The issue was well chosen, for it offered them more than one chance. A strict prohibition might embroil Jesus with king Antipas, who had not so long ago divorced the daughter of King Aretas of Damascus, and it would run counter to the prevalent practice of Jewish society. A lax answer would belie His former utterances (see v. 32) and His views were probably known. Yet He had treated a proved adulteress with leniency (John viii. 1-11) and He had allowed men and women of impure life to become His followers (ix. 11; xxi. 31; Luke vii. 37-50). How will He avoid the snare?

4. Jesus answers, as in the case of the Sabbath (xii. 1-8) and the resurrection (xxii. 29-33), by going back to a fundamental principle of revelation which brushes aside the prurient details of the scribes' casuistry, and which was set forth in that very Pentateuch of which they studied the letter and missed the spirit. *Have ye not read?* (op. xii. 3, 5; xxi. 42;

xxii. 31; xxi. 16). Quoted from Gen. i. 27. *He which made them*: the Creator and Father; *from the beginning made them male and female*: the sexual distinction is a law, as divine as it is natural, which governs the existence of man in his present condition, enabling him to fulfil the first divine command: 'Be fruitful and multiply' (Gen. i. 28). Next to the instinct of nutrition, which Jesus dealt with in its moral aspect in xv. 11, 17, the instinct of reproduction is the most imperious of all, being indispensable in the divine order both for the maintenance of the race and for its well-being.

5. But by the same divine will the physical law is subject to the moral, and to be beneficent this great impulse, like all natural forces, must work in duly regulated channels. *And said*: the words that follow are, in Gen. ii. 24, those of the sacred writer, who draws a momentous conclusion from the divine action in the creation of woman. Jesus invests them with divine authority, as expressing the essence of the marriage relationship which is based equally on the constitution of man as created in God's image, and on the will of the God who so created him. *For this cause*—that God has so created woman and mated her with man—*shall a man leave his father and mother* (cp. Ps. xlv. 10; Eph. v. 31); the relation of parent and child gives way after maturity to that of husband and wife, as the starting point of a new parenthood. *And shall cleave to his wife*: (cp. 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17) in a union which is at once physical and moral, destined to bring forth new immortal lives; *and the twain shall become one flesh*. On this is based the law of

monogamy; God has created and maintained the sexes in equal numbers, despite local variations, and the closeness of relationship in marriage is such, that no third can share it without debasing it. The rabbis allowed three or even four wives and Muhammad followed them. Fortunately other influences have made the Jews practically a monogamous community, and the constitution of nature prevents Muhammadans from indulging in polygamy to more than a very limited extent; but where the practice exists it is attended by the degradation of womanhood and easy divorce, which involve the deterioration of childhood and the loosening of the bonds of family life. The Jewish doctors objected to the divorcing of a first wife, and it was chiefly in connexion with polygamy that divorce came in.

6. Hence the principle of the unity of man and wife is repeated and applied to divorce. *What . . . God hath joined together*: not as creatures of impulse like the lower creation, but under moral self-control, in subjection to a higher law, on which depends the true happiness of both, and the welfare of the race. *Let not man put asunder*: by regulations for divorce. This is the ideal standpoint for the kingdom, just as much as, 'Resist not him that is evil', and 'Let thine alms be in secret'.

7. As was to be expected, the scribes meet Jesus with a reference to Deut. xxiv. 1-4, *Why then did Moses command?* They regard him as the dispenser of a privilege rather than as the mitigator of an evil. Moses intended to shield women against the tyranny

of men, and so did Muhammad with his kindred legislation, mainly taken from the Mosaic model. But unfortunately the latter failed to realize that the Light that lighteth the world had developed the lower law into a higher, and going back to the Mosaic stage he stereotyped it, to the great injury of his followers.

8. *For your hardness of heart*: that Moses found it necessary to tolerate divorce was not the privilege, but the infamy of Israel, as Malachi had recognized (ii. 14-16). The law was their schoolmaster and the evil of divorce was only *suffered*, not *commanded*. As far as Christian nations go back to an easier dissolution of the marriage bond, they are sinking, not only in morality, but in culture.

9. *And I say unto you*: an utterance similar to those in the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus of set purpose announces His emendation or deepening of the old law (v. 22). From Mark x. 10 it appears that this and what follows was said away from the crowd to the disciples when they had entered the house where Jesus was staying.

Whoever shall put away his wife: (cp. v. 32), the case is stated, according to the point of view of the age and country, from the man's side; but Mark x. 12 and 1 Cor. vii. 10-11 (cp. John iv. 18) show that the rule applies equally to the woman. *Except for fornication*: (see on v. 32) probably the original word is stronger than 'adultery' would have been and signifies, not a lapse under stress of temptation, but abandonment to a shameless life. In case of this offence also, there will be readiness to forgive on confession and repentance, as

illustrated in the previous section but like forgiveness of other offences, it will have its limits (cp. xviii. 17).

10. *If the case of the man is so*: i.e. that he must endure all the evils of an ill-assorted marriage, short of shameless misconduct. *It is not expedient to marry*: the disciples seem to have thought that the law of the kingdom as laid down here by Jesus, was intended to issue in a practical prohibition of marriage. It seemed to them, on the basis of their experience as Jews, incredible that men should care to enter on a relation involving such restrictions.

11. Hence Jesus goes on to show them that while He did indeed call some to abstinence from marriage, yet the class was a very small one. *All men cannot receive this saying*: namely, that it is not expedient to marry; *but they to whom it is given*: the power for such abstinence is a special grace conferred by God; it is the gift spoken of by St. Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 7.

12. Besides the classes of persons who are incapable of marriage by nature (*eunuchs so born*) and by human agency (*eunuchs made by men*) there are those who have cut off their own possibilities of marriage *for the kingdom of heaven's sake*. Such are men like St. Paul and not a few missionaries ever since, besides others, who have denied themselves the holiest and sweetest of human relationships for the love of God or man. But the demand for this voluntary mutilation of life is addressed only to a few. There was a danger in the early Church in respect of celibacy as well as of martyrdom, that persons should rush into it without the necessary gift, and later on celibacy was enforced

on the clergy of the Roman Church to make them a more mobile force under the command of the popes. Jesus puts it on the ground of a moral capacity and bids each test it in himself; *he that is able to receive it, let him receive it*. But at the same time this is a summons: for men and women were then (and are now) needed who were willing to 'lose (married) life, for my sake and the gospel's' (Mark viii. 35). *Eunuch* literally means 'lord of the bedchamber' (Urdu, *khajasa*) such, being slaves set over the harem, were emasculated and are still so treated in Muḥammadan lands. The most powerful of physical impulses, that which is worshipped by the Hindu more than any other divinity, is to be under the moral control of Christ's disciples for the purposes of His kingdom.

XIX. 13-15. JESUS AND LITTLE CHILDREN

(MARK X. 13-16; LUKE XVIII. 15-17)

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

13. *The little children* were brought by their parents (Luke xviii. 5 'their babes'). Jesus was doubtless known as a lover of children (op. xviii. 2). Though He calls for those who would renounce family life for His sake, yet His heart goes out to the little ones. The parents would have Him *lay His hands on them*, in token of

blessing (ix. 18; Gen. xlviii. 14), and *pray* as the patriarchs and prophets did. *The disciples rebuked them.* They had just heard His words (v. 12) of the married state, and had been accustomed of late to receive special attention and teaching themselves from their Master. What could children, brought by their parents, living a family life, have to do with the kingdom of heaven? They had not realized that the teaching and training accorded to them was not for their own sake merely but for that of others, and that Jesus was equally the Saviour of all.

14. *Jesus* is 'moved with indignation' (Mark x. 14); displeased with the narrow selfishness of those who would exclude others from the privileges which they themselves enjoy, because those others are weak and simple. It was a case of causing the little ones to stumble (xviii. 6). He wants *the little children.* Why? *For of such is*—i. e. to such belongs—*the kingdom of heaven.* That kingdom, for which some were to deny themselves the joy of family life, belongs to those who are like children (see on xviii. 3, 4).

15. *He laid His hands on them*: in token of blessing, which was doubtless conveyed. How many a subsequent follower of Jesus may have been the fruit of that benediction! By this act Jesus confirmed the religious rights of the child (without the distinction of sex which obtained in the Jewish religion) as in xviii. 1-6 He had asserted the moral and social claim of childhood. That religious right is expressed in infant baptism, which is based on the following grounds: (1) the youngest child is capable of receiving a blessing from

Christ; (2) it is His expressed wish that children should be brought to Him, and baptism is the means that He has ordained of bringing men into communion with Him; (3) He declares both that children are specially fitted for admission to the kingdom of heaven (Luke xviii. 16, 17; Mark x. 14, 15) and also that this admission takes place through baptism (John iii. 5). When Gentiles were converted to Judaism they underwent three rites, baptism, circumcision and sacrifice, and their infant children were baptized with them. Hence the apostles later baptized the 'households' of converts (see Acts xvi. 15, 33; xviii. 38; 1 Cor. i. 16). *He departed thence*: probably going on His journey towards Jerusalem.

xix. 16-22. THE RICH YOUNG MAN TESTED AND LACKING
(MARK X. 17-22; LUKE XVIII. 18-23)

After reading how Jesus has dealt with the law of marriage, and the religious status of childhood, we are now told what claims He makes on His followers in respect of property, and what spirit must animate even those who make the greatest sacrifice of worldly possessions. A wealthy young ruler comes to Jesus in search of the eternal life which his wealth cannot afford; but while he feels his lack of that supreme good, he has very inadequate ideas of the goodness which can alone qualify a man for it, imagining himself to have perfectly kept the divine commands, with which he was acquainted. Jesus therefore tests him in respect of his wealth. If he is truly eager to

have eternal life, and believes that Jesus can direct him in the way of it, let him devote his wealth to the service of man, by bestowing it upon the poor, and himself to the service of God by following Jesus; and thus he will find the perfection which he is seeking. The test is too severe, for the present at least. Hence in 23-30 Jesus impresses on His disciples both the danger of riches, and also the more subtle temptation of desiring spiritual rank as a compensation for temporal sacrifice, and in xx. 1-16 He illustrates this by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. It is noteworthy that our Saviour frequently treats natural deficiencies as symbols of spiritual capacities for the kingdom of heaven: e.g. ignorance (xi. 25); weakness (xviii. 2-4); starvation (Luke vi. 21); poverty (Luke vi. 20, and in the case of the rich young man). To be inheritors of the kingdom of heaven we must abjure our own prerogatives.

And behold, one came to him and said, Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But when the

young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

16. *One came*: according to Luke xviii. 18 a ruler, whether secular or religious, we have no means of telling; and he is young (vv. 20 and 22). Unlike the children who were nearer to the kingdom than they thought, he was further from it than he imagined. He acknowledges Jesus as *master* or teacher, and would enrol himself among His disciples. *What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* He is dissatisfied with his previous career of legal observance, and feels that his righteousness must exceed that (v. 20); but he has a false notion of goodness as the condition of eternal life. He thinks that a quantity of good actions has to be made up, whereas a single-hearted disposition of devotion to the will of God has to be attained. *Eternal life*: the term is used in this Gospel, besides the present passage, only in v. 29 and xxv. 46, though 'life' xviii. 8, is synonymous. It is both awarded by Jesus as Judge at the last day (xxv. 46) and bestowed by Him as Saviour as a present possession (John iii. 15, 16; vi. 54); it dwells in Him (John i. 4; v. 26), and is the supreme good, more precious than all earthly things (xviii. 8, 9). The 'kingdom of heaven' or of 'God' is sometimes used in the same sense (ep. Matt. vii. 21; Mark ix. 45, 47), this being the sphere in which eternal life is realized. Here the use of the word *have* leads rather to the thought of present possession; in Mark 'inherit' to that of the life to come.

17. The good is not a separate and limited quantity in life which a man can ascertain and do. It is an attribute of character, and that the divine character, and for the life of man it is revealed in God's commandments. *Why askest thou me*: you are on the wrong tack in trying to add to your catalogue of good actions. *One there is who is good*, essentially, and He and His will are the source and standard of all goodness. To have good fruit you must have a good tree; you must be like God (v. 48). For practical purposes the way of life is the way of God's commandments (Lev. xviii. 5). Jesus has already shown that the commandments must be kept in thought as well as in act (see v. 22, 28).

18-19. *Which?* There was much disputing as to the greatest commandment (xxii. 36), and in many quarters, as now in Islám, the ritual precepts were put foremost. Jesus quotes the commandments from the sixth to the ninth and then the fifth (Exod. xi. 14-16 and 12 and Lev. xix. 18) thus making the love of fellow-man the test of religion (xxv. 40, 45 cp. Jas. i. 27).

20. *All these things have I observed*: none but a *young man* would have made this reply, especially with the Marcan addition (x. 20) 'from my youth'. The words evince a certain shallowness and unperceptiveness; yet the real earnestness of the man is such that Jesus loved him (Mark x. 21). After all, he had doubtless outwardly observed the commandments, and that was no small thing for a young man; moreover, there is a real sense of poignancy in the question, *What lack*

I yet? Despite his Pharisaism he has felt the need of applying to Jesus.

21. He has come, however, as one whom the claims of ordinary morality do not satisfy, and who would climb to greater heights of spiritual attainment. Jesus therefore takes him on this ground, *If thou wouldst be perfect*: this was indeed the ideal which Jesus had placed before His disciples (v. 48) and the young ruler was so far right in abandoning his imperfect ideals and coming to Jesus. Let him then learn in the following of Jesus, what others had begun to practise (v. 27) and he would find what divine perfection meant. Only, he being rich, unlike the other disciples of Jesus, his sacrifice would be more conspicuous than theirs. *Sell that thou hast*: to give to the poor was then practically the only way of devoting one's substance to the good of mankind (cp. xxvi. 11). That and the keeping of the commandments were equally means to gain the supreme satisfaction of life, the *treasure in heaven* which is indestructible and inalienable (vi. 20), in fact eternal life. But it would not be sufficient to give to the poor without following Jesus. The positive command is greater than the negative.

22. The man who had acknowledged Jesus as guide, but could not make up his mind to renounce all and follow Him, goes away, not indignant at an unreasonable demand, but *sorrowful* at his own inability to comply with it. He knows that he has fallen below his own ideal, but the attraction of great possessions is too strong. How many a missionary has had the same experience with an inquirer who could not make

the great renunciation! Yet the demand of the gospel cannot be abated; the pearl of great price cannot be had without its purchase money (xiii. 45, 46). *For he was one that had great possessions*: his wealth was the one thing that hindered him from following Jesus; therefore it must be given up.

**xix. 23-30. THE HINDRANCE OF RICHES AND THE
REWARDS OF DISCIPLESHIP**

(MARK x. 23-31; LUKE xviii. 24-30)

And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon *them* said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit eternal life. But many shall be last *that are first*; and first *that are last*.

23. A step in the education of the disciples. *Verily*: a specially weighty saying; first in plain words in this verse, and then in a metaphor, in v. 24. The

sense of disappointment in Jesus must have been keen, but as in the case of the impenitent cities He falls back on the great laws of the kingdom of God; and, as then, He follows with words of sympathy and encouragement for those who follow Him in 27-9 (cp. xi. 25-9). *It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven* (see xiii. 22; vi. 19-25; 1 Tim. vi. 9). This applies in two ways: first, where the Church of Christ is a small and weak minority, as in this land, and the aspirant has to risk the loss of, his worldly wealth or actually lose it; and second, in Christian countries or communities, where the greatest watchfulness is needed, lest the concentration on this world's possessions should deprive the Christian of the treasure in heaven.

24. The same truth enforced by a bold and striking image which has become proverbial in most Christian languages. The *camel* was the largest beast in Palestine and the carrier of the most valuable merchandise; a *needle's eye* was the smallest opening in use among men. For the one to go through the other was an obvious impossibility; equally so *for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*: that is to become a disciple of Jesus and a partaker of the eternal life which the young inquirer had desired (v. 16).

25. *They were astonished exceedingly*: this fresh instance of the austerity of their Master's teaching specially perplexed them; for while they had begun to have some idea of the suffering which must precede the glories of Messiah's kingdom, they fully expected riches and honour in the kingdom that was to come,

as shown by the question of Simon Peter in *v.* 27, 'what then shall we have?' Their astonishment is voiced, perhaps by Judas Iscariot, in the question, *Who then can be saved?* The desire for wealth is well-nigh universal, and its attainment was looked upon by the Jews as an unmistakable token of the divine favour; and certainly extreme poverty, in the mass, is not favourable to the development of the religious life. A dignitary of the Church in recent times has said: 'It is difficult for a man to be a Christian on less than fifteen shillings a week.' And we know the difficulties that beset the depressed classes in this country on the score of poverty, when they begin the effort to lead a Christian and decent life.

26. Jesus does not minimize the difficulty, but confronts the human impossibility with the fact of the divine power (cp. Phil. iv. 13). He can make the greatest natural hindrance to salvation minister to its attainment and perfection (cp. Luke xvi. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 17-19). As Jesus says this He looks upon His disciples, doubtless with love, as before upon the young ruler (Mark x. 21); for was He not training them to a conception of Himself and of His service which would make all else seem small in comparison of His love and imitation? (Cp. John xxi. 17, 18; 1 Pet. ii. 21; iv. 12, 13; v. 10). The young ruler had been inexorably sifted out from His possible followers (*v.* 21); and He was now exercising His winnowing-fan on Judas Iscariot.

27. Once again Peter represents the feelings of the company—*Lo, we have left all*: (see iv. 20, 22).

The band of disciples no longer possessed individual property (John xii. 6; xiii. 29) but had put their all into a common fund, which had to be replenished by the offerings of others (Luke viii. 3). *And followed these*: which involved for these Galilean peasants grave risks, so that Jesus speaks of them when without His presence as orphans (John xiv. 18). *What then shall we have?* If earthly riches are a hindrance to discipleship, what is the nature of the treasure in heaven which we are laying up? (v. 21). In this question there is a legitimate element as well as one which Jesus would eliminate. It is quite right that they should look for the reward which their heavenly Father, in virtue of His justice no less than His love, will surely give (vi. 4, 6) and that the prospect of this inheritance should inspire them to endure suffering and serve their Master faithfully; and in this light St. Peter, the 'apostle of hope' exhibits it to his disciples later (cp. 1 Pet. i. 3-9). But there was also the danger of the mercenary spirit, especially in their rudimentary condition when these words were spoken, and this the Saviour pointedly indicates in v. 30, and impresses in the following parable.

28. Hence Jesus encourages them with the promise of reward, expressed in terms, first of current Jewish conceptions, and then of ordinary life; but each time qualified by the opening words, *In the regeneration*: this was a current term among the Jews of that time, and like 'resurrection' (i. e. of the dead) used with reference to an implied object. Josephus uses it of the restoration of the Jewish polity under Zerubbabel;

Clement of Rome uses it in his first epistle to the Corinthians (ix. 4) of the recovery of the earth after the flood; in Acts xiii. 33 the resurrection of Christ is described as a new birth; in Titus iii. 5 the word is used of baptism; here it signifies the re-birth of the world when 'He that sitteth upon the throne' will 'make all things new' (see Rev. xxi. 5; also Acts iii. 20, 21; Rom. viii. 21; 2 Pet. iii. 13). *The throne of his glory* (see on xvi. 27). The tribulations before the coming of the Son of man will be the birth pangs of a new world (cp. xxiv. 8). *Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones*: the apostles will be sharers in Christ's reign (cp. 2 Tim. ii. 12) and not they only (Rev. iii. 21). *Judging the twelve tribes of Israel*: though the full tale of the twelve tribes had ceased since the captivity of the northern kingdom, yet the expression was used to indicate the complete total of the chosen nation (see Acts xxvi. 7; Jas. i. 1) or as St. Peter says (1 Pet. i. 1) 'the elect'. The metaphors are carried out more in detail in the book of Revelation, where we find the twenty-four thrones (iv. 4) the twelve tribes (vii. 4-8) and the twelve gates of the new Jerusalem with their names (xxi. 12). *Judging* is to be understood in the Old Testament sense of rule (see Judges iii. 10; Dan. ix. 22; Rev. xx. 4). *Ye which have followed me* will have your special place of honour in the kingdom of the *regeneration*. The same thing is said without metaphor in John xii. 26. It has its fulfilment provisionally in the authority exercised by the Church which was founded by the apostles and is ruled by their teaching (xviii. 18; Eph. ii. 20).

29. This promise, too, is to be fulfilled 'in the regeneration', though it is expressed in terms of this life, and thus in a paradox; the followers of Jesus are to *receive a hundredfold* of those very things which they are to abandon for His sake (cp. x. 37). Mark x. 30 brings this out still more clearly, adding, 'with persecutions', which meant the deprivation of those very things. But they will *inherit eternal life* which the rich young ruler, with all his wealth and good dispositions, was on the way to lose.

30. A solemn warning. *Many shall be last that are first*: there will be others besides the apostles who will do great things for Jesus; but He must have been thinking especially of Judas Iscariot, who was probably placed in his position of trust because of outstanding gifts, and of Simon Peter and his self-complacency (v. 27), first now, yet last in the great trial of the Passion; an experience again and again repeated in the history of men and Churches.

CHAPTER XX

XX. 1-16. PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD

A **SUBTLE** danger was besetting the apostles. They had really and sincerely made great sacrifices for the sake of their Master; but they might be betrayed into deeming their renunciation a bargain, and so the spirit of loyalty would be degraded to that of huckstering, thus bringing in again the leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees (xvi. 6). They must be reminded that the reward of participation in the following of Jesus and promotion of His cause symbolized by working in the master's vineyard, is for all equally dependent on the bounty of their employer. The desire of even a promised reward in a spirit which grudges to others the same benefit will lead to estrangement from Him.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing in the marketplace idle; and to them he

said, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh *hour* he went out, and found others standing; and he saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard. And when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they received it, they murmured against the householder, saying, These last have spent *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat. But he answered and said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take up that which is thine, and go thy way; it is my will to give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? or is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last.

1. *The kingdom of heaven is like*: (cp. xiii. 44) it may be represented by the story of a man that is an *householder*, or master of a house (x. 25; xiii. 27; xxiv. 43) different from the steward (v. 8; Luke xvi. 1). He has a *vineyard* which provides the supply of wine for the year, and now that the grapes are just ripe, they must be gathered quickly, else the vintage will spoil, especially if the hot wind is blowing (v. 12). So he goes out early in the morning to hire labourers.

The vineyard in Isaiah v. 1-7 represents the chosen nation; we cannot here tie it down to the meaning of the Christian society, but there may be an allusion to the authority in that body lately entrusted to the apostles, for whom the lesson of the parable was primarily intended. In general, the vineyard may stand for the sphere of work which Christ entrusts to each of His servants, and the hiring for the call to that sphere.

2. *A penny a day*: till the middle of the seventeenth century the English penny was a silver coin, and the English symbol for it is *d*, the first letter of *denarius*. The Greek form of this Latin word is the one used here, and the value of the silver coin was about eight annas of Indian money at its present standard. The name *dīnār* was also given by the Persians to a gold coin of the same weight. The silver coin was a liberal day's wage for an unskilled labourer at a time when the labour market was brisk.

3-7. The pressure of work is such, that at nine, twelve, three and five o'clock the master goes out again and again to get more labourers. The day is divided into hours equal to our standard, though not, of course, so accurately measured; the night is divided into watches; the former beginning at six in the morning; the latter at six in the evening. This was the ordinary reckoning, but the Roman civil day was reckoned from midnight to midnight, and apparently the evangelist, St. John, uses this mode of reckoning. The men are standing idle through no fault of their own (*v. 11, no man hath hired us*) and

they are ready to go to work for *whatever is right* in the householder's judgement; indeed those hired at five o'clock go without any promise, on the chance of what they may get.

8-10. The householder pays the labourers in due form according to the law (Deut. xxiv. 15) as soon as the day's work is over, but he does it in an eccentric fashion, *beginning from the last unto the first*, in order to teach the men a lesson. Like the modern socialist he reckons the pay, not according to the work done, which differs, but according to the need, which is identical. The opportunity to work is a privilege, and each was ready to avail himself of it as soon as it offered. This identical reward for all may stand for the eternal life which the young ruler desired to attain, but sought in the wrong spirit (xix. 16).

11-12. The first men go off smiling, and showing the generous wage that they have received, and each succeeding lot would probably hope to be treated on the same lavish scale; at any rate all the short-timers received some bounty; but when the full-timers were paid strictly according to agreement, *they murmured*, not because they had received too little, nor because the others did not need the money, but out of sheer jealousy. They had *borne the burden of the (whole) day*: they had plucked and carried to the winepress more maunds of grapes than the others; and they had endured *the scorching heat* or hot wind (see margin). In low-lying parts of Palestine the vintage begins in July when the heat is still great, and the simoon wind may blow. The endurance of toil and privation for

the kingdom of heaven may be vitiated by the mercenary spirit and the lack of love towards the brethren. 'If I give my body to be burned but have not love, it profiteth me nothing' (1 Cor. xiii. 3). The punishment is not exclusion from eternal life, but the reproof of the Master (cp. 1 Cor. iii. 12-15).

13-15. *He said to one of them*, who, like Peter, had acted as spokesman, *Friend*: a kindly address, to soften the reproof (cp. xxii. 12; xxvi. 50). *Take up that which is thine*: he had thrown it down to emphasize his discontent, after the manner of grasping hirelings. *It is my will*: the employer's disposition is equally favourable to all who were ready for his service when the call reached them (1 Tim. ii. 4). *Is thine eye evil?* (vi. 23). Do you look askance, are you jealous, because I am generous? It is the spirit of Cain which is manifesting itself in the complaint (cp. Gen. iv. 5). An evil eye is among the heart sins mentioned (Mark vii. 22).

16. *So*: in the way indicated by this story, the last and the first shall be equal. And if the service of Jesus is taken up in a mercenary spirit, with jealousy of others (cp. the case of the prodigal's elder brother, Luke xv. 29-30) the first may actually take the last place. As a matter of fact some outside the apostolic number were before some within it. The clause of the A. V. which is omitted in the R. V. (for many be called, but few chosen) is another instance of parallel passages which have been brought into the text by the error of a scribe. It is out of place here, but belongs to xxii. 14.

XX. 17-19. THE FOURTH ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSION
(CP. ON xvii. 22-3)

(MARK x. 32-4; LUKE xviii. 31-3)

In all probability there is a considerable interval of time between the sixteenth and seventeenth verses; the period during which Jesus 'abode beyond Jordan' (John x. 40). During this period the raising of Lazarus took place, and the stay of Jesus at Ephraim, whence He went to Bethany (John xii. 1; cp. Matt. xxi. 17). However these events may have exactly occurred in detail, the final journey of Jesus and His disciples to Jerusalem is now in progress (see on xix. 1) and a more detailed prediction of the Passion is given than before to prepare the minds of His followers. We see both how the mind of Jesus was fixed on this supreme event, and also how anxiously He sought to prepare His disciples for it.

And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart, and in the way he said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up.

17. *Going up to Jerusalem*: this expression is one of the local touches which it is sometimes difficult to render in Indian versions. Jerusalem was a 'city set on an hill' (Ps. xlviii. 2) 2,400 feet above the sea, and travellers coming from the direction of Peræa, and crossing the Jordan, would have to mount over

3,000 feet from the depressed river valley to the capital. Hence repeatedly going to Jerusalem is 'going up' (cp. Luke ii. 4; Acts xi. 2). *He took the twelve disciples apart*: because crowds of people were going along with the company (cp. v. 29) on the way to the Passover feast (cp. John xi. 55). It was needful to keep them from the infection of the political movements which were so ready to break out at any time, for the people in all directions were talking excitedly about Him (John xi. 56). From Luke ix. 51 we gather that the heart of Jesus was full of the 'decease which he was about to accomplish', and from Mark x. 32 that His appearance indicated it.

18. The additional elements in this prediction, as compared with that of xvii. 22-3, are: the betrayal to the Jewish rulers; the condemnation to death by them; and the execution of the sentence by 'the Gentiles' that is the Roman authorities, with its cruel accompaniments of mockery and scourging, and its dreadful form of crucifixion. As a matter of fact Pilate was but the executioner of the Jewish rulers. The reception of this announcement is recorded only by St. Luke (xviii. 34) 'they understood none of these things'.

XX. 20-8. THE REQUEST OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE

(MARK X. 35-45)

Though Peter was the leader among the apostles, and specially singled out for commendation by Jesus, yet from his own record we know that John was

especially loved by the Master (John xiii. 23; xix. 26; xx. 2); and he, with his brother James, had been selected to go with Jesus and Peter at the raising of Jairus' daughter, and at the Transfiguration, as later they were with Him during the Agony in the Garden. The name given them by Jesus, 'sons of thunder', shows them to have been men of vehement disposition, both for love and hate; and the same comes out in the incident of the churlish Samaritans, whom the brothers desired to destroy with fire from heaven (Luke ix. 54), as well as in the action of John in forbidding those who were exorcising demons in the name of Jesus (Luke ix. 49). They seem to have told their mother, who was probably a relative of Jesus, of the Master's promise of twelve thrones (xix. 28) in which no special mention had been made of Peter, and they thought that the claims of relationship, put forward through her, might be strong enough to procure for them the promise of the two chief thrones in the apostolic circle. We have seen that party feeling (possibly through the influence of Judas Iscariot) had been active among the apostles for some time, and now we find the form of it known as nepotism, or favour to relatives, showing itself. This has been seen in the Church from time to time, and it is a peculiarly hurtful aspect of partisanship, because it degrades the sacred relationship of family love into an instrument of faction. Our Lord, therefore, teaches the sons of Zebedee that partiality to relatives is a thing which has no place in the administration of His kingdom. Its honours consist in the acceptance of the

humblest service, after His own example who is about to sacrifice His life to save the many who need Him.

Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping *him*, and asking a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto him, We are able. He saith unto them, My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on my right hand, and on *my* left hand, is not mine to give, but *it is for them* for whom it hath been prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

20. *The mother of the sons* (as in India, the title of the wife) *of Zebedee*. From a comparison of xxvii. 56 with Mark xv. 40 we gather that her name was Salome; and she would seem to be the same as the mother's sister of Jesus who was standing with the Virgin by the Cross (John xix. 25). She would thus be a near blood-relation of Jesus, and one of the faithful inner circle who ministered to Him (Luke viii. 2-3) and had come with Him on this journey (xxvii. 55-6). *With her sons*, who knew how Jesus respected

and loved her, and who had prompted her to make the request, whence St. Mark (x. 35) represents it as theirs. To enforce its urgency and gain the point at once, she, the elder relative, only less respected than a mother, actually prostrates herself before her nephew, *asking a certain thing*, as an Indian would say, 'I have a petition', in order to elicit the question which gives him permission to bring the affair before his superior.

21. The concluding words *in thy kingdom*: (op. xiii. 41; xvi. 28) that is, when Thou appearest as a king, show how strongly the idea of the messianic dignity of Jesus had taken hold of the disciples since the confession of Peter, and how much purification of their conception was needed. Referring to the promise of the twelve thrones (xix. 28) Salome asks for a royal *command* that the most honourable ones, on the right and left hand of the King, may be reserved for her sons. Rabbi Acha said: 'The holy and blessed God will cause King Messiah to sit at His right hand, and Abraham at His left.' It was not a small estimate which the sons of Zebedee had formed, either of their Master, or of themselves.

22. *Ye know not what ye ask*: they had no idea what the granting of their request would involve (cp. viii. 19). Having put them forward the mother has retired, and Jesus replies to the sons. He who desires the end should desire the means. The way to the kingdom lay through the death of sacrifice willingly and humbly endured. *Are ye able to drink the cup*: to accept the lot in life whether good or bad (op. Ps. xxiii. 5; Jer. xxv. 15) which lies before me? In this case the disciples must

have perceived that the words pointed to the endurance of suffering, as they came to know later in the Garden of Gethsamane (xxvi. 39, 42) and that such endurance must be the condition of glory (cp. 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 17). But their thoughts were of some blood-stained battle-field, like those on which the Maccabees had conquered. *We are able*: they reply, for, however rash and inexperienced, they were sincerely ready to suffer whatever risks and hardships were needed for the establishment of the kingdom.

23. Their loyalty is accepted, their ambition rebuked. *My cup indeed ye shall drink*: James at the hand of Herod (Acts xii. 2) John on Patmos (Rev. i. 9). In the writings of the latter it is noticeable that, in his Epistles which breathe the spirit of mellow love, the sense of the murderous world-enmity is not less strong than in the Revelation which depicts the divine strokes of judgement (cp. 1 John ii. 15; iii. 13; v. 4, 19). *Not mine to give*: in the spirit of favouritism; this indicates the self-limitation of Jesus on earth (cp. xxiv. 36; John v. 19; Acts i. 7); no longer obtaining when He speaks from heaven (cp. Rev. iii. 21). The assignment of rank in the kingdom of heaven is based solely on moral fitness; *it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father*: (cp. xxv. 34 'the kingdom prepared for you'). This preparation involves the 'good works which God afore prepared, that we should walk in them' (Eph. ii. 10). The preparation of God's people for the reward, and the preparation of the reward for them, are but two sides of the same process, but it is the former to which they chiefly have to attend.

24. *The ten . . . were moved with indignation* : hardly of a very righteous kind ; it was the same spirit of personal ambition as the two brothers had displayed, but the others felt that they had stolen a march on them. All the elements of faction are present in that little assembly, and high words begin to fly.

25. They would hardly bandy these in the presence of their Master ; as Jesus goes on (the company still being on the road *op. v. 17*) they would fall back, but the sounds of strife might reach Him, and *Jesus called them* to appease the strife and clear their minds of the false ideas which led to it. They had been thinking of a kingdom (*v. 21*) but they must realize that the Lord of that kingdom was not as the *rulers of the Gentiles* (or nations) of the world. The contrast here is not between Jews and Gentiles, but between the nations of the world and the kingdom of Jesus as represented by the little company around Him (*Luke xii. 30-2*). The Jewish nation and their rulers answered just as much to the description that follows as did other peoples. *The rulers . . . lord it* : they display their power in the spirit of pride and haughtiness ; 'clad in a little brief authority'. *Their great ones exercise authority* : they use their power for the furtherance of their own interests.

26-7. This selfish, grasping spirit is quite compatible with the heroic endurance of danger and privation, but with the new kingdom a new spirit is to come into the world ; *not so shall it be among you* : the form of the sentence is that of a prophecy, though this involves a command. Jesus is confident that the true spirit of His own self-renunciation will at last prevail. Greatness

will be estimated by humble service; and the *first* in rank will be he who is glad to be as the *servant*, or slave, of the rest. Jesus does not mean the self-humiliation of the devotee which is undertaken in order to bring him high estimation among men, but that greatness itself consists in the self-humiliation and voluntary slavery which is welcomed for His sake. In 1 Thess. iv. 11 St. Paul applies the principle to the Christian convert by exhorting him to substitute for the envious emulation of the busy-body the ambition (see margin) of quiet service.

28. *Even as the Son of man*: here, as so frequently, Jesus claims to be the supreme example (John xiii. 15) who has a right to demand from His disciples an implicit imitation, even in what may be naturally most distasteful. *Came not to be ministered unto*: not that He never accepted service (see iv. 11; viii. 15) but when He did, it was in order to enable Him to devote Himself the more to the service of others; the object of His life was *to minister*; He was ever giving Himself to others till at length He gave Himself for them, making *his life a ransom for many*. The *many* are mankind as a whole, in contrast to Jesus as the one Son of man (cp. Rom. v. 19). In what light are they regarded? A ransom is the price given to release a man from some evil condition; it might be given for slaves (Lev. xix. 20; xxv. 50); for captives (Isa. xlv. 13); for a man's life, as being forfeit to God (Exod. xxi. 30); or to civil justice (Num. xxxv. 31). Before this, Jesus has been spoken of as giving rest from toil (xi. 28) and as saving from sin (i. 21); now He adds that this salvation is to be

purchased through the sacrifice of His life ; and that is to be given, not only for the Jewish people (Greek, *laos*, i. 21 ; ii. 4) but for the many (xxvi. 28 ; John xi. 51-2) ; as many as will accept His invitation (xi. 28) ; as St. Paul has it (1 Tim. ii. 6) ' a ransom for all '. He has not come to give thrones, but to *give His life . . . for many*. The Greek preposition here translated *for* (*anti*) means ' instead of '. Jesus promises to give what the many cannot give, and on their behalf. This St. Paul has drawn out further in his teaching on the death of Christ as our redemption (see Rom. iii. 24, 25 ; 1 Cor. vi. 20 ; Gal. i. 4 ; and also 1 Pet. i. 18-19). The purpose expressed in these words of our Lord is that ' mind of Christ ', which St. Paul describes in Phil. ii. 5-8, and which led Him to empty Himself, and abase Himself even to the death of the Cross, which He is here foretelling, as the object of His coming into the world. It may be that our Lord, in the simile of ransom which He here uses is referring to the debt of sin which He had depicted in xviii. 23-35, and named in the model prayer (vi. 12). The forgiveness there depicted as the act of the divine Creditor is gained through the ransom offered by the Son of man who gives His pure life, which has fulfilled all righteousness (iii. 15), as a purchase money to deliver His fellows from the slavery of sin.

XX. 29-34. HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN AT JERICHO
(MARK X. 46-52 ; LUKE XVIII. 35-43)

The account given by St. Mark is ampler and more graphic, as in the case of the Gadarene demoniac

(viii. 28-34 ; Mark v. 1-20) ; and in both cases, while the two other evangelists mention one man as healed, St. Matthew speaks of two. The difference is unimportant, and it is impossible for us to judge for certain which is the more accurate. Apparently the three Synoptics regarded this healing as a suitable prelude to the history of the following chapters, because Jesus performed it in response to a request preferred to Him in the character of Messiah, which He was now beginning to acknowledge openly.

And as they went out from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, that they should hold their peace : but they cried out the more, saying, Lord, have mercy on us, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. And Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes : and straightway they received their sight, and followed him.

29. *Jericho* : the frontier fortress of Judæa, which the Israelites had to conquer, before they could advance on Jerusalem (Joshua vi). It lay in the valley of the Jordan, about five miles west of the river, and six miles north of the Dead Sea, in a fertile spot watered by streams from the hills above and springs in the valley below. At this time it was an important town commanded by a strong Roman citadel. The road to Jerusalem is about seventeen miles of very steep ascent, from the level of the city, about 1,000 feet below the

sea, to the height of the capital 2,400 feet above sea level. *As they went out*: so also Mark, whereas Luke makes it, 'as they drew nigh'. Here again we cannot tell which is more accurate.

30. *Two blind men*: Mark who mentions one only (see above) gives his name Bartimæus and states that he was a beggar, as poor blind men often are. They heard, according to Luke xviii. 36, in response to their inquiry. *Jesus*: the two other accounts add the name of Nazareth. He had become widely known by the name of His village, as His own name was a very common one (xxvi. 71; Mark i. 24). *Lord, have mercy on us*: the Greek words from which these are translated, in their Latin pronunciation, form the well-known penitential refrain: 'Kyrie eleison'. *Son of David*: that is Messiah (i. 1).

31. *The multitude rebuked them*: as the disciples had done in the case of the infants (xix. 13). Here, too, Jesus was more ready to help than His followers. *They cried out the more*: in the stentorian tones of the blind beggar which will sound through the din of most crowds.

32. *What will ye*: a question intended, as on other occasions, to concentrate the minds of the applicants on the greatness of their need, and the power of the Healer.

34. *Compassion*: (cp. ix. 36; xiv. 14; xv. 32). *They followed him*: with no need of a guide now. Doubtless there were other persons recently cured of diseases mingling in the crowds, whose tales would make the populace more and more excited till the time of the entry into Jerusalem (cp. Luke xix. 37).

CHAPTER XXI

xxi. 1-xxv. 46. THE PRELUDE OF THE PASSION

AN entire change now comes over the attitude and actions of Jesus. Instead of avoiding Jerusalem, He goes there, despite the danger of which He knew, or rather with a clear prevision of it (xx. 17*ff.*). Instead of forbidding His disciples to make known His wonderful works and His messianic dignity, He directs them to prepare for His entry into the city of David as a king. Each of the subsequent events helps to lead up to the great crisis: the cleansing of the temple, rousing the deadly jealousy of the priesthood; the cursing of the fig tree, showing the impending doom of Israel; the questions and answers with the chief priests and with the Pharisees and Sadducees, unmasking them as 'blind leaders of the blind', and followed by the denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees in chapter xxiii. Finally we have in chapters xxiv and xxv the prophecies of judgement to be executed by Jesus as Messiah, the affirmation of which before the Sanhedrin (xxvi. 63, 64) formed the ground of His condemnation to death.

More than a third of the gospel narrative is occupied with the events and sayings of the last week of the life of

Jesus, which the Church commemorates under the name of Holy Week. The reason for this is reflected in the Epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter, which show the overwhelming importance that was attached to the sufferings and death of Jesus, as the means of our salvation, by the apostolic Church, after their eyes had been opened to its meaning by the resurrection (Luke xxiv. 32, 44-8; John ii. 22; xii. 16; xx. 9) which reminded them of the words of Jesus, that they had been so slow to understand (Luke xxiv. 6-7). I give a chronology of the events of this week, based on Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*. Nisan is the Jewish month which corresponds to March-April. The Jewish day begins at sunset.

Sabbath, Nisan 8. Arrival at Bethany before sunset on Friday (John xii. 1). Supper in the evening (John ii. 2-8; Matt. xxvi. 6-13).

Palm-Sunday, Nisan 9. Triumphant entry into Jerusalem (xxi. 1-11). The children's hosannas and healings in the temple (xxi. 14-16). Return to Bethany (xxi. 17).

Monday, Nisan 10. Return from Bethany (xxi. 18). Blasting of the fig tree (xxi. 19). Cleansing of the Temple (xxi. 12, 13). Retirement to Bethany (Mark xi. 19). Conspiracy of the enemies of Jesus (Luke xix. 47).

Tuesday, Nisan 11. Returning early to Jerusalem, the fig tree is found withered (Mark xi. 20). Jesus vindicates His authority to teach; answers questions as to the tribute money, the resurrection, and the Great Commandment; and questions His opponents: 'What think ye of Christ? (Chapters xxi. 23-xxii. 46). Woes on the Scribes and Pharisees (chapter xxiii. 1-36).

Jesus in the Treasury. The widow's mite (Mark xii. 41-4). Visit of certain Greeks (John xii. 20-2). Jesus finally rejected (John xii. 37). Lament over Jerusalem (xxiii. 37-9). Prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem, and the second coming of the Son of man, followed by parables of judgement (Chapters xxiv and xxv). Council in the house of Caiaphas (xxvi. 3-5).

Wednesday, Nisan 12. Spent in retirement at Bethany (cp. John xii. 36). Bargain of Judas (xxvi. 14-16).

Thursday, Nisan 13. In the afternoon preparations for the Last Supper (xxvi. 17-19). The foot-washing (John xiii. 2). Supper with the twelve in the upper room (xxvi. 20-5) and departure of Judas (John xiii. 30). Institution of the Eucharist (xxvi. 26-9). Discourses in the upper room, followed by departure thence (John xiii. 12; xiv. 31). Allegory of the Vine, and promises of the Comforter (John xv and xvi). The high-priestly prayer of Jesus (John xvii). Departure to Gethsemane and warning to Peter (xxvi. 30-5). The agony in Gethsemane (xxvi. 36-46) lasting one hour (Mark xiv. 37).

Good Friday, Nisan 14. Jesus arrested, about midnight (xxvi. 47-56). Preliminary hearing before Annas (John xviii. 12-14 and 19-24). Peter's denial (xxvi. 69-75). Jesus sent to Caiaphas (John xviii. 24) and tried before him (xxvi. 57-68). Jesus made over to Pilate (xxvii. 1-2). First examination before him (Luke xxiii. 1-5). Sent to Herod (Luke xxiii. 6-12). Final trial before Pilate (xxvii. 11-26). Mocking, crucifixion and death (xxvii. 27-50). Following signs and burial (xxvii. 51-61). Precautions against resurrection (xxvii. 62-6).

Easter Eve, Nisan 15. First day of unleavened bread and Sabbath (John xix. 31).

Easter Day, Nisan 16. The resurrection very early. Visit of the women to the sepulchre and encounter with Jesus (xxviii. 1-10). Visit of Peter and John to the sepulchre (John xx. 3-10). Appearance to Mary Magdalene (John xx. 11-18). In the afternoon, appearances to two disciples (Luke xxiv. 13-32) and to Peter (Luke xxiv. 34). In the evening appearance to the apostles (Luke xxiv. 36-43; John xx. 19-23).

It should always be remembered that such an arrangement of fragmentary records cannot pretend to complete accuracy, and that it is possible to make out a plausible case for alterations here and there, but this is sufficiently accurate to form a reasonably correct framework in which to fix for memory and imagination the quickly moving events of the great crisis.

In the first twenty-two verses of this chapter, Matthew, after his manner, has again arranged his matter topically, and compressed it. He brings into close proximity three scenes: first the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as the peaceful Messiah; next His cleansing of the temple, as the great High-Priest; and last, His curaing of the fig tree, as the Prophet. Each of these actions is purposely and strikingly symbolic, reminding one of the acted parables of Old Testament prophets, such as the linen girdle of Jeremiah (xiii. 1-7); the bands and bars upon his neck (xxvii. 2); the horns of Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah (1 Kings xxii. 11). Mark arranges the incidents more in chronological order, noting in xi. 11 that on the evening

of Sunday Jesus inspected the city and temple. On Monday morning He sees the fig tree and pronounces on it the sentence of sterility; then follows the temple cleansing on Monday, and the withering of the fig tree is noted on Tuesday morning (Mark xi. 20).

xxi. 1-11. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM
(MARK xi. 1-10; LUKE xix. 29-38; JOHN xii. 12-19)

The evident purpose of our Lord in this action is to claim the messianic dignity, but in such a manner that there could be no doubt as to its peaceful and spiritual nature, and making it evident that the Messiah could only be satisfied with a worship that was truly spiritual, and with a national life which brought forth the fruits of righteousness.

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and came unto Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. Now this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

Tell ye the daughter of Zion,
 Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
 Meek, and riding upon an ass,
 And upon a colt the foal of an ass.

And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus appointed them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their garments; and he sat thereon. And the most part of

the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way. And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this? And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.

1. *When they drew nigh to Jerusalem*: here, as in ii. 1, we have the mention of an important new movement of the story in a subordinate clause, showing how the gospels consist of sections of teaching originally given orally, and afterwards linked together, to make a continuous record. There had been in between, the steep and toilsome march from Jericho (see xx. 29), and Jesus had stayed over the Sabbath two miles short of Jerusalem, at Bethany, which He had reached six days before the Passover (John xii. 1), probably, that is, on the Friday afternoon. There the anointing took place, which Matthew apparently relates out of chronological order in xxvi. 6-13. From St. John we learn that the procession here described really started on a pre-concerted plan from Bethany, and that others hearing of this came out from Jerusalem to meet Him (see John xii. 12). The name *Bethphage* means 'House of early figs'; according to the Talmud, it was a tract outside the walls of Jerusalem (on the way from Bethany) and it was doubtless famous for that fruit, hence the incident of the early fig tree (vv. 18-22). *The Mount of Olives* was a gentle eminence, a little nearer Jerusalem, about one mile eastward from the walls,

separated from the city by a valley through which the road ran. A certain number of olive trees still grow there, and Gethsemane at the foot of the hill was as its name signifies originally an 'oil press' in which the olives were squeezed out. *Two of his disciples*: not improbably Peter and John (cp. Luke xxii. 8).

2. *The village that is over against you*: it would seem that at that time there was a village of Bethphage, in which, as indicated by the context, a disciple of Jesus lived, to whom the beasts belonged which Jesus knew would serve His purpose and be at His disposal. *Straightway*: that is immediately on entering the village. *An ass* (Greek, *she ass*) . . . *and a colt with her*. The mother ass is only mentioned by St. Matthew. Hitherto the colt would be accustomed to run alongside of her when she was ridden by the master, as we see colts doing here, but he had just reached an age for riding, and so is bound beside his mother, though he has never actually been ridden (Mark xi. 2). The disciples are to bring them both, and when they come (v. 7) some are apparently in doubt as to which animal Jesus will use, and put their garments on both (see v. 7 'on them'), but the unused beast is suitable for so solemn an occasion, and the mother can walk along beside him.

3. *The Lord*: that is the Master whom the owners acknowledged as having a claim on their service as disciples. In the neighbourhood of Bethany, where Lazarus had recently been raised from the dead, Jesus had many disciples (John xi. 45).

4-5. *That it might be fulfilled*: (op. i. 22) a formula often used by Matthew. In this case the fulfilment was

an intentional one on the part of Jesus, though the disciples failed to realize it at the time (John xii. 16), for the Jews acknowledged that the passage (Zech. ix. 9) applied to the Messiah. The words are freely translated from the Hebrew, with a reminiscence of Isa. lxii. 11. Zechariah contrasts the King, who comes to save Jerusalem in peaceful guise, with the conquerors of the great world kingdoms who come with chariots and horses. His kingdom shall, nevertheless, stretch from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; He is heir of the world in virtue of His meekness (v. 5) and the symbol of this is the animal which He bestrides. *And upon a colt*: the *and* here is a translation of the Hebrew usage of the word, not adding a new idea, but emphasizing the previous one; *an ass*: yes indeed, on a colt foaled by a beast of burden; such is the meaning of 'ass' at the end of the verse. We have, however, to remember that the ass was not despised, as in India, where it is only used by low-caste people. It was used by the highest (Judges v. 10; 2 Sam. xvi. 2); only it was never used for purposes of war.

7. *Put on them their garments*: an improvised saddle of a modest sort, but indicating complete devotion on the part of those who gave their long upper garment, or chadar (see v. 40), for the purpose. *He sat thereon*: on the garment saddle so provided, and accepting the homage implied.

8. *The most part of the multitude*: the enthusiasm extended to the great majority of this crowd, who probably included many Galileans. *They spread their garments in the way*: as for a king (cp. 2 Kings ix. 13).

As the procession moves on from Bethany, it is met by a crowd from Jerusalem who are come out to hail the King of Israel, bearing palm-branches (John xii. 12, 13); a sign of religious festivity, especially used at the Feast of Tabernacles (Rev. vii. 9; Neh. viii. 15). The sight of them encourages *others* to cut branches from the trees and spread them in the way: as an additional sign of homage.

9. *The multitudes that went before*: are the palm-bearers from Jerusalem; those *that followed*: the crowd who started from Bethany. The enthusiasm has now spread through the whole concourse, and all join in the cry, *Hosanna*: the first word of Ps. cxviii. 25, 'Save now'. As a liturgical formula the word had come to mean much the same as the English 'Hail,' or the Hindi, 'Jai'. It was most used at the Feast of Tabernacles on the seventh day of which palm-branches were carried about by worshippers uttering that cry, from which it received the name of 'Hosanna Day'. Along with Amen, and Hallelujah, this word has come into liturgical use in the Christian Church from the Hebrew language, though the last named is often used in the corrupt Greek form 'Alleluia'. *Son of David*: that is Messiah (op. xx. 30; xxii. 42). The phrase in Luke xix. 38, 'Blessed is the King', is equivalent in meaning to the greeting here. *Blessed is he that cometh*: from Ps. cxviii. 26, one of the Passover Psalms. *Hosanna in the highest*: (op. Luke ii. 14) i.e. 'may our acclamation be echoed in heaven!' Here comes in the lament of Jesus (Luke xix. 41-4).

10. *All the city was stirred*: at the time when the Passover pilgrims were coming up the Roman guards were doubled, and the city of Jerusalem was tense with

excitement, like Mecca at the time of the Hajj, or Prayāg at the Māgh Mala.

11. To the question of the Jerusalemites, *Who is this?* the multitudes, largely composed of Galileans, reply with some provincial pride. *This is the prophet*: generally acknowledged as such (op. xvi. 14; xxi. 46; Luke vii. 16; xiii. 33; xxiv. 19; John vi. 14; vii. 40); and *He is Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee* (op. on ii. 23). Although the multitude had hailed Him as Son of David, they do not speak of Him in these terms to the questioners, in whose tone they may have felt the chilling and supercilious indifference of dwellers in a metropolis. Perhaps they were waiting for Jesus explicitly to claim the rank.

XXI. 12-17. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

(MARK xi. 15-18; LUKE xix. 45-7)

By this action our Lord made His last great protest against 'the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees', that is the worldly spirit under the guise of religious observance (see on xvi. 6 and op. xxiii. 25). In John ii. 14-16 we find a similar act recorded at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus with small differences. Such as they are, e.g. in the treatment of the pigeon-sellers and the words addressed to the traders, they make the attitude of our Lord appear more uncompromising now than at the first. Both events took place at Passover time, when the largest number of pilgrims came, and the objectionable traffic was at its height. On the first occasion Jesus uttered the words which referred to the destruction of His body as the

true temple (John ii. 19-21); and after the second cleansing this utterance was revived by His enemies in a garbled form, as the only serviceable accusation before the court of the Sanhedrin (xxvi. 60, 61). The well-known force of vested interests had brought things back again into the old rut; for the aristocratic party of the high-priest were interested in the profits derived from this trade. On Sunday evening, when Jesus visited the temple, He had 'looked round on all things' (Mark xi. 11) and His heart must then have been filled with indignation at this renewed defilement of His Father's House. The cleansing of the sanctuary was, according to Mal. iii. 1-3, expected to be performed by the Messiah; so, after spending the night at Bethany, Jesus returns to Jerusalem to assert His supreme right over the House of God, and in so doing, He once more vindicates the position of children as His disciples.

And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; and he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple: and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were moved with indignation, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these are saying? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? And he left them, and went forth out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.

12. *The temple of God* in Jerusalem was the only notable sanctuary then in the whole world devoted to monotheistic worship. That His Father's worship in spirit and in truth should be endangered in this spot could not but arouse the deepest feelings of Jesus. The temple was situated on Mount Moriah, on the east side of Jerusalem, overlooking the Valley of Jehoshaphat and the winter torrent or nullah of Kidron, with the Mount of Olives opposite. It was built on the lines of the temple erected by Solomon (1 Kings vi and vii) which was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv. 8-17) rebuilt under Zerubbabel (Ezra iii.) and restored on a scale of great magnificence by Herod the Great (see on ii. 1). It consisted of a cubical sanctuary at the west end, the Most Holy Place, at this time dark and empty. To it was attached the Holy Place, double the size, containing the seven-branched candlestick, the table with the bread of offering, and the altar of incense. Outside, on the east, stood the great altar of burnt offering, on which the bloody sacrifices were consumed. To the north and south lay the court of the priests, and to the east the court of the women. On four sides of these inner structures was the much larger Court of the Israelites, which no Gentile might enter on pain of death. This was surrounded by rows of cloisters and apartments, and on a lower level stood the Court of the Gentiles on all four sides. The word usually translated 'temple' applies to this whole group of buildings (cp. iv. 5; Acts ii. 46). But in xxiii. 16; xxvii. 51; xxvi. 61 the word 'temple' (see margin) is the translation of a different Greek term, signifying the inner sanctuary

where the priests ministered. Here the word refers to the Court of the Gentiles which was the outermost part of the whole. Those who *sold and bought* were carrying on trade in materials for sacrifice ; sheep and oxen (John ii. 14) and *doves* (cp. Luke ii. 24) and *the money-changers* were specially needed for the worshippers from foreign lands who congregated in great numbers at this time. The temple poll-tax and the price of sacrificial animals could be paid only in Jewish coin. This temple-market was held in what the Talmud calls ' the booths of the sons of Annas ' , father-in-law of the High Priest, Caiaphas (John xviii. 13) ; and its profits went to the family and hangers-on of the high-priest. It was obnoxious to pious Jews generally, and three years before the destruction of Jerusalem it was finally abolished by an outbreak of popular feeling.

13. *It is written* : (see Isa. lvi. 7 ; Jer. vii. 11). The two passages are combined by our Saviour. *A house of prayer* : Mark (xi. 17) adds what Jesus doubtless used, the remainder of the verse, ' for all the nations ' . The indignation of Jesus was aroused, not only by the defilement of His Father's house (John ii. 16 ; Luke ii. 49) but by the mean advantage which the covetousness of the chief priests took of the Gentile worshippers, whose place of devotion was thus disturbed. When land and sea had been compassed to make one proselyte (xxiii. 15) his devotion would thus be deadened, and formalism promoted. It was a case of causing little ones to stumble (xviii. 6). *A den of robbers* : like those that abounded in the limestone hills of Judæa, where the dacoits wrangled over their ill-gotten booty, just as

these people were chaffering over bargains while they fleeced the pilgrims. Jesus was the only one who had courage at this time to attack the abuse; He was enabled to do it by the majesty of His righteous indignation, aided by the presence of many Galilaean pilgrims and the popular feeling, as well as by the uneasy conscience of the temple guardians, who were fain to attack Him on another score (v. 15).

15. This little section, relating the healings in the temple which followed on its cleansing, and the homage of the boys in the temple, is peculiar to St. Matthew. Now that the crowd of traders and beasts had been removed, *the blind and the lame* were able to come into the sacred precincts, at the doors of which they had been begging (John ix. 1; Acts iii. 2) to be healed by the Prophet of Galilee; a true service of God and fitted for His house. The chief priests, galled by the loss of their gains, and the scribes, annoyed at the popularity being gained by the Prophet, challenge Him. His works of healing, added to the reform just carried out, have excited such enthusiasm that the boys who have come to the temple with their parents cry out loud in its precincts what their elders had been shouting on the way from Bethany, *Hosanna to the Son of David* (see on v. 9). The indignation of the authorities was professional, like that of the synagogue ruler in Luke xiii. 14, who was so displeas'd at works of mercy being done on the Sabbath.

16. As Jesus was moved with indignation when the children were kept from Him (Mark x. 14) so now He sharply answers the hypocritical remonstrance. *Yea:*

a clear affirmation that what the boys had been shouting was fully justified. *Did ye never read*: of course they had, but they had utterly missed the meaning of the Scriptures which they knew so well, and not only in this instance. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings* (Ps. viii. 2). The Psalmist is describing the glory of Jehovah as manifesting itself equally in the greatest and the meanest of His creatures; it is above the heavens, yet it is specially manifested in so insignificant creature as man, and even through babes and sucklings; their childish admiration of God's wonders and praise of Him has a force which many an enemy has been unable to withstand. *Perfected praise*, instead of 'established strength', as in the Psalm, is the rendering of the Septuagint.

17. Apparently the objectors had nothing to answer, so Jesus *left them, and went forth out of the city to Bethany*, probably to the house of Lazarus and his sisters (John xi. 1; xii. 1) where He would find both refreshment and safety (cp. xkvi. 6-13).

xxi. 18-22. THE CURSING OF THE FIG TREE

(MARK xi. 12-14; 20-4)

In the parable recorded in Luke xiii. 6-9 Jesus had described the moral condition of Israel under the image of a fig tree on which the master of the garden seeks fruit but finds none. In response to the vinedresser's plea, the fruitless tree is spared yet another year to see whether it will respond to the gardener's efforts. That respite has now expired, and the vinedresser Himself

now announces in parable of action that His cleansing efforts will not avail to regenerate the nation ; the tree that God has planted will not bring forth the fruits of righteousness, it will remain barren and therefore wither away, leaving a bare stem as a monument of God's curse on moral sterility. The fulfilment is before our eyes ; Judaism had been an active missionary religion, enrolling proselytes and leavening the thought of the world. Now it is self-contained and dwindling, and its chief influence on the nations is through Jesus of Nazareth and His followers. The same principle which our Saviour set forth in this acted parable applies to the Christian Church. There have been branches of the Church which were barren of the fruits which God desires, and they have been cut off by the sword of Islam or other agencies. It behoves us also of the Indian Church to ' be not highminded, but fear ' (cp. Rom. xi. 17-22).

Now in the morning as he returned to the city, he hungered. And seeing a fig tree by the way side, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only ; and he saith unto it, Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How did the fig tree immediately wither away ? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

18. *In the morning* of Monday in Holy Week (see introduction to the chapter). *He hungered* : very likely

Jesus had risen early for prayer (cp. Mark i. 35) and started for the city before taking His first meal.

19. *A single fig tree* : (see margin) this would attract His attention as He went along, and suggest the possibility of staying His hunger till He should arrive in the city where He could get a meal. Going up to it He finds *nothing thereon, but leaves only*. In Mark xi. 13 we read, 'it was not the season of figs'. Being close upon the Passover, we may suppose that it was about the beginning of April. The Palestine fig tree bears two crops. In the early spring, about a month before this, small fruit buds appear on the twigs of the previous year's growth (the green figs referred to in Song of Solomon ii. 13 as a sign of the coming in of spring) and behind them appear the new leaves (xxiv. 32) which develop together with the fruit. This ripens by the end of May or beginning of June, but the unripe figs are eaten when shaken down by a high wind (cp. Rev. vi. 13) by fellahin (or peasants) who wish to stay their hunger. The use made of the unripe fruit of the North Indian *gular*, or wild fig, is analogous. Seeing that the tree had leaves, it should have had green figs which would serve the purpose of staying the hunger of Jesus, but, like the mango trees that sometimes disappoint us, after their 'false blossoming', this had no fruit under its leaves. It was an apt picture of the Jewish nation isolated in its profession of faithfulness to God and to the hope of salvation, yet without the fruits of righteousness, which should have ripened under the shadow of rite and ceremony and doctrine. It reminds our Saviour of what He hungered for more than earthly

food (cp. John iv. 34), namely, to save the people to whom He was sent (xv. 24); and He pronounces the parabolic sentence, *Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever*. Its useless condition is made permanent. The divine judgement is the sealing of the course of life which we have adopted, only in this case, unlike the tree, by our own choice (cp. Rev. xxii. 11). It is noteworthy that this, the only miracle of judgement performed by our Lord was enacted on a non-sentient being. When it was a question of calling down fire on those who had rejected Him, He indignantly refused (Luke ix. 54-5). *Immediately the fig tree withered away*: its condition was not noticed by the disciples till the next morning (Mark xi. 20) but the sentence began to take effect at once (cp. Gen. ii. 17). 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.'

20. *They marvelled*: for this sign, like others, they did not understand at the time, but its record here would teach a needful lesson to Palestine Christians regarding the rejection of Israel. St. Paul develops the same lesson in Rom. xi. 13-24 under the metaphor of an olive tree which may well have been suggested by our Lord's two parables. The wonder of the disciples, however, is not as to the fact which they beheld, but as to the manner in which the words of Jesus had taken effect.

21-2. Our Lord enters upon the question, though it was a diversion from the main issue, and tells them that the channel of power in this, and we may believe in His other signs, was faith. He did His works, not only 'in the power of the Spirit' (Luke iv. 14), but through faith in the Father who sent Him (John viii. 29).

That world-overcoming faith they would soon need sorely, and Jesus would fain strengthen it in them, therefore He repeats His promise of xvii. 20 (the note on which see). There stress is laid on faith as a grain of mustard seed, small, yet living; here, without image—*have faith and doubt not*: it must be pure and unadulterated if it is to be strong. In this passage the former promise of the removal of a mountain of difficulty is supplemented by promise of positive blessings in answer to the prayer of faith. It is a continuation of the promise already given in vii. 7 and 8. The *all things* are conditioned only by the limitation which the Saviour put upon His own petitions (xxvi. 39), 'not as I will, but as thou wilt'. There is no kind of blessing, bodily or spiritual which is outside the range of believing prayer, and the Church is realizing this more and more.

xxi. 23-xxiii. 39. THE CRISIS OF THE HISTORY

This section contains the crisis of the history. Jesus has asserted His kingly and priestly authority by the entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple; He is now met by the rulers with a challenge to that authority, and the question is brought to a point; is it to be His or theirs; the new or the old; the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets, or the fossilized legalism that is immersed in the study of the letter of Scripture and misses its aim? The people hold Jesus as a Prophet, and as the true Prophet of His people He meets His opponents, confutes and pronounces sentence upon them.

From xxi. 23 to xxii. 14 Jesus deals with the Chief Priests and elders, representing the Sanhedrin (xxii. 15-46) with the Pharisee and Sadducee scribes, the Jewish schoolmen; and after they are silenced comes His scathing denunciation of the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. It then only remains for Him to depict the future judgement which will issue in the establishment of His kingdom of eternal life (see xxv. 46).

**XXI. 23-32. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS QUESTIONED
AND VINDICATED**

(MARK XI. 27-33; LUKE XX. 1-8)

This Jesus does, first by an appeal to the witness of John the Baptist whose prophetic authority was acknowledged by all the people; next by the parable of the two sons, enforcing the truth that 'the kingdom of God is righteousness' (Rom. xiv. 17; cp. Matt. vi. 33); that is loyal obedience to God, the great lesson taught by the failure of Saul, the first king of Israel (1 Sam. xv. 32).

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, From

men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son go work to-day in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of the twain did the will of his father? They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him.

23. *When he was come into the temple: after arriving in the city from Bethany. In the temple He had taken up His work of teaching (op. Luke xx. 1) and was doubtless preaching the gospel of repentance, forgiveness and a new life. There come to Him the chief priests and the elders of the people: two of the three classes represented in the Sanhedrin (see on xvi. 21; but in Mark xi. 27 all three are mentioned). They challenge Him. By what authority doest thou these things? Referring to the actions of Jesus since He had come up to Jerusalem, and to the teaching which He was then giving, doubtless with a strong insistence on His personal claim, as at Nazareth (see Luke iv. 21). Who gave thee this authority? Jesus had not been admitted to the office of Rabbi by the usual ceremony, the delivery of a key, which signified the right to interpret the Scriptures (op. xvi. 19). He*

had already puzzled the people of Jerusalem as 'having never learned' letters, that is the theology of the time (cp. John vii. 15).

24. *I also will ask you one question*: it was their part, as the professed teachers of the nation, to resolve doubts about requirements for the office of a teacher. The use of answering a question by a question is to bring back both parties to a common principle by which the problem may be solved. Jesus says, in effect: Let us go back to one who is, or should be, equally acknowledged on both sides, and see what he said of Me.

25. *The baptism of John*: that is his prophetic office, of which baptism was the distinctive sign, seeing that He did no miracle (John x. 41). It involved a claim to high authority; a right to pronounce upon the moral and spiritual condition of the nation; and to admit those who were fit for the coming of the kingdom to its preparatory purification. At the same time it was inferior to, and leading up to that mission of Jesus (see iii. 11, 12). *From men*: was the idea that he was a prophet a mere popular fallacy? *They reasoned*: there had previously been inconsistency in their attitude towards John; many of them had come to his baptism (iii. 7); but again they had accused him of being possessed by a demon (xi. 18). So now they have to devise an escape from a dilemma, and cannot. As religious guides of the people it was eminently a question on which they should have had a clear opinion, but they can only consult expediency, not conviction. *Why then did ye not believe him*, as to what he said about Me? There was no

question as to what answer John had given to the inquiry from the official deputation from the rulers, 'Why baptisest thou then?' (See John i. 25-7; and cp. John v. 32-3).

26. *We fear the multitude*: they were afraid lest they should lose credit with the people (John v. 44) or even stir up a popular riot (Luke xx. 6).

27. The rulers are fain to abdicate their office and declare themselves blind guides of the blind, in the words, *We know not* (cp. xxiii. 16, 17, 19, 26). According to Deut. xv. 1-5 and xviii. 20-2, and the Mishna commentary thereon, the most important duty of religious leaders was to distinguish between true and false prophets. *Neither tell I you*: the answer was more than justified; it was demanded; for they had confessed their incompetence to ask Jesus the question as to His authority.

28. He now will ask them a question, as afterwards of the Pharisees, when they too had been unable to answer Him (xxii. 41). We have here the first of a trilogy of parables: (1) the two sons, touching the personal attitude of the rulers to God, and exposing their insincerity; (2) the vineyard, touching their attitude to the Messiah, and showing their contempt of the divine authority which they had accepted as caretakers of the vineyard; (3) the wedding feast, touching their attitude to the message of the divine grace which they had rejected for themselves, but only to bring about its extension to the outside world which they despised. *What think ye?* An appeal from the hair-splittings of the schools, in which they would fain have taken refuge, to

conscience and common sense. Compare the same form of question in the affair of the tribute money and in the parable of the lost sheep (xvii. 25 and xviii. 12) introducing a convincing simile. *A man had two sons*: God is, as Creator, the Father of all men, both good and bad (v. 45); but their moral relation to Him is determined by their moral choice of obedience or disobedience to His expressed will. *Go*: leaving the occupations that you may be engaged in by preference, *work to-day in my vineyard*: a favourite metaphor at this time with Jesus (xx. 1 and xxi. 33) here again indicating a pressing opportunity which will not occur again, like the critical day in vintage time.

29-30. The contrast is, of course, between ready profession without doing, and doing, albeit after a tardy concession.

31. This time the rulers cannot say, 'We know not'; they are bound to give the obvious answer though in so doing they pronounce their own condemnation. *Publicans and harlots*: (cp. Luke vii. 29 and 37-50) blatant defiers of God's laws of honesty and purity, who say by their lives, 'I will not'. They are more likely to become conscious of their sin and danger, and so to arrive at repentance and *go into the kingdom of God before you*, the smooth-spoken sons, professing such readiness and doing nothing. Yet they, too, might come and afterwards did (cp. Acts vi. 7; xv. 5) when they had learned to do the work of God, and believe on Him whom He had sent (John vi. 28, 29).

32. *John came unto you in the way of righteousness*: i. e. living according to the law (cp. Luke i. 6); there

were none of those apparent irregularities in him to which they took exception in Jesus (xi. 16-19). Yet they *believed him not*. As a body the rulers had rejected John, perhaps even intrigued for his death (xvii. 12). On the other hand, many of corrupt and dissolute life *believed him* (Luke iii. 12-13). *Ye did not even repent*: the word for 'repent' here, and in v. 29, is not the strong term with which John and Jesus exhorted their hearers to change their minds; it is a weaker word conveying compunction or regret. It is used of the remorse of Judas Iscariot (xxvii. 3). Not even so much did these people show, but were rather gratified when John was imprisoned and killed at the removal of the inconvenient rival.

xxi. 33-46. PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD FARMERS

(MARK xii. 1-12; LUKE xx. 9-19)

Following upon the personal rebuke of the last parable, Jesus deals in this with the official position of the leaders of the people. Comparing it with the parable of the vineyard labourers, we note that the central point there is the relation of workers in the kingdom of heaven to the one reward which is common to all; here it is the relation of those whom God has set over His people to Him in whom God visits them to receive His rightful due. The claim of Jesus to a unique sonship of God comes out with increasing clearness; He is the Heir, while Moses and the prophets are slaves of the Owner.

Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, which planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it,

and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive his fruits. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them in like manner. But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance. And they took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected,

The same was made the head of the corner:

This was from the Lord,

And it is marvellous in our eyes?

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust. And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. And when they sought to lay hold on him, they feared the multitudes, because they took him for a prophet.

33. *A householder*: or proprietor, as in xx. 1; here also representing God. *A vineyard*: the people of Israel, whom God brought as a vine out of Egypt and planted

in Canaan (Ps. lxxx. 8); a very frequent simile in the Old Testament. *Set a hedge*: the law which kept them separate from other nations and prevented the encroachments of open sins, which were like wild beasts seeking to devastate the vineyard. The *winepress* and the *tower* represent the organization that was necessary to secure the production of the fruit and to protect it from robbers. The vineyard is completely equipped for fruitfulness and safety, and the people of Israel in like manner had all that they needed to serve God and receive His protection. The owner then *let it out to husbandmen*: vine-farmers who will pay a rent in fruit or wine (cp. Luke xvi. 6-7). This represents God's appointment of leaders of His people, who are bound to promote His true worship and service. *And went into another country*: after the special revelation granted to Israel when the covenant was first established God's visible presence was withdrawn.

34. *The season of the fruits*: God demands nothing without giving the full opportunity for the service to be rendered. *He sent his servants* or slaves; namely, the prophets. *To receive his fruits*: the proceeds of the vineyard. The prophets demanded of Israel righteousness of life and true devotion (cp. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15).

35. The treatment of the owner's servants by the men in charge is a series of outrages (cp. v. 12). They *took* them, laid violent hands upon them (cp. xxii. 6); from beating (Jer. xxxvii. 15; 1 Kings xxii. 24) they went on to killing (with the sword, cp. Neh. ix. 26) and stoning (xxiii. 37; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21; cp. Heb. xi. 37).

36. *More than the first* : the frequency and urgency of prophetic missions increase in the later history of Israel after Elijah and Elisha.

37. *His son* : God's revelation is progressive, and calculated to rouse whatever there is of real receptiveness in man, especially in the case of His chosen people. The claim made by Jesus was stupendous, but it had been prepared for.

38. *Let us kill him* : Caiaphas had already given his fatal counsel (John xi. 50) showing his fellow-councillors how to escape the loss which they feared of their place and nation. It amounted to saying, *This is the heir* : for the claims of Jesus to Messiahship were never rebutted, except by violence ; *come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance*. There were unconfessed disciples of Jesus in that council (John xii. 42) ; and the others could see that Jesus knew their plottings against Him.

39. *They took him* : an anticipation of the arrest, (Mark xiv. 46). *Cast him forth out of the vineyard* : they rejected Him as a false Messiah (cp. John xix. 15 ; Matt. xvii. 63). *Killed him* : as Jesus had announced this consummation repeatedly to His disciples, so now He does to His opponents.

40-1. *When the lord of the vineyard shall come* : for judgement on the unfaithful and murderous administrators of his estate. In chapters xxiv and xxv He comes in the person of His Son. What will he do unto those husbandmen ? Starting off with the familiar imagery of Isa. v Jesus has carried along the interest of His hearers, so that they involuntarily answer this

question, unlike the one about John the Baptist (v. 27) which had been put in plain words. They implicitly confess that their own destruction and supplanting by the Gentiles is the just consequence of what they were then engaged in plotting. It was an unconscious prophecy, like that of Caiaphas (John xi. 51).

43-4. Jesus drives home the meaning of their own reply, first by a quotation from Ps. cxviii. 22-3; then by the announcement of their rejection (v. 43) and destruction (v. 44) containing the germ of the following discourses (xxiv and xxv). *Did ye never read?* (Cp. on v. 16). The quotation is in the immediate context of the Hosanna passage (v. 9). The Psalm is one of rejoicing in the restored temple after the captivity. In its rebuilding the psalmist sees a fulfilment of God's purposes for the world. Babylon and the other great kingdoms with which Israel had to do were trying to build up a structure of world dominion, and in this they had no use for the small and despised nation of Israel; but this rejected stone would really be the corner stone of God's greater temple (cp. Dan. ii. 35, 45; Isa. xxviii. 16). The Psalm passage was applied by the Rabbis to the Messiah, and by Jesus here to Himself. He is the stone destined for *the head of the corner*, the one on the fixing of which the lines of the whole building depend. This placing of Jesus as the corner stone, in the place of supreme honour, was brought about by His resurrection (Acts iv. 11). The metaphor is carried out by St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 4-8) whom Jesus had designated as the rockman of His Church, and alluded to by St. Paul, in Eph. ii. 20, where he deals with the Church as God's habitation. This

claim of Jesus to be the supreme regulator of the kingdom of God is corollary to that of His Sonship.

43. *Therefore . . . the kingdom of God*: of which you are the sons and heirs, if faithful (viii. 12), with all its privileges and blessings, *shall be taken away from you*: and not from you only, for what concerned the heads of the nation also concerned the nation which accepted them as its representatives; hence the kingdom *shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*: not a nation in the political sense, but God's chosen people, who would worship Him in spirit and truth (John iv. 23-4; ep. 1 Pet. ii. 9-10). On the ground of this and similar passages the Christians of the earliest centuries used to speak and write of themselves as the 'third nation' in contrast to Jews and Pagans. The fruits of the kingdom are described by St. Paul (Rom. xiv. 17; Gal. v. 22-3).

44. Those who refuse this Corner stone are of two kinds, and will be judged accordingly. *He that falleth on this stone*: (cp. Isa. viii. 14-15) that is, he who is turned aside from faith by the apparent contradiction between the lowliness and the authority claimed by Jesus, and who therefore sins against Him through lack of understanding. Such a one *shall be broken to pieces*; reduced to a condition of abject submission (cp. Ps. ii. 9). If this breaking or 'contrition' is of the heart, he may repent and be restored and bring the kiss of homage to the Son (Ps. ii. 12). *But on whomsoever it shall fall*: the image seems to be of a builder who stubbornly opposes the placing of the immense corner block in its proper place, and as he does so, it falls

into position and crushes him. He is irretrievably destroyed. The words were fulfilled in two classes of Jews: first those who disbelieved when they were first spoken, but were brought in after the resurrection and Pentecost; and next, those who continued in unbelief and were involved in the destruction of Jerusalem.

45-6. Though the leaders had at first been carried along by the interest of Christ's parables, they soon *perceived that he spake of them*, and were enraged accordingly, but the prophetic authority of Jesus stood too high for them to attempt an arrest then.

CHAPTER XXII

xxii. 1-14. PARABLE OF THE ROYAL PRINCE'S

MARRIAGE FEAST

(LUKE xiv. 16-24)

THE appeal to the Jewish leaders' sense of the divine commission had been fruitless; now Jesus touches a chord which should respond to the message of divine grace. He presents to them their position as called by God's undeserved favour to the joys and fellowship of His kingdom. At the same time He reiterates the assertion of His divine Sonship, and His approaching rejection, and the destruction of Jerusalem which will be the sequel of it, to be followed by the calling of the Gentiles; while at the same time, He warns the members of His Church that the mere acceptance of the call without change of life will not serve to save them from eventual exclusion.

This parable partakes very largely of the nature of allegory (see introduction to chapter xiii); e.g. 'the king sent his armies' (v. 7), the servants gathered together both bad and good (v. 10); and in v. 13 the story and its interpretation run into one.

And Jesus answered and spake again in parables unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise: and the rest laid hold on his servants, and entreated them shamefully, and killed them. But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests. But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen.

1. *Jesus answered*: i. e. began to say, with reference to what has gone before (cp. xi. 25). *Parables*: see on xiii. 10-13.

2. Here again the *king* corresponds to God, his *son* to our Lord. *A marriage feast for his son*: this parable is not concerned with the symbolism of a

marriage as showing forth the union between Messiah and His people, as in ix. 15, but with the invitation of the guests to the feast, as emblematic of the joys and privileges of the kingdom of heaven (cp. vii. 11 and Luke xiv. 15-24). In the latter place we have the same imagery, but in a less developed form, the feast being given by a wealthy man. This may be a different report of the former discourse but considering the familiarity of the image to the Jews, it more probably belongs to a different occasion.

3. *Sent forth his servants* : the contrast here is not between the sending forth of the slaves and the son, as in the last parable, but between the first and the second sending. The first invitation of the people to the prepared marriage feast comes through John and Jesus ; our Saviour here appears in the character of the Servant of Jehovah (see on xii. 18). *To call them that were bidden* : the invitation has been previously given and accepted, and the servants come to announce that the feast is actually ready. *They would not come* : a gross insult to the host. The words imply that they were unwilling to come, though pressed. Jesus and John were rejected, despite all their urgency, by the leaders and the mass of the people, and that out of intentional opposition to the will of God (cp. John v. 40).

4. The *other servants* are the apostles and their helpers. *Behold* : the words following this draw attention yet more urgently to the message, and more in detail, as was done after Pentecost.

5. The insult is emphasized by contemptuous behaviour ; *they made light of it* : mocked at the invitation

(Acts xiii. 45; xxviii. 24-5); and instead of preparing to follow the summons, they betake themselves to their everyday occupations. *His own farm*: as being of more importance to him than the king's palace and gardens.

6. While the people generally were indifferent, *the rest*, i.e. the rulers, returned active and cruel hostility for the king's gracious invitation (cp. Acts v. 40; vii. 58; xii. 2; xiv. 5).

7. *He sent his armies*: here the proclamation of the gospel in Israel first (Mark vii. 27) comes to an end. The reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem; for the purpose of judgement on the unbelieving nation the Roman legions were the armies of God. The word here rendered *armies* is translated 'soldiers' in Luke xxiii. 11 and Acts xxiii. 10, 27, and would be better rendered 'troops'. The succession of features in the parable does not necessarily indicate a strict succession of time; when the evangelist wrote, the Jewish body and its leaders had already in many places rejected the gospel and the apostles had turned to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 46; xxviii. 28); but the destruction of Jerusalem was the final turning point in this process.

8. *The wedding*: better 'marriage feast', as in *v.* 2 which has the same word.

9. *The partings of the highways*: where the roads bifurcate in front of the city gates. People generally congregate in such places, and after the 'city' had been 'burned', they would be there in masses. The apostles go to the great centres of population in the Gentile world.

10. *Both bad and good*: verging into interpretation; the story would naturally have run, 'both high and

low' or 'well clad and ragged'. As in xiii. 47 of the Church as a whole, so of the Gentile Church, our Saviour teaches that not all its members will be perfect, and this is further shown in the sequel (vv. 11-13). The simile also points to the freedom of salvation, irrespective of merit. *The wedding* : not, as in v. 7, the feast, but another word, meaning the bridechamber ; here used for the banqueting hall.

11. The scene of the application here changes. The entry of the guests into the banqueting hall corresponds to the admission to the kingdom upon earth, i. e. the Church. But now there comes the final advent of the King, resulting in judgement. The thread of the story, however, is not interrupted. *The king came in to behold the guests* : and welcome them as their host, before the feast begins, when he gives the signal. *A man which had not on a wedding garment* : considering the mixed condition of the guests, these must have been provided (cp. 2 Kings x. 22). The garment represents Christian character and conduct (cp. Rom. xiii. 12-14 ; Heb. xii. 14).

12. *Friend* (see on xx. 13) ; *how camest thou* : the unwilling guests had made light of the invitation itself ; this man had made light of the rules of courtesy and respect due to his host, and of his bounty in providing the needed raiment. Carelessness as to our Christian walk and conduct, for which we have the grace of God at our command, will exclude us from the presence of God.

13. The penalty of such conduct is exclusion from those privileges the conditions of which he had despised. *Bind him* : so that there will be no possibility of his returning, and he will lose the freedom which he has

abused. *Outer darkness*: contrasted with the lights and festivity of the wedding feast (see on viii. 12). The *servants* (margin, *ministers*) are not slaves, but servants of a higher class, and correspond to the angel reapers (xiii. 39).

14. *Many are called*: the same word as 'bidden' (v. 3) for the invited guests. This shows that our Lord, in speaking of only one who was found unworthy to remain in the banqueting hall, regarded him as the type of a class. Neither those who openly reject nor those who but nominally accept Him are chosen for eternal life (Acts xiii. 48).

xxii. 15-22. THE QUESTION OF THE TRIBUTE MONEY

(MARK xii. 13-17; LUKE xx. 20-6)

The first of the three catch questions put to Jesus on this day, first by one party and then by another from among the Sanhedrists, in order to get materials for an accusation. The scribes at that time warmly debated the lawfulness to a pious Jew of paying the Roman taxation and thus acknowledging the authority of a Gentile nation over the people whose only King was Jehovah (Deut. xv. 17). Their object in bringing it forward now is to suggest a contradiction between the Messianic claims of Jesus and loyalty to the existing rule. The presence of men among His disciples like Simon the Zealot afforded some hope that the answer, if it did not render Him liable to the censure of the Roman authorities, might at least help to create a dissension among His followers. To the wisdom of

Jesus it afforded an opportunity of making clear those principles of His Messianic rule in relation to the world-powers, which He had symbolized in His entry into the city, and which He afterwards plainly asserted before Pilate (John xviii. 36). His kingdom was based neither on worldly force nor on worldly wealth.

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in *his* talk. And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's. And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

15. *Then went the Pharisees and took counsel:* to judge from Mark xi. 27, where all three constituent elements of the Sanhedrin are mentioned, it would seem as if the Pharisee members were the prime movers in this scheme, though the deputation was sent by the council, something like that mentioned in John i. 19 (see Mark xii. 13). As the Sanhedrin no longer had the power of life and death, they wished, if possible, to get material for a political accusation which they could sustain in the court of the Roman procurator, as they

afterwards did on this very point, but with ill success (see Luke xxiii. 2 and 4).

16. Their disciples, or theological students, are sent to give colour to the appearance of genuine inquiry about a theological difficulty. Their Pharisee professors have been unable to answer the arguments of the Herodians, so now they betake themselves to an impartial authority. Luke (xx. 20) says that they 'feigned themselves to be righteous', by which adjective he probably means members of the sect known as Chasidim or Puritans. The Herodians (cp. Mark iii. 6 and see on xii. 14) were not a religious but a political party, composed of adherents of the Herodian dynasty, and therefore opposed to the strict Pharisees, and still more to the Zealots or extreme nationalists. They favoured the adoption of Graeco-Roman culture and customs. Herod Antipas was at this time in Jerusalem (Luke xxiii. 7) and members of his court party would be there in numbers, some of whom might be inimical to Jesus on account of the purity of His life and the strictness of His moral teaching (see also on xvi. 6). By addressing Jesus as *Master* they publicly recognize Him as an acknowledged religious teacher (cp. xii. 38). The flattery that follows is carefully thought out and neatly expressed, and it really brings out the noteworthy points in the character and conduct of Jesus. When they say, *we know that thou art true*, they admit that the accusation formerly made by the Pharisees of a league between Jesus and Beelzebub was a slander; for not only is He sincere in intention, but also true, fearless and impartial in His teaching. These qualities

are especially exemplified in the discourses which St. John has preserved to us in chapters v and vii-ix.

17. The deputation continue in the same strain, *What thinkest thou?* Others might be biased, or timid, but you can be trusted. *Is it lawful*: op. the same question regarding divorce xix. 3, put in the spirit of the legal casuist. *To give tribute*: the word translated *tribute* here signifies the capitation tax levied by the Romans, from which only children and old people were exempt. In Luke xx. 22 the same word stands for a different Greek one which signifies a tax on property or land. The question was as to taxation of any kind levied by a foreign government, which the Zealot party held no true Jew ought to pay. Since the time of their leader, Judas of Gamala, they had refused payment of Roman taxation, thus separating themselves from the general body of Pharisees, who, though they sympathized with the Zealot view, yet thought it well to compromise in practice.

18. *Hypocrites*: doubly, first in pretending to be asking for a decision in a theological controversy from a teacher whom they revered, while they were plotting to get up an accusation against an enemy whom they detested, and next because they secretly sympathized with the Zealot view, yet were about to falsely accuse Jesus, before a pagan governor, of maintaining it.

19. The *tribute money* was a *denarius* (see on xviii. 28). Probably the Roman taxation had to be paid in the imperial coinage, as the temple tribute was paid in the local Jewish coinage (see xvii. 24ff.).

20. The *image* on the silver denarius would be the head of the emperor Tiberius, and the *superscription*, or rather inscription, would be his name and titles TIBERius CAESar AUGustus IMPerator (His Imperial Majesty T.C.), the Latin words being shortened as indicated by the capitals.

21. The Jewish doctor Maimonides wrote: 'Wherever the coinage of a certain king is current, the inhabitants acknowledge that king as their lord.' Accordingly our Lord replies: *Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's*. It is a simple case of fair dealing. You profit by the protection and administration of the imperial government, and are willing to use and enrich yourselves by means of the emperor's coinage; you are bound therefore to give back due value in the way of taxation for what you have received. But that in no way interferes with your duty to God, whether it be to offer for His house and ministry, or to give yourselves to His service from whom you have received all. If His image is impressed upon you (Gen. i. 27), you are bound to render yourself to Him. This saying of our Saviour's lays down the true relations of Church and state. Obedience to the secular authority in return for the benefits received, is a Christian duty (Rom. xiii. 1-7) up to the limit at which that authority begins to encroach on what is due to God. If differences between the two occur, they are to be treated in a spirit of conciliation on the basis of fundamental principle, not in an attitude of captious opposition. In the present imperfect condition of humanity, Church and state are rightly regarded as

distinct, but wrongly treated as antagonistic. Religious persecution by the Church and secular domination of conscience by the state are equally wrong.

xxii. 23-33. PROBLEM OF THE DECEASED
:BROTHER'S WIFE :

(MARK xii.:18-27; LUKE xi. 27-40)

The aristocratic sect of Sadducees, to whom the high-priestly families belonged (Acts v. 17), now seek to bring Jesus into discredit by exposing His inability to defend the doctrine of the resurrection which they impugned, while the more pious of the nation held to it passionately. These Sadducees come with a superior air, and take no trouble to frame a polite introduction to their problem. Doubtless they were aware of what Jesus had said to the Pharisee doctors on the subject of divorce (xix. 6, 9). If, then, the marriage relation is so close and sacrosanct, how is the idea of a bodily resurrection compatible with it? In reply, Jesus first points out the essential basis of the hope of personal immortality, of which the resurrection of the body is a corollary; this, he says, is based upon the actual spiritual relation between God and His faithful people. Next Jesus teaches the spiritual nature of the resurrection body, which St. Paul, in the light of the resurrection of Jesus, further develops (1 Cor. xv. 35-49). So, out of a coarse and clumsily concocted story, made up to bring Him into discredit, Jesus draws a grand and inspiring revelation of the glorious hope of His people.

On that day there came to him Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection : and they asked him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren : and the first married and deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his brother ; in like manner the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And after them all the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven ? for they all had her. But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? God is not *the God* of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

23. *On that day* : the same Tuesday of Holy Week, so marked by controversy. *The Sadducees which say* : the marginal rendering *saying* is preferable ; the Jewish readers and learners would not need to be told this tenet of the Sadducees ; the evangelist introduces them as *saying that there is no resurrection* : they affirm their denial and challenge Jesus to solve the problem of the concrete case which supports, as they imagine, their contention.

24. *Master* : they too acknowledge Jesus as rabbi. *Moses said* : a free quotation of Deut. xxv. 5. The custom was older than the time of Moses (cp. Gen. xxxviii. 8) it was one of the customary laws which he embodied in his code, just as the British Government

has taken on many customary laws in India; but at the time of Christ it was falling into disuse.

25-7. *Deceased* means died. The story is not impossible, but like most casuistic instances it was probably made up for the occasion, despite the words, *there were with us*.

28. *In the resurrection*: that is the condition of things ushered in by it. A few rabbis took a spiritual view of this life, but the majority believed, like the author of the Qur'an, in the enjoyments of sense in the world to come, and some even in the procreation of children. The Sadducees presuppose the material view, and so regard their case as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the doctrine of the resurrection. If it be true, they would imply, there must be quarrels in heaven over matrimonial rights; for according to the teaching of Jesus each spouse has an exclusive right to the other. Some rabbis held that in the other world the wife would be adjudged to the first husband.

29. Again our Lord answers with authority, *Ye do err*: a judicial sentence on those very modern theologians. They understood neither *the scriptures*, containing the revelation of God in history, nor yet *the power of God*, or indeed His divine attributes generally; though they were professed students of the one and regarded themselves as particularly illuminated regarding the great problems of the other. They ignored the hints given even in the Old Testament of the changed conditions of another life, and could not imagine it as real, except under the laws of the present temporal state.

30. *They neither marry (the men) nor are given in marriage (the women).* In this existence the primary command of God to the race of man is: 'Be fruitful and multiply' (Gen. i. 28) otherwise under the present physical conditions the race would be extinguished and the world go back. Marriage was instituted as the beneficent channel in which the all-powerful reproductive instinct should move; 'but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world and the resurrection from the dead' (Luke xx. 35) have entered the sphere of eternal life, 'neither can they die any more'; hence the need for the reproductive instinct is gone, and they are as angels in heaven who need no marriage condition to save them from extinction. The physical sex-relation is abolished, though the deeper characteristics behind it, and the spiritual relationships to which it has given rise may remain.

31. *Have ye not read:* as far as regards direct proofs of the resurrection, other passages might seem clearer (e.g. Job xix. 25-6; Ps. xvi. 10-11; Dan. xii. 2); but Jesus purposely selects from the Pentateuch, in Exod. iii. 6, as acknowledged by the Sadducees, who held the Prophets and the Psalms in slight esteem. Also He wishes to go down to the foundations of the doctrine.

32. *I am the God of Abraham:* the fundamental thing is the existence of a personal God who has a personal relation to His reasonable creatures. 'God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God' (Heb. xi. 16); they can say 'My God' (cp. Ps. lxxiii. 1). This relationship of mutual knowledge and obligations is expressed in the Old Testament term 'covenant'. And

from it follows something more: *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* The life which is in Him is communicated to those who belong to Him personally; they 'live unto him' (Luke xx. 38). A God who could not give His worshippers eternal life would be a mere word, a figment of the human imagination; he would be no God, and the Sadducee is on the way to atheism. On the other hand, He who has made His worshippers, even in this mortal body, in His own image, will not fail to deliver them from the imperfections of the intermediate state, called in the Old Testament Sheol (Ps. cxvi. 3; xviii. 5-6; 2 Sam. xxii. 6-7), and to furnish them with a spiritual body, for the completion of their being. The Hindu idea of re-embodiment expressed in their doctrine of transmigration is a groping after what the Sadducee had missed; but with this difference that the supposed new body is not even necessarily a human one, and so may be utterly unfitted for moral and intellectual development; while, even if it be human, still it is supposed to move in the same material sphere as the present body, with the same tendencies to carnality and sin, so that the chain of births becomes endless and aimless. In the teaching of Jesus, on the other hand, we have the prospect of a real ascent into a higher condition of life. He offers rest from the weary toil of endless mortal lives (xi. 28).

33. *The multitudes . . . were astonished*; and expressions of admiration were not wanting (Mark xii. 28; Luke xx. 39). Here, as after the Sermon on the Mount, it was the authority of the teaching which struck them (vii. 29).

xxii. 34-40. THE QUESTION OF THE GREAT
COMMANDMENT

(MARK xii. 28-31; CP. LUKE x. 25-8)

Though he asks by way of testing Jesus, yet this questioner is one who had been impressed by the answer of Jesus to the Sadducees, and was still more so by the answer of Jesus to his own question, so that Jesus commended him (cp. Mark xii. 28 and 34). He must have been the type of many who were drawn to Jesus, but had not yet crossed the line and were still probing His claims. The 'lawyer' in Luke x is of a different disposition; self-righteous and unwilling to draw the true conclusion from the passage which He had readily and rightly quoted.

But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets.

34. *The Pharisees . . . gathered themselves together* : as a body with no friendly intent, yet some of them impressed by the way in which Jesus had confuted the Sadducees, after he had answered the mixed deputation of their own students and Herodians, who had retired in confusion (v. 22).

35. *A lawyer*: this term, to designate one of the scribe class, is used here only in Matthew; in Luke we have it frequently (vii. 30; x. 25; xi. 45) and in Titus iii. 13 we find a Christian convert of this class named Zenas whom St. Paul seems to be sending to Titus to help him in controversies raised by disputatious Jewish Christians (Titus i. 10, 14; iii. 9). Many men like this questioner afterwards became disciples. They were called in to decide religious controversies, like the *muftis* of Islám, and this man may himself have been called on before this for a *fatwa* or opinion on the very matter with which he was about to test Jesus. *Tempting*: not always used in an invidious sense (see on iv. 1). It is the same word as that rendered 'prove' in John vi. 6, where Jesus tests Philip by His question, and in 2 Cor. xiii. 5 where Christians are bidden to test themselves. The phase of meaning is decided by the context. Here the questioner is not a bitter or hypocritical opponent.

36. *Which is the great commandment in the law?* In v. 19 we have already had a reference to the distinction made by the Jewish scribes, to whom this man belonged, between heavy and light commandments; and our Lord did not there negate it, but He cut across the mechanical method by which the scribes divided up the commandments by His teaching, in xv. 1-20, that the ethical is to be preferred to the ceremonial, as end is preferred to means.

37-8. Jesus therefore answers the question without reserve, quoting Deut. vi. 5, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*: this and the preceding verse were known as the *Shema* or 'Hear' from the first word of verse 4:

'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.' These verses comprised the confession of faith in the Unity of God, and of duty to love Him with every faculty of the being. They were and are recited daily in Hebrew by every pious Jew in his set prayers, and were worn on the phylacteries (xxiii. 5). They thus correspond to the *Kalima* of Muslims, only that they carry a profession of duty, as well as a confession of faith, while they omit the name of the law-giver. Thus they form a brief creed of unparalleled depth and beauty which only awaited the embodiment given to it by the life and teaching of Jesus to expand it into the full scope of His religion. Mark who gives a fuller report of this incident, includes the Shema' verse in our Lord's reply and in the lawyer's answer. The love of God is to extend to the *heart*, in our language, personality including will; the *soul* or sentient life, and the *mind* or intellectual faculties. All the powers of man are to be united in this one outgoing of his being to his Creator and Redeemer, for to the Israelite Jehovah was both (cp. Ps. ciii. 1-5). This command indicates the spirit or intention which alone gives value to all obedience. God, though infinitely higher, is infinitely nearer than our fellow man. Yet, on account of His exaltation, it was necessary to express His desire for the love of man as a command, because, without such, man could not dare to adopt the attitude of love towards his Maker; nor, save through Christ, has he ever maintained it and followed it out to its consequences, to be 'imitators of God, as beloved children' (Eph. v. 1). The way in which Jesus uttered this most

familiar passage would be like the apt quotation of a sentence from the Creed which makes us realize the meaning of words that we had lost through their glib and constant repetition.

39. *A second like unto it* : both in nature and necessity ; because the love that goes out to God must go out to those whom He loves ; therefore the fulfilment of this commandment comprises the law and the prophets (vii. 12). The quotation is free, according to the Greek translation of the Septuagint, from Lev. xix. 18. It is not a little remarkable that this commandment should be recorded, together with much of the same nature, and the great command, ' Be ye holy, for I am holy ' (Lev. xi. 44) in that book of the law which is particularly concerned with rites and ceremonies, showing how likeness to God and love of man were regarded as the vital principle of all ritual and sacrifice. Thus our Saviour expands the meaning of His fulfilment of the law (v. 17) and the prophets. The whole of them depend on these two commandments. Religion and morals form an organic unity, based on that of God Himself.

xxii. 41-6. DAVID'S SON AND LORD

The object of the question with which our Lord winds up the controversies of this day is not so much to silence His adversaries, as to appeal to all His hearers to revise their ideas regarding Messiah and His kingdom. He had been repeatedly greeted as the Son of David, and latterly in a very pointed manner (xxi. 9, 15). The title carried with it the idea of Messiahship, but it implied

too lofty notions of temporal sovereignty, and too low a conception of spiritual dignity. Jesus therefore refers to Ps. cx, as being one of the recognized prophecies of Messiah, and brings out its true implication, namely, that the Son of David, according to this oracle, must also be the Lord of David, which implied, according to the remainder of the psalm, that He was to be a participator in the sovereignty of Jehovah, and the holder of an eternal priesthood and empire. The application of this to Himself Jesus accepts, though He well knew that the claim would be the cause of His death (see xxvi. 63-6). His words in v. 64 of that chapter contain a virtual quotation of Ps. cx. 1.

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son of David*. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

The Lord said unto my Lord,

Sit thou on my right hand,

Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?

If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

41. *The Pharisees are still gathered together, as in v. 34, when Jesus reverses the role, and puts a problem to them.*

42. *The son of David* : this was the accepted belief, on the basis of 2 Sam. vii. 1-17 and Ps. lxxxix (cp. i. 1, 17; John vii. 42). All along the evangelist has been proving this by the life and teaching of Jesus.

43. *How then doth David . . . ?* the words of Ps. cx. 1 are given as words of Jehovah (Heb. i. 13). David is mentioned as the chief author of the Psalms. Similarly the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in iv. 7 quotes Ps. xcv. 7 as God speaking 'in David,' that is in the Book of Psalms. The passage is also quoted by St. Peter at Pentecost (Acts ii. 34-5) in the presence of many of those who had heard these words of our Lord, and the reference then carried home conviction that Jesus of Nazareth indeed was what He had not long before claimed to be at the peril of His life. *In the Spirit* : (cp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2) as in an atmosphere, inspired by Him (cp. Rev. i. 10 ; iv. 2 ; Acts i. 16 ; 2 Pet. i. 21). It was no mere human emotion which made the Psalmist conceive of a king who should be his *lord*, that is, master and ruler. The idea of inspiration here is that of the Spirit of God uplifting and indwelling the spirit of a holy man so as to show him truths which he would not of himself have seen.

44. The first clause of Ps. cx. 1 runs, *Jehovah saith unto my lord* : the first name being that of God, the second a title of honour which might be and often was applied to men. In the psalm David hears Jehovah say to the king who rules in Zion, the city of David (2 Sam. v. 9), and whom, though of his family, he regards as his overlord, that this scion of David is to be sharer in Jehovah's own rule till all his enemies are subdued. Only the one Son of David could fulfil this who was a greater than Solomon (xii. 42). *My right hand* : the place of honour and rule (cp. xx. 21, 23).

45. *If . . . how is he his son?* The only answer to the dilemma is the union in Messiah of human nature and divine dignity. In missing this the Jews sentenced Jesus to death for blasphemy, but His Father declared Him 'who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh . . . to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness (who had spoken through David) by the resurrection of the dead' (Rom. i. 4). This exposition, given by the converted Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, who might conceivably have heard these words of Jesus, certainly gives their import.

46. The enemies are silenced, because all their questions have only resulted in bringing the truths which Jesus sought to proclaim into clearer light and more indisputable prominence. So now they turn to baser machinations, the hiring and manufacture of false witness and the bribery of a disciple.

CHAPTER XXIII

**MATT. xxiii. 1-12. DENUNCIATION OF THE PRIDE,
HYPOCRITICAL DEVOTION, AND RAPACITY OF
THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES**

(**MARK** xii. 38-40; **LUKE** xx. 45-7; xi. 39-52)

IN **Mark** xii. 38-40 we have a brief indication of denunciation of the scribes at this time, and similarly in **Luke** xx. 45-7. But in **Luke** xi. 37-52 we find our Lord, after dinner in the house of a Pharisee who raises a ceremonial objection to the behaviour of Jesus, uttering several of the same condemnations which are contained in this chapter. It may well be that, as the Pharisees made repeated attacks on Jesus, so He may have uttered condemnations of this kind before; or **St. Matthew** may, after his manner, have collected together cognate sayings from various sources. Certainly the discourse, as we have it here, is most pertinent to the occasion.

The scribes and Pharisees having retired discomfited but malignant, Jesus first addresses the multitude who 'hung upon him listening' (**Luke** xix. 48) in *vv.* 1-7; then the disciples in *vv.* 8-12; then the scribes and Pharisees *vv.* 15-36; and finally Jerusalem as a whole

vv. 37-9. The people generally he bids to reverence the divine precepts handed down to them by their teachers, while shunning their pride and ostentation. The disciples, too, are to take warning by the unsympathetic hierarchical ways and pride of place which they see in the leaders, and to seek their ambitions in lowly service; the teachers Jesus denounces for their ruling sin of hypocrisy. It is the most fatal of sins because it produces self-deception, which prevents it from recognizing itself as sin, and so bars the way to repentance. Under the guise of more minutely observing God's commandments, these religious hypocrites empty them of their real content; and while they self-complacently honour the memory of the martyrs of tyranny and ungodliness, they are bent on preparing to make the greatest Martyr of all. Yet the heart of Jesus melts with pity for those who are thus led astray, and He weeps for the impending fate of Jerusalem; but she must go through the fires of destruction before she emerges as the new Jerusalem which will welcome her true King with heartfelt loyalty.

Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, *these* do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not. Yea, they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of *their garments*, and love the chief place at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and

the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of men, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, *even* the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.

1. *To the multitudes and to his disciples*: some of the following discourse is more applicable to the one, some to the other (see introduction); even the woes on the scribes and Pharisees may have been pronounced when most of them were away.

2. *The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat*: as he sat to judge the people (Exod. xviii. 13) so the scribes occupied the place of authority as teachers. Their appointment was made by laying on of hands, and they sat on a raised seat, as an Indian guru does, among their disciples. They claimed an unbroken chain of succession from Moses downwards. At any rate they had since the time of Ezra, and probably long before, done inestimable service in preserving the Mosaic traditions and sacred writings.

3. *All things . . . whatsoever they bid you*: in this capacity, not in the exercise of their arbitrary authority, see *vv.* 4 and 16-22. The principle is similar to that of Art. xxvi which teaches that the unworthiness of the minister does not hinder the effect of the sacrament, while Art. vi forbids him to require of any man to believe, as necessary to salvation, beyond what is contained in Holy Scripture. The command is addressed

to the multitude, and is intended for the Jewish people till such time as the scribes whom Jesus would send (v. 34) should take the place of the others. He would not destroy the moral sanctions of the time, till others had been really assimilated to take their place. So, too, the teachers of the Christian Church in the mission field must see to it that the old sanctions of ethnic religion or society are not prematurely undermined, till better principles have been assimilated, which will replace them efficiently.

4. One thing in which they are not to be imitated is the hierarchical spirit (found not only in clerical, but also in lay persons) which delights in imposing duties on others without leading the way one's self. *They bind heavy burdens* : as a cultivator sometimes binds a big sheaf or bundle of fodder, and lays it on the shoulders of his labourer without giving him any help to adjust or ease it. Their attitude to their followers is the opposite of that described by St. Paul in 2 Cor. i. 24 ; they are lords over them, rather than 'helpers of their joy'. They will not *move* the burdens *with their finger* : that is give the slightest help in carrying out the intricate and troublesome observances which they have added to the law, and declared to be more binding than the law itself (cp. Acts xv. 10)—a glaring contrast to the light burden of Jesus (xi. 28, 30). They are unsympathetic task-masters.

5. While unsympathetic towards others their own religious observances are essentially selfish ; they are done *to be seen of men* : with a view to present results ; the exact opposite of the spirit which Jesus had inculcated

in His disciples (vi. 2, 5, 16). This is shown in their dress (here) and in their social behaviour (vv. 6 and 7). They make *broad their phylacteries*. The last word means a 'preservative' or amulet. These phylacteries in some ways resembled the *ta'wiz* of the Muḥam-madan, with its slips of Qur'an verses enclosed in a case; but they were more elaborate and more highly esteemed as a meritorious adjunct to prayers. The phylacteries (in Hebrew *tephillin*, i.e. prayers) were cubical boxes, from half an inch to an inch and a half in size, made of the skin of a clean animal and attached by a broad band of stuff to the forehead and left arm at the time of prayer. The head-phylactery was so fastened that the prayer-box came between the eyes, and it was this which was made as large as possible. The arm-phylactery was tied on the left arm near the heart, and was hidden by the sleeve. The passages written on the enclosed slips were: Exod. xiii. 1-10; 11-16; Deut. iv. 4-9; xi. 13-21. *Enlarge the borders*, or rather, 'tassels,' *of their garments*; (see on ix. 20) from which passage we see that Jesus Himself wore them, but the Pharisees made them of abnormal size, because they were the part of their dress which had a religious meaning. Modern Jews, to escape ridicule, wear these tassels on an undergarment called a *tallith*.

The next weakness is an inordinate love of social distinction. *The chief place at feasts* was the one nearest the host (Luke xiv. 7-10). Such rivalries are not unknown in 'society' in Anglo-India. *The chief seats in the synagogues*: these were on the semicircular bench, going round the ark or chest containing the rolls of the Law,

at the Jerusalem end of the building. On these sat the elders and the members conspicuous for devotion.

7. *Salutations in the marketplaces*: not the ordinary greetings of passers-by, but the formal and long-winded compliments which are forbidden in Luke x. 4 as likely to hinder the disciples on their preaching errand. *Rabbi*, a Hebrew word, meaning, 'My master'. Shortly before the time of Jesus it had come into vogue as the title of a religious teacher, as *maháráj* or *maulawi* is now used in Hindustan. *Rabbán* and *Rabboni* (John xx. 16) were yet higher titles.

8-10. *Be not ye called Rabbi*: Our Lord certainly does not mean to forbid the use of conventional titles of respect, as the Society of Friends have supposed: for though He says in the next clause, *one is your teacher*, yet He has been training His disciples for that office (xiii. 52) and is about to send them forth as such (v. 34); and we know that the office and name of teacher, as appointed by Christ, was held in honour in the time of the apostles (Eph. iv. 11). In His capacity as teacher Jesus addressed His disciples as children (John xiii. 33) and bids them consider each other *brethren*, as fellow-disciples. *Father*, in Aramaic *Abba*, was one of the titles by which scribes were known, the word being used as a prefix to the proper name, as 'Abbá Shádl'. Such names should lead them up to the thought of the Father of all, whom Jesus Himself addressed by the loving name of *Abba* (Mark xiv. 36). Yet St. Paul speaks of his converts as his children (Gal. iv. 19) and of himself as their father in very emphatic terms (1 Cor. iv. 15). *Master* or guide was also a title given to

the scribes, and our Lord refers to it in His description of them as blind guides in *v.* 16. Yet the evangelist Philip accepted the office of a guide (Acts viii. 31). Jesus then does not condemn the use of conventional titles of honour, but the lust for them as the object of the religious life, as when a man seeks ordination for the sake of having the title of 'Reverend' before his name, without thinking of the holy responsibilities of the office. One teacher, one Father, one guide; the three-fold repetition is noteworthy; the uniqueness is ascribed equally to the Father and to Jesus, but the placing of men in the stead of God in the religious life is strictly forbidden, whether that place be occupied by a guru or a priest. Only one Man can fill that place of Mediator (1 Tim. ii. 5) He who perfectly manifests God in the flesh. *The Christ* or Messiah; that is Myself.

11-12. *He that is greatest*: (see on xviii. 4 and xx. 26). The only rivalry in the religious life is to be in humility and service of others. For the impression made on the apostles by these words of Jesus when recalled to them by the Spirit (see Jas. iv. 10; 1 Pet. v. 6).

xxiii. 13-36. THE SEVEN WOES

(1) Abuse of the power of the keys (*v.* 13); (2) zeal for proselytism with misguidance of the proselytes (*v.* 15); (3) dishonest casuistry, depraving the conscience (*vv.* 16-22); (4) neglecting the principles of morality for the sake of ceremonial details (*vv.* 23, 24); (5) cloaking moral corruption by ceremonial purity (*vv.* 25, 26); (6)

warning others against moral defilement, while concealing it in themselves (*vv.* 27, 28); (7) belauding dead martyrs, while plotting against living ones, and laying up judgement against themselves accordingly (*vv.* 29-36). All this is comprised in the one sin of hypocrisy, acting the part of stage-players, with whom it matters not what they are, but only what they seem. This sin is not confined to the time of our Lord; the scribes represent the professional religious scholars and teachers, and the Pharisees the zealous laity of each succeeding age. Nor is this hypocrisy only among the professedly religious; there is a pharisaism of the irreligious which boasts of its sincerity in the following of truth, but is ready for shifts and evasions none the less.

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter.

13. *Ye shut the kingdom*: especially in its manifestation by John and Jesus, whom they opposed and traduced. This was their leading offence against the Spirit of truth, that they rejected the very kingdom of heaven which they professed to consider the chief good, and hindered the salvation of those for whose spiritual welfare they were responsible. From John ix. 22; xii. 42 we see that they had already excommunicated believers in Jesus. *Verse 14*, omitted in the R.V., was brought in by a copyist from Mark xii. 40 and Luke xx. 47.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is

become so, he make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves.

15. *To make one proselyte*: Professor Harnack in his *Spread of Christianity*, has shown that the Jews must have had a very considerable missionary activity in the Roman empire at the time of Christ, in which they numbered something like seven per cent of the entire population (say four millions out of sixty). The mass of these were the 'devout persons' repeatedly mentioned in the Acts (xiii. 43; xvii. 17), and here (cp. also Acts ii. 10) designated as proselytes, or as our missionary reports would say, 'adherents'. The 'proselytes of righteousness' who were circumcised and subject to the whole law were probably few, but naturally the most fanatical and hypocritical. Apparently it is to these that Jesus refers in the words, *twofold more a son of hell than yourselves*: the vices of the teachers were emphasized in the pupils; a bad heathen made a worse Jew; just as a non-Christian converted from impure motives may as a nominal Christian become worse than the average outsider.

xxiii. 16-22. TAMPERING WITH OATHS

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that hath sanctified the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it, he is a debtor. Ye blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

He therefore that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And he that sweareth by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that sweareth by the heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

16-22. This passage throws light on *vv.* 33-7, in which our Saviour spoke so strongly about the use of oaths. Evidently the Pharisaic casuistry upon the subject had dangerously depraved the Jewish conscience. Hence the term *blind guides* is peculiarly applicable to them; it expresses the inner contradiction of their condition; claiming to show the way to others, yet unable to see it themselves, because they had depraved the standard of distinction between truth and falsehood: (cp. *vv.* 17, 19, 26; John ix. 39-41; Rom. ii. 19). *The gold of the temple*, that is of the inner sanctuary, which was heavily gilded (cp. 1 Kings vi. 22; 2 Kings xviii. 16) both on walls and furniture. This and *the gift* on the altar (cp. v. 23-4) may have been preferred in sanctity to the structures themselves on some quibble that had to do with the idea of *korban* or offering (xv. 5-6; Mark vii. 11); but we cannot tell for certain; only we know that similar ideas obtain among Christians about the ceremony of 'kissing the book' at the time of taking an oath. I have known an educated and devout person plead that he had not really pledged himself because he had not actually kissed the New Testament after repeating the words of the oath. In chapter v. 33ff we have seen that Jesus considered the oath ideally as out of place in His kingdom; but here He clearly implies that the oath in practice is binding,

for He does not desire us to cut away the conventional and customary supports of morality, till something more efficient has taken their place.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hyppoorites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgement, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel.

23-4. *Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin*: in Lev. xvii. 30 the Israelite was commanded to tithe all seed and fruit. The rabbis stretched this to include pot-herbs, and Jesus does not object; it might happen, in the case of a market gardener for instance, that these would form an appreciable part of a man's income. But the scribes used these minute observances to distract attention from gross delinquencies, leaving *undone the weightier matters of the law*: it was supposed to contain 613 precepts, which were classified, with variations, under the heads of 'light' and 'heavy' (the latter included the laws touching circumcision, Sabbath rest, blasphemy, etc.). Jesus draws a different distinction; religion and morality on the one hand, and rites and ceremonies on the other. The moral requirements which the scribes particularly neglected were *judgement*, that is justice, and *mercy* towards those to whom they were pledged, who were often helpless persons, looking to them as their natural protectors (cp. Mark xii. 40; Luke xi. 47), and *faith*, that is faithfulness in keeping their promises (vv. 16-22). The situation is summed up

in a forcible metaphor which appeals to us in India. *Which strain out the gnat and swallow the camel* : like Jains and Jogis with us, the very careful Pharisee would not drink without straining out the water through a fine cloth lest he should swallow some minute creature which would cause legal pollution ; but they did not hesitate to commit sins which deeply defile the soul (vv. 27-8) ; they swallowed as it were a bulky animal (cp. xix. 24) plainly declared unclean by the law (Lev. xi. 4 ; Deut. xiv. 7). The two are as incommensurate with each other as is the tithing of pot-herbs with justice, mercy and good faith.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.

26. *Cup and platter* : the vessels in which drink and food are served respectively ; these were as scrupulously cleansed by the Jew as by the Hindu (Mark vii. 4). *Full from*, that is as the result of, *extortion and excess*. The enjoyments of their lives were the fruits of wrongful gain from others, and of unbridled self-indulgence on their own part. *The inside* means the contents ; *the outside* the surface of the vessel. Do away with the extortionate and luxurious spirit, and your way of life will become virtuous.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of

all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

27. *Whited sepulchres* : the Jews were accustomed to whitewash isolated graves in the month of Adar (not long before these words were spoken) to warn passers-by, especially passover pilgrims, against defilement (cp. Num. xix. 16). *Beautiful* : the same word as is used of the gate of the temple (Acts iii. 2, 10) and of the feet of God's messengers (Rom. x. 15). The metaphor is differently used in Luke xi. 44 of graves which had not been whitewashed, and so defiled those who passed over them without their knowing it. Here the graves and those signified by them convey a warning against defilement, yet are full of it themselves ; as the Persian proverb has it, *Digar ra nasihat, khud ra fazihat* ; a sermon for others, vice for one's self.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgement of hell ? Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes : some of them shall ye kill and crucify ; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city : that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom

ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

29-31. They honour dead martyrs and persecute living saints. Herod the Great is reported to have built the tombs of many Jewish worthies, while he provided fresh victims for the veneration of future generations; and no doubt the scribes and Pharisees would join in eulogies of the departed, adding their deprecation of the deeds of their ancestors; *if we had been*: 'It is customary with hypocrites thus to honour after their death good teachers and holy ministers of God, whom they cannot endure while they are alive. It is a hypocrisy which costs little, to profess a warm regard for those who are now silent' (Calvin). *Ye witness to yourselves*: the words that you are using should remind you how nearly related you are to those criminals, and how you are imitating them.

32-3. The sentence of judgement. *Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers*: (cp. Gen. xv. 16). Generation after generation has, so to speak, added to the accumulating stream of evil, and at last the dammed up stream will break its barrier, and divine judgement will overflow on the guilty (cp. Isa. xxviii. 2, 15, 17). These words from Him who so deeply loved His people are terrible in their severity. 'As you will have it so, go on plotting the death of Him of whom the prophets whose tombs you build were witnessing' (cp. 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16). The permission to go on in the way of sin is its most awful punishment (cp. Hos. iv. 17). *Ye serpents*: Jesus knew of their treacherous machinations against

Him (cp. iii. 7 ; xii. 34). *The judgement of hell* : the divine sentence consigning you to it (cp. xxv. 41).

34-6. Yet the divine love of Jesus will not rest content without trying to the utmost to save those who may be saved. *Behold, I send unto you* : with the message of mercy and reconciliation (2 Cor. v. 18-21); *prophets* : He who can send prophets must be greater than the greatest of them, as John had testified (iii. 11). (On the mission of the apostles as prophets see x. 40-1 ; cp. Eph. ii. 20 ; iii. 5). *Wise men* : the corresponding word *Khakam* is still a title of the Jewish teacher ; the apostles claimed to be dispensers of divine wisdom (cp. 1. Cor. ii. 6-8 ; Col. i. 23). They were also *scribes*, charged with investigating and explaining the past revelations of God in the light of the present (see on xiii. 52). In Luke xi. 49 this saying is ascribed to 'the wisdom of God', which St. Luke's master St. Paul explains to mean the salvation of God, as revealed to us in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. i. 30). In the Old Testament it means God in His wise providence (cp. Prov. viii. 22-31). Alas ! that this goodness of God which was leading them to repentance (Rom. ii. 4) should only result in hardness of heart and rejection of the message (cp. Acts xviii. 25-8). *Some of them shall ye kill* : as in the case of James, with the sword (Acts xii. 2) ; *and crucify* : as in the case of Peter (John xxi. 18-19). These punishments were indeed inflicted, as was the case with our Lord's own death, by the Romans, but it was often at the instigation of the Jews. What follows refers to sufferings inflicted directly by the Jewish authorities ; *scourge in your synagogues* (see on x. 17, and cp. Acts

xxii. 19). *Persecute from city to city* : as St. Paul so frequently experienced (cp. Acts xiii. 51). *The blood* : that is the penalty for its murderous shedding (cp. xxvii. 25 ; Gen. iv. 10 ; Heb. xii. 24). *Abel . . . Zachariah* : the first righteous sufferer is coupled with one mentioned in the last book of the Hebrew canon, an indication that it existed in the order in which we have it at the time of Christ. *Zachariah* (2 Chron. xxiv. 21) was the son of the high priest Jehoiada, whom the renegade king Joash caused to be treacherously murdered, because of the reproof which *Zachariah* (not the writing prophet of that name) uttered against the king's impiety. How the name *Barachiah* came into the text here it is impossible to say for certain ; we can only suppose that it was through a slip of some early copyist. *Whom ye slew* : from the account given in 2 Chron. xxiv. 17-22 it would seem that the princes of Judah, who were inclined to Baal-worship, made a conspiracy which ended in the stoning of *Zachariah*, and that the king either winked at it or encouraged it. It was the deed of some of those forefathers (vv. 30-1) in whose ways the rulers were walking. *Between the temple* : the sanctuary proper ; *and the altar* : that is the great altar of burnt offering which stood in front of the sanctuary on the east side. It was a particularly sacred spot ; possibly the prophet had fled to the altar to secure protection from violence. *This generation* : Jerusalem was destroyed within forty years of the time when these words were spoken.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her ! how often would I

have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

37-9. Lament over Jerusalem (cp. Luke xiii. 34-5). This gives what seems to be the original historical connexion. *Jerusalem* is personified as the mother city (metropolis) of the nation, as is often done in the second part of Isaiah (li. 17ff). The doubled name indicates strong emotion and concern (cp. Luke xxii. 31; Acts ix. 4). In Luke xix. 41 Jesus looking upon the city weeps loudly. *How often would I*: a clear reference to the visits to Jerusalem recorded in John v and vii-xi (cp. Acts x. 39). *As a hen gathereth her chickens*: to protect them from the bird of prey which is hovering above (cp. 2 Esdras i. 30). Possibly there may be a reference to the Roman standards which were in the form of eagles (cp. xxiv. 28). When we think of the authority claimed by Jesus, both before and after this passage, the contrast between *I would* and *ye would not* (cp. John v. 40) is doubly striking. The utmost yearning of the divine love is not suffered to override the human will. *Your house is left unto you desolate*. In Isa. lxiv. 11 the prophet laments over their 'holy and beautiful house' as 'burned with fire'. That house was restored to unparalleled beauty and splendour in the days when Jesus spoke (cp. Mark xiii. 1). But He had cleansed it in vain; He was accused and reviled as one who would willingly destroy it (xxvi. 61; xxvii. 40) and He was about to depart from it for ever. Unlike the

city, it was never restored; its site is occupied by the Mosque of Omar, and the Jews can only come Friday by Friday to wail by what is left of its retaining wall. *Ye shall not see me . . . till ye shall say*: with sincerity and conviction, not in a transient ebullition of enthusiasm, as a few days since (cp. xxi. 9). The words clearly refer to His coming again in glory, (xvi. 27). Then Israel will mourn because of Him and recognize its Saviour (Rev. i. 7) when the new Jerusalem is fully established upon earth, and no temple is needed because God is present throughout her (Rev. xxi. 2, 22).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PROPHECY OF THE END

(MARK xiii; LUKE xxi. 5-36)

WE have seen in chapter xxiii how Jesus uttered His last indignant protest against the sin which was the most formidable obstacle to the coming of the kingdom of God—a dead religion, ‘holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof’ (2 Tim. iii. 5). This sin it was that brought Him to His death, and that brought about the doom of Jerusalem, which He had so mournfully pronounced. This prophecy of the desolation of the city and especially the ‘house’ has impressed the minds of the disciples, and as He is passing out thence, never to return, one of them draws His attention to the wonders of the structure, which seemed as if it could defy time and decay (Mark xiii. 1). Our Saviour repeats the prophecy of utter destruction, and His disciples, after thinking over His words come to Him with the question as to the time when the prediction shall be accomplished, and the signs of His coming which they take to be the crisis of the world. Jesus replies to them in a discourse which strongly reminds us of that in the tenth chapter,

having to do first with the situation of the age which called forth the inquiry, and then reaching forward to later developments in the Church and the world. The same principle is exemplified in Luke x. 18, where Jesus receives from the seventy whom He had sent out to preach, the tidings that the message which He had given and the power with which He had endued them was beginning to work effectively, and thereupon utters the words, 'I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven'. What was to be accomplished through the ages by means of their message and that of their followers, Jesus, from the heavenly point of view, beholds as done, reminding us of the successive visions of the Apocalypse, in each of which the history of judgement or redemption is depicted, from the side of God, as finished. Previous to this we have seen how Jesus had again and again described to His disciples the growth of His kingdom as a gradual process (in the parables of the seed, the tares, the mustard grain, and the leaven, as well as in that of the prince's wedding). Here, on the other hand, the judgement of the world is seen as if accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem, though there are not wanting indications of the time between that and the end. But the thought is dominant that the dead religion of Jerusalem has left her a moribund body over which the vultures must inevitably be gathered ere long.

To understand this chapter, we must also realize the position and needs of those for whom it was compiled. This is best illustrated by the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was addressed to Christians of the second genera-

tion, who had not themselves seen the Lord (Heb. ii. 3). They were liable to be stumbled by delay in the advent, the disbelief of the mass of their nation and the continuance of the Jewish temple and its worship with increasing magnificence, for its rebuilding was not finally completed till about A.D. 63. Yet there were signs of danger to the theocracy (Heb. x. 25) and the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles had made and was making great progress. For Palestine Christians in this stage of development and surroundings, for whom this Gospel also was designed, it was necessary to be reminded, (1) that Jesus had prophesied the destruction of the city and temple; (2) that this was a necessary judgement on the theocracy, which had lost its true life by rejecting Jesus (v. 28); (3) that it was the first great step towards the realization of His coming in glory to judge, as He had promised; (4) and that thus the fate of Jerusalem was a miniature or type of the world-judgement.

At the same time there are not wanting tokens that Jesus distinguished between the judgement of Jerusalem and the judgement of the world. Of the latter He cannot give the time (xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 22) but 'the end' (of the age) will not come till the gospel has been preached in all the inhabited world (v. 14); the judgement of Jerusalem will be in the lifetime of the hearers (xxiii. 36; cp. xvi. 28) and a time will intervene before the final judgement (Luke xxi. 9). But our Saviour speaks after the manner of prophetic imagery, in which contemporary judgements are treated as the type or foreshadowing of the final doom (cp. Joel ii. 1, 2, 11; iii. 16); and He speaks of the one in terms of the other, e.g. in x. 23

and in *xvi.* 28 the coming of the Son of man points to the destruction of Jerusalem, while in *vv.* 34 and 36 of this chapter He brings the known day and the unknown day into close proximity. The evangelist in this discourse shows that Jesus will manifest Himself as King, executing vengeance on His enemies (*xxii.* 7), while preparing for a yet further extension of His kingdom, and finally coming in majesty to judge all men (chapter *xxv.*). Meanwhile His servants are to show their faithfulness and wisdom (*vv.* 45-51) and to beware of the sin of hypocrisy which has been the destruction of the old theocracy. This exhortation to watchfulness is the objective of the whole chapter, for it was precisely this of which the Jewish Christians, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem so greatly stood in need, lest they should 'drift away' from the things which they had heard (*Heb.* ii. 1).

At the same time we have to remember that we have here a condensed reproduction of the words of Jesus, spoken in another language, and that possibly Matthew may have brought together sayings from more than one occasion after the manner of the Sermon on the Mount, especially *vv.* 37-51 (cp. *Luke* xii. 39-46; also *xvii.* 22-37).

The exposition will be made clearer by giving first a brief analysis of the contents of this chapter and the next.

xxiv. 1-2. As He goes away from the temple, Jesus prophesies its entire destruction.

3-14. Being asked by His disciples as to the time of (1) the destruction of the temple, and (2) His coming again, He first warns them against being led astray,

either by allurements or terrors, in the shape of false Christs, or of wars, famines, tumults, earthquakes (3-7) which are but preliminary birthpangs (*v.* 8). The Church itself will suffer from persecutions through the Gentiles, and by apostasies, heresies, and religious indifference within her own borders. Others will remain firm, and the gospel will continue to spread till the limits of the race are reached. So far we have general guidance for the disciples after the ascension of Christ.

15-28. Specially on the destruction of Jerusalem. When the 'abomination of desolation' is established in the holy place, the disciples are at once to flee, in order to escape unparalleled tribulation, which, however, will be mercifully shortened (15-22); then let them beware of deception by false Christs (23-5); for the coming of the true Christ will be unmistakable, the result of the retribution which must overtake decay (27-8).

29-31. The Advent itself is to come about through world-catastrophes and shaking of kingdoms (*cf.* Heb. xii. 26-8).

32-5. The budding fig tree of spring is a parable of the ripening of God's judgement, in which process the destruction of Jerusalem is a miniature of the final doom of the rebellious world.

36-44. But the time of this final judgement cannot be defined; the coming will be sudden and unexpected; enforced by the parable of the householder and the burglar.

Then follow four parables of preparation.

45-51. The watchful and the negligent steward. Overseers of the household of Christ must combine faithfulness and wisdom.

xxv. 1-13. The wise and the unwise maidens.

14-30. The faithful and unfaithful slaves.

Individual Christians are to be (a) as friends of Christ, wise, (b) as slaves of Christ, faithful.

31-46. The judgement of the nations. The parable merges into allegory. Judgement will be according to the law of love to the neighbour, which implies love to God, and will be manifested as such.

XXIV. 1-14. JESUS LEAVES THE TEMPLE

And Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way; and his disciples came to him to shew him the buildings of the temple. But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for *these things* must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. But all these things are the beginning of travail. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake. And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and

shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.

1, 2. *Jesus went out from the temple*: where He has been teaching, healing, arguing and denouncing since xxi. 23. He leaves it for the last time, and the real life of the temple has departed with Him. *His disciples*, remembering what He had lately said in xxiii. 38, *shew him the buildings of the temple*, with admiration (cp. Mark xiii. 1; Luke xxi. 5). It seems to them incredible that such magnificence should speedily come to desolation. But Jesus emphasizes it with His accustomed *Verily*. *There shall not be left here one stone upon another*: (cp. Mic. iii. 12; Jer. xxvi. 18) after the Roman general Titus had taken the city, in A. D. 70, he ordered it to be dug up, and explorers find only the foundations of buildings of those days. These words were used against Jesus shortly after (xxvi. 61; xxvii. 40); possibly they were repeated to the rulers by Judas Iscariot.

3. *He sat on the mount of Olives*: after having gone out of the city gate on the east, and crossed the little valley of Kidron. From this point He had a magnificent view of the temple and city. *The disciples* were the chosen three, together with Andrew, the brother of Simon (Mark xiii. 3). They came to Him with their inquiry *privately*: hence the following discourse is very specially addressed to them, apart from the general audience who had been listening to the words of Jesus

previously, and He explains at length what He had said to the crowd in brief hints. Their question is a double one. (1) *When shall these things be?* and (2) *What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* The Greek word for 'coming' is *parousia* meaning presence or arrival; it has passed into Christian usage. In the Gospels it is used only in this chapter, but in the Epistles frequently by St. Paul, as also by SS. James, Peter and John. The *end* is literally the accomplishment or completion; *the world* should be translated, as in the margin, *the age*; it signifies the world-process, which will be accomplished, as the disciples rightly supposed, by the arrival of the Son of man (see on xiii. 39-40, 49 and xxviii. 20). The apostles had come to expect the departure of their Master, and to hope for His return, but about both their ideas were confused. As to the departure they were soon to be enlightened by experience; as to the return, even after the resurrection of Jesus (Acts i. 6) and later, their apprehension was imperfect. At this time *these things*, that is the destruction of the city and temple, and the return of their Master seemed close together, though distinct, and the Church too, from age to age has had to learn the lesson that 'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day' (2 Pet. iii. 8). As with the lesson of the departure, so with that of the return, the disciples of Jesus know in part, and the teaching of experience will be needed to teach us the reality. *The sign* which the disciples wished to be described was probably some portent in the heavens, such as the unbelieving Jews and had

demanded, though in a different spirit (xvi. 1). Jesus gives them none save Himself (cp. v. 30).

4. The discourse both begins and ends with the exhortation to be on their guard ; here *take heed* ; v. 42 'watch' ; v. 44 'be ready'. The first word conveys the idea of concentration and attention ; the second its maintenance despite influences that tend to sloth and carelessness ; the third indicates the result of successful resistance to those benumbing influences, which proceed from men ever ready to *lead astray* by directing the hopes of Christ's disciples to something other than their true object.

5. *Many shall come in my name* : assuming the title of Christ which Jesus had now accepted openly (xxi. 9 ; xxiii. 10). *Saying, I am the Christ* : there were several false Messiahs before the destruction of Jerusalem ; after it no more appeared for a while, owing to the severity of the Roman repression, till Barokba (the son of a star) in A. D. 120.

6. *Ye shall hear of wars* : several campaigns took place between A. D. 30 and 70, especially that against the Parthians. There were *rumours of wars* against Judæa under the emperors Claudius, Caligula, and Nero.

7. There are to be massacres and civil tumults within the bounds of the Empire, owing to national hatreds : *nation shall rise against nation*. Such were the fearful massacres which took place at Seleucia on the Tigris when 50,000 Jews were killed by Greeks and Syrians, and at Caesarea when 20,000 Jews were slain. *Famines* : the reign of the emperor Claudius was a time of great scarcity, from A. D. 40-51. In A. D. 46 relief works had

to be set on foot in Palestine, and the collections, beginning with that mentioned in Acts xi. 28-9, which were for some years so actively promoted by St. Paul, had to do with this long continued want. The number of *earthquakes* during this period is reported to have been exceptionally great, including one in Palestine.

8. *All these things are the beginning of travail* : that is birth-pangs, often compared to public calamities (Ps. xlviii. 6 ; Isa. xiii. 8, etc.) ; for the disciples these are but the necessary pains which usher in the brighter age (cp. John xvi. 21) of the regeneration (xix. 28 ; Rom. viii. 22). But this knowledge that all things work together for good is only for those who love God (Rom. viii. 28).

9, 10. Christians will not be exempt from these troubles (cp. x. 17-23). *Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation* : the apostles will find among their followers treacherous brethren, such as Jesus had found among them, who will betray them to persecuting authorities. *Ye shall be hated of all the nations* : a sign that the gospel will be spreading among the Gentiles (see on x. 22). Within the Church there will be apostasy ; *many will stumble* (xi. 6 ; xiii. 2) that is fall into sin and go away from Christ. This will be accompanied by treachery and hatred, as a result of persecution past and present.

11. A yet greater danger will be that coming from *false prophets*, such as there were in Old Testament times (cp. 1 Kings xxii. 23 ; Ezek. xiv. 9 ; also Matt. vii. 15 ; 1 John iv. 1 ; 2 Pet. ii. 1). They will not be unsuccessful, but will *lead many astray* (cp. 1 Tim. iv. 1). Here in India we are not without the experience of

such deceivers and deceived ; witness the Adventists in South India ; the Pentecostal Dancers ; and the Christian Scientists in North India and elsewhere.

12. *Iniquity shall abound* : literally 'lawlessness' (the same word in vii. 23 ; xiii. 41). Christians will be living in open defiance of God's law, as we sometimes see now, alas ! or even denying its binding nature ; *beshara* : like heathens. Such wickedness as this, which goes unrebuked in some, produces general coldness ; *the love of the many shall wax cold* (cp. Heb. x. 25 ; Rev. ii. 4). If this was so even in early times, we must not be discouraged if we see signs of it now, but we must all the more courageously fight against it.

13. Then and always there have been such as *endure to the end* : such endurance means not flinching from suffering, turning away from false prophets, and keeping love warm (cp. the letters to the seven Churches in Rev. ii and iii, especially Smyrna ii. 10, Thyatira ii. 20-5 ; Ephesus ii. 4 ; Laodicea iii. 15-16). The endurance must be *to the end* of the trial, not only 'for a while' (cp. xiii. 21), for God gives the 'way of escape' (1 Cor. x. 13). James (v. 11) looking back on those who had so endured, calls them 'blessed'. *Saved* (cp. x. 22).

14. *This gospel of the kingdom* : involving two aspects of the 'good news' ; grace for the penitent (2 Pet. iii. 9) and judgment for the disobedient (Rev. xiv. 6, 7) ; for the completion of the kingdom of heaven must include both (xxii. 7-9). *In the whole world* (Margin *inhabited earth*) might be understood as a popular way of speaking, as we say 'worldwide reputation' (cp. Col. i. 6). The word so translated was very frequently used to

designate the countries of the Roman empire, and by the year 70 the gospel had penetrated to its western limits as far as Spain (Rom. xv. 24, 28), to Illyricum (Rom. xv. 19) on the north, to Pontus (1 Pet. i. 1) on the Black Sea, to Damascus in Syria (Acts ix. 2), and to Arabia (Gal. i. 17); probably also to Ethiopia (Acts viii. 27, 38), and Cyrene in North Africa (Acts xi. 20). But beyond this, as the world opens out before the Church of Christ, the words point to the proclamation of the gospel wherever man is found, before *the end shall come*. The word for *end* signifies also 'object' or 'aim' (cp. Rom. x. 4), for God is accomplishing His one purpose through all the history of the spread of the faith. It is the same word as we have in 'teleology', the doctrine of aims. The object of the preaching is to be *for a testimony unto all the nations*, in the same way as the arrest and trial of the disciples in the exercise of their mission was to be for a testimony to their judges and to the nations (x. 17-18), showing them that there is a gospel which has changed the lives of men, and for which its professors are willing to lay down their own. So here, this proclamation amid and despite persecution, is to bring to the consciousness of the nations, as such, and not merely to individuals among them, the facts of the kingdom of God's grace and the hope of the kingdom of glory. Thus it will be a witness either for conviction or for condemnation, as in the case of Israel.

xxiv. 15-28. THE SIGNS OF THE END

Warning to the disciples to separate themselves from the impenitent nation and city, before the great crisis

which is the inevitable outcome of internal decay (cp. Isa. xlviii. 20; Jer. li. 6, 45; Rev. xviii. 4).

When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains: let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloke. But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath: for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe *it* not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe *it* not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Where-soever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

15. In the words, *Let him that readeth understand*, the evangelist draws emphatic attention to this saying of our Lord as conveying a very important practical direction for his readers (cp. Rev. xiii. 18; xvii. 9) from which we may judge that the book was compiled not many years before the destruction of Jerusalem. It is conveyed, like so much else of our Lord's teaching, in Old

Testament imagery, and is taken from Dan. ix. 27. The translation of the Septuagint, from which the evangelist cites the expression 'abomination of desolation' differs from that of the present Hebrew text, which in our Revised version runs: 'Upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate;' whereas the same sentence in the LXX reads, 'Upon the temple shall come the abomination of desolations.' The general sense is the same, that the temple will be defiled in a specially abominable manner, and both texts state that the sacrifice and oblation, that is the regular temple worship, will be suspended. This latter feature of the desecration of the temple is again mentioned in Dan. xi. 31 and xii. 11, and the taking away of the continual burnt offering is connected with it. The prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled when the soldiers of Antiochus, the persecuting king of Syria, in 168 B.C., desecrated the temple and erected an idol altar there. This *abomination of desolation* is to stand *in the Holy Place*, that is the sanctuary proper, which was only entered by the priests. In A.D. 66, at the beginning of the wars which ended in the destruction of the city, the sect of Zealots or Assassins gained possession of the temple, defiled it with blood, made a creature of their own High Priest, and finally caused the daily sacrifices to cease. The Christians who fled from Jerusalem when this took place, were saved from the horrors that followed. The surrounding of Jerusalem with armies in Luke xxi. 20 is a different sign, and the very last that would serve as a guide, as after that the city was strictly shut in. Here we have the death struggles of the body, there the gathering of the vultures.

16. *Let them that are in Judæa flee to the mountains* : namely to those outside Judæa, on the other side of Jordan. The particular place in that district selected by the fugitive Christians was, as we are told by the Church historian Eusebius, the town of Pella, about fifty miles northwards. The migration thither took place in A. D. 68.

17-18. The flight will have to be so hasty that, when the summons reaches a man who happens to be on the roof of his house, he must *not go down* to fetch any provision or valuables out of the house, for so he would get entangled in the narrow lanes of the city, which would be full of rioters ; he must take the nearest line straight over the house roofs towards the city gate. The man *that is in the field* must on no account return to the city, even though he have to flee without his necessary wraps.

19. *Woe* : that is alas for the mothers whose physical condition or motherly love prevents speedy flight.

20. God grant that it may not be impeded, either by physical conditions—*winter*, with the chilly rains and impassable torrents—or religious scruples, which permitted no more than a journey of 2,000 yards upon a *sabbath* (Exod. xvi. 29 ; Acts i. 12) on which day the traveller, without provision of food or clothing would find it difficult to obtain either. He might find the gates shut, and if he could get through them transport would be unprocurable.

21. *Great tribulation* : though the figures given by Josephus must be grossly exaggerated (he says that 1,100,000 perished in the siege) ; yet even if we quarter

them the tragedy of the last days of Jerusalem, considering its small size among the capitals of the world, was one of the most awful in the history of the world : all the more so, when we think of the high calling of the nation, and the divine light vouchsafed to it.

22. *Except those days, the period of resistance and carnage, had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved.* As it was Jerusalem was ploughed up ; but had the struggle continued, the fugitive Jewish Christians also would have been destroyed, and the whole land depopulated. Hence, *for the elect's sake* (op. xxii. 14).

23-6. A repetition of the warning against false Christians ; evidently a matter of urgency at a time when on the one hand religious passions were so deeply stirred, and on the other hand apprehensions and hopes were so lively. *Then* : during the time both before and after the crisis, when the desire for a deliverer from tribulation is at its height, the disciples are to be specially watchful, for the claims of the false messiahs will even be supported by *great signs and wonders*. The Jews, of the Dispersion especially, were zealous and successful in the practice of magic (op. Acts viii. 9-11 ; xiii. 6 ; xix. 13, 14 ; Matt. xii. 27). *I have told you* : strong emphasis, showing how great the temptation must have been, as we see also from the Epistle to the Hebrews. *In the wilderness . . . in the inner chambers* : the pretenders will affect secrecy, whether in remote regions, or in the heart of the city ; e.g. Simon, son of Gioras gathered followers in the desert of Tekoah, while John of Giscala withdrew into the inner recesses of the temple, both at this time claiming to be Messiah.

27. The actual *coming of the Son of man* is reserved for a more distant future. It will be *as the lightning* : sudden and manifest to all. The tribulations of the Jewish war will not be contemporaneous with the Parousia itself.

28. Meanwhile, the law of moral retribution will be working surely, if invisibly. No sooner has life left the carcass than the vultures swarm to devour it. The extinction of spiritual life will be followed by judgement, but not till it is complete.

xxiv. 29-31. SIGNS INDICATING THE PAROUSIA

The Parousia, preceded by a shaking of the powers of heaven ; accompanied by a mourning of the nations, and the gathering of the elect.

But immediately, after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

29. *Immediately* : it will be noticed that the R.V., whose translators were exceedingly careful as to punctuation, placed a comma after this word, to disconnect it from the following. The sense is not that the darkening of the sun and moon is to take place as soon as

the days of the *tribulation* connected with the destruction of Jerusalem are past. As the Greek word rendered *immediately* stands, it may refer to some other event in the writer's mind. But probably it is, as in the Greek translation of Job v. 3, the equivalent of a Hebrew word meaning 'suddenly', and is connected with what was said in v. 27 as to the lightning-like Parousia. Even so we can see how the words would be understood to mean that the troubles of the Parousia would follow those of Jerusalem at no long interval, and such was clearly the belief of the earliest apostolic age (see Phil. iv. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 15); though it was equally believed that the advent would be sudden and unexpected (1 Thess. v. 2-3). Later the conviction gained ground that the 'day' of the second coming of Christ might be a long historical period, granted by God in His mercy for the salvation of mankind (cp. 2 Pet. iii. 8-9); and so, in Rev. xxii. 17, alongside of the prayer for the coming of Christ to the world we have the invitation to all the world to come to Christ. What from the heavenly point of view is immediate or rapid, may from ours be a long development (see introduction to chapter). *Sun, moon, stars* are the heavenly bodies distributively; *the powers of the heavens* means the same collectively (cp. Isa. xiii. 10; Rev. viii. 12). In the Old Testament they are often called 'the host of heaven' (cp. Deut. iv. 19) and their dissolution is spoken of as a sign of judgement (see Isa. xxxiv. 4) where in the Greek version this very expression is used, and the reference is to political powers, which rule the earth as the heavenly bodies rule the day and the night (Gen. i. 16, 18). Here, too, the words

probably import the shaking of the kingdoms of the earth, that the kingdom which cannot be shaken may remain (Heb. xii. 27, 28).

30. *The sign of the Son of man in heaven*: what the unbelieving Jews impudently demanded (xvi. 1) will then be given, but to the confusion of all who have not accepted Jesus. The sign is *the Son of man* Himself (cp. Luke ii. 34); He is a sign which has been spoken against but will then be absolutely convincing, when He is seen, *coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory* (xvi. 27; Dan. vii. 13). His chariot is the same as that of Jehovah (Ps. civ. 3). His appearing will make *all the tribes of the earth mourn* (cp. Zech. xii. 10-14; Rev. i. 7) because the good news of His Kingdom will have been proclaimed among all nations (v. 14) and those who have rejected it will be called to account.

31. *His angels*: who belong to the Son of man as invested with divine attributes (cp. the parables of the tares and the drag-net, xiii. 41, 49). *The sound of a trumpet*, in the Old Testament, was associated with festivals (Lev. xxiii. 24; Ps. lxxxi. 3) royal accessions (1 Kings i. 34, 39) impending danger (Amos iii. 6; Jer. vi. 1); and also with the giving of the law at Sinai (Exod. xix. 16; xx. 18). The two latter ideas may be combined here; it is the signal of a theophany, and of the calamity connected with it (cp. 1 Thess. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 52; Rev. viii. 2). *Gather together his elect*: this union of the chosen people of the Son of man from every quarter of the world is the climax of the prophecy (cp. v. 22 and Rev. vii. 2f.). The extension of the kingdom of Messiah among all nations is the objective

of the Gospel (see xxviii. 18-20), and amid all the expectation of His speedy advent, this was never out of the mind of the early Church.

xxiv. 32-42. THE FIG TREE AND HER PARABLE

The parable of the spring fig tree teaches that a steady process of growth is going on, which may be retarded or accelerated, but will surely come to maturity, though its final ripening may be unexpected.

Now from the fig tree learn her parable : when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh ; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, *even* at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only. And as *was* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Then shall two men be in the field ; one is taken, and one is left : two women *shall be* grinding at the mill ; one is taken, and one is left. Watch therefore : for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh.

32. *When her branch is now become tender* : the words sound as if Jesus were then and there pointing to a budding fig tree, which told of the near summer.

33. *All these things* : terrible as they mostly are, betoken the ripening of God's purposes, which have a sweet fruit at last. *He is nigh* : (Jas. v. 9) the hope and joy of His people.

34-6. These verses comprise the framework of the preceding discourse ; an event which shall be during the lifetime of that generation, and another the time of which is not even revealed to the Speaker, majestic as are His claims, and between both comes the assurance that His word *shall not pass away*. It will not fail of its fulfilment in either direction, the contemporary or the future. In miniature or microcosmos, all was accomplished in the judgement that came upon that generation ; in full or macrocosmos the consummation is still future, and God opens out to His Church, age after age, new ways in which the advent is prepared (cp. Acts i. 7). This passage is a remarkable instance of the union of boundless claim and entire self-abnegation in our Lord. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but* : in the light of Ps. cii. 26-7 and Isa. li. 6, these contain nothing less than an assertion of the prerogatives of divinity ; yet in v. 36 He empties Himself of the exercise of His divine omniscience (Phil. ii. 7) as we see Him throughout His life on earth laying aside His omnipotence.

37-9. The Parousia illustrated by the days of Noah. As in those days, despite the warning given, men carried on their ordinary occupations and pleasures, and therefore were unexpectedly overwhelmed, so will the world in general be at the second advent.

40-1. Then there will be a sudden sifting out of the elect (corresponding to the gathering by the angels,

v. 31) from among those with whom they have been in the closest connexion. To have been going on with one's most ordinary daily occupation will be no ground of condemnation; that will depend on the readiness of each for the appearing of the Son of Man. *One is taken*: pictorial present, depicting the suddenness of the separation; taken away from the evil to come (Isa. lvii. 1; cp. 1 Thess. iv. 17). *One is left*: for judgement. In describing the troubles before the destruction of Jerusalem, those in the field and the house are urged to flee (vv. 16-18); in depicting the final judgement, the saved ones are snatched away by a power beyond themselves, the angels, who can distinguish among those who are to all outward appearance exactly the same, but inwardly so different.

42. *Watch, therefore, for ye know not*: the point of the whole discourse. The Christian is ever to keep his eye on the great Presence in which he continually lives, but which will be sometime suddenly manifested.

Then shall the whole, like a parched scroll,
 Before my amazed eyes uproll;
 And with nought between in a flash be seen
 The Presence in which I ever have been.

XXIV. 43-4. THE HOUSEHOLDER AND THE BURGLAR

(CP. LUKE xii. 39-46)

But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.

43. *Know this* : the time of the Parousia you do not know, but this you are aware of, that if a householder knows that a burglar may come at any time, he will keep a perpetual watch, either himself or by his servants ; *therefore be ye also ready* : lest His unprepared coming should shatter your security and leave you bare of what you possessed but did not guard. Here, as in Rev. iii. 3 (cp. 1 Thess. v. 2), Jesus compares Himself to a thief, because of the suddenness of His appearing, and because He will take away from the unfaithful Christian the spiritual possessions which he had neglected to make his own by perpetual watchfulness (cp. xiii. 12). For those who are ready He will be, not a thief, but a Deliverer.

XXIV. 45-51. THE FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL
STEWARDS, AND THEIR FATE

From Luke xii. 41 we gather that the parable was intended especially for the apostles and those others who are stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2) ; but that it has a general application also.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season ? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth ; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat and drink with the drunken ; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites : there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

45-7. *Faithful and wise slave* : Peter and Paul, when writing with authority to the Churches which they had founded, designate themselves as 'slaves of Christ', because they had been *set over his household* (cp. 1 Tim. iii. 15; Eph. ii. 19; Gal. vi. 10). The qualities required in such are, as regards the object of their commission, faithfulness (1 Cor. iv. 2); as regards the means for accomplishing its wisdom (1 Cor. iii. 10). Their work is to provide rightly for the wants of the household which the master has on his heart; *to give them their food in due season* : as St. Paul says of his ministry to the Ephesian elders, Acts xx. 20, 'I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable.' Or, as he puts it in 1 Cor. iii. 2, 'milk' and 'solid food' have to be given according to the condition and growth of the members of God's household (cp. Heb. v. 12). *When he cometh* : either at death or judgement. *He will set him over all that he hath* : because his faithful obedience has been tested and approved, and he who has learned to obey has learned to command. He who was a slave, and a faithful one, becomes a ruler. By obeying the laws whether of nature or of grace, we become partakers of their power. 'All things are yours' on the condition that 'ye are Christ's' (1 Cor. iii. 21-3) to love and obey.

48-9. *That evil servant* : i.e. a wicked man in the same position, is characterized by a disbelief in the speedy coming of his master; the language of his heart is, *My lord tarryeth* : accordingly he tyrannically abuses his authority (*beat his fellow-servants*) and indulges in revelry and excess. The connexion between these sins of tyranny and self-indulgence is only too manifest in

the history of the Church, as we see in the case of the Papacy and the monastic orders, and not only in them. The same is sometimes seen in the case of the individual pastor.

50-51. The punishment is equally unexpected with the reward. The marginal rendering, *severely scourge him*, is more consonant with the parable than the text; *cut him asunder*: after the latter penalty there would be no room for appointing a further *portion* or treatment, whereas severe scourging would be a punishment suited to the position of a slave, and having suffered this disgrace and pain, the unfaithful steward would be excluded from the joyful banquet held on the occasion of his master's return, and put out with the other *hypocrites* who had been pretending to serve their master in his absence, while really following their own pleasure or profit, but who will find and express too late what an awful loss they have incurred. The *weeping* of regret and the *gnashing of teeth*, telling of enraged disappointment, will alike be in vain. This hypocrisy it was which constituted the unpardonable sin of the Pharisees, and of which the servants of Jesus have to especially beware, lest the Parousia find them entangled in it (op. viii. 12).

CHAPTER XXV

XXV. 1-13. THE TEN VIRGINS

THIS and the following parable of the talents are alike connected and contrasted. Both show the danger of neglect and slackness, whether inward or outward, and both have to do with the members of the Church of Christ, in regard to their individual preparation for His coming. But in the first we have presented to us types of prudence or carelessness as to the inward life of the believers who are waiting to become sharers in the joy of the bridal festival, to which they have been invited as guests. In the second we have the contrast of faithfulness and negligence in men who are working, with the expectation of a coming account to be rendered, on a task to which they have been assigned as slaves of their master. On the one hand, the disciple is to maintain the self-recollectedness which carefully tends the inner life as the source of the outward profession; on the other hand, he is to show the energy and enthusiasm which throws all its powers into the appointed work, with the result that the loyal slave receives honour and glory and a share in his master's joy (cp. Rom. ii. 6-11).

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut. Afterward come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

1. *Then, at the time of the Parousia, the kingdom of heaven: i.e. the manner of it, will be likened unto ten virgins, the nearest girl-friends of the bride (Judges xi. 37-8) who take their torches and go forth to meet the bridegroom. He with his marriage party is expected to arrive at night for the wedding feast, and after the mutual greetings have taken place, these girls will have to escort him to meet the bride at her parents' house. The bride is not mentioned in this story, because she represents the Church in her corporate unity, whereas the contrast to be brought out here is the diversity in character between the members of the Church, and to express this, the plurality of bridesmaids is better suited.*

The number, ten, generally stands for secular completeness (see Luke xv. 8; xix. 13; and Rev. frequently) and indicates the body of believers in general. The lighted torches represent Christian conduct and profession (Matt. v. 14; Phil. ii. 15, 16) which is our true preparation for the coming of Christ (cp. 1 Cor. iv. 5).

2-4. The differences of character in professing Christians represented by these girls. The one set merely take the torch, possibly a *chiragh* (earthen lamp) set on a stick, with enough oil to keep it burning for an hour or two; the others take the trouble to procure and carry a supply of oil in their *vessels* or cans. Oil would appear to be the symbol of the Holy Spirit and the inward life which He gives (Acts x. 38; 1 John ii. 20-7). The difference is not between reality and unreality of religious life, but between depth and shallowness; the need of endurance to the end is to be enforced (xxiv. 13; xiii. 20-1, 23).

5. *The bridegroom tarried*: an obvious hint that the coming of Christ would be delayed. *All slumbered and slept*: first nodded, then fell off into deep sleep, indicating the gradual diminution of the expectation of a speedy Parousia, ending in the acceptance for practical purposes of the ordinary course of things.

6-7. *At midnight*: the time of deep slumber, with least consciousness of impending arrival. *Trimmed their lamps*: this may include the relighting them.

8-9. At any rate, when they do so, the state of their oil supply and the lack of a reserve is discovered by the five negligent girls. Their *lamps are going out*, just when they ought to be brightest. *Peradventure*:

a polite refusal, because the sensible girls have not brought more than they required. No one has more than a necessary supply of the spiritual life; it cannot be imparted to order, but must be got by the appointed means; hence, *Go to them that sell*. We cannot rely for our supply of grace at a crisis on our association with spiritual people. 'None of them can, by any means, redeem his brother' (Ps. xlix. 7).

10. *While they went away to buy*: the shopkeepers, when a wedding was going on, would not be unready to supply the girls, even in the dead of night, but they ought to have been going in the opposite direction. Meanwhile, *the bridegroom came, and only they that were ready at the critical moment, went in with him to the marriage feast*: there are many beggars and other casuals crowding round the *door* on such an occasion, and it has to be *shut*.

11-12. Panting and dishevelled, looking, it may be, little like a party of bridesmaids, after pushing their way through a grimy crowd, having first vainly tried to find the bridegroom's procession, *come also the other virgins*. They call upon the master of the house to open (cp. vii. 22-3), but here the reality invades the parable; and he answers in the words of Jesus Himself to their *Lord, Lord! I know you not*: see the note on vii. 23. The picture has fallen into the background; there is no mention of pleading on the part of the five bridesmaids inside; and indeed, spiritually, no one can intercede for his or her fellow at that day; for the excluded ones, alas! are not His (cp. John x. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 19).

13. The moral again, *Watch*: see that your spiritual life is now kept constantly bright and clear, for it will be too late to see to it when *the day* comes, and before it does none will have warning.

XXV. 14-30. THE TRADING SLAVES

This parable and the foregoing do not represent successive stages, but different aspects of the same experience. The ideal Christian life is not like the Hindu, supposed to consist of four Ashramas or stages (religious student, householder, hermit, religious mendicant): the Christian has to develop the outer and inner life, the practical and the contemplative, together. The reality of the inner life is shown by the believer, and tested by his Judge according to the active use of the things and opportunities which life affords. These are here represented by sums of money. This story may possibly be a different form of the story of the pounds in Luke xix. 12-25; but it seems more probable that Jesus gave one turn to an obvious analogy in the Lucan passage for the generality (to whom also the feature about the rebellious citizens would appeal) and another for the disciples in this place. There is, moreover, a special reference to the virtue of faithfulness in this parable, as compared to that of wisdom in the foregoing.

For *it is as when* a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. Straightway he that received the five talents went

and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that *received* the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that *received* the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter: and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own. But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14. The manner of the Parousia is compared to a man going into another country: again a hint of a

lengthened absence of the Son of man before His return. He is a person of property, who has received his rents or trading profits and is called away for lengthened business in a distant land. He might have given his money to bankers (*v.* 27) who were not uncommon in the Roman Empire, and especially among the Jews of that time; but by preference he *called his own slaves*, not hired servants as in *xx.* 1; but those who were personally attached to him, and in fact members of his household. They can carry on branches of his business with more benefit to him, besides having the chance of gaining distinction and profit for themselves; so he *delivered unto them his goods*: or put them in charge of his property. Jesus, going away into heaven, leaves His disciples in charge of the gifts which He had received for them (*Eph.* *iv.* 7; *1 Pet.* *iv.* 10).

15. The amount made over to each varies *according to his several ability*, of which the master is the best judge. The *talent* (*xviii.* 24) like the Indian lakh was the measure of a large sum of money; it amounted to about £240, or Rs 3,600. The sums mentioned represent the various gifts, intellectual, spiritual, material, social, with which Christ's servants are endowed in differing proportions, as He sees most suited to each. This parable has made the word 'talent' a synonym for ability.

16-18. The use made by the slaves of their master's money. *Straightway*: in the case of the first two, suggests an eager and energetic use of the chance. They *traded* with the money, for exchange on a sound basis both profits him that gives and him that takes. So

does the diligent use of the powers entrusted to us by God, provided it be made with a view to the approval of the Lord, whose we are, when He returns. He *made other five talents*, for diligent use increases both natural and spiritual gifts. The third slave simply *digged in the earth*: after the usual fashion of storing money among backward peoples. He showed both laziness and foolishness, for at no more trouble to himself he might have gone to the bankers. And besides this, he is absolutely unconcerned about his master's profit; he is content that he should lose interest on the capital, and have to feed a lazy slave till his return.

19. *After a long time*: another hint of a delayed Parousia. The judgement, when it comes is of the nature of a *reckoning* (cp. xviii. 24) there will be nothing arbitrary about it, and no favouritism, but an account rendered of the things done in the body (2 Cor. v. 10).

20-1. *I will set thee over many things*: (cp. xxiv. 47) the reward of faithfulness is greater responsibility and higher service; the master is glad to make use of approved helpers. But it goes higher than this. As the faithful slave has made his master's interests his own, even when the master was not present, so the satisfaction and pleasure of the master shall be his—*enter thou into the joy of thy lord*. The reality is mingled with the symbolism. There seems to be the thought of a festival to celebrate the master's return, in which the dependents will share (cp. v. 30), and at this the faithful slave will have a special place of honour and delight. But still deeper is the thought that henceforth

he will be a partaker of the joy of the master, a close confidant of his (cp. John xv. 10, 11). Such is the reward of spiritual faithfulness; not mere rest, but enlarged activity, and fellowship with God in His purposes, like that of Jesus (John v. 34; xvii. 4f). Not through seeking happiness do we find it truly, but through seeking God's glory.

22. Equality in faithfulness brings a proportionate reward. Each will have as much of influence and happiness as his nature can contain.

24-5. *The one talent*: smallness of opportunity or gifts is no excuse for slackness in using what we have. The fault of this man lies in a jaundiced estimate of his master's character—*thou art a hard man*. The opportunity which his master gave him of acquiring wealth, dignity, and greater nearness to himself, the slave sees through a distorted medium, as nothing but grasping selfishness. No doubt the master would profit by his servant's labour and contriving, but proportionately the servant would profit much more in the reward bestowed upon him. The man was, or pretends that he was, afraid of the risks involved in dealing with the property of such a grasping master so he resolved to run none, and *hid the talent in the earth*, the way a man deals with money when he has no idea of how to use it, except to prevent its being stolen. The spiritual cowardice which refuses to take any risks, is one of the sins that exclude men from the City of God (Rev. xxi. 8). While watchfulness and sobriety are necessary qualities for those who would be prepared for the coming of Christ (xxiv. 42, 49), yet the faithful servant must not

be afraid to venture in his Master's cause, even 'hazarding his life' (Phil. ii. 30). The hiding of the talent in the earth is an apt picture of the conduct of the Jews who were only concerned to keep their religious privileges to themselves, and left them unfruitful for others. *Lo, thou hast thine own* : that is, all that is due to you. A churlish rejection of all the advantages that had been within his grasp, and a flat lie, which emphasized his short-sighted selfishness. What had the man done in return for the chance given to him, and for the maintenance received from his master? He had defrauded him of the fruits of his property. Spiritually, the false estimate which men make of the character of God, regarding His service as a tax levied on the good things of life, and Him as a taskmaster, is at the root of slackness, cowardice, and selfishness in the religious life.

26-7. The master's answer. *Thou wicked and slothful servant!* The epithets are justified by the churlish and slanderous attitude of the man, in return for the trust shown him. He had shown himself unfit for the position of a confidential slave. *Thou knewest* : rather a question, You knew, did you? Supposing your slander had been true, would it have been any excuse? You were bound at least to let the master who was maintaining you suffer no loss. *To have put my money to the bankers* would have cost you neither thought nor labour. For those who are incapable of the higher forms of Christian service, there are lower ones which they may adopt, especially if they are willing to make use of co-operation with others, instead of remaining in selfish isolation.

28-30. The penalty of neglect. *Take from him* who made no use of his talent what he has slighted, and *give it unto him that hath*: who made use of his trust. The loss of what he might have doubled is aggravated by the sense that another now possesses it; the chance of recovery is put out of his reach. The penalty of unfaithfulness in the spiritual task is to see the work that we might have done given to others, and ourselves on the level of those who started much below us. For v. 29 (cp. on xiii. 12) it was an axiom that our Lord repeated in order to enforce it. On v. 30 (see viii. 12).

XXV. 31-46. THE ALLEGORY OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT

The readers and learners of this Gospel were concerned to be assured that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, but also that He was and is the King of all the earth (see v. 13-14; viii. 11; xiii. 38; xvi. 27; xxii. 9, 10; xxiv. 14); and the book closes with the charge to make disciples of all nations (xxviii. 19). In like manner, therefore, these prophetic parables close with an allegorical description of the judgement of all nations. It is not a parable, that is a story of something earthly, having its parallel in the spiritual sphere, but an allegory, that is a description of the spiritual thing itself in symbolical terms, for example the throne, the sheep and the goats, the conversation between the Judge and the suitors. As in the story of the prince's wedding feast a separation takes place among the guests (xxii. 11-13), so here, not all who had the opportunity of serving the king are chosen as citizens of his kingdom and partakers

of its privileges. The shepherd-king musters his flock (Ezek. xxxiv. 17, 20) as, under another image, the angels sever the righteous from the wicked in the kingdom of heaven (xiii. 49). The touchstone of judgement is the service of the King in the person of His brethren of lowly estate; the same thing on which Jesus had already taught that greatness in the kingdom of heaven is based (xviii. 4, 5; cp. John xiii. 14, 15); it is the love of the brother without which the claim of love to God is groundless (John xiii. 34f; 1 John iii. 17; iv. 21). Hence the 'all nations' can hardly be meant to represent the non-Christian world, but rather the great multitude out of every nation (Rev. v. 9; vii. 9) who are called into the Church; for the righteous and the wicked alike are treated as having had the opportunity of serving the King, who represents Jesus exalted, and both acknowledge His service as their supreme duty. The word 'nations', generally translated 'Gentiles', is often applied to Christians from among the foreign nations (see Acts xxi. 25, 'Gentiles which have believed'; xv. 3, 'Conversion of the Gentiles'; Rom. xi. 13, 'you'—Christians—'that are Gentiles'; Rom. xv. 27, 'the Gentiles have been made partakers'; Gal. ii. 12, 'he did eat with the Gentiles'; Eph. iii. 1, 6, 'prisoner in behalf of you Gentiles'; 'the Gentiles are fellow-heirs.) Not all who have these privileges will enjoy them permanently, unless they 'supply' in their 'godliness love of the brethren' (2 Pet. i. 7; cp. 1 Pet. i. 22). The prerogatives assumed by Jesus are more salient than ever; He comes in divine glory; sits on the throne of universal judgement; service to Him is

the criterion of moral worth ; nearness to, or separation from, Him is equivalent to eternal life or death.

But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all the nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats : and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ? or athirst, and gave thee drink ? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into eternal life.

31. *When the Son of man shall come* : the certainty of the advent being assumed. *In his glory* : from xvi. 27 we see that it is also His Father's glory, in virtue of that perfect community between them of which Jesus speaks (xi. 27), and which is further asserted by Him in John x. 38 ; xiv. 11 ; xvii. 21. *Sit on the throne* : as a judge takes his seat for the assizes. The *glory* is the outshining of His moral perfections and divine attributes, now hidden as He speaks ; the splendour of the kingly majesty which for the time being He has laid aside.

32. *All the nations* : the Church Catholic in its widest extent ; ' for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God ' (Rom. xiv. 10). *As the shepherd separateth* : His work as the good shepherd is to lay down His life for the sheep and take it up again (John x. 15) ; to gather His other sheep into the one flock (v. 16) ; to call, lead out and go before His sheep whom He is tending (vv. 3, 4) ; now comes the final work of separating *the sheep from the goats*. Here and in Palestine they herd together promiscuously, and in Hebrew they are designated by one word (*tson* or 'small cattle'). But at certain times, for example for wool-shearing, they have to be separated, and the shepherd, with his dogs, does the work unerringly. So does He before whose eyes all things are naked and laid open (Heb. iv. 13).

33. *The sheep*, as being the more valuable beasts, *on his right*, the place of greater honour (xx. 21) ; *the goats*, as being the less valuable, *on the left*, the place of smaller esteem. The differences of degree in the symbols become differences of kind in the interpretation ;

the one accepted and honoured, the other rejected and destroyed. The rabbis used a not dissimilar imagery in connexion with the divine judgement. For *goats* the original (see margin) has *kids*, the diminutive probably being used by way of contempt (cp. Luke xv. 29).

34. *Then shall the King say*: the majestic sentence of the Judge of all the earth (Gen. xviii. 25; Rev. xix. 16). *Come*: from the lips of Jesus in His humiliation, the word of invitation (xi. 28); now the sentence of life and bliss. Compare its various occurrences in the mouth of Jesus; iv. 19, Come after me (discipleship); xi. 28, Come unto me (rest); xxii. 4, Come to the wedding (spiritual privilege); xxviii. 6, Come, see the place where the Lord lay (the angelic summons to faith in the resurrection); Mark vi. 31, Come and rest; and John xxi. 12, Come and break your fast (refreshment after toil). *Ye blessed of my Father*: that is you who are happy, because you belong to Him; in effect the same as the 'chosen' (xxii. 14; xxiv. 22, 31). *Inherit*: receive in virtue of your sonship. God's children are heirs of His kingdom (Jas. ii. 5), as our Catechism has it. Jesus is *the heir* (xxi. 38); His people are joint-heirs (Rom. viii. 17). When he inherits, the heir becomes the proprietor. On the sense of 'kingdom' as signifying the privileges of the member of a state (see on 'kingdom' iii. 2). *Prepared for you*: they have the right to the places of honour in the kingdom (cp. xx. 23). *From the foundation of the world*: Christ's people are the heirs of all the ages, of which He is the King (see 1 Tim. i. 17, margin; Rev. xv. 3). All the course of history and even of creation is leading up to 'the liberty of the

glory of the children of God' (Rom. viii. 19-21). The history of this land is but a chapter in that great preparation, but it is one of which we in India are permitted to write a part.

35-6. What is the quality which has gained this momentous sentence of approval? Love to the brethren, shown in words of mercy. The forms of charity here enumerated are such as are recognized in all religions as works of piety; in Christian ethics they are known as six of the seven 'corporal works of mercy', the seventh being the care of orphans (Jas. i. 27). By these works of love living faith in the Saviour is shown, (see Jas. ii. 14-26; Gal. v. 6). Jesus, the Saviour, judges all men according to their works (cp. xix. 28; John v. 29; Rom. ii. 6-16).

37-40. The question of the righteous and the answer of the King. *When saw we thee*: this does not, of course, mean that the righteous on the great day will be unconscious of what Jesus has revealed to the Church of all ages in this allegory, for no prophecy has ever done more to realize itself. It means that those who are accepted as *righteous* before the judgement throne of Christ will, however high the commendation bestowed on them, disclaim their own deeds, as the meritorious cause of their salvation. *One of these my brethren, even these least*. The universal sympathy of Jesus is the basis of His universal lordship. Our Saviour has already taught the unity of his followers with Himself as an exceedingly close relation (cp. x. 40, 42; xii. 49-50). When He calls Saul of Tarsus, this is one of the first truths which He makes him feel in the words, 'Why

persecutest thou me?' (Acts ix. 4); and it was this apostle who saw and taught most clearly the mystical union between Christ and His people: 'Ye are the body of Christ and severally members thereof' (1 Cor. xii. 27). Thus, then, we do in a real sense, serve Jesus in His members, and this is the only true and lasting basis of Christian philanthropy; this motive alone overcomes all natural repulsion and contempt, by the conviction that, however contemptible or repulsive a fellow Christian may be, in serving him I am serving Another who is my Saviour and my Judge.

41. *Depart from me*: is the sentence of spiritual death (cp. vii. 23). It is addressed to the devil in iv. 10, and it consigns to the judgement which is his lot; *fire prepared for the devil and his angels*: in contrast to 'the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world' for the blessed of His Father (v. 34). The others are *cursed*, but not because He has tied them down by any chain of necessity; not 'my Father', but they are the authors of their own condemnation. The devil is coupled with his angels only here and Rev. xii. 7; and in xii. 24 we have the mention of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons, see the note there. By the *fire* (cp. Rev. xx. 10, 15) we may understand the flames of remorse and unsatisfied desire. Round the word *eternal* libraries of controversy have gathered (see v. 46). 'The fire' is the favourite name for hell in the Qur'an, and luridly realistic descriptions of it are given both there and in the writings of mediæval Christian theologians.

42-5. The 'cursed ones' have sealed their own sentence by a lack of love to their brethren. Here, as in

the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the final condemnation is on the ground of sins of omission, rather than of commission; the rich man, too, neglected to listen to Moses and the prophets and to relieve his needy brother (Luke xvi. 19-31). *Ye did it not unto me*: that neglect is a slighting of the divine love as manifested in Christ. The cardinal sin is selfishness; first selfish, independence of God (Gen. iii. 6); then hatred of the brother (Gen. iv. 4-8).

46. *Eternal punishment . . . eternal life*. It must suffice to go briefly into the meaning of the words. The word translated *punishment* means primarily the pruning or checking of trees, and secondarily chastisement or correction. It is defined by Aristotle as reformatory, rather than retributive suffering. It occurs only in one other place in the New Testament, in 1 John iv. 18, 'Fear hath punishment' (A. V. torment); but the word there was written originally in Greek, whereas here it is the translation of an Aramaic term and what that was we do not know. The meaning of *eternal life* is probably the same as that (used) in Dan. xii. 2 'life of the age'. How far this meant life of infinite duration as distinguished from indefinite duration (which would take its colour from the context) in contrast to the quickly fleeting life of this world, is doubtful. Certainly the life which has its roots in communion with God must be deathless through the ages (xxii. 32). The punishment which prunes and chastises should reach its objective in the ages of the world to come, either in the reformation of those who accept it, or in the extinction of those who reject it.

CHAPTERS XXVI AND XXVII

THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF JESUS

IN Acts i. 1-2 St. Luke refers the catechumen Theophilus to his record of what Jesus 'began both to do and to teach until the day in which He was received up'. His death and the resurrection and ascension following were the climax to which the works and the words of Jesus led up, and the centre of all, as viewed by the first missionaries, was the cross. The greatest of them writes to his converts at Corinth: 'I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (1 Cor. ii. 2). This unique value ascribed by the first missionaries to the death of Jesus, leading up to His resurrection, explains to us the arrangement of the Synoptic Gospels. In the Jerusalem ministry of Jesus, the one thing which they thought needful to impress on their converts was the passion and death of the Saviour; as regards the rest of it, these evangelists, with St. Paul, would not know even Christ after the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16). The other thing which they desired to record was His words and works in Galilee, to which Peter (Mark's master) and Matthew belonged.

The thread of this part of the story is the same in all four Gospels, St. John supplementing what the three

have given, and omitting even striking scenes which they had recorded, such as the Last Supper, and the agony in Gethsemane. We shall have to consider the differences as to the date and nature of the Last Supper, whether it was an actual Passover meal, or an anticipation of it, when we come to the section in question. A sketch of the chronology of the Passion has already been given in the introduction to chapter xxi. But we must again remember that these things were not recorded by people who had watches or kept diaries. The picture of events stands out clear enough before us, and it tells us that the heart of the gospel is the atonement of the cross. It has been the fashion of late years to represent the incarnation as the main feature of the gospel, and the atonement as, comparatively, an incident. But in the proclamation of good news to a sinful world, the reverse is the case. The incarnation, indeed, is the fundamental fact which gives the atonement its unique value. But the means by which the life of the incarnation is made available to the sinner is the death and resurrection of Jesus. Hence in these first missionary manuals, the three Synoptical Gospels, one, St. Mark's, says nothing of the incarnation; another, St. Matthew's, but little; and the third, St. Luke's, devotes far less space to it than to the story of the cross. It is not till we come to St. John, the evangelist of the developing Church, that we have a definite doctrine of the incarnation set before us; and it is immediately followed by the testimony of the Baptist: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!' (John i. 29). The centrality of the cross of Jesus in the missionary message has again

and again been proved, and is still being proved by contemporary missionary history. It was a typical experience which befell Hans Egedé, the apostle of Greenland. After he had long preached to the Esquimaux of sin and judgement without effect, he at last showed them a picture of the crucifixion. 'You say He did that for me,' asked a chief. 'Yes,' said Egedé, 'for you.' For the first time hearts were melted and the work of conversion began.

XXVI. 1-5. THE DEATH OF JESUS PLOTTED BY A
MEETING OF THE SANHEDRIN

(MARK xiv. 1, 2; LUKE xxii. 1, 2)

And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; and they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people.

1. *It came to pass . . . these words*: the same formula that we have had in vii. 28; xi. 1; xiii. 59; xix. 1; indicating a fresh section in the narrative, and reminding us that St. Matthew's Gospel was originally a collection of sayings; hence its divisions are linked to groups of sayings, in this case to the discourses of the last things in chapters xxiv and xxv. *He said*: Jesus had repeatedly announced His approaching death as a future event (see on xx. 18-19).

2. Now it has come near ; it is to be during *the passover season*, which was coming *after two days*, and would last a week. Owing to the difference in method of calculation between the Jews (whose day began at sunset) and the Romans (who calculated from midnight or from sunrise) the computation of the time of these events in detail must remain uncertain ; besides which it has to be remembered that the hours were calculated roughly by the sun, so that it was possible for the data honestly and even carefully given, by various people, to be out by several hours. In the case of the Muslim noonday prayers, about which detailed rules are given in the *Shara'*, the clock time varies from twelve to one thirty in Egypt and India. *After two days* may mean here a day and a fraction. If the words were spoken in the afternoon. they might mean that the passover festival was to begin the next evening after sunset. If the passover began in that year on the Friday evening (see on v. 17), these words might be spoken on Thursday afternoon. If the passover fell on Thursday evening, then we are here on Wednesday. *The Son of man is delivered up*, that is by treachery. The present tense points to the near approach of the event. The final preparations were already being made by the council of the Jews (vv. 3-5) ; and the treachery of Judas Iscariot (vv. 14-16). Neither was hidden from Jesus.

3. *Then were gathered* : the three estates of the Sanhedrin : *the chief priests, and the elders of the people*, and (Mark xiv. 1) the scribes. They met in *the court of the high priest . . . Caiaphas*. His forename was Joseph, and he was son-in-law of Annas, who had been high priest

before him (John xviii. 13). Caiaphas was appointed to his office by Valerianus Gratus, the procurator who preceded Pontius Pilate, about A. D. 18, and he held office till he was deposed by the emperor Vitellius in A. D. 36. The meeting of the Sanhedrin here referred to may be the same as that recorded in John xi. 47-53, when Caiaphas had carried the resolution that Jesus should be killed ; or, somewhat more probably, it may be a later one convened to consider ways and means of executing the project.

4-5. The conclusions arrived at are, first that the arrest of Jesus must be effected *by subtilty*, as an open arrest would have been dangerous ; and even so it must *not be during the feast*, when many countrymen and partisans of Jesus were in Jerusalem, and the people generally, who had been impressed by His words and works, were ready for tumult. The counsellors separate without a definite plan.

XXVI. 6-13. THE ANOINTING OF JESUS AT BETHANY

(MARK xiv. 3-9 ; LUKE vii. 36-50 ; JOHN xii. 1-8)

In the account given in John xii. 1-8, the time of this occurrence is fixed as 'six days before the passover' ; that is, on the previous Sabbath. It is inserted here in Matthew and Mark as being taught in this connexion to the early learners, in order to throw light on the motives of Judas' treachery. Luke vii. 37-8 is a different incident, exemplifying the feelings of devotion with which our Lord inspired the women of loose life who had repented at His preaching and accepted His gracious invitation

to discipleship (xxi. 31-2); the present story illustrates the spirit of loving ministry in which the holy women who served Jesus with their substance (Luke viii. 2-3) offered of their best to Him. Accordingly, the woman rescued from a life of shame only ventures to touch His feet, while she who was the personal friend of Jesus (John xi. 5) acts the part of hostess in anointing his head (cp. Luke vii. 46), yet with a deeper sympathetic intuition than any of the circle, gained by sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to His word (Luke x. 39), she does it 'to prepare me for burial'. It is a picture of the offering by Christian womanhood of her best and most precious things, as a sacrifice to the love that has done all for her.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment, and she poured it upon his head, as he sat at meat. But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. But Jesus perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she poured this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

6. *In Bethany*: see on xxi. 17. *In the house of Simon the leper*: probably among those who had been healed by Jesus, and who thus sought to show his gratitude.

From John xii. 2 we learn that Lazarus also was present, and that Martha was serving, from this some have concluded that Simon was the husband of Martha.

7. *There came* : as a disciple, bringing an offering for the Master ; *a woman having an alabster cruse of exceeding precious ointment*. From John xii. 3 we know that this woman was Mary of Bethany. Her offering was not needed to supply the wants of our Lord or His disciples ; it was an article of luxury suited to the banquets of the wealthy. Mark xiv. 3 speaks of it as 'spikenard', or as it is called in Hindustani, *sumbul*, a perfume much in favour with the wealthy of ancient and modern times. It was in a *cruse* or flask of alabaster which held a 'pound' or *litra* (John xii. 3), a large quantity, worth at least 300 denarii or Rs 150. *She poured it upon his head* : a large quantity would go down even to His feet (cp. Ps. cxxxiii. 2) as mentioned by St. John ; or Mary may have anointed both, which would agree better with the idea of preparation for burial ; as Jesus says in v. 12, 'she poured this ointment upon my body', namely, the exposed parts of it. In any case it was an act expressive of the deepest love and reverence.

8-9. *The disciples* : moved by Judas Iscariot, who was disappointed of the hope of greater gain from the common purse (John xii. 5-6) than was often his lot. *Given to the poor* : a duty which fell upon Judas (John xiii. 29). Jesus and His disciples were generous to the poor, and especially at the time of the feast it is likely that they would wish to help poor worshippers who could not afford the cost of the offerings. Objections to

the waste of life or means in missionary or other work for God very often have their root in selfishness.

10-12. The answer of Jesus to the disciples who spoke to her sharply (Mark xiv. 4-5) shields Mary from their unfeeling and uncalled for reproof. She must have expected sympathy and understanding from those who were the chosen of her Master, and would be downcast or weeping at the reception with which her offering of love had met. St. John writes, 'Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying'; apparently she had not used the whole pound of ointment, and Judas would have liked to take the remainder from her, but this is not permitted. *Why, . . . she hath done a good work on me.* Peter's indignation at the prospect of the death of Jesus (xvi. 20) was analogous to the feeling of the disciples now (v. 8). That, too, seemed to him a waste, but it was necessary that the most precious thing in the world should be poured out as an offering for the ransom of humanity (xx. 28); and all that is sincerely offered for God has its value in His sight. This is the standard by which we may estimate the value of religious art and magnificence, as devoted to the service of the mystical body of Christ, which is His Church. *Ye have the poor always with you:* (cp. Deut. xv. 11) the cavil of the disciples may have seemed to them to have the more weight, inasmuch as Jesus, in the last great discourse of judgement, had spoken of the poor as His special representatives (xxv. 40). But such exceptional offerings as that of Mary did not interfere with regular and constant care for them. Who gave more to the poor, Mary, or Judas Iscariot? It is those who love

and serve Christ most lavishly who do most for philanthropy. *Me ye have not always*: a melting appeal to Judas, who had so long had Jesus as Friend and Master, and knew that he was ready to compass His death. To *prepare me for burial*: showing that He was not unaware of the plots being made against Him. To the other apostles an unwelcome shadow on the path (Luke xix. 11); to Mary not without a reminder of the resurrection which her brother Lazarus had experienced.

13. Here, as when the Greeks were brought by Philip and Andrew to see Jesus (John xii. 20-33), the thought of near death lifts the mind of Jesus to that which is to be the fruit of it. *This gospel* (of His atoning death) is to be preached in the whole world (cp. xxiv. 14). Where the disciples could, as yet, see only shame and defeat, He beheld the prospect of victory, beyond their fondest expectations, of the divine love, shown in sacrifice, which rules all things. *That which this woman hath done*: the self-forgetting love of Mary was an earnest of the spirit which would work in the disciples of Jesus, when they had been changed by the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Ghost, as a world-conquering power; and therefore *it shall be spoken of for a memorial of her*. A unique honour, not said even of the mother of our Lord, nor of any apostle; yet it is an honour in which we may share if we have the same spirit of devotion (Acts x. 4).

XXVI. 14-16. THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

(MARK xiv. 10-11; LUKE xxii. 3-6)

Mary's self-forgetting act of love is set off by a black foil of intrigue and treachery on the other side. The

solution of the difficulties of the Sanhedrin comes from a disciple of Jesus. What was his motive? Possibly a desire to compel Jesus in self-defence to use His power by establishing a temporal kingdom with rewards for His followers. In favour of this is the paltry amount of the sum accepted by Judas. In any case, ambition and covetousness were at the root of his action, and it is probable that a feeling of estrangement and opposition to the line taken by Jesus, and eventually of resentment against Him, had been growing since Jesus spoke the words recorded in John vi. 70-71, after He had refused the chance of a temporal kingdom, and many of His disciples had lost faith in Him (John vi. 64). Then came the confession of Peter eliciting the approval of Jesus, which would arouse the jealousy of Judas, and this was followed by increasingly clear announcements of His approaching death, which would still further repel him. Still Judas could not leave the company of the twelve, whether for fear of discovery, or from a lingering attachment to Jesus. Torn by distracting feelings he gives place to Satan (Eph. iv. 27) and yields to the temptation to pilfer. Now, after the authorities have decided on the death of Jesus, and want to find a means of arresting Him, the opportunity has come; Judas goes to them, and Satan takes full possession of him (Luke xxii. 3).

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him *unto them*.

14. *Then* : apparently not long after the council meeting recorded in vv. 3-5. *One of the twelve* : the enormity of this was impressed on the others by Jesus Himself (v. 21), and it was strongly before the mind of the early Church. None, even of the apostles, was free from the possibility of lapse. *Judas Iscariot* : (cp. x. 4) the only Judæan apostle, who might possibly have easier access to the Jerusalem rulers than the others.

15. *What are you willing* : the offer was a welcome relief from perplexity. All the more does the paltry bribe surprise us. No doubt Judas was accustomed to doing things on a small scale, and the Jewish rulers were as hard at a bargain as their descendants ; but it seems probable that the thirty denarii, or Rs 15, simply meant earnest money (see Mark xiv. 11, 'they promised to give him money'). Afterwards, instead of claiming his full reward, Judas throws back even the miserable handful. Matthew alone mentions the sum first paid because it reminds him of the prophecy quoted (xxvii. 9.)

16. *From that time* : the words imply that the betrayal took place some days before the arrest. It would seem that the opportunity came to Judas when Jesus commanded Peter and John to make the preparations for the Last Supper, which Judas would fain have had as his perquisite (Luke xxii. 8), and that this hastened on the Sanhedrists to do the deed before the feast (v. 5). This would also throw some light on the hurry of their gatherings among themselves and of their application to Pilate.

XXVI. 17-30. THE LAST SUPPER

(MARK xiv. 12-26; LUKE xxii. 7-23; JOHN xiii. 21-6)

The date on which it was held. Before proceeding to the exposition, it is necessary to take up this point because of the apparent difference between the account given by St. John and the Synoptics. The latter seem to say that the Last Supper was instituted at the time of the passover meal, while St. John relates that the trial and crucifixion of Jesus took place the day before the passover. Three views have been held upon this question: (1) that the meal here recorded was the Passover itself; (2) that it was intended by our Saviour as an anticipatory passover, since He knew that on the actual passover day He would be crucified; (3) that it was a meal irrespective of the passover, except that the eucharist now instituted was intended to supersede the passover.

We have already seen that the Synoptical Gospels were compilations intended for the instruction of the first generations of Christian disciples, while St. John's Gospel was a supplementary review of the life of our Lord, written of a piece, to supply the blanks of the earlier Gospels in accordance with the needs of a more advanced Church. By that time baptism and the eucharist were both so deeply imbedded in the mind and practice of the Church, that there was no need to repeat the record of their institution; it was sufficient to elucidate their inner meaning (John iii. 5; vi. 48-58). Hence in the narrative of St. John there is no mention

of the sacrament, but he unmistakably states that the last meal at which it was instituted took place before the passover (John xiii. 1, 2). When Judas Iscariot went out from it, there was still time for buying supplies for the feast yet to come, and the shops were not shut, as they would have been on the Passover day (John xiii. 29). On the following morning the rulers of the Jews had not yet eaten the Passover meal (John xviii. 28), and the day on which Jesus was tried was the preparation of the Passover (John xix. 14). On the other hand, the Synoptics speak of the 'first day' (Matthew and Mark) or the 'day of unleavened bread' as the day on which the disciples made preparations for the passover meal, and St. Mark adds 'when they kill the passover', and St. Luke: 'when the passover must be sacrificed': the words, in each case defining the 14th Nisan, while all three say: 'they made ready the passover'. In Luke xxii. 15 Jesus Himself says: 'I have desired to eat this passover with you.'

At the same time, in the words in v. 18 of this chapter: 'My time is at hand'; and the instruction of Jesus to the disciples in Mark xiv. 15 that they would find the room 'ready', there may be indications that Jesus, who knew of the treachery of Judas, hastened the celebration which He so earnestly desired, and this may have occasioned the words of explanation in Luke xxii. 14-5 when the hour of Jesus had come. Besides this, there are other indications in the Synoptics that the Last Supper was instituted on the day before the actual feast. (1) The Sanhedrin had decided not to arrest Jesus during the feast, and hence their hurried proceedings,

when once Judas had offered his help (see on v. 5); (2) it was contrary to custom to hold trials and executions on the first and most solemn day of the feast; (3) each of the Synoptics (Matt. xxvii. 62; Mark xv. 42; Luke xxiii. 54) has designated the day of the crucifixion as the 'preparation', which might mean either Friday as the day of preparation for the Sabbath or Saturday, or the day of preparation for the Passover, but would hardly be applied to the first and great day of the feast itself; (4) on that day the temple police and the disciples would hardly have carried arms; (5) nor could Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus have brought linen cloth and spices, nor the women have prepared spices and ointments (John xix. 39; Mark xv. 46; Luke xxiii. 56). If the disciples came to Jesus about sunset as the fourteenth Nisan began, and the preparations for the last meal were hastened by Jesus, it might still be taken that evening. In this case the meal was intended as an anticipation of the Passover, though what ceremonies were observed we cannot exactly tell, nor even whether a lamb was eaten. As the Lamb of God was to be sacrificed on the next day, it is possible that the meal may have consisted only of bread and bitter herbs. This would explain why bread was distributed and not flesh, which would have been the more natural symbol, and why there is no mention whatever in these accounts of the lamb, which was the principal feature of the meal.

The Passover festival was a combination of two celebrations. The more ancient was that of the Unleavened Bread, the spring festival of first fruits, which were offered in the sanctuary; and this lasted seven

days (Lev. xxiii. 4-14). The other was the memorial of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exod. xii. 1-28), which was combined with the Unleavened Bread, as having taken place at the same time. The Passover lasted one day, and its principal feature was the sacrifice of a lamb and the memorial meal on its flesh. The lamb for each household was sacrificed on the afternoon of the fourteenth Nisan (March—April), and the meal was celebrated after sunset when the fifteenth Nisan had begun according to Jewish reckoning. On the fourteenth also leaven was removed with great care from the houses, hence while this day was the 'Preparation of the Passover', it might also be called 'the first day of Unleavened Bread', as being 'the first day' when leaven was to be put away out of the houses (Exod. xii. 15).

The ordinary ritual of the Passover is thus given in outline: (1) the first cup of red wine mixed with water was blessed and drunk; (2) the hands were washed while a blessing was said; (3) bitter herbs (Exod. xii. 8) were partaken of, dipped in sour broth, made of vinegar and bruised fruit; (4) the eldest son of the household asked his father (Exod. x. 26) to explain the origin of the observance; (5) the roast lamb and the flesh of the thankofferings were placed on the table, and the first part of the Hallel (song of praise) was sung, consisting of Psalms cxiii-cxiv; (6) the second cup was blessed and drunk; (7) unleavened bread was blessed and broken, a fragment of it was eaten, then a fragment of the thankofferings, then a fragment of the lamb; (8) preliminaries being thus ended, the feast proceeded till all was consumed; (9) the lamb being quite finished, the third

cup, called the cup of blessing was blessed and drunk ; (10) the fourth cup was drunk, and meanwhile the second part of the Hallel (Psalms cxv-cxviii) was sung. How much of this was observed, when Jesus was about to institute a new rite, we cannot be certain.

It is only St. Luke (xxii. 19) among the Synoptics who mentions the command of Jesus to perpetuate this observance, but from the Acts (ii. 42 ; xx. 7) and from 1 Cor. xi. 23-35 we see that it was observed by the Church from the very first as a commandment of Jesus. At the time when the prospects of His kingdom are darkest, and when treachery has invaded the innermost circle of His disciples, Jesus by this institution teaches them that He Himself will be their life, but through His death. His blood-shedding in that death, which He had repeatedly foretold will be for the forgiveness of sins of many, that is, of the world at large. Moreover, it will be the sealing of a new covenant between God and man, and hereafter the rite will find its fulfilment in the kingdom of God. Taken together with what Jesus had said about His resurrection and return in glory, the rite of the Last Supper clearly pointed to these facts, and from the first it was so interpreted (see 1 Cor. xi. 26), and the memorial of Christ's death in this sacrament was bound up with the day that commemorated His resurrection as well as with the hope of His return. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is for the Church clearest witness to the passion and resurrection of our Lord, as the central fact of the gospel history, and it is to the individual Christian the most precious pledge and means of his participation in the benefits of that passion, and the life of the resurrection.

Now on the first *day* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith My time is at hand; I keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when even was come, he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples; and as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord? And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born. And Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives.

17. *Where wilt thou*: Jesus was staying at Bethany, and probably in retirement (see sketch before chapter **xxi**) on this day; but the Passover feast must be eaten in Jerusalem. The houses of the city were not permitted to be hired out for the occasion; the owner only received as a perquisite the skins of the lambs that

had been consumed in his dwelling. The distance from Bethany to Jerusalem was trifling, and the preparations could be made in a short time.

18. *He said* : to Peter and John (Luke xxii. 9). *Such a man* : Mark and Luke mention the way in which they were to recognize his house. He may have been a secret disciple, who did not wish to be recognized; in any case he was a disciple who would recognize the claim of Jesus as *the Master* : one of the hints in this Gospel of the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem. *My time is at hand* : giving the reason, though couched in mysterious language, for a sudden demand on his hospitality, before the time expected.

20. *Even* : after dark, probably fairly late. *He was sitting at meat* : literally *he was reclining* (see ix. 10; John xiii. 23). The Jews of our Lord's time had adopted the Roman custom of reclining at meals. The couches at this meal would be arranged in horse-shoe form, that is round three sides of a square, the fourth being left open so that attendants could approach the tables. The couches were covered with cushions, and the guests reclined on the left side, and ate with the righthand. In the Old Testament reclining for banquets is mentioned as a sign of luxury (Amos iii. 12; vi. 4); it was customary, however in Persia (Esther i. 6; vii. 8); and though the law spoke of standing (Exod. xii. 11); the Talmud commented : 'It is the custom of slaves to eat standing; but now let them eat reclining, that it may be discerned that at the Exodus they went out from slavery into freedom.'

21. *As they were eating* : probably at one of the pauses in the ritual. *One of you shall betray me* : before

this had come what is told in John xiii. 1-20, the foot-washing, with the first warning to Judas. If he will not now yield to a last appeal, the traitor must be eliminated, and all the disciples, if possible, aroused to a sense of their own weakness and lack of loyalty; for had they not, after the former announcement of the passion quarrelled for precedence, which quarrel they were just about to renew (Luke xxii. 34)? Probably the disciples generally understood the term *betray* (analogously to the announcements of the Passion) in some milder sense, of an act of cowardice or unfaithfulness.

22. *Is it I?* Comparing the reply of St. Peter in *vv.* 33, 35, we should rather have expected indignant denials; for this charge was worse than that of denial. Perhaps this is accounted for by the frequent and recent warnings which Jesus had given them of this very thing (*xvii.* 22; *xx.* 18, 19; *xxvi.* 2) and which made them feel an uneasy sense of treachery in the circle. Their mutual rivalry would make each one desirous to clear himself before the others by an appeal to Jesus.

23. *He that dipped his hand with me in the dish*: my confidential table companion; it is those who are nearest friends who dip into the same dish (*op.* *Ps.* xli. 9). Subsequently Jesus illustrates this, and at the same time makes a last appeal to the old affection, by giving Judas a sop (*John* xiii. 25-6).

24. *The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him, but woe unto that man, etc.* Both here and in *vv.* 54 and 56 we have the same general reference to the tenor of Scripture which was commented on at *ii.* 23. The reference here is especially to those passages in the

Psalms which represent the righteous sufferer as betrayed to shame and death by his friends (cp. Ps. xxii. 6-18; xxvii. 9-13; xxxv. 11-17; lxix. 4-7, 17-21). *Goeth* : that is on his way to death. The divine foreknowledge does not annul human responsibility. The prophetic writings showed that, in the state of religion and society then existing, some one would betray the righteous servant of Jehovah. But there was no need for Judas Iscariot to be that some one; nay, the purpose of such predictions was primarily to serve the purpose of warnings and to prevent those who knew of them from falling into the sins or evils which they announced as imminent. Even ordinary men may predict averages of crime or suffering with much accuracy, but that in no way compels a certain person to be a criminal or a sufferer; on the contrary, such knowledge should help society or the individual to avoid the causes which lead to the threatened ills. The working of God's natural and spiritual laws includes the operation of individual freedom. *Good were it* : a proverbial saying: the Rabbis said, 'Whoever knows the Law, and does it not, it were better for him never to have been born.' But in the mouth of Jesus, who called all men to him to receive rest and life, the saying gathers an awful intensity.

25. *Thou hast said* : also a current Jewish expression, meaning, 'It is as you say'; 'Just so'. From John xiii. 27-30 it would seem as if the others had not heard the reply of Jesus, but only the words which followed, bidding Judas do quickly what he was plotting; and these they misunderstood to mean that he was to execute a commission for purchase of supplies or charity. Judas

now goes out, and is therefore not present at the eucharist.

26. The gloom of anticipated calamity having settled down on the little company, Jesus wishes to show them most vividly, that His imminent death is to be for them and for many the effectual source of forgiveness and life, and that not once only, but that these gifts will be constantly bestowed, till the great feast of the kingdom of God (cp. viii. 11); or, as St. Paul puts it, with reference to other sayings of Jesus (xvi. 28), 'till he come' (1 Cor. xi. 26). The institution of the sacrament may have come between the items (8) and (9) in the ritual, as given above, but the expression, *as they were eating* is vague, being used also in the warning of betrayal (v. 21). *Jesus took a loaf* (see margin), or cake, like a chapati, of unleavened bread. *And blessed*: as when he multiplied the loaves and fishes; it was a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his gifts and of supplication for His blessing on them. St. Luke and St. Paul write of it as thanksgiving, whence the name eucharist for the sacrament, that being the Greek word used; the meaning is in effect the same as blessing. *And brake it*: into fragments sufficient to go round. *Take, eat; this is my body* (cp. John x. 7 and xv. 1). The substantive verb *is* would not be expressed in Aramaic. If the remains of the lamb were still lying on the table, the words must have vividly reminded some of the apostles of the first testimony of their teacher John the Baptist to Jesus, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John i. 29), and the impression would be deepened when He spoke of His blood shed for the

remission of the sins of many. All would be reminded of the words spoken by Jesus at a crisis of discouragement second only to this (John vi. 51-8) of His flesh given for the life of the world. In Luke xxii. 18 the words are added, 'which is given for you'; not 'broken' for the body of Jesus was not mutilated (John xix. 33, 36).

27. *He took a cup* : like the cup of blessing (9) in the ritual, of which all the guests at the feast were expected to partake. *Gave thanks* : as at the second feeding of the multitude (xv. 36; cp. Acts xxvii. 35) and note on 'blessing' in previous verse. *Drink ye all of it* : in face of these words it is strange that the cup of the Lord is withheld from the laity in the Roman Church, only the bread being allowed, about which the command is not so explicit.

28. *My blood of the covenant* : St. Luke and St. Paul have, *the new covenant in my blood* (cp. Zech. ix. 11). *Which is shed* : at a given time shortly to come; but with an eternal and universal effect. Through Moses God made a covenant with Israel by sacrifice (Ps. l. 5) of victims and sprinkling of their blood (Exod. xxiv. 8); now through the death of Jesus a new covenant will be established with those who believe in Him (Jer. xxxi. 31-4), the fundamental benefit of which will be *the remission of sins*, and that not for those few only who now take part in these symbols of the new covenant, but *for many*, that is for the great mass of the world (cp. xx. 28; Rom. v. 15; for all men see xxiv. 14; xxviii. 19; 1 Tim. ii. 6). The prerogative of the remission of sins, for claiming which Jesus had

been attacked (ix. 2; Luke vii. 48), is to be finally vindicated as His; for in place of the outward sprinkling which symbolized the first covenant, there is to be an inward assimilation of the benefits of His death, symbolized by drinking. The fruit of this inwardly appropriated forgiveness will be that prophesied by Jeremiah, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it.'

29. *This fruit of the vine*: a current term for wine, which on these occasions was always mingled with water. After the prayer of thanksgiving Jesus still speaks of the wine and water as such, not as His blood; this is against the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation; the elements of the sacrament in themselves remain the same after the consecration, though to the faithful partakers they convey what Jesus indicated to His apostles, the life and efficacy of His body and blood. The pronoun *this* indicates the wine of this particular rite, which Jesus had longed to celebrate with His disciples, because it established the new covenant, and sealed to those whom He loved the benefits of the death which he was about to undergo for them (Luke xxii. 14) where Jesus also says in v. 16, 'I will not eat it until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God'. The phrase used here, *when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father*, expresses the same thought under the image of the new wine, which Jesus had already employed to signify the life of His kingdom (ix. 17). That new life in its fulness is typified in Rev. xix. 9 by the marriage supper of the Lamb, that is, the eternal and uninter-

rupted communion of perfect love and life between Christ and His Church and each member of it, as the fruit of His sacrifice. Meanwhile the Lord's Supper is the memorial meal of the Church which waits for His return, by which she assimilates His life till she enjoys His perfect presence. And in a non-Christian land especially the Church thus constantly witnesses to the great fundamental fact of her redemption.

30. *When they had sung a hymn* : this is all expressed in one word in the Greek, which may mean one hymn or many. They would naturally sing the four Psalms which formed the second part of the Hallel, cxv-cxviii (see remarks on the ritual in the introduction). How full of meaning many of the verses were for Jesus! (See cxvi. 15; cxviii. 17-18, 22, 27). In cxv. 17 we read: 'The dead praise not Jehovah; neither any that go down into silence.' He was about to bring life and immortality to light (2 Tim. i. 10). This is the only occasion on which we hear of Jesus singing, though doubtless he regularly joined in the services of praise. Either before or after this singing we have to place John xiv-xvii. *The Mount of Olives* : on the Bethany road; the Garden of Gethsemane was at the foot of the slope, if we may trust the traditional site. Perhaps the disciples thought that He would go on thence to Bethany, but He was bound for another home.

XXVI. 31-5. PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD

(MARK xiv. 27-31; LUKE xxii. 31-4)

Though the note of warning of the imminent fall is most prominent in these words of our Lord, yet the

emphasis laid on the resurrection, together with the clear prophecy of His death is very marked. Jesus would have the disciples know the nature of the trial, as well as the hope that lay behind it, so that the impending shock might not leave them in despair. The words, though but little understood then, would come back to them later as a ray of light.

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, *yet* will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

31. One had already gone out from the circle. What of the rest? Would they remain loyal? Alas! no. *All ye shall be offended in me (or caused to stumble by me) this night.* It was a tragic situation which only the clear faith and hope of Jesus could meet undaunted. To carry out His Father's will, He must needs bring His beloved but unripe companions into a fire of trial which He knew would cause them to fall into sins of mistrust, cowardice, and even falsehood and ingratitude, going near to wreck His whole work. But He knew the way that they were to take, and that despite their weakness, through His victorious intercession (Luke xxii. 32), they would come forth as gold (Job xxiii. 10). *It is written:* a free adaptation of Zech. xiii. 7. Jesus had already

proclaimed Himself the Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for the sheep (John x. 11) but would take it again.

32. Accordingly He goes on to remind them of his previous promises: *after I am raised up* (xvi. 21; xvii. 9, 23). I will go before you, as your Shepherd (John x. 4). They had left all to follow Him as He had bidden them (iv. 18-20; ix. 9) and He would not fail them (see xxviii. 7, 10, 16).

33. *Peter answered.* Euthymius says well: 'He ought rather to have besought Christ, and begged for aid against the coming temptation. But he sinned in three ways at once: (1) in contradicting the prophet and the Christ; (2) in placing himself above the rest; (3) in trusting in himself alone, and not in the help of God. Wherefore also he was permitted to fall, that he might be humbled, and might learn not to trust too much in himself, and that others also might learn the same. Also he was allowed to fall that he might learn to love more; for he to whom more is forgiven loves more.'

34. *Before the cock crow*: before the earliest dawn (op. Mark xiii. 35). Mark xiv. 30 has 'crow twice'; perhaps a slightly more accurate detail. *Thou shalt deny me thrice*: a terrible sentence to the apostle who had heard the words of Jesus in xii. 33: 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.'

35. Peter may have remembered the words of Jesus in the same connexion (x. 38-9) of taking the Cross and losing life. At any rate he replies in the spirit of them. *Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.*

Thomas had said the same not long before (John xi. 16) and the other disciples now chimed in. Had it been a case of fighting to gain the throne for the Messiah, doubtless they would have kept their word; but it was a harder fight to which they were called, and the endurance for that they yet lacked (xxiv. 13). Eventually Peter learned the lesson of sobriety (1 Pet. i. 13) humility (v. 5), and watchfulness (v. 8); and was able to encourage others in the proof of their faith by the fire of trial (i. 7; iv. 12).

xxvi. 36-46. JESUS IN GETHSEMANE
(MARK xiii. 32-42; LUKE xxii. 40-6)

Our Lord was 'in all points tempted like as we are, but without sin' (Heb. iv. 15). What He had already firmly resolved and fully accepted, He had to reaffirm and to appropriate in conflict and prayer when the hour of decision came. He had offered prayer for Peter in particular (Luke xxii. 32) and for His disciples in general, as well as for His own perfecting and entrance into glory (John xvii). But the door, through which lay the entrance into glory, was both for Him and them the narrow door of suffering and sacrifice even to death (Heb. ii. 10; Luke xxiv. 26). Jesus had come to Jerusalem steadfastly purposed to die; yet He now shrinks from the ordeal in an agony of apprehension; whereas His martyrs have often suffered with a smile of triumph not less physical pangs, and not less of the terrors of anticipation. Whence this contrast, and the change from the calm of the high-priestly prayer in the upper chamber to the agony in Gethsemane? The martyrs

have calmly endured because of the victory won in this conflict by their Lord, who bore what no other could, and once for all took away from death its sting (1 Cor. xv. 56). Jesus is conscious that He is going forth to meet the great enemy (John xiv. 30); the death which He is to endure is the fruit of sin; then and there it is the result of the treachery of Judas, the cowardice of His disciples, the intrigues and hypocrisy of his own countrymen, the indifference of the nation, the injustice of Pilate. But His blood is to be shed for many; He is to bear the sin of the world. To meet this enemy, and to take up this burden He goes with the shrinking of a pure humanity, more antipathetic to sin and suffering than our sin-stained nature can realize. He endures as we have to do (Heb. v. 7-8) but infinitely more than we have to do; and He is made perfect through suffering; the real human will of the Son of man is distinguished clearly from the divine will and apprehended in its repulsions and attractions to the full, to be reunited with the Father's will in perfect harmony. He has proved once and for all, that the Father's will and the expression of it form the very food of His being (iv. 4; John iv. 34).

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me. And he went forward a litle, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from

me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words. Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed unto the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me.

36. *A place called Gethsemane*: or the oil-press. There seems no reason to distrust the tradition which places this on the lower slope of Olivet by the road to Bethany from the city. It was a place which Jesus was accustomed to visit, possibly as being the property of a disciple, and so suited for undisturbed retirement. The estate contained an orchard, which would have an olive-press and garden house. At the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, the tenth legion of his army was pitched here, and the trees were out down; but they were replanted by pilgrims of the third and fourth centuries, and an olive orchard still stands on the spot. *Sit ye here*: perhaps in the garden house to rest; they may well have been tired, and it was no new thing for them to rest while their Master prayed (Luke ix. 32).

37-8. *He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee*: to be witnesses of His humiliation, as they had been of His glory (xvii. 1), and of His works of

power (Mark v. 37); also because He was longing for human sympathy from His nearest friends, whom He bids to *watch with Him*. But first it would seem as if He kneeled or stood with them to pray; then the awfulness of the crisis comes upon Him, and He begins to be so *sorrowful and sore troubled* that He can only beg them to keep awake in sympathy, while He goes to pray alone the prayer which none other can join in fully. His oppression is as if the death agony were come.

39. *He went forward a little* : but not out of earshot, so that the disciples, as far as drowsiness would allow them, could hear what he said. The same was the case with the high-priestly prayer, and probably at the time when the prayer of Jesus made the disciples ask Him to teach them to pray (Luke xi. 1). These occasions must have been but samples of many, and we may well believe that the hearing of our Lord's prayers were one of the greatest means of grace to the disciples. In the semi-stupor of drowsiness they would hear at intervals only the gist of what was said; and the words are somewhat differently reported in the three Synoptics, though the drift of them is identical. *Fell on his face* : an attitude of agonized supplication, the same as that adopted by the most urgent of the suppliants who came to Jesus (viii. 2; ix. 18). The usual attitude of prayer was standing, or kneeling. *O my Father* : in a unique, and yet a truly human sense (John xx. 17). *If it be possible* : our Lord realized the boundless resources at His disposal, which He had only to ask for, in order to be delivered from shame and death (v. 53); but He would not ask; He remits the decision to His Father.

The human will of Jesus longs for deliverance from the Cross and all that it involved, yet with no trace of sinful murmuring or impatience; there is a struggle, but absolute subordination to the divine will (John v. 30; vi. 38). *This cup*: with its draught of bitter suffering which He had foreseen (see on xx. 24), and which afterwards He resolutely grasped, when Peter would have fought for Him (John xviii. 11).

40-1. *Could ye not watch*: after professing readiness to die with Me could you not do the one thing that I asked? But, in fact, we often find that to watch is more difficult than to die; one great ordeal will brace the energies; the continuous struggle against weariness and slackness is harder to maintain. *Watch*: this command is repeated with special urgency before and during our Saviour's passion (xxiv. 42; xxv. 13). St. Peter and St. Paul both inculcate it (1 Cor. xvi. 13; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 6; 1 Pet. v. 8); and the frequently-occurring names, Gregory, Vigilus and Vigilantius, all meaning 'watcher', show that it became a kind of motto among the early Christians. *Pray, that ye enter not into temptation*: to deny and forsake Me; a practical enforcement of the prayer taught in vi. 13. Boastfulness is followed by slackness, and slackness by temptation, and temptation by a fall (cp. Prov. xvi. 18). *The spirit indeed is willing*: spoken sympathetically from the experience through which Jesus was even then Himself going; but, in His case the spirit prevailed over the weakness of the flesh; and through the victory that He gained, and the gift of the Spirit, we may likewise conquer the weakness of our mortal nature (see Gal. v. 16-24; Phil. iv. 13).

42-3. Jesus prays a second time. Now the victory is won; perfect resignation is attained; *thy will be done*: the same prayer which He had taught His disciples to pray, He now utters Himself, for He was tempted as we are. The words are not only an expression of passive resignation in the face of suffering, like the ordinary Muhammadan phrase, 'There is no remedy but patience', meaning, God is mighty, and we must just let His will have its way. This prayer is one of active acquiescence in the doing of the will of the Father, of a determination to offer the sacrifice for the sins of the world for which Jesus had entered it. Christian resignation is a resolve not only to suffer but to do the will of God. As for the disciples, *their eyes were heavy*: as one is in the last watch of the night when fighting with drowsiness.

44. *A third time*, Jesus prays, *saying the same words*. When a great resolve has been made, one braces oneself to the execution of it by repeating the resolution. In the stress and tension of mental conflict the mind does not readily frame new turns of speech.

45. Jesus has gained strength in prayer, and He now no longer seeks for sympathy, but is bent on warning and saving the weaklings who have neglected their opportunity. *Sleep on now*: with the reproach is mingled something of sympathy with the wearied men who are so unconscious of the great peril and fall close upon them. After these words there may have been something of a pause, while Jesus stays in meditation for a brief space; then He perceives the sound of coming feet and muffled voices in the still night, and rouses the sleepers finally.

Arise, let us be going: the enemies coming must not find the little company scattered and reeling with sleep. The company hastily reassembles.

XXVI. 47-56. THE ARREST OF JESUS

(MARK xiv. 43-50; LUKE xxii. 47-53; JOHN xviii. 3-12)

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him. And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, do that for which thou art come. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear. Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not. But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled.

47. *Judas, one of the twelve*—the interjected words reveal the horror of the betrayal by an apostle—*came*: as Luke xxii. 47 indicates, in front of the others, to shew them the way. *With him a great multitude*: not a rabble, but strong detachments of troops and police, provided by

the rulers because of their nervous dread of the wonder-working power of Jesus and of the popular feeling in His favour. The *swords* were the arms of the Roman soldiers, of whom, John xviii. 3 tells us, that a 'band' or cohort was provided, doubtless on the representation of the chief priests that a pretender to the Messiahship was to be arrested who might be rescued by his followers. The cohort contained 1,000 men, but it may well be that only a detachment of the regiment was detailed for this duty. The *staves* were the batons of the Levitical temple police; they would arrest Jesus, while the soldiers would cover the movement and guard against a popular tumult. The man whom Peter wounded was one of the temple police. *The chief priests and elders*: that is, the Sanhedrin (v. 3) who had control of the temple guard, and could on occasion shown (as in xxvii. 65) get troops from the procurator.

48-9. *Gave them a sign*: the tense of the verb implies that he agreed upon this token as they approached the garden. The full moon was shining, but under the olive trees with their black shadows it might be difficult to recognize the chief person by any description. Evidently in outward appearance our Lord differed little, if at all, from His apostles. *Whomsoever I shall kiss*: it was more usual for the Master to greet the disciple with a kiss, but the token would serve. *Hail, Rabbi!* As if he had come to pay his respects in the usual way; the greeting was probably the same *shalom 'aleka*, peace be to thee, with which Jesus greeted His apostles (xxviii. 9; John xx. 21), but there was war in his heart (Ps. lv. 10). In his nervous haste Judas overdoes the greeting; *he*

kissed him much (margin) : that is, repeatedly, instead of the usual once.

50. Jesus allows the greeting and responds to it courteously. *Friend* : (xx. 13 ; xxii. 12) but adding stern rebuke, *do that for which thou art come*. *Then they came* : here may come the interlude related in John xviii. 4-9 where Jesus goes forward and offers Himself to His captors, who at first fall back, in order to save His disciples from the arrest which they were not in a condition to bear with fortitude.

51. On seeing his Master actually seized Peter attacks the aggressor, but the blow clumsily aimed at his head only cuts off his ear. In this episode, Peter and Malchus the temple guard are named by John only. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, prominent Christians were in some danger ; James the Lord's brother was martyred about sixty-two.

52. *All they that take the sword* : resistance by the two-armed disciples (Luke xxii. 38) on this occasion would have brought certain vengeance on the whole company, and would have given an opening for effective accusation before Pilate. These words of our Lord are not a condemnation of war in the abstract, but of using force on behalf of religion. It stands in strong contrast to the utterances of the Qur'ân on the subject of religious war, as in Sûratu't-Tauba (ix.) 14. ' Attack them therefore : God shall punish them by your hands,' and various other passages. These words of Jesus also lay down a general principle, namely that the fate of a religion which appeals to physical force will be subject to the same vicissitudes which beset the empires of the world which

have the same basis. The decay of the Roman Church and of Islám in those countries where they have relied most upon the sword illustrates this maxim (cp. John xviii. 36; 2 Cor. x. 4). So effectual was this repudiation of force by Jesus, accompanied by His healing of Malchus' ear (Luke xxii. 51), that no attempt was made by His accusers, hard pressed as they were for evidence, to turn this incident against Him.

53-4. It is, however, from no sense of inherent weakness or helplessness that Jesus speaks thus. In God's world right, in the last instance, is to be revealed as might, and meanwhile it has the forces of omnipotence behind it, though they are waiting to be revealed. The prayer that multiplied the loaves and stilled the storm could *even now*—if it were not held back by something more weighty, the desire for the salvation of a world—bring to the spot *more than twelve legions of angels*: not only one for each fearful or treacherous apostle. The cohort and the temple guard are as the dust of the balance before these forces; but they are restrained by the counsel of God for the salvation of man recorded in the Scriptures, which witness of Jesus and of His sufferings for the salvation of the world (Luke xviv. 45-7).

55-6. The sense of gross injustice and ingratitude on the part of rulers and people is quieted by the same anodyne; the counsel of God in Scripture. *A robber*: like Barabbas the murderer and brigand whom they eventually chose, that they might destroy the Healer and Benefactor. *I sat, or used to sit* (imperfect tense) daily with you *in the temple*: not only this last week, but repeatedly during former times of ministry in Jerusalem.

Ye took me not : when they tried to, on one occasion (John vii. 32, 45, 46), the force of His truth and grace was too much for them. *All the disciples left him, and fled* : He had enjoined on His captors to let them go (John xviii. 8), that is, not to arrest them, and He had bidden the disciples offer no forcible resistance to His own arrest : their action is, therefore, natural, though it did not reach the pitch of fidelity professed beforehand by Peter (Luke xxii. 33).

xxvi. 57-68. THE TRIAL OF JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS
(MARK xiv. 53-65)

John xviii. 12-24 supplies the preliminary examination before Annas, which is omitted by the Synoptics, probably because nothing came of it, and John omits the trial before Caiaphas, as having been sufficiently recorded. It would take some time formally to assemble the members of the Sanhedrin, even the quorum of twenty-three required for a trial. The preliminary hearing before Annas would fill up the time till the great council met (Luke xxii. 66) 'as soon as it was day', at that season about 5.30 a.m. It was a hurried proceeding, and the whole day's story bears witness of the haste, that was made to put everything through before the feast, and before the people, especially the pilgrims encamping round Jerusalem, should get excited. This accounts for the irregularities in procedure, so far as they did not come from passion or prejudice. It was the rule to hear the reasons for acquittal first, and afterwards those for condemnation; and acquittal might be pronounced on the day of the trial, but condemnation not till the day afterwards. Both these rules

were violated in the case of Jesus, but it is not likely that these judges in their own case would stick at rules of legal procedure when they wanted to get a verdict. The trial of Stephen was similarly irregular (Acts vii. 57-9).

And they that had taken Jesus led him away to *the house of Caiaphas* the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. But Peter followed him afar off, unto the court of the high priest, and entered in, and sat with the officers, to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. But afterward came two, and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest stood up, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? They answered and said, He is worthy of death. Then did they spit in his face and buffet him: and some smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?

57. *The house of Caiaphas* was not the regular place for the meeting, but probably more convenient than the proper court known as 'Gazith' (hewn stones) on the Temple Mount. With *the scribes and the elders* would, of course, be the chief priests, forming the high court.

58. *Peter followed him afar off*: love and loyalty forbade him to lose sight of the Master; but his feverish restlessness had left him no time for prayer or watchfulness. He enters *the court of the high priest*: this was like many Indian *kachahris*, or district courts, with the rooms for audience and business and residence built round an open courtyard, in which the servants and outsiders can congregate, either to hear and see what they may of the proceedings, or to wait till they are called on for duty or witness. Peter had little hope, and only stayed there *to see the end*.

59-61. The proceedings, as we have seen, are confused and hurried. As in an Indian court, there are miscellaneous characters hanging round, ready to give their services as witnesses for a consideration. A judge and jury ought not to have to seek for witnesses, least of all false witnesses, but such is the case of the prosecution here. At last, with difficulty, two are put up—this being the smallest number allowed by the law (Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15)—after many others had broken down (Mark xiv. 56) and proved absolutely false. These two have a confused memory of one of the sayings of Jesus connected with the temple. *I am able to destroy the temple of God*: was a distorted version of the words spoken at the first cleansing of the temple, in which Jesus challenged the rulers to destroy the temple of His body (John ii. 19). Apparently the second cleansing, which had aroused the anger of the chief priests, had revived a blurred memory of the first. Even if the words of the witnesses had been accurate, they would have amounted to no more than a boastful

remark, not a basis for a capital charge; and, in fact, the high priest does not attempt to follow up this accusation.

62. There seems to be an interval of consultation between the judges. At last the high priest tries to browbeat the prisoner, rising to give emphasis to his blustering demand. *Answerest thou nothing?* (Isa. liii. 7). The accused had had no opportunity for defence, and now He is to be accused of contempt of court for his silence. *What is it which these witness against thee?* The reply to that it was the duty of the judges to give, by framing the charge against Jesus.

63. Still, therefore, there is silence. Jesus will not answer such garbled testimony, knowing well how He had been treated before Annas, when He replied gently (John xviii. 22-3). As a last resort Caiaphas administers the judicial oath (I Kings viii. 31): *I adjure thee . . . whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* This was an echo of the confession made by Peter near Caesarea Philippi (xvi. 16). Had Judas Iscariot told them of it? In any case the former teaching of Jesus in Jerusalem had led up to it (see John v. 18; viii. 58; ix. 37; x. 24). It was a skillful dilemma; either self-contradiction or blasphemy; He had claimed to be not only Messiah, but a divine Messiah.

64. Jesus is fully ready to face the issue. He might have, as some critics have done, watered down the meaning of the title Son of God, but, on the contrary, He emphasizes it and punctuates it. *Thou hast said*: no less than the bare truth (v. 25). *Nevertheless*: or rather moreover, for it is an additional assertion. *Henceforth*: from this very time of My death, which is sealed by My

confession, and the resurrection that shall follow, you will behold with dismay My kingdom prevailing. The words are a bold defiance of the worst that they can do, as resulting only in their defeat. *The Son of man* (viii. 20) the title which characterized the lowly appearance of Jesus combined with His high authority. *The right hand of power* : with reference to the words of Ps. cx. 1, which a few days since they had been obliged to confess to be applicable to the Son of David (xxii. 41-6). *Power* (cp. the Arabic *kibriya*) is a synonym for 'the Almighty'. Not only the increase of His kingdom shall they see, but its culmination in His *coming on the clouds of heaven* (cp. Dan. vii. 13); the words tell in brief what Jesus had been saying to His disciples in detail during His last discourses. He has thrown down His gauntlet not only to the Great Council of the Jews, but to the world for all time. In the prophetic manner He proclaims, as ideally accomplished, what is potentially established by the divine decree (Ps. ii. 7-9; Luke x. 18), though to His power and providence a thousand years are as one day (2 Pet. iii. 8).

65. *Rent his garments* : a formal act, enjoined by the traditional law in cases of blasphemy; both outer and inner were to be torn, and Mark xiv. 63 mentions his tunics in the plural. It resembled somewhat the putting on of the black cap by English judges, when they condemn a criminal to death.

66. *Worthy of death* : the Sanhedrin could sentence to death but had to get confirmation from the Procurator (John xviii. 31) who could, if he saw fit, revise the sentence; but in matters that concerned the Jewish religion,

the Romans did not care to interfere without special necessity, and an illegal act like the stoning of Stephen would be passed over by the help of a present to the Procurator. The proper punishment for blasphemy was stoning (Lev. xxiv. 16), but for some reason the Sanhedrin did not carry this out, probably because they were afraid of a riot, and Jesus eventually suffered the penalty of sedition according to Roman law by crucifixion (xxvii. 37). The statement in Mark xiv. 64 that 'they all condemned him' seems to indicate that Nicodemus, who on a former occasion, had protested (John vii. 50, 51), and Joseph of Arimathæa, and any others who were in favour of Jesus, had withdrawn or possibly were not summoned to a packed meeting of the council.

67. *Some began to spit on him* : the officers of the Levitical temple guard who had arrested Jesus desire to show their pious abhorrence of the blasphemy, as Muhammadans on the North-West Frontier still do nowadays to the preacher of Christ crucified. They go on to deride the pretender to the office of prophetship and Messiah, by blindfolding Him, and bidding Him tell by inspiration who buffeted Him. The covering of the face was perhaps a sign of condemnation to death (cp. Esther vii. 8). The picture of the righteous sufferer in (Isa. l. 6) is fulfilled.

XXVI. 69-75. PETER DENIES JESUS

(MARK xiv. 66-72 ; LUKE xxii. 55-62 ; JOHN xviii. 16-18, 25)

It is not easy to reconcile the four accounts in detail. According to John xviii. 12-27 it would seem as if the

denials took place in the quarters occupied by Annas, where the preliminary hearing had been, whereas here and in the other Synoptics the denials are depicted as happening in the palace of Caiaphas. The most probable explanation is that Annas, who still exercised a good deal of authority, though no longer titular high priest, had quarters in the same building as Caiaphas, and to judge from Mark xiv. 66 those of Caiaphas were on an upper floor, so that Peter was below in the open courtyard while the proceedings were going on before Caiaphas. The impulse which led Peter to deny was shame and fear. His reply to the first announcement by Jesus of His passion, 'Be it far from thee Lord' (xvi. 22) showed how strongly he felt the incongruity of shame, death and apparent failure, with the faith which he had confessed and truly held of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. Hence he sensitively shrunk from the ridicule which had just culminated in the behaviour of the temple guards. Jesus had warned His disciples against such shame (Mark viii. 38), but the practical lesson still remained to be learned (cp. 1 Pet. iv. 16). Also Peter's nature was one that was liable to violent reactions (cp. xiv. 30; Gal. ii. 12) and he was suffering from a revulsion of feeling, following on his impetuous attempt at defending Jesus in the garden, damped by the command of his Master. Now in the midst of hostile or indifferent persons, he is seized by a spiritual panic. The climax by which he reaches his final baseness is well marked here. In (vv. 69-70) a servant girl speaks to him, and he professes not to understand her; in 70-1 the girl points him out to others, and he denies knowledge of Jesus with an

oath: in 73-4 a troop of men fix the stigma on him, and he curses and swears.

Now Peter was sitting without in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Jesus the Nazarene. And again he denied with an oath, I know not the man. And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, Of a truth thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

69. *Sitting without*: and according to Mark xiv. 66 below, so that, if the trial was going on in the upper story of the palace, Peter might see the treatment of Jesus as the officers received him from the court-room when sentence had been pronounced (Mark xiv. 65). He and the others were warming themselves round a fire which they had made, as people do when waiting round at night in the cold weather. The nights in Jerusalem would be colder than those in Peshawar at Easter time.

73. *Thy speech*: the Galilean dialect of Aramaic is said to have been thick and harsh in the gutturals.

74. *The cock crew*: pointing to early dawn, indicating the time of the hearing before Annas. But we cannot make a time table, by the watch, of events which passed in such hurry and excitement. *Then began he to curse and to swear*: he had got into a condition of intense

nervous irritability and ill temper, and losing his self-control, he fell into the profane language of the Galilean fisherman.

75. In his lowest abasement, when he realizes how deeply it was possible for him to fall, *Peter remembered* (see v. 34). The pain of memory may be either remedial or tormenting (Luke xvi. 25). To memory was added the glance of Jesus (Luke xxii. 61) who may have heard his apostle's violation of his express command, 'Swear not at all' (v. 34), as He was being led up from the audience with Annas to the trial before Caiaphas. John had brought Peter into the high priest's court (John xviii. 16) and Peter seems to have remained with him till the resurrection (John xx. 3); and we find them together afterwards (Acts iii. 1). But for the first he must be alone, with a contrite and broken heart (Ps. li. 17). The contrast between the godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, and the sorrow of the world which worketh death is nowhere so clearly expressed as in the two sentences, *he went out, and wept bitterly*; and xxvii. 5, 'He went away and hanged himself.'

CHAPTER XXVII

XXVII. 1 AND 2. THE FINAL TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

(MARK XV. 1; LUKE XXII. 66; JOHN XVIII. 28)

THE final trial before the Sanhedrin is only referred to by St. Matthew. Two things remained to be done: (1) according to Jewish law, to confirm the sentence of death in a second session of the court; (2) to get the sanction of the Roman procurator, who had to revise such sentences, as the British Government does in the case of small Indian states.

Now when morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and they bound him, and led him away, and delivered him up to Pilate the governor.

1. *When the morning was come*: it was now full day. *The chief priests and elders . . . took counsel*: a final session of the Sanhedrin was held to take necessary measures for presenting the prisoner in Pilate's court.

2. *They bound him*: he must have been already chained at the arrest, but during the trial he would be free, and now, as being condemned, they fettered him again. *Delivered him up to Pilate*: the Roman soldiers

who had assisted at the arrest now took charge of the prisoner (John xviii. 3, 12). Judæa and Samaria made up a province under the emperor. It was a very small one, not as large as an average Indian district, but it was given a separate administration on account of its importance as the centre of the Jewish population of the empire, which was large and wealthy (see on xxiii. 15). The governor in charge was called 'procurator' or deputy superintendent (the superintendent being the emperor himself, so that the governor was directly responsible to him). The office could only be held by one who belonged to the order of Roman knights. Pilate was appointed to it in A. D. 26, being the sixth procurator since the deposition of Archelaus (ii. 22), and he ruled for ten years. In many ways the office resembled that of an Indian collector, but with larger judicial and administrative powers. He resided at Cæsarea, the chief harbour and garrison town in the province, about sixty miles from Jerusalem. At the time of the Passover he would be in Jerusalem to keep order, with the help of the garrison in the castle of Antonia, as an Indian collector goes to the chief place of pilgrimage in his district at the time of a great mela, only that the Jews were far more turbulent than Indians. Pilate had his quarters in the prætorium (translated 'palace' in xxvii. 27), a set of buildings not unlike the 'forts' of Delhi and other great Indian cities, including quarters for the ruler himself, audience halls for civil administration, and barracks for the military. Pontius Pilate is the best known pagan in Christendom, owing to his name being mentioned in the Creeds as a witness to the historical

fact of our Lord's crucifixion and the time of it. The Roman historian Tacitus writes : ' Under Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius, Christ was crucified.'

xxvii. 3-10. THE REMORSE AND SUICIDE OF JUDAS
ISCARIOT

In Acts i. 18-19 a different account of the matter is given. Here Judas takes back the money to the priests and hangs himself, whereupon the priests with the money buy a field hitherto used by potters and make it a strangers (!) burial ground ; in Acts i Judas acquires a field with the money and meets his death there by falling headlong ; in one case the field receives the name of ' the field of blood ' from being bought with blood money, in the other from being the scene of the horrible end of the traitor. It may be that Judas had bargained for the field in question on the strength of the money paid over to him as an advance by the priests, regarding it as a good speculation, possibly a building site near the city. When overcome by remorse he flings back the earnest money to the priests sitting in the sanctuary, and hangs himself in bitterness of soul in the field that he had secured ; but, neglecting to use a strong enough rope, he falls into one of the pits which had been excavated by the potters for clay, and is disembowelled. The bargain is taken over by the priests accordingly, and the scandal hushed up, after their fashion, by making the place a cemetery for outsiders.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty

pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? see thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled, that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

3-4. *When he saw . . . repented.* The sight of the fruit of his deed and the bearing of the sufferer has stifled resentment and recalled old memories. He is looked at askance by both sides, and remorse comes (cp. on xxi. 29) but not repentance. *He brought back the thirty pieces of silver*: if these were earnest money only (see on xxvi. 15) the action would mean that Judas wants to break off the bargain before he receives the full bribe, and to get the Sanhedrin to reverse their decision; but this they refuse to do. *Betrayed innocent blood*: that is, betrayed an innocent man to death. The answer is an implicit acknowledgement of his assertion, in the spirit of the Sadducee who had consciously determined on the death of Jesus as a matter of policy (John xi. 50). *See thou to that*: the answer of the accomplice in evil when conscience begins to accuse.

5. *He cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary*: flung them on the floor into the apartment where he

had been paid them, probably by the treasury. *Hanged himself*: in his case there are no tears, only a fierce resentment against himself for his act of baseness, and he inflicts upon himself a punishment as nearly as possible similar to that which Jesus was about to suffer through his fault. 'This is the way of the devil. Before we sin he suffers us not to see the evil of it lest we should repent. But after the sin is done he suffers us to see it, to cause us remorse, and to drive us to despair.' (Euthymius.)

6. *It is not lawful*: this prohibition is not found in the law, but it was deduced from Deut. xxiii. 18 where it is forbidden to bring the wages of impurity into the treasury of God's house; by parity of reasoning the profit made by a breach of the sixth commandment would be excluded. It is again an implicit confession that they were contemplating a judicial murder. They are punctilious as to the bestowal of the blood money, but to do to death the Righteous One causes them no concern (cp. xxiii. 23f, 31).

7-8. *The potter's field*: somewhere in the neighbourhood of the city, having been used up as a clay pit, and now being rendered unfit for a dwelling site, would do for a cemetery for *strangers*, that is, foreign Jews who happened to die while staying in Jerusalem, and who had no relatives at hand to object to such a resting place. *The field of blood*: because of the blood money and the bloody end of Judas. *Unto this day*: showing that some time had elapsed between the event and this record of it; the readers and learners were of the second generation of Christians.

9-10. *Jeremiah the prophet*: as a matter of fact, the quotation is from (Zech. xi. 12, 13). It is difficult to explain how the slip occurred. It may have been through a very early transcriber, who was thinking of the mention of a potter twice by Jeremiah (xviii. 2 and xix. 1); or it may have been because in some collections of the prophets the first book was that of Jeremiah (followed by Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve and so Jeremiah stood for the whole). Zechariah is speaking of the contempt with which the good Shepherd of Israel, representing Jehovah Himself, is treated by the rebellious people. He is valued at thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave, and the money is to be cast to the potter, the most menial of craftsmen, for services that he has rendered. Here the price paid for the true Shepherd is expended on a discarded potters' clay pit. They are fulfilling yet another prophetic figure, the rejection of the chosen corner stone, which will be exalted through the death which they are now plotting (xxi. 42).

xxvii. 11-26. THE TRIAL OF JESUS BEFORE PILATE

(MARK xv. 2-15; LUKE xxiii. 2f, 13-25; JOHN
xviii. 29; xix. 11)

The accounts given by St. Luke and St. John supplement each other, and those of St. Matthew and St. Mark which are practically identical. Features peculiar to this evangelist are the dream of Pilate's wife, his washing of his hands, and the reply of the people: 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' St. Luke alone gives us the

exact form of the charges brought by the Jews before the procurator (sedition, refusal of tribute, pretension to kingship) and the trial before Herod. St. John gives the most detailed account; he alone mentions the conversations between Pilate and Jesus, the merciful purpose of Pilate in ordering him to be scourged, and the final argument which broke his resistance: 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend.' Pilate is impressed, partly through his wife's dream, partly by his own observation, with the innocence of Jesus, and would prefer to throw the onus of the whole business on the Jews (John xviii. 31). He wants to release Jesus (Luke xxiii. 20) and in fact acquits Him (John xix. 46); but he combines superstition (John xviii. 8) with scepticism (John xviii. 38). He, therefore, tries to temporize and uses various artifices, but finally the knowledge of his own misdeeds makes him yield, lest he should be accused by the Jews before Tiberius, as he afterwards was, with the result that he was condemned and banished.

Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he gave him no answer, not even to one word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered

him up. And while he was sitting on the judgement-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you ? And they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ ? They all say, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done ? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified. So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man : see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he unto them Barabbas : But Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.

11. *Jesus stood before the governor* : a brief reference to the trial more fully detailed by John. This shows that the Sanhedrin had taken the confession made by Jesus of his Messianic dignity as the basis of an accusation that He claimed to be a rival king to the Roman emperor. In answer to this, Jesus had plainly shown Pilate that He made no claim whatever to a temporal sovereignty. Here Matthew merely notes that in a spiritual sense Jesus reaffirms the claim (cp. John xviii. 37).

12. To the accusations of the Jews, on the other hand, Jesus deigns no reply. They had already perverted justice, and deserved no answer (cp. Isa. liii. 7 ; 1 Pet. ii. 23).

13-14. Even to the question of Pilate about these accusations Jesus gives no answer, much to the surprise of the procurator to whose own questioning Jesus had answered freely. He intends to impress upon the governor the fact that an illegal prosecution has been set on foot. Here follows the first acquittal, the accusation of sedition, by which the Jews sought to bolster up a failing case, and the attempt of Pilate to get rid of the troublesome process by referring to Herod (cp. Luke xxiii. 4-12).

15. *The governor was wont to release*: at the pagan festival known as 'lectisternium' (when a banquet was placed before the images of the gods lying on couches) it was customary to release prisoners. It would seem that Pilate, perhaps to wipe out the memory of former cruelties, had introduced the custom of such a release at the most popular festival of the Jews, when they were most inclined to turbulence.

16. *A notable prisoner, Barabbas*: in some ancient manuscripts this man is called Jesus Barabbas, and it may well be that this was his proper name, for the other is only a family name, meaning 'Son of Abbas', that is of a father, or rabbi. He was a degenerate son of religious parents, for he had become a robber (John xviii. 40) and had committed murder in one of the riots that were common at that time, in which rapacity was mingled with a distorted patriotism, as it sometimes has been in the Bengal dacoities of late years. This would make him popular with a large section of the rabble of Jerusalem. It is likely that the two other robbers who were not so fortunate or so popular (v. 38) were of his company.

17-18. *When they were gathered together* : after the interlude above noted before (v. 15). *Jesus which is called Christ* : the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah had become a matter of common knowledge during the last few days ; the only question was as to its meaning, and Pilate by this time well knew that it was not political. More than this, *he knew that for envy they had delivered him up* : he was aware that the rulers feared that their position and influence might be undermined ; and he also understood that the people who had recently acclaimed Jesus as Messiah, might turn and demand His release, and indeed he hoped that they would do so. The choice might, therefore, be left to turn on their decision.

19. Meanwhile another element comes in to increase his perplexity. Pilate might look down on the whole affair as a squabble among Jews whom he despised, but the position of a Roman matron was honourable and influential, and her representation would carry weight. *While he was sitting on the judgement-seat* : i.e. the judicial bench. Pilate was in court, though his official chair (*bema*) was set in the open air, on a tessellated pavement (or in a portico) outside the prætorium (see John xviii. 28 ; xix. 13). *His wife sent unto him* : from the time of Augustus it had become the custom for the wives of provincial governors to accompany their husbands in their foreign residence. *I have suffered many things this day* : she had awoke troubled from a morning dream ; perhaps more than one. *That righteous man* : she may have heard why Pilate was called out early, and possibly she had gone to sleep again.

20. *The chief priests . . . persuaded the multitudes* (cp. Acts xiv. 19). How did they succeed in producing so soon an unreasoning fury? Doubtless they were well acquainted with the arts of the *agent provocateur*. They would scatter their own agents among the people, who would magnify Barabbas as a patriot, and inveigh against Jesus as the destroyer of the temple and a blasphemer (cp. Acts xxi. 28-30).

21-2. They have succeeded and the answer is ready, not only to the first question, *Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?* but also to the second, a weak device on the part of Pilate, who hopes against hope that the friends of Jesus may still speak up against the priestly intrigues which he saw through well enough. *What shall I do?* Coming from a Roman procurator and a judge this was a shameful question, putting the administration of justice in the hands of a mob. *Let him be crucified* was certainly suggested by the priests; they would have him treated as the robber Barabbas would have been treated.

23. *Why, what evil hath he done:* the words of his wife are still in Pilate's ears, backed by his own convictions, and those of many others (cp. Luke xxiii. 41). Yet these things only produce a feeble remonstrance and exasperates the multitude, which had already experienced what obstinate persistence could do against the flexible procurator. From Luke xxiii. 22 we see that at this point Pilate suggests scourging the prisoner to satisfy their excitement, but in vain.

24. *Washed his hands:* it was customary for a Roman judge to protest 'before the Sun' (as his deity) that he

was guiltless of the blood of the person about to be condemned. In Deut. xxi. 6 it was ordered that the elders of a city where a murder occurred whose perpetrator could not be traced should wash their hands over a sacrificed animal and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.' Pilate might have remembered the words of the Roman poet Ovid:—

Too easy souls, who deem the crystal flood
Can wash away the fearful guilt of blood.

Having succeeded in attracting the attention of the yelling mob to what he would say, Pilate disclaims responsibility. *I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man*: as his wife had called the accused. *See ye to it*: as the chief priests had said to Judas Iscariot; both equally in vain. No man can put off his moral responsibility on another when he himself has power to act otherwise.

25. *All the people*: that is the mass of the Jerusalemite mob who were gathered before the Prætorium, and had now been worked up, as mobs soon are, into a state of reckless fury. No consequences matter, as long as they get their way against the irresolute foreign ruler, and have this irritating pretender crucified. Inverting the prayer of Deut. xxi. 8, in the case already referred to, they cry, *His blood be on us, and on our children*—the most fearful imprecation known in history, directed against Him who had come to save them and who had never done aught but good to any one, and recoiling with awful force upon themselves. After the fall of Jerusalem, Titus ordered so many Jews to be

crucified, that no more wood could be found for crosses, nor ground on which to set them up. And in the succeeding generations the sufferings of the Jewish nation through their rejection of Jesus form one of the saddest pages in history. In this case, as in that of other judgements, the instruments of divine chastisement have themselves been guilty of fearful sin.

26. *Jesus he scourged*: the Roman scourge, or flagellum, consisted of several thongs of leather with pieces of lead tied to them which lacerated the flesh. It was much more severe than the Jewish scourge, which was made of three thongs of leather only (x. 17; xxiii. 24) and the stripes of which were limited to thirty-nine (2 Cor. x. 24). The person to be scourged was tied to a pillar or stretched on a frame. John xix. 15 seems to show that Pilate had inflicted this penalty at an earlier stage in the proceedings, in order to arouse pity.

xvii. 27-31. JESUS MOCKED

(MARK XV. 16-20; OP. JOHN XIX. 2-3)

The condemnation had taken place on the raised 'pavement' outside the Prætorium before the multitude. The soldiers, who had been long on duty, and whose work at Passover time was trying, are now allowed to have some diversion. They have heard the accusation about kingship, and the wits among them get up a game of mock coronation, and deride the Jewish king, as the temple guards had derided their prophet (xxvi. 67-8). The element of fanatical hatred is absent here;

we see merely the brutal horse-play of the coarse soldiery ; there was spiteful insult ; here is wanton mockery.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the palace, and gathered unto him the whole band. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand ; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews ! And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.

27. *The soldiers of the governor* : to whom Jesus had been made over (*v. 2*) *took Jesus into the palace* or Prætorium, where the governor's residence and court-rooms and their barracks were (see on *v. 2*). *Gathered unto him* : to see the performance with the prisoner who had been made over to them, *the whole band*, or cohort, equal to our regiment (see on xxvi. 47).

28. *They stripped him* : probably to the loin-cloth ; *and put on him a scarlet robe* : in Greek a *chlamys*, or military cloak, worn by emperors and officers of high military rank. The soldiers must have got a cast-off garment of this kind from their tribune or other high officer. Thrown over a nearly naked body, such a garment would be the height of incongruity, leaving the victim to smart from his wounds and to shiver with the chill air.

29. *A crown of thorns* : not the emblem of royalty

which would have been a diadem, or cross bound turban (Rev. xii. 3) but an imitation of the garland leaves worn by a victorious emperor or general; it would be accompanied by some such words as, 'The king of the Jews celebrates his triumph.' The thorns probably were twigs of the *nebk*, a thorn bush plentiful in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, with pliant branches, glossy green leaves, and sharp thorns, a colourable imitation of the laurel used for garlands in a triumph. The reed represented the commander's staff or a royal sceptre. *They kneeled down before him*: with exaggerated gestures of homage, more than the usual genuflexion. They capped the mockery with the cry of homage, *Hail*: in Latin: *Ave*: usually addressed to emperors, now to the mock *King of the Jews*.

30-1. After the mock homage they go on to real insult, welcome to the Roman soldiery as an occasion of venting their spleen and contempt against the proud and fierce Jews whom it was their unpleasant task to guard and control. Instead of the kiss of homage, they *spit* upon the prisoner, and hit Him on the head with His commander's staff. The imperfect verbs in Mark xv. 19 indicate that they went on with the mockery for some time (as the Urdu translation expresses it, *karte rahis*). Here comes in Pilate's last attempt to excite compassion by leading Jesus forth to the people with the words, *Behold the man!* (John xix. 4, 5), only provoking the reply *Crucify him! Put on him his garments*: the seamless tunic (John xix. 23) and the robe over it. The repeated taking off and putting on of these garments over the lacerated back must have been exquisitely painful.

XXVII. 32-44. THE CRUCIFIXION

(MARK XV. 22-38; LUKE XXIII. 32-8; 44-6; JOHN XIX.
17-19; 23, 24, 28-30)

This form of punishment came from the Phœnicians to the Greeks and Romans, but was not customary among the Jews. It was employed by the Romans as a particularly shameful and deterrent form of execution, to be inflicted on slaves or degraded criminals, or as an act of the severest vengeance. Originally the cross was a sharp spike on which the criminal was impaled; afterwards a cross-piece (from which the English name) was added so as to nail the victim on it. This was arranged in three forms \times T †. The last, a vertical post projecting somewhat beyond the horizontal cross-piece, was that used in the execution of Jesus, as otherwise the board with the criminal charge inscribed could hardly have been set up over His head (v. 37). The upright beam was eight to nine feet in length, and furnished with a peg in the middle to serve as a saddle for the victim; without which the tissues of the hands would not have sustained the weight of the body. The cross-piece was a single or double bar, in the latter case the parallel bars were joined at the end, and the neck of the victim fastened between them; and it was this cross-bar which was carried by the criminal to the place of execution, while a herald went before, bearing a wooden tablet, on which was recorded the charge on which the accused had been convicted. At the place of execution the criminal was laid with his shoulders upon the transom, and his hands nailed to it. He was then hoisted up, the cross-piece was

fastened to the upright; and he was seated athwart the peg. The feet might be either tied or nailed to the upright; in the case of our Saviour they were nailed (cp. Luke xxiv. 39, 40) probably side by side, with the knees crooked. Death ensued from hunger, thirst, sun-stroke or blood poisoning; seldom from loss of blood. Our Saviour's blood was 'poured out' when His side was pierced with the spear (John xix. 34).

The evangelists pass over these circumstances with a word only; to them and to their learners crucifixion was as sadly familiar as hanging used to be here.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to go *with them*, that he might bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink. And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots: and they sat and watched him there. And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand, and one on the left. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach.

32. *As they came out*: from the city, within the walls of which executions were forbidden. Up to this point Jesus had been carrying the cross-bar above referred to, called *patibulum* (John xix. 17). The tradition that Jesus fell down or fainted outside the city walls is highly probable, seeing that He must have been weakened by sleeplessness, hunger, scourging, and other maltreatment, while the *patibulum* itself was no light load. In Mark xv. 22 also, we read, 'they bring him unto the place Golgotha', the same word being used as in i. 32, 'they brought unto him all that were sick.' It would seem as if Jesus had to be carried or supported to the place of suffering. Apparently the guard which took Him to crucifixion were themselves more humane than the bulk of the regiment, or they were under the command of a more humane officer (v. 54); at least we read of no more needless cruelty, and even a small act of humanity (v. 48). Now they use the military privilege of commandeering or impressing a passer-by, *a man of Cyrene, Simon by name*, to bear his cross. The custom of forced labour existed in Palestine to a greater extent than now in India (cp. v. 41). Cyrene was a Greek settlement on the north coast of Africa; its position corresponded to that of Barca in Tripoli. Many Jews lived there, and they had a synagogue of their own in Jerusalem, and therefore a considerable colony of resident Cyrenians, of whom we may suppose that Simon was one. He may well be the same person as Simon Niger (the black) mentioned in Acts xiii. 1 among the leading Christians of Antioch. A black man would be more likely to be caught by the soldiers. He is said by Mark

and Luke to have been coming from the country or field, which may mean that he was returning from work. If so, this would be another indication that it was not the first day of the Passover feast. At this point, as Jesus is being supported or carried along to the place of execution, come His words to the daughters of Jerusalem who are bewailing Him (Luke xxiii. 28).

33. *Golgotha*: a skull-like eminence, not necessarily of great height; it was a somewhat prominent knoll, suitable for the purpose of making the execution conspicuous, and near to a garden in which Jesus was buried (John xix. 41). The traditional site is within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which lies outside the walls as they then were, but it is unlikely that we shall ever attain certainty on this point, for Jerusalem too long lay desolate, with all its distinctive features purposely obliterated, after the destruction by Titus.

34. *They gave him*: this was probably done by some of the compassionate women to whom Luke refers. It was a humane custom among pious ladies in Jerusalem to provide stupefying drafts for criminals condemned to the cross. There is some difficulty as to what exactly is meant by *wine mingled with gall*. Mark writes of the draught as wine mingled with myrrh, but neither gall nor myrrh are anæsthetics. In the Old Testament, of which the evangelist is thinking here (Ps. lxxix. 21; op. Deut. xxix. 18; xxxii. 32), 'gall' is the translation of the Hebrew word *rosh*, which means some bitter, poisonous herb. 'Grapes of gall' in Deut. xxxiii. 32 may mean poppy-heads, which would, of course, have the desired effect. Myrrh might be added as an aromatic ingredient

to make the potion less nauseous, or it may be used inaccurately to describe a bitter drug, namely opium. *Mor* in Hebrew, and *murr* in Arabic both mean 'to be bitter.' He *tasted it* : His thirst must have already been great, but finding it drugged *he would not drink*. He knew that there was yet a work to be done on the cross, and He would not go hence to His Father in a state of stupefaction. Well for the penitent robber, for His mother and for the world that it was so ; else where would be the words of intercession, forgiveness and love that were spoken on the cross ?

35. *When they had crucified him* : with these few words the evangelist passes over the painful details of what was well known. But in teaching the Churches committed to his care how St. Paul, not to mention St. Peter and St. John, draw out in detail the meaning of it (cp. 1 Cor. i. 23 ; Gal. vi. 15 ; 1 Pet. ii. 21-5 ; 1 John i. 7 ; v. 6). Mark, xiv. 25, mentions the third hour as the time ; John, xix. 14, the sixth hour. The whole painful process of carrying out the sentence after it was passed must have taken up not a little time between nine and twelve on that day. *They parted his garments* : the clothes of the criminal were the perquisite of the executioner. John xix. 23-4 gives us the details. Jesus left the world stripped of everything ; for our sakes He became poor (2 Cor. viii. 9). Here comes in the first word from the cross (Luke xxiii. 34) : ' Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

36. *They*, the guard of four soldiers, *sat and watched him there* : it was necessary to keep a guard on duty to

prevent any kind of interference, but it was an easy going one which did not take the trouble to stand.

37. *His accusation* : this was the customary *titulus* or placard on a wooden tablet, stating the charge on which the accused had been convicted (see v. 11). There are slight variations in the wording of the inscription, such as are sure to occur in reproduction from memory. Probably the version of St. John, who certainly was an eye-witness, is the most accurate: 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews'. The affixing of this board had been done before the cross was set up.

38. *Two robbers* : brigands, like Barabbas. The placing of these men may have been actuated by a desire to deride the pretensions of a Jewish Messiah, or it may have been a mere matter of accident, that these two criminals were due for execution, and were worked off at the same time. But in the providence of God the result was the salvation of one of them, and the comfort of many a penitent sinner since.

39-40. At the time of the Passover there would be crowds of people coming and going. Some of them were ill disposed to Jesus and *railed on him* : taunting him with the two principal charges of the trial. *Thou that destroyest the sanctuary* (cp. xxvi. 60); *if thou art the Son of God* (cp. xxvi. 63, 64). In fact the sonship of Jesus meant to Him not exemption from suffering and death, but dedication to those very things (see introduction to chapter iv, and Heb. ii. 10). But this was far from their thoughts. He had said He would come on the clouds of heaven ; let Him now *come down from the cross*. How often similar taunts are levelled at Christians when

persecuted for their faith in this country : ' Do one of the wonderful things that you tell of your Guru, and we will believe you.'

41-2. The Sanhedrists are not ashamed to enjoy their short-lived triumph. *Chief priests, scribes and elders* are there, who would not defile themselves by entering the prætorium, but are ready to deride the Sufferer ; and while they do so, they utter a stupendous truth, *he saved others, himself he cannot save* : the physical possibility had become a moral impossibility, which Jesus had sealed in Gethsemane with the words, ' Thy will be done ', and this divine impossibility is the basis of the world's salvation. *He is the King of Israel* : they vent their spleen by pointing in derision to the charge-tablet over the head of Jesus, which they had vainly tried to get altered (John xix. 21-2).

43. *He trusteth on God . . . desireth him* : that the scribes should quote and apply Psalm xxii. 8, describing the persecution of the righteous man by ungodly oppressors, to Jesus on the cross, would seem almost incredible, were it not that we know how mechanical familiarity with Scripture makes men unconscious of its application. The Genevan reformer Farel was cited to defend his doctrine before a Papal tribunal, and after he had spoken freely against the abuses of the Roman Church, the president rose from his seat, saying, ' He has blasphemed God : what further need have we of witness : what think ye ? ' and the whole assembly answered : ' He is worthy of death.' *I am the Son of God* (John v. 17, 18 ; x. 36). The scribes, too, distinguish this title from that of the king of Israel (op. John i. 49).

44. *The robbers also* : The sequel of the repentance of one of them and the second word from the cross spoken by Jesus to him, 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise,' is related by Luke xxiii. 39-43. Then follows the third word from the cross: 'Behold thy son', 'Behold thy mother' (John xix. 26-7).

45-56. THE DEATH OF JESUS.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabaohthani? that is, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him. And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many. Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding from afar, which had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

45. *From the sixth hour* : approximately noon (see on v. 35). *Darkness over all the land* : this must have

been a local phenomenon. It is not mentioned by Josephus, but it is appealed to by Tertullian (250) and Origen (280) in controversy with heathen writers. It was not an eclipse of the sun, for the moon was at the full. Such local obscuration of the light has been known at times before an earthquake.

46. *About the ninth hour* : three p.m., the time when the passover lambs were being sacrificed. *Jesus cried with a loud voice* (cp. Heb. v. 7). It was the voice of agonized supplication in the hour of supreme need, which was answered then and there. *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* This is the fourth of the seven words spoken on the cross, and in significance, as in position, it is the central one, in which the mystery of the atonement is concentrated (see 2 Cor. v. 21). Our Saviour was feeling physically intense pain and depression, mentally the disgrace of apparent failure, the ingratitude of His nation, the malice of His enemies, the unfaithfulness of His disciples; worst of all spiritually He feels that the answer to His prayer for divine help and deliverance from the fiery trial is being delayed. He realizes in His condition the fulfilment of the Scriptures which depicted the righteous man suffering for God's sake, especially in Psalms xxii and lxix (also Wisdom ii. 12-20), and in this agony He uses the words of Ps. xxii. 1 to give vent to His feelings. The words are given here in the Aramaic form, from which we may conclude that our Saviour, as with the use of the word *Abba*, prayed in His mother tongue, rather than in the classical Hebrew of the Old Testament. Such passages as Ps. lxxi. 10-11 were before His mind, 'Mine enemies speak concerning me;

God hath forsaken him ; ' and though God is undoubtedly His God, yet His prayer for aid is still unanswered : ' Why art thou so far from helping me ? . . . I cry, but thou answerest not ' (see Ps. xxxv. 17 ; lxxxix. 46 ; Rev. vi. 10). Jesus exercised the choice, as we have to do, of holding fast to God as His God, despite the outward absence for a time of His aid and countenance ; but the suffering involved in His desolation was unique, for He alone had lived in unbroken sinless communion with God.

47-9. Soon, perhaps immediately after the cry of agony, came the fifth word from the cross, recorded in John xix. 28 : ' I thirst.' It was followed by the first act of human sympathy which Jesus had received on the cross since the kind-hearted ladies of Jerusalem had offered Him drugged wine, it would seem that none of His friends had been allowed to come near enough to bring help or refreshment. The cry of a dying man though loud, might not be distinct ; and the bystanders thought that Jesus was calling upon Elijah, who was expected to prepare the way for Messiah (Mal. iv. 5). This man who aspired to be the King of Israel might be calling upon the great prophet to appear to destroy his enemies and deliver him (cp. xvi. 14 ; xvii. 10). Some of the soldiers had previously joined in the derision of the Jewish rulers, and offered him vinegar in mockery only (Luke xxiii. 36, 37) ; but now when Jesus, having endured all insults with perfect patience, appeals for drink, one of them is moved by compunction, and actually gives Him vinegar to drink from a sponge fixed to a reed. The *vinegar* was known in Latin as *posca* ;

it was the sour wine commonly drunk by the soldiers, not the sharp acid that we use as a relish. Possibly it was kept in a jar with a sponge as stopper; sponges are common in the Levant. The *reed* which was used, John tells us, was a stalk of hyssop, which would not be more than a foot or two long. The crucified person hung just too high to be easily reached by the hand. *Let be*: the verb here is singular, addressed to the man who gave the wine; in Mark xiii. 46 it is plural, addressed by him to the others; which is the original we cannot say; at any rate the bystanders resolved to do nothing further by way of relief, but to let things take their course.

50. They had not long to wait. *Jesus cried again with a loud voice*: this refers probably to the sixth word, 'It is finished' (John xix. 30). The seventh and last word, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,' was said in a lower tone of exhaustion, and heard only by the faithful women, whose chronicler, St. Luke, gives them (xxiii. 46). The one would follow close upon the other. *Yielded up his spirit*: our Lord, as true man, was possessed of a human spirit (Mark ii. 8) as well as soul (xx. 28) and body. It is most probable that He died of rupture of the vessels of the heart; hence the loud cry, followed by a softer one, and the separation of the watery and the more solid elements of the blood (John xix. 24).

51-2. *The veil of the temple*: there were two, one before the Holy Place (*Hekal*) the other before the Holy of Holies (*Debir*). The latter seems to be meant here (see Heb. ix. 3). This would signify that the invio-

lable sanctity of the Holy of Holies was abolished, so that in killing Jesus the priests had destroyed the sanctity of their own temple. In Heb. x. 19-20, we have a different mystical application; the flesh or human nature of Jesus, which was the dwelling place of the essential Deity, was rent asunder, and by His death free access is thus given to God in Him. The earthquake may have been connected with the rending of the veil, which was large and substantial. In consequence of the same convulsion also *the rocks were rent*: St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-86) writes of fissures in the rocks about Golgotha in his day, as bearing witness to this. These signs may partly account for the fact that after Pentecost 'a great company of the priest were obedient to the faith' (Acts vi. 7).

52-3. *The tombs were opened*: also it would seem, in consequence of the earthquake; but the resurrection mentioned happened after that of Jesus. *Saints*: a common designation of Christians (cp. Acts ix. 13; 1 Thess. iii. 13) and often used in the Epistles which were written before this Gospel; but the term occurs here only in the Gospels. *That had fallen asleep*: as our Lord's disciples, during His lifetime on earth. In 1 Pet. iv. 6, we read that 'glad tidings were preached even to the dead', and it would seem that some of the deceased, followers of Jesus were permitted to rise with Him, who was 'the first-born from the dead' (Col. i. 18). While the word *bodies* is neuter, the participle *coming forth* is masculine, applying to the persons themselves. *The holy city*: Jerusalem, so called (also iv. 5; Rev. xi. 2; xxi. 2, 10; cp. Isa. xlviii. 3).

54. *The centurion* : (see viii. 4) in charge of the guard at the cross (v. 36). He and his soldiers are impressed with the signs, and, in accordance with their pagan notions, they take Jesus for a *Son of God* or hero. Luke xxii. 47 tells us that the centurion also called Jesus 'a righteous man'.

55-6. *Many women*; and others (Luke xxiii. 49) which had followed Jesus from Galilee : as distinguished from the 'daughters of Jerusalem', who bewailed Jesus (Luke xxiii. 37) and brought Him the anodyne. They had been *ministering unto him* during His Galilean ministry (Luke viii. 1-3), and they had come in His train to Jerusalem for the same purpose, to which they still remained faithful. *Mary Magdalene* : a lady of Magdala near the Lake of Galilee, who had been healed by Jesus from a particularly severe form of demoniacal possession (xxvii. 61; xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 9). *Mary the mother of James* : the Less, so called to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee (Mark xv. 40); the son of Alphaeus (x. 3). *The mother of the sons of Zebedee* : named Salome (Mark xv). The mother of Jesus is not mentioned, because John had led her away to his home (John xix. 27).

xxvii. 57-61. THE BURIAL OF JESUS

(MARK xv. 42-7; LUKE xxiii. 50-56; JOHN xix. 38-42)

As often, misfortune shows the true friends. Joseph of Arimathæa, and doubtless Nicodemus, had not consented to the sentence of the Sanhedrin (Luke xxiii. 51), for Nicodemus joined in the work of love (John xix. 31).

In their opposition to the Jews they had been helpless, but now Joseph makes a bold venture (Mark xv. 43) and succeeds in obtaining from Pilate the body of the man who had just been executed as a criminal, to do it all honour; fulfilling in the loyal affection of his heart the prophecy of Isa. liii. 9.

And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

57-8. *When even was come*: that is the time approaching sunset; the burial would have to be completed before the legal beginning of the Sabbath (John xix. 31). Jesus died about three; Joseph then goes to the procurator; Pilate investigates; the garden is close by, and by sundown the hasty burial has taken place, Nicodemus having in the meanwhile purchased the spices and cloth (John xix. 38-42). *Arimathæa*: the site is not known, but the place may be the same as Ramathaim Zophim (1 Sam. i. 1). Tradition says that Joseph was afterwards sent as an evangelist to Britain by Philip, the apostle, and that he founded the Abbey Church of Glastonbury. *The body of Jesus*: according to Deut. xxi. 23 it should have hung on the cross through

the night; by Roman custom it would have been left for days, but it might be buried by special permission which was usually granted. In this case the Jews had a special reason for desiring its removal (John xix. 31). *Pilate commanded*: after receiving official information that death had actually taken place (Mark xv. 44-5); meanwhile the side of Jesus had been pierced to the heart (John xix. 31-7).

59-60. *Joseph took the body*: when he presented the warrant from the procurator, the soldiers would take down the cross-beam, after extracting the nails from the feet; and the body would then be made over to Joseph. *Clean linen cloth*: unused and specially procured for the purpose. The large quantity of spices was hastily wrapped round the body (John xix. 40) with the view of ordering it duly when the Sabbath should be past. *His own new tomb*: it was close by Golgotha in his garden (John xix. 41-2). *Hewn out in the rock*: like many tombs which may be seen round Jerusalem to-day. A chamber is cut, in the walls of which are made recesses, and in these the bodies are laid, the entrance to them being closed with a slab of stone. The entrance to the grave is also closed with a larger, sometimes circular slab, which can be rolled aside and back again. Our Saviour's body, owing to haste, would probably simply be laid on the floor of the tomb. The *great stone*, called *golel* or roller, runs in grooves and covers the low entrance.

61. The two Marys carefully watch all that is done, with the object of coming after the Sabbath to complete the interment.

xxvii. 62-6. THE SEPULCHRE GUARDED

One special aim of the compiler and teachers of this Gospel was to refute the slanders current among the Jews regarding the birth and the death of our Saviour. With the former the evangelist has dealt in chapter i by the genealogy and birth history of Jesus; the latter he unmasks here. The chief priests and Pharisees had barely had time to carry out their purpose of destroying Jesus, without breaking the Passover regulations; but on the morrow, a double Sabbath, they were filled with uneasiness on account of the words of Jesus predicting His resurrection, which conscience brought to their memory (xii. 40; xxvii. 61; John ii. 19). The suicide of Judas Iscariot was widely reported (Acts i. 19), and must have increased their uneasiness. They therefore demanded and obtained from the Procurator a guard, to prevent the possibility of a theft of the body, as they allege, and to quiet their own fears as to a resurrection. These precautions were unknown to the women who 'on the Sabbath rested according to the commandment' (Luke xxiii. 56) which the scrupulous Pharisees had broken; and hence their only anxiety the next day was as to the removal of the stone (Mark xvi. 3).

Now on the morrow, which is *the day* after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last

error will be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a guard: go your way, make it *as* sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.

62. *The day after the Preparation*: it was this in a double sense. 'Preparation' was the name for Friday as the day of getting ready for the Sabbath; but this same Friday was also the day of preparation for the Passover (John xix. 14, 31) the first day of which was a rest day. The conjunction of the week-sabbath and the Passover-sabbath made the day doubly sacred, and the anxiety of the rulers is shown by their application to Pilate notwithstanding this. Their action also shows how they understood the prophecy of three days or the third day, for they are unwilling to wait over the Saturday to take precautions.

63-4. *That deceiver*: the accusation of deceiving the people had been brought against Jesus during His life (John vi. 12), and the Jews to our day still call Him by the same opprobrious epithet, as they did when this gospel was written. *After three days*: (op. xvi. 21; xvii. 23; xx. 19; xxviii. 6) the same as *the third day*, for which they are bent on making provision. *The last error*: or rather, the last deceit, the root of the word being the same as that of *deceiver* in v. 63. They would make Jesus out to be a double deceiver; first as regards His claim to Messiahship, which they hold has been disproved by His death as a criminal; and second, as regards His resurrection in which He had led His disciples to believe. It is strange that the most fiercely unbelieving of the Jews should have shown more expec-

tation of His resurrection than His own disciples. Conscience made cowards of the opponents, by arousing their apprehensions; the stupefaction of calamity deadened the minds of the disciples, till they were awakened by the great fact.

65. *Take a guard* (margin). The words have the air of being spoken in irritation by the sceptical Pilate, annoyed at being invaded on a double holiday. The detachment would probably be one of sixteen soldiers to mount guard four at a time (cp. Acts xii. 4).

66. *Sealing the stones*: they would put cords across the openings fastened to the rock on either side with sealing clay that had the official stamp (cp. Dan. vi. 17; Rev. xx. 3). This was done *the guard* being with them, so that the officer in charge could identify the mark, and guard against any possible tampering.

CHAPTER XXVIII

XXVIII. THE RESURRECTION AND THE FINAL COMMAND OF JESUS

It will be well first to enumerate the appearances of our Lord after His resurrection, as far as they are mentioned in the New Testament. From John xxi. 25 and Acts i. 3 we conclude that only a minority of these appearances, as of His other signs, were recorded, and we must also bear in mind that the record is of an entirely simple and unvarnished kind, giving the chief appearances of our Lord as the disciples were taught them from Pentecost onwards, according to the accounts of the principal witnesses. There was no question of the persons concerned sitting down to weave a consecutive story; each gave his or her impressions, and the records reflect the successive shocks of tremulous joy with which the great message was received. Hence it is possible to arrange the details in somewhat varying order, but we give one that seems reasonably probable.

(1) Mary Magdalene and the other women at the tomb (Matt. xxviii. 2-7; Mark xvi. 1-7; Luke xxiv. 1-8).

(2) To the other women (Mary Magdalene having gone before to tell Peter and John) on the way (Matt. xxviii. 9-10).

(3) To Mary Magdalene in the garden, after her return there (John xx. 11-18).

(4) To Peter (Luke xxiv. 34 ; 1 Cor. xv. 5).

(5) To two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 15-31).

(6) To the ten apostles without Thomas (Luke xxiv. 36 ; John xx. 19).

(7) To the apostles with Thomas (John xx. 26).

(8) To seven disciples, among whom were Peter, James, John, Thomas, and Nathanael (John xxi. 1).

(9) To the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 16).

(10) To over 500 brethren at once perhaps in addition to those mentioned in (9) (1 Cor. xv. 6).

(11) To James the Lord's brother (1 Cor. xv. 7).

(12) To the apostles at the Ascension (Acts i. 4).

(13) To St. Paul (Acts ix. 3).

Thus we see that appearances are recorded to the representative classes in the first Church ; St. Peter, the leader of the apostles ; the apostles as a company ; St. James the brother of the Lord, who afterwards became the leader of the Church in Jerusalem ; St. Paul the apostle and organizer of the Gentile Church ; and the body of Galilean believers ; but the first appearances are to the holy women who were the most faithful disciples of Jesus in life and death, and the first of the band of ministering women who have served Christ and His Church ever since. St. Matthew, for his purposes, relates in brief the appearance to the first witnesses (vv. 1-10), the origin of the slander by which the Jews sought to invalidate their testimony (vv. 11-15), and the occasion

on which Jesus gave the great command which sums up the message of the first chapter (i. 21): 'It is he that shall save his people from their sins' (vv. 16-20).

xxviii. 1-10. THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO THE
FIRST WITNESSES

(MARK xvi. 1-10; LUKE xxiv. 1-10; JOHN xx. 1-18)

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

1. *Late on the sabbath day*: the narrator seems to be using a popular way of reckoning, instead of the legal Jewish one, which would have made the sabbath end at sunset the previous evening; the phrase must mean between midnight and dawn on Sunday morning. The

two Marys are as before (xxvi. 56, 61) ready for service: they come to *see the sepulchre*, with the object of caring for the body (Mark xvi. 1) but they are by no means certain that they will be able to gain access to the tomb. They are unaware of the presence of the soldiers, but they think that the gardener of Joseph of Arimathæa will hardly be on the spot at so early an hour. Still the impatience of love cannot wait.

2-4. These verses are parenthetical, explaining how it was that the women on arrival already found the stone rolled away. The earthquake and the descent of the angel had preceded their coming, and they find the watch in a state of collapse from deadly fear. Meanwhile the risen Jesus had departed in the raiment of immortality, his glorified body leaving the grave clothes and spices undisturbed in their place (John xx. 7). *Rolled away the stone*: (see on xxvii. 60) from the groove in which it rested in front of the door, breaking the cords and seals (xxvii. 66).

5-6. The narrative returns to the moment of the women's arrival, their faces expressing first anxiety and then terror. *The angel* answers their unspoken inquiry. Mark mentions a young man; Luke two men; here the women seems to be outside the tomb, and Luke inside: slight differences which reflect the agitation and joy of the witnesses, and show the absence of collusion. *He is risen*: to them almost incredible, yet bringing back memories of what *he said*. *Come see the place*: here the women enter the tomb; meanwhile, before hearing the angelic tidings, Mary Magdalene has gone back.

7. *Go quickly* : the words imply a sympathy of the angelic messenger with the mourning disciples, and his joy in communicating the world-renewing tidings. *He goeth before you into Galilee* : again reminding them of the promise of Jesus (xxvi. 32).

8. *They departed quickly* : not however, before they had looked at the place. *With fear and great joy* : a true description of the state of mind of those who had just realized the greatest event of the world's history ; *fear* of the powers of the world to come whose working they had just experienced (Heb. vi. 5) ; *joy* at the tidings that had changed their mourning into exultation.

9. *Jesus met them* : there were other women besides the two Marys (cp. Luke xxiv. 10). Mary Magdalene, meanwhile, after telling Peter and John, had returned to the garden and there seen Jesus, whether just before or after this, we cannot say. *All hail* : the same greeting as (xxvi. 49) ; another translation of the *shalom alekem* (John xx. 19, 21, peace be unto you). *Took hold of his feet* : to kiss them in sign of homage (2 Kings iv. 27). Jesus did not repel such reverence, as did his apostle, Peter (Acts x. 25), and the angel of the revelation given to John (Rev. xxii. 8, 9).

10. *Go, tell my brethren* : the spiritual relationship which Jesus had already acknowledged with His disciples (xii. 49 ; xxv. 40) is now confirmed (cp. 'my Father and your Father' John xx. 17). The words must have come to the apostles with infinite comfort and strengthening, telling them that despite all their weakness and unfaithfulness they were still recognized as His nearest and dearest. *Into Galilee* (see on v. 7).

xxviii. 11-15. THE GUARDS BRIBED TO SPREAD A FALSE REPORT

This incident is reported by Matthew only (see introduction to chapter).

Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day.

11. *While they were going*: the report had begun to spread, but there might still be time to discredit it (after the fashion of some latter-day critics) as the idle talk of excited women when they were half awake at early dawn. Besides, the lives of the guard were in danger, seeing that the place they were set to watch had been broken open, and who would believe their tale of a supernatural agency? Accordingly as soon as they have collected their wits, some are hurriedly despatched to report the matter to chief priests, under whose orders the officer in charge was for the time acting. The vexation of these proud Sadducees, who denied the doctrine of the resurrection, and their consternation on finding that the Person whom they had apparently succeeded in getting out of the way, was now out of their grasp, must have been extreme.

12-13. Once more an early morning council is hurriedly assembled. The only thing to be done is to fall back on the apprehension expressed to Pilate, before he gave the guard (xxvii. 64), and to pretend that a theft had taken place, *while we slept*. A lame story; all that they could really say was that the tomb was empty when they awoke. Even this earliest calumny that was set on foot is a clear proof that the tomb of Jesus was found empty on the third day after His death and burial.

14. *If this come to the governor's ears*: the penalty for sleeping at their posts was death (Acts xii. 19) but as the detachment was, for the time being, under the orders of the chief priests, Pilate was not likely to trouble himself much about the matter.

15. *This saying was spread abroad among the Jews*: the authorities, no doubt, helped in every way to circulate it; hence the resurrection of Jesus, notwithstanding the witness of the apostles, remained discredited in many quarters among the Jews (cp. Acts xv. 19). *To this day*: when the Gospel was written, about a generation after the events (cp. xxvii. 8).

xxviii. 16-20. THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS ON A MOUNTAIN

IN GALILEE

It was of special importance for Jewish Christians and learners to be impressively taught that Jesus had commanded His disciples to bring all nations into His Church, for even after all that St. Paul had done and taught, the race prejudice of the Jewish Christian was much in evidence. Hence St. Matthew chooses this

particular manifestation of the risen Saviour to form the conclusion of his manual. It is, moreover, probable that this appearance of Jesus is the same as that referred to by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6), when more than five hundred Christian brethren at once saw the Saviour. These would represent the bulk of our Lord's disciples in Galilee, and the Palestinian learners would need only the brief account which is given in these five verses. We must remember always that the teacher would unfold orally the meaning of such words as are recorded here, about the baptism which his hearers had received or were hoping to receive.

But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped *him* : but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

16. *The eleven disciples* : that is the apostles, who were the principal disciples of Jesus (cp. x. 1 ; xi. 1 ; xvii. 6). They were the chief witnesses of the resurrection (cp. Acts i. 22 and often ; also 1 Cor. xv. 15). It would be natural for them to take with them as many of the other followers of our Lord as they could muster. *The mountain* : it may well have been the same which they already knew as the one on which Jesus had taught them (v. 1), and which had a plateau or terrace large enough to accommodate a considerable number of persons (see on

v. 1-2). *Where Jesus had appointed them* (see *vv.* 7, 10). With the general direction there recorded Jesus had doubtless given some more specific guidance.

17. *They worshipped him* : this seems to refer to the apostles, of whom Thomas had already accorded to Jesus divine worship (John *xx.* 28). The others were somewhat further off, and had mostly not seen the Saviour in His risen body ; hence *some doubted*. In other cases too we see that not even the apostles immediately recognized their Lord (Luke *xxiv.* 37, 41 ; John *xx.* 25).

18. The doubt was dispelled by the near approach of Jesus and by His conversation with them. *Jesus came to them* : it was His wish then, as on other occasions, to dispel their doubts as to the reality of His bodily resurrection (cp. Luke *xxiv.* 39 ; John *xx.* 20, 27). *Spoke unto them* : it is the main tenor only of His words which is here given (see introduction). *All authority hath been given unto me* (cp. *xi.* 27). In that passage Jesus claimed universal authority as His right, in virtue of His self-abnegation ; now he claims it as His possession (*hath been given*, in virtue, that is, of the resurrection) on account of His exaltation (cp. Phil. *ii.* 6-11). He has begun to enter into the state of glory which He had prophesied of before the Sanhedrin (*xxvi.* 64) ; therefore He adds the words *in heaven and in earth*. His ascension and session at God's right hand is the complement of His resurrection (cp. Eph. *i.* 20-2). In this and many other passages of St. Paul's epistles (as also in the other) we see how the Christian missionary drew out the teaching of the Gospel records which the learners were taught in the Gospels as the basis of their faith.

19-20. Not only for Jesus, but also for His apostles the limitations imposed during His state of humiliation are abolished. In x. 5 He had commanded the newly-made apostles, 'Go not into any way of the Gentiles', now the reinstated messengers of His kingdom are bidden and authorized to make others what He had made them, and that in all the world without distinction of race. *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations*: The command 'Go' corresponds to the words recorded in John xx. 21: 'As the Father hath sent me, even to send I you.' The missionary work of the Church is the necessary consequence of the authority conferred on Jesus by the Father. Belief in Jesus involves a belief in missions. The making disciples of all the nations is the complement of the judgement of all the nations which Jesus had announced as His predestined work (xxv. 31; cp. Acts. xvii. 30-31); and His command is now, not merely to make proselytes from among many nations. That the scribes and Pharisees had done (xxiii. 15); but the apostles of Jesus are to make disciples of the nations themselves; the high dividing walls of nationality, beginning with the 'middle wall of partition' between Jew and Gentile, are to become nothing more than landmarks within the great enclosure of a world-embracing discipleship. Having purchased 'the many' by His death (xx. 28) He will now claim them by His life through His chosen instruments (cp. Acts ix. 15) and thus fulfil the highest anticipations of the prophets (cp. Ps. xxii. 27, 28; cxvii. 1; Isa. xxix. 6; lii. 15). The commands to go and make disciples are in the aorist tense, signifying an action

to be accomplished once for all. This indicates the liberation, which then and there took place, of the messengers of Jesus from the limitation of their ministrations to the land and people of the Jews. The following verbs are in the present, indicating work that is continuously to go on, in order to fulfil the command to make disciples, and also the timeless presence of Jesus Himself with His messengers. There is to be a new rite of universal application, for admission to the circle of discipleship—*baptizing them*. True, this was not the first direction to baptize men by way of admission into the brotherhood of Christ's disciples (see John iii. 22; iv. 1); but now for the first time it is promulgated as a rite of universal, perpetual and necessary observance in the name of the fully-revealed Godhead. Circumcision is done away with, as the symbol of a legal covenant, confined to one nation and the observance of its religious law (Gal. v. 2-6); and its place is taken by 'the washing of regeneration' (Tit. iii. 5) alike for all. Baptism as a rite for the admission of proselytes to the Jewish faith (see on iv. 6) included families and children, and the baptism of these is the natural sequel of the command to christianize the nations, for the nation is built up on the family. The conception of national Christianity, subject to the condition of catholicity, is also contained in these words, and we find that St. Paul, the chief interpreter of them, regarded 'the offering up of the nations' as the great aim and end of his work (Rom. xv. 16). The special gifts entrusted to each nation can be developed to their full excellence only by communion with the risen life of Jesus, and in

Rev. xxi. 26 St. John sees the honour and glory of the nations brought into the City of God, that is the Church of Christ (Rev. xxi. 9, 10). A true nationalism must spring from His life which regenerates men. Disputes as to the exact nature of the benefits bestowed in baptism need in no way interfere with its observance. In the mission field we well know that it constantly forms the turning point of the spiritual life; and converts experience practically that it is not merely a symbol, but a gift. It is to be done *into the name*. In the dialect of Greek used in the time of and by the New Testament writers, the word translated 'into' often means simply 'in'; it may also mean 'with reference to'. In any case, the Name is to be used when the act is done. If the preposition is to be taken literally—dipping, as it were, into the Name—the meaning would be that the baptized person is transferred into a new condition, namely, that, of union with the triune Godhead, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. The use of the triune Name here is analogous to that by St. Paul in 2 Cor. xiii. 13. While St. Paul uses the combination as a formula known in the Church, he sums up by it the teaching regarding the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which is interwoven with the whole texture of his epistles (cp. 2 Cor. i. 22; iii. 3 Gal. iv. 6). So here also our Lord sums up what He had taught His disciples of the Father (vi. 9.) who had revealed the Son and been revealed by Him (xi. 27; xvi. 17) and who would give the Spirit to His disciples (x. 20; Luke xi. 13; cp. John i. 12, 13, 18; xvi. 13-14). By *name* we have to understand the revelation and communication

of the divine nature (see John xvii. 6, 26). From this summary of our Lord's teaching about the divine nature grew the creeds which we still confess. The baptisms recorded in Acts ii. 38, viii. 16, x. 48, xix. 5 are said to have been in the name of the Lord Jesus (cp. Rom. vi. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 27). By this is probably indicated the distinction of Christian baptism from that of John, or of the Jewish missionaries. In the earliest Christian authors we find the trinitarian formula: three times in the writings of Clement of Rome (A. D. 100); in the oldest form of the Apostles' Creed, and in the 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles'¹ (both about A. D. 100); and it is referred to by Justin Martyr (A. D. 150). The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is simply the crystallization of the facts of the life of Christ and of the Christian life which flows from it.

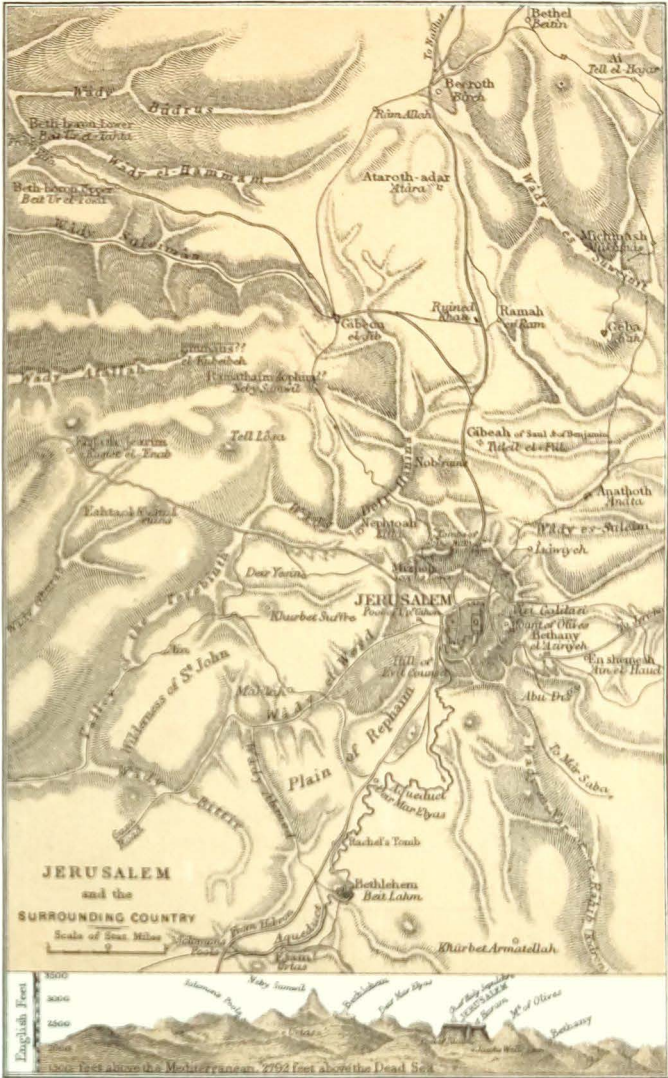
20. *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you*: the introduction into the new life of a disciple would be in vain, without the continual maintenance and growth of it, and that can only be brought about through the keeping of the commandments of Jesus. Only by this is love to Him proved and maintained (John xiv. 15, 21, 23; xv. 10).

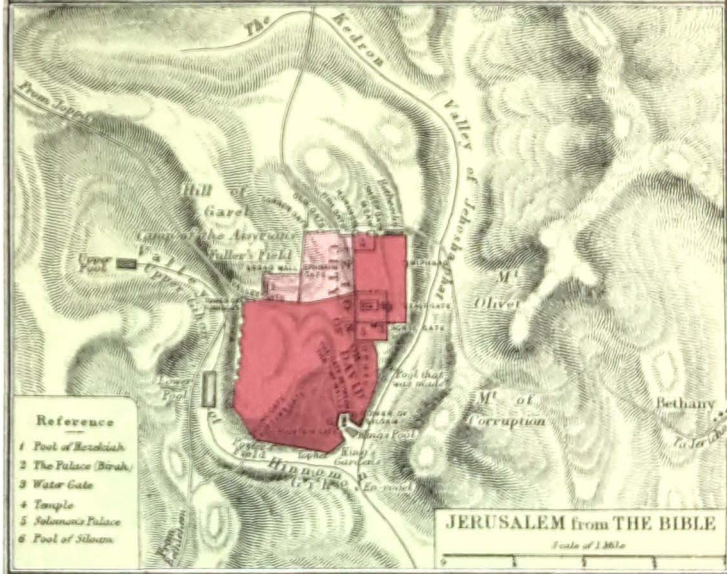
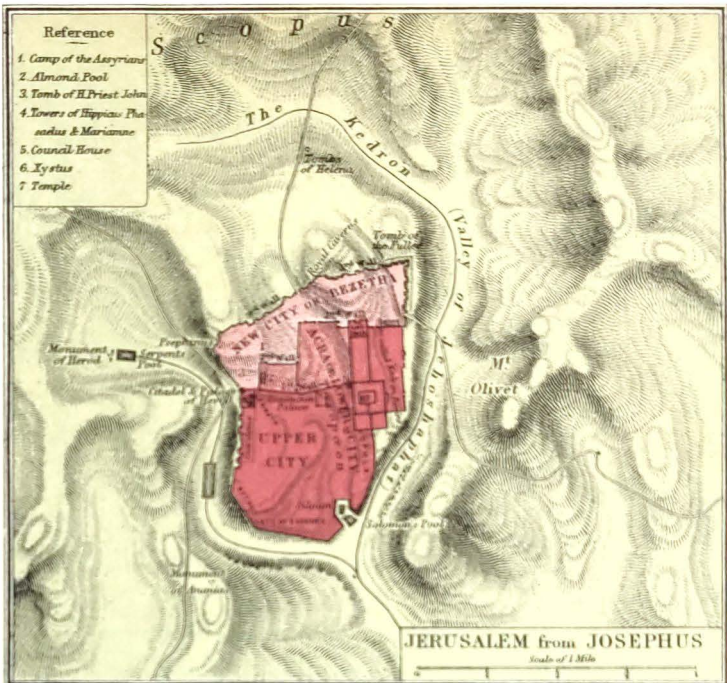
Having become a disciple, the Christian remains always a learner in the school of Jesus (xi. 29); and His scribes, who are themselves learners of His kingdom (xiii. 52), are to minister His teaching to others. It is

¹ This writing, like the book of Acts, 'speaks of Christian baptism as being into the name of the Lord Jesus; but when it describes the rite in detail, it directs the use of the trinitarian formula only.'

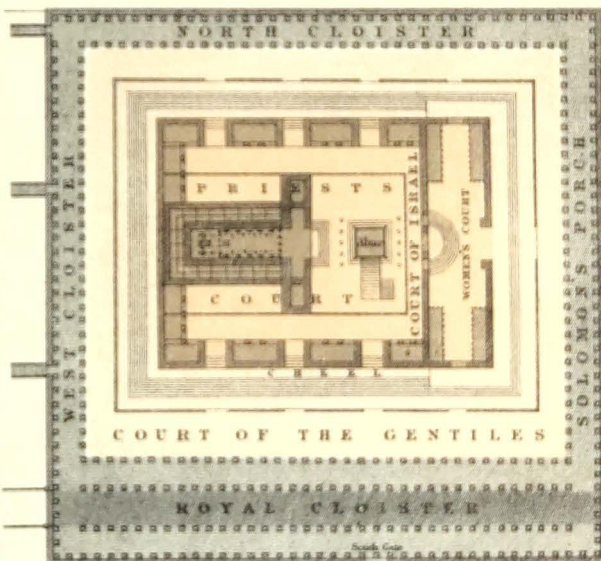
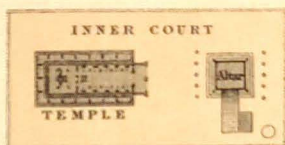
this duty which St. Matthew has been fulfilling in his treatise, and with it he closes this manual, reserving only the promise of the Master which is the seal to his teaching. The authority to teach and the power to do it Jesus has thus committed to His Church, and true teachers are one of the chief gifts which He imparted after His ascension (Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28); and the work to which the greatest of Christ's missionaries feels himself called, next to preaching the gospel (Rom i. 15; 1 Cor. i. 16; ix. 17; 2 Cor. x. 16), is to be a teacher of the nations (1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11). The relation between the two parts of this royal command of our Lord—that is, how much of the teaching work of his discipleship should be done before baptism, and how much after—has been much discussed, and is still very differently apprehended in the practice of the mission field. The answer will be affected by the circumstances of catechumens, their previous education and moral or social level, but broadly speaking we may say that the phrase 'into the name' indicates an acquaintance with the outline of Christian truth, sufficient to enable the catechumen to realize intelligently on whom he is believing, to what he is committing himself, and what body he is joining. *And lo*: generally translated 'behold'; drawing attention to an important addition. Without the promise the command would simply cause despair. *I am with you always*: the verb is in the 'timeless present', for there is no limit to the action. Only lately our Saviour had assured His disciples that apart from Him they could do nothing (John xv. 5), and the withdrawal of His bodily presence was the severest test that could come to them,

especially as the duration of the age before His return was to lengthen out indefinitely; but this promise met the situation, and does so still. This presence of Jesus, they had heard from Him was to be brought about through the coming of His Spirit (John xiv. 16-18), and in his missionary experiences we find the apostle of the nations recognizing that the Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18). *Even unto the consummation of the age*: (see margin; op. on xiii. 39). The mission of Christ's servants is world-wide, and it also holds good through all time till His return. This 'age' of the kingdom is working up towards its consummation, when the prophecy of Ps. cx. 1, which the Jews could not understand, though Jesus applied it to Himself (xxii. 44), will be fully realized (op. 1 Cor. xv. 24-8). As the Church carries out this command of Jesus, so she brings the great consummation nearer. His parousia will be the manifestation of the name with which the Gospel set out (i. 23), Immanuel, God with us.





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