

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

VI.

WE have now taken the evidence of the four Gospels severally in reference to the Teaching of our Lord. Each Gospel has yielded its special contribution to the great subject, and has impressed upon us its characteristic view. It remains in this last paper to collect the results, without regard to the sources from which they have been obtained.

Irenaeus, in a well known passage, represents the Gospels as a "quadriform" unity; a single Gospel, presenting four aspects of the One Incarnate Life.¹ This conception expresses a spiritual fact. When we compare the Synoptic Gospels with one another, and their united testimony with that of the fourth Gospel, we become conscious that notwithstanding wide differences of matter and treatment, the four are fundamentally agreed in their portrait of the Master and their presentation of His teaching. The same Teacher speaks in all. This conviction justifies us in combining their evidence for the purpose of gaining a general view; indeed, such a process is a necessary complement to the separate examination of the documents.

1. Our Lord began His Galilean ministry by announcing that the Kingdom of God was at hand.² This idea was at once the starting-point of His teaching and its basal truth. The term is nearly limited to the Synoptists, and possibly it was not used by Jesus in His public preaching except in Galilee;³ but the conception meets us everywhere.

¹ Iren. iii. 11. 8, ὁ τῶν ἀπάντων τεχνίτης λόγος . . . ἔδωκεν ἡμῶν τετράμορφον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἐνὶ δὲ πνεύματι συνεχόμενον.

² Mark i. 15; Matt. iv. 17.

³ In St. John it occurs only in the conversation with Nicodemus (iii. 3, 15).

The term itself was not new,¹ but the conception was transfigured under the hands of Christ; its full contents were revealed for the first time. The faith of the Psalmists and Prophets had pictured the Almighty Ruler of the world as seated on His throne in the highest heaven, and from thence directing and controlling the universe. So far as the Divine Kingdom had its seat on earth, it was located at Jerusalem, and its representative was the reigning King of the Davidic line, or when that line ceased, the expected Messiah. Jesus did not disturb these convictions, which indeed embodied substantial truth. But the Christian idea rises far above them. As Christ preached it, the Kingdom of Heaven is not a territorial empire, whether limited to the land of Israel or co-extensive with the world, but a personal reign, the rule and sway of God over the hearts and lives of men. This Kingdom of God is not "here" or "there"; it has no local centre; its seat is in the inner man.² It finds its expression in character and life. Its practical results may be learned from the Beatitudes which stand on the threshold of Christ's New Law. They propound the paradox of the Christian life—the blessedness of spiritual poverty and sorrow, of self-forgetfulness and self-dissatisfaction; they exalt into the first rank of virtues the mercy, the purity of heart, the labouring for peace, which reflect the character of God.³ As the Sermon proceeds, it reveals the new attitude towards God upon which this life rests: an attitude which brings a constant sense of His presence, a firm trust in His love, submission to His will, desire of His approval, imitation of His perfections.⁴ To live thus is to

¹ For examples of its use in pre-Christian Jewish literature see *Ps. Sol.* xvii. 4, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. *Orac. Sibyll.*, iii. 47, βασιλεία μεγίστη ἀθανάτου βασιλῆος ἐπ' ἀνθρώποισι φανείσα. For its use in the Targums cf. Deissmann, *Words of Jesus*, etc., p. 91 ff.

² Luke xvii. 21.

³ Matt. v. 1-9.

⁴ Matt. v. 45, 46, vi. 1, 4, 6, 19, 25 ff.; vii. 11.

reverse the general aims and conduct of mankind ; the man who would enter the Kingdom, or even discern its true nature, must be born from above, of water and the Spirit, since only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, i.e. possesses an affinity to the spiritual nature of God or a capacity for spiritual truth.¹

While the Kingdom of God, as it was taught by our Lord, is primarily the present exercise of the Divine sway over hearts dominated by the Spirit, He looks forward to the extension of this spiritual reign until it has covered the earth with subjects of the Kingdom and issues in a sinless life of unimaginable glory in the presence of God. Thus He teaches His disciples to pray "Thy Kingdom come," although they had already received the Kingdom in its initial stage. Though the reign of God begins within, it works its way from the centre of human life to the circumference, and from the individual life to society in general ; it is as leaven which, hidden in the meal, spreads until the whole is leavened.²

2. It is noteworthy that in all this teaching about the Kingdom of God mention is scarcely ever made of God as King³ ; when the King appears, it is usually Christ Himself, exercising supreme authority in His Messianic character, as God's Representative.⁴ Of God Jesus speaks usually as Father ; "My Father," "thy Father," "your Father," or simply "the Father," without indicating the person or persons to whom He stands in a paternal relation. The idea was taken over from the Old Testament ; the Prophets teach the Fatherhood of God. But it is in the teaching of Christ that this view of God becomes for the first time a dominant note. In the Sermon alone, this

¹ John iii. 3, 5 f.

² Matt. xiii. 33.

³ See, however, Matt. v. 35, xviii. 23, xxii. 2.

⁴ E.g. in Matt. xxv. 34-40, xxviii. 18 ; John xviii. 37.

title is used seventeen times ; even in the second Gospel it finds a place, whilst in the fourth it meets us at every point. Moreover, on the lips of Christ it receives a new meaning, and is little short of a new revelation. In the Gospels, God is not simply the Father of Israel in virtue of His covenant with the chosen people, or the Father of all men, inasmuch as they are His rational creatures, made in His image and after His likeness ; the relation is at once more fundamental and more intimate. The Fatherhood of God, as it is seen in the light of the Gospel, is the counterpart of the Love of God, which embraces the world and is not finally alienated even by its sin. No unworthiness however great, no fall however deep, no separation however long, destroys the relation ; it is held in suspense, it is dormant till repentance comes, but it still exists. When the sinner turns to his Father, he finds that the Father has been waiting for him ; a welcome is ready : he takes his place in the Divine household, not as a servant but as a son ; there is joy not only in the presence of the angels but in the fatherly Heart of God. From that hour there begins the regular exchange of paternal and filial intercourse ; trust, prayer, love, service, on the one hand, and acceptance, grace, restoration of the inheritance, upon the other.¹ It is only in the sinner who repents that the paternal love of God finds free exercise, because it is only in his case that there is any capacity for understanding or reciprocating it, any response of filial feeling or performance of filial duty. But the mission of Jesus, which was the highest expression of the Divine love, was addressed to sinners without distinction ;² and His whole teaching had for its aim to bring all men to realize the Divine Fatherhood, and to claim their place in the Divine Family.

3. The relation of Jesus to the Father, and His place in the Kingdom of God, were less fully set forth in His Gali-

¹ Luke xv. 18 ff.

² Mark ii. 17 ; Luke xix. 10.

lean teaching. Until the Galilean ministry was near its close, He did not even declare Himself to be the Christ; and when He did, the disciples were forbidden to make Him known in this character.¹ In contemporary Jewish thought the word suggested ideas largely alien to the purpose of His ministry; if with us it is the symbol for all that is purest and strongest in humanity, this is due to our use of "Christ" as a synonym for the personal name of our Lord. Jesus Himself, if we may judge from the Gospels, used it but rarely, and advanced personal rather than official claims. Personally, He claimed to be at once the Son of Man, representing humanity both in its weakness and its potential glory; and the Son of God, representing Deity, and fulfilling in the highest degree the filial relation to God. Both titles had their origin in the Old Testament, the Son of Man in Daniel's vision,² the Son of God in the second Psalm and in other foreshadowings of the Messianic King. But in the teaching of Jesus both acquire a new significance. They are complementary to one another, and taken together they reveal the mystery of His dual character. They proclaim Him to be a true member of the human family, and indeed its very flower and crown, and at the same time to stand in a peculiar and unique relation to God. At first sight it may seem as if when He calls God His Father the Lord claims for Himself no more than He attributes to every subject of the Divine Kingdom, or at most a merely official superiority. But when we examine the meaning of His Sonship, as disclosed not only in the fourth Gospel but in some of the sayings recorded in the first and third, it becomes evident that it differs from the sonship of believers not in degree but in kind. Jesus is the "Only Begotten," i.e. the Only Son; His relation to the Father is *sui generis*; the Father is His Father in a sense in which He is not and

¹ Mark viii. 30.

² Dan. vii. 13.

cannot be the Father of any other. His Sonship is pre-existent; it involves essential oneness with the Father; it is the basis of a perfect knowledge of the Father, it carries with it a right to all that the Father has. The author of the prologue to St. John's Gospel has surely not misread this element in our Lord's teaching when he writes, "The Word was God."

Of His mission Jesus speaks with greater freedom. Here He departs altogether from the popular conception of the Messianic rôle. He does not connect His work with the restoration of Jewish independence, or with His own nation or generation in any exclusive way. He was sent to humanity; if He began by evangelizing a corner of Palestine, the larger purpose was kept steadily in view. He came to be the "Light of the world," to "bear witness to the truth," to be Himself "the Truth," the Ideal in which the yearnings and hopes of the race should be realized. He came to be the life of men, saving them from sin which is death, restoring them to fellowship with God, the Source of life. To these great ends He directed all His thoughts and energies; He had no object in life but to fulfil the work for which He had been sent into the world. His death served the same great purpose, and served it in the highest degree. The Cross was first foretold upon the occasion when His Messianic character was first distinctly acknowledged.¹ It was not simply a foreseen consequence of His mission, but a true and essential, perhaps the most essential, factor in its fulfilment. He began by preaching the Cross merely as the symbol of self-sacrifice, the example which every disciple must follow in his daily life. But as the Passion approached, He proceeded to represent it as bound up in some unexplained way with the salvation of mankind. The thought had been with Him from the first; in the conversation with Nicodemus, at the first passover of the

¹ Mark viii. 32 ff.

ministry, He had likened Himself to the Brazen Serpent, lifted up in the wilderness to heal serpent-bitten Israel.¹ But toward the end it was taught more openly : He must give His life, He said, a ransom for many ;² the Shepherd must die for the sheep ;³ the seed-corn must fall into the earth and die, or it would abide alone.⁴ Jesus, if lifted up from the earth, would draw all men unto Him ;⁵ His Blood was the blood of the New Covenant, shed for many unto remission of sins.⁶ The many-sidedness of this teaching will not escape the notice of the reader ; there are few aspects of the Atonement which do not find an anticipation in the words of Christ. Yet He propounds no doctrine, but merely bears witness to the manifold fruits of the Passion.

Beyond His Cross and Passion the Lord foresaw not only His Resurrection and Ascension, but His future Coming. The basis of the teaching is again supplied by a few familiar texts from the Old Testament ;⁷ but the application of these prophecies, the interpretation they receive, the place which they fill in Christian eschatology, are due to our Lord Himself. If the Apostolic letters and the Apocalypse have filled in the picture, the bold outline is the Master's own. Not the least remarkable feature in the teaching of Christ is His calm assurance of future triumph and glory, expressed under conditions of humiliation and mortality.

4. From the teaching of Christ as to His own person and mission we pass to His teaching in reference to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God appears in the Old Testament as the principle of the Divine energy manifested in creation and providence, in the ordinary endowments and work of life and in the inspiration of the prophetic order. The earlier

¹ 2 John iii. 14.² Mark x. 4 f.³ John x. 11.⁴ John xii. 24.⁵ *Ib.* 32.⁶ Mark xiv. 34.⁷ 6 E.g. Dan. vii. 5; 13 Ps. cx. 1,

teaching of Christ scarcely carries us beyond this view of the Spirit, except in one particular; the sphere of the Spirit's work is no longer limited to Israel, but is regarded as co-extensive with the Kingdom of Heaven and the family of God. Our heavenly Father, we are assured, will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. The gift of the Son there includes the gift of the Spirit;¹ "if any man thirst," Jesus cried in the Temple, "let him come unto Me and drink."² All who enter the Kingdom have been born of the Spirit, and the Spirit in their hearts becomes "a well of water springing up into eternal life."³ Such sayings prepare us to expect a fuller and wider manifestation of the Spirit under the New Covenant, but they do not touch the question of the Spirit's personality and relation to the Father and the Son, or the details of the Spirit's work.

These deeper teachings were reserved for the hearing of the Apostles on the night before the Passion. Then at length it became possible and necessary to speak of the dispensation which would follow the Lord's Death and Resurrection. The occasion determined the form of the revelation. The Twelve were troubled and dazed by the near approach of the Master's departure. It would take from them the Counsellor on whose guidance they had hitherto depended in every time of need. The Lord promised that He would send another Counsellor, a second Paraclete, who would recall His teaching and continue it. The term *παράκλητος* in this connexion was, so far as we know, entirely new; but Jesus hastens to identify the coming Paraclete with the "Holy Spirit"⁴ of the Psalms and the Prophets; it was the same Spirit who had inspired the Prophets and baptized the Son, by whom the work of the Son was to be carried forward and onward. The whole drift of the discourse compels us to regard the Spirit as a

¹ Luke xi. 13.² John vii. 37.³ John iii. 5, iv. 14.⁴ John xiv. 26, ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.

personal agent, distinct from the Father, distinct also from the Son, and yet in the closest relation with Both. He—the masculine pronoun is advisedly employed¹—is to be sent by the Son from the Father, or to be sent by the Father in the Son's Name; He receives from the Son that which the Son Himself has received from the Father. He issues forth from the Father, a statement which refers no doubt to the temporal mission of the Spirit, but seems to presuppose the eternal relation which the Church teaches in the "Nicene" Creed.² The general effect of this teaching is to place by the side of the Father and the Son a third Divine Person, another eternal Phase of the One Divine life; an interpretation which our Lord after His resurrection sealed with His approval when He instituted Baptism into the Name of the Three in One.

As to the operations of the Paraclete Spirit Jesus speaks with reserve; it is to the Epistles, written in the light of Christian experience, that we must look for a fuller pneumatology. But He marks out the great outlines of the Spirit's work after the Pentecost; His conviction of the world, His teaching of the Church, His glorifying of the Christ, His illumination of human life with the hope of the world to come.

5. From the doctrine of the Holy Spirit our thoughts pass naturally to the doctrine of the Church in which the Spirit came to dwell. Here again the germ of the later Christian teaching is to be found in the words of Christ. The Church is mentioned in the Gospels twice only, and on both occasions in the first Gospel. In two of the Matthean *logia* the Lord speaks of His disciples collectively as the *ecclesia*,³ the counterpart of the "congregation" of Israel; in the first

¹ Ἐκεῖνος (John xiv. 26, xv. 26, xvi. 8, 13 ff.) refers without doubt to ὁ παράκλητος, but it carries on the suggestion of personality which that title conveys.

² John xv. 26, ὁ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται. The Creed uses ἐκ instead of παρὰ.

³ Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17.

the Christian *ecclesia* is the whole body of believers, the *ἐκκλησία καθολική* of a later age; in the second the term is applied to a particular community, assembled together for worship or mutual counsel. It is interesting to note this double use of the word at its first appearance in the New Testament, in sayings attributed to our Lord Himself.

Christ regarded Himself as the Founder of a new Israel, a Divine Society upon earth. It was in His thoughts from the first, when He gathered disciples round Him, and when out of them He chose twelve and brought them into the closest association with Himself. The Twelve were in one sense the germ of the Christian ministry; in another they were the original *ecclesia*. Jesus foresaw the indefinite expansion of the Church and provided for it. This Gospel must be preached throughout the whole world, and wherever it was preached the nations would flock into the fold. To cement the union of His disciples, the Lord instituted Baptism; to maintain it He gave the Eucharistic Food of His Body and Blood. These were among His last preparations for the new order which was to follow the Ascension. But the future of the Church had occupied His attention months before the Passion. A whole series of parables, beginning with the days of the Galilean ministry, reveals the deep interest which the subject possessed in the eyes of Christ. The Sower and the Seed, the Tares, the Mustard Seed, the Leaven, the Dragnet, the Great Supper, the Ten Virgins, are obvious examples; they describe the process of the Church's growth, its adulteration and ultimate purification, the relation of individual disciples to the body, and other kindred matters upon which ecclesiastical history has thrown a flood of light. In these parables, it is true, the Church is not mentioned by name; it is the Kingdom of Heaven which they profess to illustrate. The conclusion has been too hastily drawn that the Kingdom is

identical with the Church. The two conceptions, though related, are distinct; the Kingdom is the spiritual principle which the Church exhibits in a concrete form, and it transcends the Church as the spiritual transcends the visible.

Nevertheless, the Church is no mere accident of the Divine Kingdom, but its greatest present result. A vast spiritual corporation, charged with the evangelization of the world, designed to receive all classes and races of mankind, invested with magnificent powers and assured of an indestructible vitality, is surely as splendid a conception as can be found even in the teaching of Christ. The Architect of this building of God, who laid its foundations in the obscurity of Galilee and foresaw its progress and completion, was master of the Divine art of inspiring and regenerating human life on a great scale.

6. With this vast design in His thoughts, Jesus was not less mindful of the needs of the individual. Indeed, it is with the spiritual life of the individual that the great bulk of His teaching is concerned. If the third Gospel treats it with special fulness and tenderness, there is no Gospel and no part of the teaching from which it is absent. It has been said that our Lord was inspired by the "enthusiasm of humanity,"¹ and this is a true account of His spirit, if it be understood that His zeal for the salvation of the race never led Him to overlook the interests of individual men. The regeneration of the world to which Christ pointed was not to be attained by ignoring the needs of personal life. Nothing is more impressive in the records of His ministry than the minute care which He bestowed on those who sought His help. He did not heal or save men in the mass, but had a word for each: "Son, thy sins are forgiven"; "daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole."²

This individualism pervades His teaching. As the

¹ *Ecce Homo*, c. xvii.

² Mark ii. 6; Matt. ix. 22.

Physician of souls, He detected in every man a deep-seated disease which demanded separate treatment. His remedies are two, repentance and faith. Repentance is the sinner's return to his Father, with his pride broken, his delight in sin changed to aversion, his repugnance to God converted into a desire to be numbered among His servants. Faith makes the return possible, assuring the penitent of acceptance, and inspiring him with the spirit of sonship. Christ speaks of faith in God, faith in the Gospel, the message of the Love of God, faith in Himself as the Son of God and the Saviour of men. On the last point He insists with a frequency and earnestness which shew the importance He attached to it. Trust in Jesus Christ is coordinated with trust in God; it includes a loyal devotion which shrinks from no sacrifice and refuses no command; it is accompanied by a love for the Master which takes the first place among the forces that move human conduct.

Each individual life, as Christ sees it, is shaping its own destinies, whether good or evil, and will receive from Him, as the Supreme Judge of men, its final award. There will be a general judgment of the race, but in this, as in the work of salvation, full recognition will be made of the claims of the individual.

7. Our Lord's teaching with regard to future rewards and punishments calls for careful consideration.

Jesus Christ was not sent into the world to judge it, but to save it,¹ and on more than one occasion He distinctly refuses the office of judge.² Yet His life and teaching had the effect of a judicial process, since men are judged in the sight of God according to their attitude towards the Incarnation. "He that believeth not hath been judged already; and this is the judgement, that light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light."³ The

¹ John iii. 17.

² Luke xii. 14; John viii. 14, 15.

³ John viii. 18, 19.

remark is, perhaps, due to the Evangelist and not to Christ, but it gives the substance of much of His teaching. This judgment is still in progress: the Church retains the sins which she is not able to remit. But the Lord also contemplates a judgment which is to come at the end of the present order, and which He connects with His return and the general resurrection of the dead. In this He will sit as Judge "in the glory of the Father with the Holy Angels." The manifestation of the glorified Christ will, it seems, bring to a climax the work of judgment which began with His Incarnation, and will reveal to the world and to each individual the true character of all lives.

Of the doom of the ungodly our Lord speaks in terms borrowed from the popular religious teaching of His time. There is a Valley of Hinnom in the spiritual world, where the worm that feeds upon dead souls does not die, and the fire that consumes them is not quenched. The imagery is not unduly strong to depict the agony of a conscience awakened too late, of an ever-present memory of opportunities gone beyond recall. But Christ adds to these familiar descriptions; and His own words on the subject, if less realistic, are not less terrible. The unprofitable servant is cast into the outer darkness; those who have not done what they could for Christ in the person of His brethren shall go away into eternal punishment. Whether by this expression we are to understand an absolutely interminable sentence is a question which, perhaps, does not admit of an answer. "Eternity," in the sense commonly attached to the word, is an abstraction with which our Lord does not deal. He speaks of the consummation of the present *αἰών*, and of a new order which will take its place. A sin which passes unforgiven into that coming age is an *αἰώνιον ἁμάρτημα*, "an eternal sin,"¹ and the punishment that will overtake it there a *κόλασις αἰώνιος*, "an eternal punishment."² But the *αἰών*

¹ Mark iii. 29.

² Matt. xxv. 46.

ὁ ἐρχόμενος, the future order, cannot be measured by our standards. We unconsciously transfer to it the conditions of time and space—a tendency which is apparent in modern discussions of this painful question. It is enough to know, on Christ's assurance, that the sentence upon the sinner involves the loss of all that the coming age holds of blessedness and hope.

“But the righteous into eternal life.” So Christ paints the future of the true members of the Kingdom. The higher life of the Spirit, begun on earth, will be matured and perfected in the world to come. Here and there in His teaching the veil is partly drawn back and the life is revealed, though necessarily in terms borrowed from present experience. Men who have used their talents well shall receive more; greater endowments, larger stewardships, a wider domain, increased opportunities of service. The principle which will guide the award is stated: “Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.”¹ There will be no dull uniformity of goodness or place; though all true servants enter into the joy of their Lord, they enter with powers of enjoyment varying widely according to their use of opportunities. In Christ's view there is no breach of continuity between the past and the future, between the temporal and the eternal. His judgment will but interpret and give effect to the results of human life, carrying these forward into a new order where they will serve as the ἀφορμὴ of the life of the world to come.

These are but faint outlines of some of the chief features in the Teaching of Christ, regarded as a whole. Our Lord did not teach systematically; His words arose out of the circumstances in which He moved, and were adapted to the intelligence of the persons whom He addressed; and this is one of the secrets of their inexhaustible charm. Yet in

¹ Matt. xxv. 29.

His teaching there are master-thoughts which dominate the whole, and bind it into a unity; and when these are brought together, it is seen to constitute a body of religious truth which has for its aim the regeneration of human life.

It is sometimes said that Christ was an eclectic, who based His teaching on ideas which already had a place in Palestinian, Alexandrian, and even Oriental thought. The theory in this form is baseless, but it may at once be conceded that our Lord deliberately built on Old Testament foundations, and availed Himself of contemporary ideas and forms of speech. It is the wisdom of a teacher to begin with the knowledge which men already possess, and to use the materials that lie in his path. But in doing this Jesus by a spiritual alchemy transformed into gold all that He touched. Nor did He by any means limit Himself to the work of lifting up current conceptions to a higher level, and breathing into them a new spirit. There are new things as well as old in the treasure which the Master has committed to the scribes of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the new are "things which eye saw not and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man,"¹ until they were revealed by Jesus Christ. But let the teaching, old or new, be considered as a whole, and where can its like be found? It provides for all the spiritual needs of men, covering the whole domain of the inner life. It regulates conduct for all time by asserting principles of universal application. It fixes the highest standards, and at the same time supplies the strongest motives for endeavouring to reach them. "Love your enemies," it commands, adding, "that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven," and "ye shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."²

If it be objected that an attempt to reconstruct society on such lines as these is chimerical, and as a matter of fact

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

² Matt. v. 44, 48.

has never been realized, the answer is that the character which Christ sets before men, and which He Himself exhibited, is one which with us can have only its beginnings in the present life. He works and would have men work for the eternal and the infinite. The Kingdom of Heaven within us must ever be an ideal which is above our present efforts, pointing us on to another state where it will have its perfect work. Meanwhile it is not inoperative or destitute of results. If the world has not yet been transfigured by the teaching of our Lord, no other teaching has done so much to make its crooked ways straight and its rough places plain. If the teaching of Jesus Christ has not yet produced a perfect saint, it has planted in the lives of tens of thousands a principle which makes for perfection, and will attain it, as our faith assures us, in the day of the Lord's Return.

H. B. SWETE.

STUDIES IN THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

II.

THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

And in this we know that we have come to know Him:
If we be keeping His commandments.

He who says, "I have come to know Him," and is not keeping His
commandments,

Is a liar, and in him the truth is not;

But whosoever is keeping His commandments,

Verily in this man the love of God has been perfected.

In this we know that in Him we are:

He who says that he abides in Him,

Is bound, even as *He* walked, to walk also himself.

—1 John ii. 3-6.

FELLOWSHIP with God, St. John laid down at the outset (i. 3, 6), is the purpose of the Christian revelation. This "fellowship" now resolves itself into *knowledge* (ii. 3) of and