

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

III.

BESIDE the memoirs which were the chief source of St. Mark's Gospel the Apostolic age possessed at least another body of tradition in which the Lord's teaching was more fully represented. Whether this second cycle is to be identified with the "oracles" attributed by Papias to the Apostle Matthew,¹ we need not stop to inquire; certainly it was largely used by the writer of our first Gospel. To the Matthean tradition, as we will venture to call it, our attention must now be turned.

1. The most extensive collection of sayings in the Synoptic Gospels is that which in Augustine's time² had already received the title of the "Sermon on the Mount." The name is misleading if it suggests a formal discourse, or even a *κήρυγμα* addressed to the crowd who hung about our Lord's person. The "Sermon" was, in fact, an instruction or a series of instructions intended, as both St. Matthew and St. Luke are careful to say,³ for the disciples who formed the inner circle of His audience.⁴ It is a specimen, not of Christ's public preaching, but of His manner of teaching those who acknowledged Him as their Master. Moreover, it does not belong to the first days of the Galilean ministry, as its early place in the Gospel of St. Matthew might lead us to suppose, but rather, as St. Luke's more chronological arrangement makes evident, to the days

¹ Eus. *H. E.* iii. 39: Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραϊδι διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνεγράψατο. On *λόγια* see Dean Armitage Robinson's *Study of the Gospels*, p. 69 f.

² See the opening words of his *De sermone Domini in monte*.

³ Matt. v. 1: ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ, προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ . . . ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς. Luke vi. 20: ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς εἰς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἔλεγεν κ.τ.λ.

⁴ That it was delivered in the hearing of the multitude, appears from Matt. vii. 18, Luke vii. 1; but they were not primarily in view.

which followed the choice of the Twelve.¹ By that time the Lord's popularity had perhaps reached its highest point, and the crowd which followed Him was daily replenished by fresh arrivals from all parts of Syria and the adjacent lands²; while on the other hand the breach with the official teachers of Israel was practically complete.³ The moment was opportune for gathering the whole body of His adherents together, and promulgating the fundamental laws of the new Kingdom. Ancient writers compare or contrast the Sermon with the Lawgiving. On both occasions the scene was a mountain, and the voice Divine. But the Lawgiving was attended by circumstances of terror, while the Sermon opens with beatitudes; the Decalogue was written on tables of stone, whereas Christ was content to inscribe His new law on the memory and the heart. The parallel, however, is closer and deeper than at first sight it may appear to be. In the Sermon our Lord is not merely the Teacher, but the Legislator; it is in great part a code of laws enacted by Him on the strength of His personal authority. The *ἐξουσία*, which at an earlier stage had revealed itself in authoritative teaching and miraculous powers, is now manifested in legislative acts. Six times in one chapter Christ overrules an old enactment by a new one which rests on His own word.⁴ Yet the new Law is not a rival of the Law of Mount Sinai, but its complement.⁵ Jesus had not come to break down the ancient barriers which protected human life from the inroad of the selfish passions, but to introduce principles of conduct which would gradually supersede the necessity of legal re-

¹ Cf. Luke vi. 12 ff., vii. 1; in Mark there is a manifest break (at iii. 19b), where it is easy to fit the teaching in the hill-country.

² Mark iii. 7, Luke vi. 17, *ὄχλος πολλὸς μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ πλῆθος πολλὸ τοῦ λαοῦ*.

³ Mark iii. 6.

⁴ The remarkable formula *ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις . . ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν* occurs with slight variations in Matt. v. 21 f., 27 f., 31 f., 33 f., 38 f., 43 f.

⁵ Matt. v. 19: *οὐκ ἤλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι*.

straints. If His disciples were to be no longer "under law," it was because they would be "led by the Spirit" which instinctively fulfils the Law.¹ "That which was said to the ancients" is definitely set aside by Christ only when, through the hardness or dulness of the times, the earlier legislation had been unable to give effect to the fulness of the Divine Will.²

From the precepts of the ancient Law the Lord proceeds to deal with the "righteousness,"³ i.e. the religious practice, of His own age, which is treated under the three heads of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.⁴ Here, again, He is careful not to disturb existing landmarks unnecessarily; it was enough to correct what was amiss and supply what was wanting at the time. The "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" was insufficient, and defaced by hypocrisy; but Christ does not propose any radical change in its main features. Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting had their place in the religious life, and He recognizes the fact. But in these external acts of religion He requires more than the external performance; each is to have its inward and spiritual side turned towards the Father of spirits and looking to His approval for its only recompense.⁵ It is thus that Christian righteousness is to "exceed"⁶ the righteousness of the Synagogue—not in the multiplicity of its acts but in the inwardness and concentration of its spirit. How little importance is ascribed by Christ to mere quantity in religious actions is apparent from the model⁷ prayer which He gives, in

¹ Gal. v. 18, Rom. viii. 4.

² Thus, *e.g.*, the regulation of Deut. xxiv. 1, which Christ withdraws in Matt. v. 31, was in His judgement a temporary concession to the *σκληροκαρδία* of Israel, made with the purpose of limiting an evil which at the time could not be suppressed; see the writer's note on Mark x. 5.

³ Matt. vi. 1, where read *δικαιοσύνην* with \aleph^b BD.

⁴ Matt. vi. 2 ff., 5 ff., 16 ff.

⁵ See the refrain in Matt. vi. 4, 6, 18.

⁶ Matt. v. 20.

⁷ Matt. vi. 9, *οὕτως προσεύχασθε ὑμεῖς.*

which all the necessities of life are compressed into the fewest words.¹ Even in the most spiritual of the three chief acts of righteousness there was danger from externalism; words must needs be used in common prayer as the vehicle for desires which in themselves are voiceless,² but the multiplication of words for the words' sake was no better than a heathenish *βατταλογία* in the sight of the Father, who needs no such incentive to bestow His gifts.³

In the next place Christ insists on that which lies behind all true acts of devotion, the upward trend of mind which finds its goal in the Presence of God. The subject of the Kingdom of Heaven must not seek his treasure on earth. "Mammon"—the word reminds us that the audience is an Aramaic-speaking crowd⁴—may not share his allegiance with God; his one aim must be to gain the Divine Kingdom and righteousness, and earthly things, even the most necessary, should take the second place.⁵ Christ's disciple must be free from the anxiety which distracts while it does not satisfy.⁶ His whole life is to be lived upon a plane from which he will be able to see all things in their true proportions.

The Sermon ends with a code of directions for the guidance of daily conduct, which refutes the suspicion of transcendentalism. The Lord charges His disciples to abstain from hasty judgements⁷: to exercise a wise reserve in religious communications with non-Christians⁸: to deal with their brother men as they would themselves be dealt with by God.⁹ They are not to suffer themselves

¹ The Lucan text of the Prayer is even shorter than the form in Matthew, and possibly more primitive.

² Rom. viii. 27, τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερευαγγελεῖ στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις.

³ Matt. vi. 7; cf. vii. 11.

⁴ Aug. *De serm. Domini*, ii. 14, 47, *lucrum Punice mammon dicitur.*

⁵ Matt. vi. 24-33.

⁶ Matt. vi. 27 ff.

⁷ Matt. vii. 1 ff.

⁸ *Ibid.* 6.

⁹ *Ibid.* 12.

to be carried away by the current of popular opinion or prevalent practice¹: they are especially to guard against religious teachers whose deeds belie their words.² Above all they are to beware lest their enthusiasm for the Christian cause should expend itself in a mere confession of the Name, or even in the bustling activity of outward service. The Lord ends with the warning that His words will profit only those who obey them: the rest of His disciples are as men who build their house on the sandy floor of a *wady*, where the first storms of winter will bury them under its ruins.³

2. With a characteristic perception of the inner affinity of incidents remote from one another in time and place, St. Matthew brings together in chapter xi.⁴ a series of sayings which reveal Christ's view of His own office and person. Teaching of this kind is rare in the Synoptic Gospels, and therefore peculiarly welcome when it is offered.

The Evangelist begins with the question which reached our Lord from the prison of John the Baptist, now in the dungeons of Machaerus. It was brought to Christ, if St. Luke's order is right, shortly after the great miracle at Nain, and not long after the sermon on the Mount. Such teaching, confirmed by such a miracle, must have deeply stirred the heart of Galilee, and raised in many minds the question which the Baptist put into words, *Σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*; Christ points the way to the true answer without anticipating it: He places the facts before John and leaves the Baptist to draw the natural inference.⁵ This incident probably took place in private, or in the presence of the Twelve only; but the crowd outside was aware of the coming of the Baptist's disciples, and Jesus seized the oppor-

¹ Matt. vii 13 ff.

² *Ibid.* 15 ff.

³ *Ibid.* 24 ff.

⁴ The corresponding sections in St. Luke are Luke vii. 18-28, xvi. 16, vii. 31-35, x. 13-15, 21 f. The last three verses in St. Matthew (xi. 28-30) have no parallel in St. Luke.

⁵ Matt. xi. 4 ff.

tunity of directing attention to the mission of John.¹ John, He taught, was at once greater than any of the Old Testament heroes, and yet inferior in privilege to the least disciple of the Kingdom, since he came to prepare the way of the Kingdom, and therefore himself stood outside its borders.² Such teaching left no reasonable doubt as to the Lord's own position; if St. John was the last herald of the Advent, who could Jesus be but the Christ? More plainly than this He declined to speak, for He recognized in the crowd about Him none of the moral earnestness which would have rendered them capable of receiving a great spiritual truth³; they were as children who played with the solemnities of life, and wondered that the Forerunner and the Christ did not share their levity.⁴

So far the first and third Gospels follow the same order, but at this point St. Matthew, in accordance with his principle of arrangement, goes to another part of his document for the logical sequel. It belongs, as St. Luke shows us, to the narrative of the mission and return of the Seventy-two, which followed the Lord's final departure from Capernaum.⁵ Capernaum and the adjacent lake-side towns had but too fully justified Christ's verdict upon the Galileans of His generation, and the purpose of the new mission seems to have been to awaken in the villages of Peraea and central Palestine a sense of the greatness of the opportunity which Galilee had slighted, and which was now at their own doors. The Seventy appear to have met with some success; at all events, they returned flushed with hope, and their enthusiasm stirred in the human heart of Christ a sense of joy which is quite unexampled in

¹ Matt. xi. 7, *τούτων δὲ πορευομένων* (Luke, *ἀπελθόντων δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων Ἰωάννου*) ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωάννου.

² Matt. xi. 11 ff.

³ *Ibid.* 12: *βιασταὶ ἀρπάζουσιν αὐτήν.*

⁴ *Ibid.* 16 ff.

⁵ St. Luke ix. 51, x. 1, 13 ff, 21 ff.

the records of His life. He knew that the names of these simple but loyal followers were "written in heaven"; He saw in them the type of some of the best members of His future Church, men of childlike faith, unlettered and without personal weight, yet strong in the possession of a Divine secret which was hidden from the great world.¹ As He realized this vision of the victory of faith, the Lord "exulted in the Holy Spirit"; the "oil of joy" descended upon Him.² His "exultation" revealed itself in a solemn act of thanksgiving,³ and this, uttered doubtless in the presence of the Twelve, passed into the words of self-manifestation to which reference has been made. "All things are delivered to Me by My Father, and none knoweth the Son⁴ except the Father, nor doth any know the Father⁴ except the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall choose to reveal Him."⁵ As Dr. Sanday remarked thirty years ago, "there is nothing in the Johannean Christology that [this passage] does not cover. Even the doctrine of pre-existence seems to be implicitly contained in it. For how and when is this unique and mutual knowledge to be regarded as obtained? Clearly it is no empirical guessing; it does not appear possible that it should be grounded on anything short of an essential unity."⁶ The knowledge claimed is that of a son, and it rests upon sonship; it is a strange misreading of the words which reverses this order, as Prof. Harnack seems to do, when he bases Christ's con-

¹ Luke x. 21; cf. 1 Cor. i. 26 ff.

² Luke l.c.: ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἠγαλλιάσατο τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ. Cf. Heb. i. 9 (Ps. xlv. 7) ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός σου, ἐλαίῳ ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου.

³ Matt. xi. 25: ἐξομολογοῦμαι σοι, πάτερ κ.τ.λ. ἐξομολογεῖσθαι here of course= ἡἷη as in Ps. vii. 17, ix. 6, etc.

⁴ St. Luke writes: "Who is the Son," "Who is the Father," a paraphrase which is true but not exhaustive of the sense, and not structurally necessary (cf. Matt. vii. 16, 20, etc., where ἐπιγινώσκειν τινά occurs).

⁵ Matt. xi. 27.

⁶ Sanday, *Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel* (London, 1872), p. 109.

sciousness of Sonship upon His knowledge of the Father.¹ It is not knowledge which makes Him "the Son," but Sonship which enables Him to know. He declares that He knows God as only a son can know his father, and that this knowledge is not a possession which other sons of God² naturally share with Him, but one which belongs of right to Him alone, and to others only so far as He is pleased to impart it. This is to claim not only unique knowledge, but an unique Sonship. It is difficult to discover any essential difference between this statement in St. Matthew and the closing words of St. John's prologue: "God none hath seen at any time; God only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, He declared Him."³

The exquisite invitation to the "weary and heavy laden," which in St. Matthew follows the *ἀγαλλίασις*,⁴ may well have been spoken on another occasion. It seems to require the presence of a crowd of toil-worn peasants, bringing their sick to be healed, or pressing round the Christ with wistful faces and half-formed longings for His help. Yet no reader of the Gospels will wish to dislodge this saying from the place which the consummate skill of the Evangelist has found for it. If the words of *v.* 27 lift the Son to a height where none may approach Him, in His *δεῦτε πρὸς μέ* He steps down once more to our level, and He to whom all things are delivered, and who alone knows God, shows Himself the sympathetic friend of suffering humanity. Yet the note of authority, of ownership, of superhuman greatness, can still be heard: "Take My yoke, learn from Me ;

¹ Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 81 (= Saunders, E. Tr., p. 127 f.).

² Cf. Matt. xvii. 16.

³ Let the reader compare the two passages and judge for himself:—

Matt. xi. 17.

John i. 18.

οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις ἐπιγινώσκει εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς υἱὸς καὶ ᾧ ἔαν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποθεῖσθαι, ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

⁴ Matt. xi. 28-30. St. Luke has no parallel.

I will give you rest." It is the voice of the Only-begotten Son; we recall Augustine's words: "Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te."¹

3. Twice in the first Gospel² the Lord speaks of the future Christian Society, using the word *ἐκκλησία*. The two passages, which we will bring together here, contain important teaching on the powers and responsibilities of the Church.

The first is the famous promise to St. Peter, "Thou art Peter (*Πέτρος*), and upon this rock (*πέτρα*) I will build My Church." Christ has already used, in the Sermon on the Mount,³ the metaphor of building upon a rock. There it denoted the security which the individual life attains by obedience to the words of Christ; here the building is not an individual but a congregation, Christ Himself is the builder, and the rock appears to be Peter, representing the whole Apostolate.⁴ For the aggregate of successive generations of the faithful St. Matthew employs the word which in the Greek Old Testament is the usual equivalent of *קָהָל*,⁵ the "congregation" of Israel; Christ probably used the corresponding Aramaic. In so doing He created a new Israel, substituting the congregation of His disciples for "Israel after the flesh," who knew Him not.⁶ Israel was "the congregation of Jehovah," and the Christian brotherhood bears in the Epistles of St. Paul the corresponding title, "the Church (or the churches) of God."⁷ But Christ

¹ *Confessions*, i. 1.

² Matt. xvi. 18 f.; xviii. 15-20.

³ Matt. vii. 24: *ᾠκοδομήσεν αὐτοῦ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν.*

⁴ He had spoken on behalf of all in answer to the question, "Τμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι (Matt. xvi. 15; Mark viii. 29). Peter's name supplied an apt image of the relation which the Twelve were called to fulfil towards all future generations of disciples; cf. Eph. ii. 20: *ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν.* Apoc. xxi. 14: *τὸ τεῖχος τῆς πόλεως ἔχον θεμελίους δώδεκα, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῶν δώδεκα ὀνόματα τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῦ ἀρνίου.*

⁵ Cf. Hort, *Ecclesia*, p. 3 ff.

⁶ Cf. Rom. ii. 28, ix. 6 f.; Gal. vi. 16; Apoc. iii. 9.

⁷ 1 Cor. i. 2, xv. 9; 2 Cor. i. 2; Gal. i. 13; 1 Thess. ii. 14: *Αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ χριστοῦ* occurs, however, in Rom. xvi. 16.

does not hesitate to speak of the new congregation as His own (*οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*). No such claim is attributed to Moses, whose relation to Israel was that of a servant set over the House of God. Jesus speaks as the Master and owner of the house; the Church of God is His, since He is the Son and the Heir of God.¹

Not less remarkable are the words that follow: "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."² Human institutions, one after another, fall under the power of dissolution, and pass into oblivion, or become memories of the past. Christ foresaw that the society which He was founding was destined to outlive every other organization upon earth; the day would never come which should see its downfall or disappearance. History has thus far fulfilled this prophecy, and Christians are entitled to believe that it will hold true to the end. An institution which has survived the Roman Empire and the governments that rose upon its ruins, can await without fear any changes that time may work in the existing order of the world.

We will pass to the second occasion on which the Lord referred to the Ecclesia.³ It is precarious to build chronological inferences on St. Matthew's order, but it may probably be assumed in this instance that the second reference is later than the first; certainly it fits in well with the context where it occurs. The Lord had spoken much of the danger of placing a stumblingblock in the way of a brother. But what if a brother be the offender? are you to connive at his trespass? No, he must be brought to see and confess the fault. Private remonstrance

¹ Heb. iii. 6; see Westcott's note.

² For *πύλαι ᾧ* cf. Isa. xxxviii. 10 (LXX) and 3 Macc. v. 52. The Risen Christ has the keys of Hades (Apoc. i. 18) and can liberate the dead. But the imagery in Matt. l.c. goes further: Hades prevails against the individual, though in the end it will be forced to set him free; but the Church as a body can defy its power altogether.

³ Matt. xviii. 15 ff.

is to be tried first, and if this fails, remonstrance in the presence of two or three witnesses ; as a last resource, the matter must be referred to the congregation, whose judgment is to be final. Should the offending brother refuse to listen to the congregation, he puts himself outside the pale of Christian fellowship, and may be regarded as the Jew regarded the pagan or the outcast.¹ The principle affirmed is merely the inherent right of a society to exclude a member who declines to submit to its ruling. This power was exercised by the Synagogue, and Christ claims no less for His Church. But the next words reach much further : “ Whatsoever things ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” “ Binding ” and “ loosing ” are terms borrowed from the Synagogue ; the Rabbis were said to bind what they forbade, and to loose what they allowed² ; and Jesus transfers this judicial power to the Christian Ecclesia, which was in future to be the judge in questions of religious belief and practice. But He does much more, for He declares that the decisions of the Church shall be ratified in heaven. The promise which had been made to the Apostolate in the person of Peter is now extended to the whole body of the Church.³ Not the Apostolate only but the whole Church was to be the organ of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit speaking through the Church would pronounce judgements which were binding alike on earth and in heaven. The human infirmity which is so conspicuous in the history of the Church sufficiently explains her frequent

¹ ἔστω σοι ὡσπερ ὁ ἔθνικὸς καὶ ὁ τελώνης, i. e. as the ἀποσυνάγωγος (John ix. 22 ; xii. 42 ; xvi. 2) was regarded by the Jewish community. But the ἐκκλησία can scarcely be itself the Jewish community, though Dr. Hort (*Ecclesia*, p. 10) inclines to this view ; there is no example of this use of the word in the N. T., and its meaning here is surely governed by c. xvi. 18.

² Abundant instances of this use of רבן and רביר will be found in J. Lightfoot's *Horae Hebraicae* (ed. Goudell), ii. p. 237 ff.

³ Matt. xvi. 19 : δ ἐὰν δήσῃς . . . δ ἐὰν λύσῃς ; Matt. xviii. 18 : ὅσα ἐὰν δήσῃτε . . . ὅσα ἐὰν λύσῃτε.

failures in the attempt to reach this high ideal. Great Church councils have arrived at decisions which it is impossible to regard as ratified by the judgement of God. Yet it is not too much to say that what the universal conscience of Christendom has affirmed does bear the stamp of Divine approval, whilst that which all faithful Christians reprobate is assuredly 'bound' in heaven. *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*¹ is a maxim which enshrines a great truth; the voice of the whole Christian people in all time is the Voice of God.

But the Church has another privilege which can be exercised by the smallest of Christian congregations. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst of them."² The promise is still to the Church, not to the individual³; that its fulfilment may be claimed, there must be at least two disciples acting in Christian fellowship, and thus representing the whole body. But this *minimum* is assured of Christ's presence no less than the largest congregation; for the purposes of common prayer it possesses the privileges of the body, provided that it be gathered in Christ's Name.⁴ Christ's "there am I" necessarily involves the coming of the Spirit, thus again anticipating the fuller treatment of the Fourth Gospel. Only when the Spirit had been sent from the Father in the Son's Name did it become possible for the Lord to be in the

¹ Vincentius Lirinensis, *Commonitorium*, 2.

² Matt. xviii. 20.

³ The Matthean saying is thus distinct from the Oxyrhynchian *logion*; see Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. i. p. 3: [λέγει] [Ἰησοῦς, "Ὀπ] [του] ἐὰν ὡσιν [β, οὐκ] εἰ[ταί]ν ἄθεου, καὶ [δ] [που] [ε] [ἰ]ς ἐστιν μόνος, [λέ]γω, ἐγὼ εἰμι μετ' αὐτοῦ.

⁴ Cf. Tertullian, *De cast.* 7, "Sed ubi tres ecclesia est, licet laici." He might have written "ubi duo," for he read the passage as we do (*praescr.* 16, *ad uxor.* ii. 9). And he overlooks *εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα*, which guards against the sectarian spirit that prefers the company of two or three. The *a fortiori* claim upon this promise of the regular assemblies of the Church is well urged in the original of the "Prayer of St. Chrysostom"; see Bright, *Liturgies*, i. p. 367, ὁ τὰς κοινὰς ταύτας καὶ συμφύτους ἡμῶν χαρισάμενος προσευχάς, ὁ καὶ δυοὶ καὶ τρισὶ κ. τ. λ.

midst of every congregation of His Church to the end of time.¹ The Ascension and the Pentecost have illuminated a saying which to those who first heard it must have been perplexing indeed.

4. Our Lord's teaching, as represented in the Matthean tradition, places in contrast with the Ecclesia the world in its two aspects, as the visible order of the universe (*κόσμος*), and as the course of human affairs under the conditions of time (*αιών*).²

Christ manifests no hostility to the world in either sense. The visible world is the harvest field in which He sees the ripening crops awaiting His labourers; from another point of view, the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are not Apostles and Evangelists, but the angels who will attend His coming.³ If His own countrymen and His own generation afforded little ground for hope, or indeed seemed likely to go from bad to worse,⁴ His eye saw the Gentile nations flocking into the Kingdom from the four quarters of the earth.⁵ The present age must reach its appointed end⁶; but Jesus expects a new world to take the place of the old, and a regeneration of heaven and earth analogous to the new birth which ushers individual lives into the Kingdom of God.⁷ His outlook is therefore, upon the whole, full of hope; the present state of mixed good and evil will issue in the final triumph of good.

¹ Cf. Matt. xxviii. 20.

² Dalman, who observes that Matthew alone of the Synoptists uses *κόσμος* freely, shows that in the Jewish literature *קוֹסְמוֹס* cover both senses (*Worte Jesu*, i. pp. 136, 138, 140=E. Tr. pp. 167, 169, 171).

³ Matt. ix. 37 f., xiii. 37, 39.

⁴ Matt. xii. 39-45.

⁵ Matt. viii. 11; cf. Luke xiii. 29.

⁶ The *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος* is mentioned five times by St. Matthew (xiii. 39, 40, 49; xxiv. 3; xxviii. 20), and in this sense by St. Matthew only.

⁷ Matt. xix. 28. For *παλιγενεσία* see Tit. iii. 5, and cf. John iii. 5; in Matt. the term seems to be equivalent to the *ἀποκατάστασις πάντων* mentioned in Acts iii. 21, though Dalman (p. 145 f.) denies this.

Yet Jesus does not minimize either the extent to which evil prevails in the world as it now is, or the seriousness of the issues which it entails. The latter point is brought out with great variety of illustration in the Matthean parables, which, when all allowances have been made for the high colouring of eastern imagery, leave no doubt as to the general purport of Christ's teaching on the subject. The angel reapers "shall gather out of His Kingdom those that work lawlessness, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire";¹ "there," it is twice said, "shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth."¹ The angel fishers in the sea of life "shall cast the worthless outside";² the Master will deliver the debtor who had been forgiven, but proved himself unworthy, into the hands of the ministers of torture, until he shall have paid the whole³; the guest who is not suitably attired for the wedding feast is to be cast out of the banqueting-hall into the darkness of the night⁴; the virgin attendants of the Bride who let their lamps die down will find the door shut against a diligence which has come too late⁵; the slave who has neglected his talent, though but one was committed to him, not only loses it, but is cast out from his Lord's presence.⁶ These scenes represent the fate of disloyal or negligent disciples, but the final parable extends the principle, *mutatis mutandis*, to all mankind. In all nations of the world those who have failed to serve Christ by ministering, according to their lights and opportunities, to His brethren, their fellow-men, must go away from the judgement seat into age-long punishment.⁷

¹ Matt. xiii. 30, 42: 'Ο κλαυθμός, ὁ βρυγμός (so also in viii. 12, xxii. 13, xxiv. 5, xxv. 30; Luke xiii. 28), misery which is such κατ' ἐξοχήν.

² Matt. xiii. 48: τὰ δὲ σαπρὰ ἔξω ἐβαλον.

³ Matt. xviii. 34.

⁴ Matt. xxii. 18: εἰς τὸ σκοτός τὸ ἐξώτερον. Cf. John xiii. 30, where it is significantly said of Judas, ἐκείνος ἐξῆλθεν εὐθὺς· ἦν δὲ νύξ.

⁵ Matt. xxv. 11.

⁶ *Ibid.* 29 f.

⁷ *Ibid.* 46.

The general import of this teaching is too plain to be disputed ; beyond a doubt the Lord points to loss and suffering of the gravest kind as the lot of those who sin against the light they possess, or neglect their opportunities of doing good.

The Matthean teaching possesses all the features which we have observed in the Marcan tradition ; the same inwardness, practical bent, universality of application, majesty of manner, are apparent in both records ; the same unique personality can be recognized in both. But the field of observation is larger in St. Matthew than in St. Mark ; the range of subjects embraced by the teaching is more varied, and the teaching itself more extended and less fragmentary. We are therefore in a better position for gaining a conception of our Lord's scope and purpose as a Teacher, and we see Him in some lights which are quite new. He appears, as we have learnt, in the character of a legislator, and we notice the wisdom with which, while conserving for the time a system that could not be at once abandoned, He aims at substituting for mechanical obedience the great principles of morality and religion which lie at the root of all true goodness. He reveals Himself also in the light of a great architect, a constructive mind which could plan and lay the foundations of a spiritual building destined to last as long as the world itself. We are struck again by the width of His outlook on human life ; His appreciation of the forces which are struggling for mastery in the world ; His calm anticipation of the end, and the richness and variety of the imagery which He adopts in order to impress upon an unspiritual age the gravity of the issues to which time is carrying the race and each individual man. Lastly, in an hour of unexampled exultation, He reveals to us that which lay behind all His teaching and all His life, the secret source of Divine knowledge which belonged to

Him as the Only-begotten Son. We catch but a momentary glimpse into the mystery of His relation to God, but it is enough to send us back to the Gospels with a deeper sense of the graciousness of One who, possessing a perfect knowledge of God, condescended to teach men the elements of truth.

H. B. SWETE.