

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

LUKE

Commentary by **DAVID BROWN**

INTRODUCTION

THE writer of this Gospel is universally allowed to have been Lucas (an abbreviated form of Lucanus, as Silas of Silvanus), though he is not expressly named either in the Gospel or in the Acts. From ^{<5044>}Colossians 4:14 we learn that he was a “physician”; and by comparing that verse with ^{<5040>}Colossians 4:10,11 — in which the apostle enumerates all those of the circumcision who were then with him, but does not mention Luke, though he immediately afterwards sends a salutation from him — we gather that Luke was not a born Jew. Some have thought he was a freed-man (*libertinus*), as the Romans devolved the healing art on persons of this class and on their slaves, as an occupation beneath themselves. His intimate acquaintance with Jewish customs, and his facility in *Hebraic Greek*, seem to show that he was an early convert to the Jewish faith; and this is curiously confirmed by ^{<4217>}Acts 21:27-29, where we find the Jews enraged at Paul’s supposed introduction of Greeks into the temple, because they had seen “Trophimus the Ephesian” with him; and as we know that Luke was with Paul on that occasion, it would seem that they had taken him for a Jew, as they made no mention of him. On the other hand, his fluency in classical *Greek* confirms his Gentile origin. The time when he joined Paul’s company is clearly indicated in the Acts by his changing (at ^{<4160>}Acts 16:10) from the third person singular (“he”) to the first person plural (“we”). From that time he hardly ever left the apostle till near the period of his martyrdom (^{<5041>}2 Timothy 4:11). EUSEBIUS makes him a native of Antioch. If so, he would have every advantage for cultivating the literature of Greece and such medical knowledge as was then possessed. That he died a natural death is generally agreed among the ancients; GREGORY NAZIANZEN alone affirming that he died a martyr.

The *time* and *place* of the publication of his Gospel are alike uncertain. But we can approximate to it. It must at any rate have been issued before the Acts, for there the ‘Gospel’ is expressly referred to as the same author’s

“former treatise” (~~400E~~Acts 1:1). Now the Book of the Acts was not published for two whole years after Paul’s arrival as a prisoner at Rome, for it concludes with a reference to this period; but probably it was published soon after that, which would appear to have been early in the year 63. Before that time, then, we have reason to believe that the Gospel of Luke was in circulation, though the majority of critics make it later. If we date it somewhere between A.D. 50 and 60, we shall probably be near the truth; but nearer it we cannot with any certainty come. Conjectures as to the place of publication are too uncertain to be mentioned here.

That it was addressed, in the first instance, to Gentile *readers*, is beyond doubt. This is no more, as DAVIDSON remarks [*Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 186], than was to have been expected from the companion of an “apostle of the Gentiles,” who had witnessed marvellous changes in the condition of many heathens by the reception of the Gospel. But the explanations in his Gospel of things known to every Jew, and which could only be intended for Gentile readers, make this quite plain — see ~~400B~~Luke 1:26 4:31 8:26 21:37 22:1 24:13. A number of other minute particulars, both of things inserted and of things omitted, confirm the conclusion that it was Gentiles whom this Evangelist had in the first instance in view.

We have already adverted to the classical *style* of *Greek* which this Evangelist writes — just what might have been expected from an educated Greek and traveled physician. But we have also observed that along with this he shows a wonderful flexibility of style, so much so, that when he comes to relate transactions wholly Jewish, where the speakers and actors and incidents are all Jewish, he writes in such *Jewish Greek* as one would do who had never been out of Palestine or mixed with any but Jews. In DA COSTA’S *Four Witnesses* will be found some traces of “the beloved *physician*” in this Gospel. But far more striking and important are the traces in it of his intimate connection with the apostle of the Gentiles. That one who was so long and so constantly in the society of that master mind has in such a work as this shown no traces of that connection, no stamp of that mind, is hardly to be believed. Writers of Introductions seem not to see it, and take no notice of it. But those who look into the interior of it will soon discover evidences enough in it of a *Pauline* cast of mind. Referring for a number of details to DA COSTA, we notice here only two examples: In ~~412B~~1 Corinthians 11:23, Paul ascribes to an express revelation from Christ Himself the account of the Institution of the Lord’s Supper which he there gives. Now, if we find this account differing in small yet striking particulars from the accounts given by Matthew and Mark, but agreeing to the letter with Luke’s account, it can hardly admit of a doubt that the one had it from the other; and in that case, of course, it was Luke that had it from Paul.

Now Matthew and Mark both say of the Cup, “This is my blood of the New Testament”; while Paul and Luke say, in identical terms, “This cup is the New Testament in My blood” (^{<4125>}1 Corinthians 11:25 ^{<4220>}Luke 22:20). Further, Luke says, “Likewise also the cup *after supper*, saying,” etc.; while Paul says, “After the same manner He took the cup *when He had supped*, saying,” etc.; whereas neither Matthew nor Mark mention that this was after supper. But still more striking is another point of coincidence in this case. Matthew and Mark both say of the Bread merely this: “Take, eat; this is My body” (^{<4133>}Matthew 26:26 ^{<4142>}Mark 14:22); whereas Paul says, “Take, eat, this is My body, *which is broken for you*” (^{<4112>}1 Corinthians 11:24), and Luke, “This is My body, *which is given for you*” (^{<4229>}Luke 22:19). And while Paul adds the precious clause, “*This do in remembrance of Me,*” Luke does the same, in identical terms. How can one who reflects on this resist the conviction of a Pauline stamp in this Gospel? The other proof of this to which we ask the reader’s attention is in the fact that Paul, in enumerating the parties by whom Christ was seen after His resurrection, begins, singularly enough, with Peter — “And that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve” (^{<4150>}1 Corinthians 15:4,5) — coupled with the remarkable fact, that Luke is the only one of the Evangelists who mentions that Christ appeared to Peter at all. When the disciples had returned from Emmaus to tell their brethren how the Lord had appeared to them in the way, and how He had made Himself known to them in the breaking of bread, they were met, as Luke relates, ere they had time to utter a word, with this wonderful piece of news, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (^{<4234>}Luke 24:34).

Other points connected with this Gospel will be adverted to in the Commentary.

CHAPTER 1

LUKE 1:1-4.

It appears from the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apostolic Epistles, that the earliest preaching of the Gospel consisted of a brief summary of the facts of our Lord's earthly history, with a few words of pointed application to the parties addressed. Of these astonishing facts, notes would naturally be taken and *digests* put into circulation. It is to such that Luke here refers; and in terms of studied respect, as narratives of what was "believed surely," or "on sure grounds" among Christians, and drawn up from the testimony of "eye-witnesses and ministering servants of the word." But when he adds that "it seemed good to him also to write in order, having traced down all things with exactness from their first rise," it is a virtual claim for his own Gospel to supersede these "many" narratives.

Accordingly, while not one of them has survived the wreck of time, this and the other canonical Gospels live, and shall live, the only fitting vehicles of those life-bringing facts which have made all things new. Apocryphal or spurious gospels, upheld by parties unfriendly to the truths exhibited in the canonical Gospels, have *not* perished; but those well-meant and substantially correct narratives here referred to, used only while better were not to be had, were by tacit consent allowed to merge in the four peerless documents which from age to age, and with astonishing unanimity, have been accepted as the written charter of all Christianity.

1. **set forth in order** — more simply, to draw up a narrative.
2. **from the beginning** — that is, of His public ministry, as is plain from what follows.
3. **from the very first** — that is, from the very earliest events; referring to those precious details of the birth and early life, not only of our Lord, but of His forerunner, which we owe to Luke alone.

in order — or "consecutively" — in contrast, probably, with the disjointed productions to which he had referred. But this must not be pressed too far; for, on comparing it with the other Gospels, we see that in some particulars the strict chronological order is not observed in this Gospel.

most excellent — or “most noble” — a title of rank applied by this same writer twice to Felix and once to Festus (^{<4026>}Acts 22:26 24:3 26:25). It is likely, therefore, that “Theophilus” was chief magistrate of some city in Greece or Asia Minor [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

4. that thou mightest know — “know thoroughly.”

has been instructed — orally instructed — literally, “catechized” or “catechetically taught,” at first as a catechumen or candidate for Christian baptism.

^{<4106>}LUKE 1:5-25.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORERUNNER.

5. Herod — (See on ^{<4088>}Matthew 2:1).

course of Abia — or Abijah; the eighth of the twenty-four orders of courses into which David divided the priests (see ^{<4341>}1 Chronicles 24:1,4,10). Of these courses only four returned after the captivity (^{<4528>}Ezra 2:34-39), which were again subdivided into twenty-four — retaining the ancient name and order of each. They took the whole temple service for a week each.

his wife was of the daughters of Aaron — The priests might marry into any tribe, but “it was most commendable of all to marry one of the priests’ line” [LIGHTFOOT].

6. commandments and ordinances — The one expressing their *moral* — the other their *ceremonial* — obedience [CALVIN and BENGEL], (Compare ^{<4317>}Ezekiel 11:20 ^{<4901>}Hebrews 9:1). It has been denied that any such distinction was known to the Jews and New Testament writers. But ^{<4123>}Mark 12:33, and other passages, put this beyond all reasonable doubt.

7. So with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Elkanah and Hannah, Manoah and his wife.

9. his lot was to burn incense — The part assigned to each priest in his week of service was decided by lot. Three were employed at the offering of incense — to remove the ashes of the former service; to bring in and place on the golden altar the pan filled with hot burning coals taken from the altar of burnt offering; and to sprinkle the incense on the hot coals; and, while the smoke of it ascended, to make intercession for the people. This was the

most distinguished part of the service (^{<688>}Revelation 8:3), and this was what fell to the lot of Zacharias at this time [LIGHTFOOT].

10. praying without — outside the court in front of the temple, where stood the altar of burnt offering; the men and women in separate courts, but the altar visible to all.

the time of incense — which was offered along with the morning and evening sacrifice of every day; a beautiful symbol of the acceptableness of the *sacrifice* offered on the altar of burnt offering, with coals from whose altar the incense was burnt (^{<682>}Leviticus 16:12,13). This again was a symbol of the “living sacrifice” of themselves and their services offered daily to God by the worshippers. Hence the language of ^{<600>}Psalms 141:2 ^{<688>}Revelation 8:3. But that the acceptance of this daily offering depended on the *expiatory virtue* presupposed in the burnt offering, and pointing to the one “sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor” (^{<482>}Ephesians 5:2), is evident from ^{<206>}Isaiah 6:6,7.

11. right side — the south side, between the altar and the candlestick, Zacharias being on the north side, in front of the altar, while offering incense [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. But why there? The right was the favorable side (^{<233>}Matthew 25:33) [SCHOTTGEN and WESTEIN in MEYER]; compare ^{<405>}Mark 16:5.

13. thy prayer is heard — doubtless for *offspring*, which by some presentiment he even yet had not despaired of.

John — the same as “Johanan,” so frequent in the Old Testament, meaning “Jehovah’s gracious gift.”

14. shall rejoice — so they did (^{<658>}Luke 1:58,66); but the meaning rather is, “shall have cause to rejoice” — it would prove to many a joyful event.

15. great in the sight of the Lord — nearer to Him in official standing than all the prophets. (See ^{<410>}Matthew 11:10,11.)

drink neither wine nor strong drink — that is, shall be a *Nazarite*, or “a separated one” (^{<002>}Numbers 6:2, etc.). As the leper was the living symbol of *sin*, so was the Nazarite of *holiness*; nothing inflaming was to cross his lips; no razor to come on his head; no ceremonial defilement to be contracted. Thus was he to be “holy to the Lord [ceremonially] all the days of his separation.” This separation was in ordinary cases temporary and voluntary: only *Samson* (^{<073>}Judges 13:7), *Samuel* (^{<001>}1 Samuel 1:11), and *John Baptist* were Nazarites from the womb. It was fitting that the utmost severity of legal consecration should be seen in Christ’s forerunner. HE was the REALITY and PERFECTION of the Nazarite without the symbol,

which perished in that living realization of it: “Such an High Priest became us, who was SEPARATE FROM SINNERS” (^{<3026>}Hebrews 7:26).

filled with the Holy Ghost, from ... womb — a holy vessel for future service.

16, 17. A religious and moral *reformer*, Elijah-like, he should be (^{<3006>}Malachi 4:6, where the “turning of the people’s heart to the Lord” is borrowed from ^{<11852>}1 Kings 18:37). In both cases their success, though *great*, was *partial* — the *nation* was not gained.

17. before him — before “the Lord their God” (^{<4016>}Luke 1:16). By comparing this with ^{<3006>}Malachi 3:1 and ^{<2306>}Isaiah 40:3, it is plainly “Jehovah” in the flesh of Messiah [CALVIN and OLSHAUSEN] before whom John was to go as a *herald* to announce His approach, and a *pioneer* to prepare His way.

in the spirit — after the model.

and power of Elias — not his miraculous power, for John did no miracle” (^{<4041>}John 10:41), but his power “turning the heart,” or with like success in his ministry. Both fell on degenerate times; both witnessed fearlessly for God; neither appeared much save in the direct exercise of their ministry; both were at the head of schools of disciples; the success of both was similar.

fathers to the children — taken *literally*, this denotes the *restoration of parental fidelity* [MEYER and others], the decay of which is the beginning of religious and social corruption — one prominent feature of the coming revival being put for the whole. But what follows, explanatory of this, rather suggests a *figurative* sense. If “the disobedient” be “the children,” and to “the fathers” belongs “the wisdom of the just” [BENGEL], the meaning will be, “he shall bring back the ancient spirit of the nation into their degenerate children” [CALVIN, etc.]. So Elijah invoked “*the God Abraham, Isaac, and Israel*,” when seeking to “turn their heart back again” (^{<11836>}1 Kings 18:36,37).

to make ready, etc. — more clearly, “to make ready for the Lord a prepared people,” to have in readiness a people prepared to welcome Him. Such preparation requires, in every age *and every soul*, an operation corresponding to the Baptist’s ministry.

18. Whereby, etc. — Mary believed what was far harder without a sign. Abraham, though older, and doubtless Sarah, too, when the same promise was made to him, “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief,

but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” This was that in which Zacharias failed.

19. Gabriel — signifying “man of God,” the same who appeared to Daniel at the time of incense (^{<2129>}Daniel 9:21) and to Mary (^{<2125>}Luke 1:26).

stand, etc. — as his attendant (compare ^{<1170>}1 Kings 17:1).

20. dumb — speechless.

not able — deprived of the power of speech (^{<2164>}Luke 1:64). He asked a *sign*, and now he got it.

until the day that these things shall be performed — See on ^{<2164>}Luke 1:64.

21. waited — to receive from him the usual benediction (^{<2123>}Numbers 6:23-27).

tarried so long — It was not usual to tarry long, lest it should be thought vengeance had stricken the people’s representative for something wrong [LIGHTFOOT].

22. speechless — dumb, and deaf also (see ^{<2162>}Luke 1:62).

24. hid five months — till the event was put beyond doubt and became apparent.

^{<2125>}LUKE 1:26-38.

ANNUNCIATION OF CHRIST.

(See on ^{<2118>}Matthew 1:18-21).

26. sixth month — of Elisabeth’s time.

Joseph, of the house of David — (See on ^{<2116>}Matthew 1:16).

28. highly favored — a word only once used elsewhere (^{<2106>}Ephesians 1:6, “made accepted”): compare ^{<2131>}Luke 1:30, “Thou hast found favor with God.” The mistake of the *Vulgate*’s rendering, “full of grace,” has been taken abundant advantage of by the Romish Church. As the mother of our Lord, she was the most “blessed among women” in external distinction; but let them listen to the Lord’s own words. “Nay, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.” (See on ^{<2127>}Luke 11:27).

31. The angel purposely conforms his language to Isaiah's famous prophecy (²³⁷⁴Isaiah 7:14) [CALVIN].

32, 33. This is but an echo of the sublime prediction in ²³⁰⁶Isaiah 9:6,7.

34. **How**, etc. — not the unbelief of Zacharias, "Whereby shall I know this?" but, taking the fact for granted, "*How is it to be*, so contrary to the unbroken law of human birth?" Instead of reproof, therefore, her question is answered in mysterious detail.

35. **Holy Ghost** — (See on ⁴⁰¹⁸Matthew 1:18).

power of the highest — the immediate energy of the Godhead conveyed by the Holy Ghost.

overshadow — a word suggesting how gentle, while yet efficacious, would be this Power [BENGEL]; and its mysterious secrecy, withdrawn, as if by a cloud, from human scrutiny [CALVIN].

that holy thing born of thee — that holy Offspring of thine.

therefore ... Son of God — That Christ is the Son of God in His divine and eternal nature is clear from all the New Testament; yet here we see that Sonship efflorescing into human and palpable manifestation by His being born, through "the power of the Highest," an Infant of days. We must neither think of a *double* Sonship, as some do, harshly and without all ground, nor deny what is here plainly expressed, the connection between His human birth and His proper personal Sonship.

36. **thy cousin** — "relative," but how near the word says not.

conceived, etc. — This was to Mary an *unsought* sign, in reward of her faith.

37. **For**, etc. — referring to what was said by the angel to Abraham in like case (⁰¹⁸⁴Genesis 18:14), to strengthen her faith.

38. Marvellous faith in *such* circumstances!

⁴¹¹³LUKE 1:39-56.

VISIT OF MARY TO ELISABETH.

39. **hill country** — the mountainous tract running along the middle of Judea, from north to south [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

with haste — transported with the announcement to herself and with the tidings, now first made known to her, of Elisabeth's condition.

a city of Juda — probably Hebron (see ^{<040>}Joshua 20:7 21:11).

40. saluted Elisabeth — now returned from her seclusion (^{<024>}Luke 1:24).

41. babe leaped — From ^{<044>}Luke 1:44 it is plain that this maternal sensation was something extraordinary — a sympathetic emotion of the unconscious babe, at the presence of the mother of his Lord.

42-44. What beautiful superiority to *envy* have we here! High as was the distinction conferred upon herself, Elisabeth loses sight of it altogether, in presence of one more honored still; upon whom, with her unborn Babe, in an ecstasy of inspiration, she pronounces a benediction, feeling it to be a wonder unaccountable that “the mother of her Lord should come to *her*.” “Turn this as we will, we shall never be able to see the propriety of calling an unborn child “Lord,” but by supposing Elisabeth, like the prophets of old, enlightened to perceive the Messiah's *Divine nature*” [OLSHAUSEN].

43. “The mother of my Lord” — but not “*My Lady*” (compare ^{<020>}Luke 20:42 ^{<018>}John 20:28)” [BENGEL].

45. An additional benediction on the Virgin for her implicit faith, in tacit and delicate contrast with her own husband.

for — rather, as in the *Margin*, “that.”

46-55. A magnificent canticle, in which the strain of Hannah's ancient song, in like circumstances, is caught up, and just slightly modified and sublimed. Is it unnatural to suppose that the spirit of the blessed Virgin had been drawn beforehand into mysterious sympathy with the ideas and the tone of this hymn, so that when the life and fire of inspiration penetrated her whole soul it spontaneously swept the chorus of this song, enriching the Hymnal of the Church with that spirit-stirring canticle which has resounded ever since from its temple walls? In both songs, those holy women, filled with wonder to behold “the proud, the mighty, the rich,” passed by, and, in their persons the lowliest chosen to usher in the greatest events, sing of this as no capricious movement, but *a great law of the kingdom of God*, by which He delights to “*put down the mighty from their seats and exalt them of low degree*.” In both songs the strain dies away on CHRIST; in Hannah's under the name of “Jehovah's King” — to whom, through all His line, from David onwards to Himself, He will “give strength”; His “Anointed,” whose horn He will exalt (^{<020>}1 Samuel 2:10); in the Virgin's song, it is as the “Help” promised to Israel by all the prophets.

My soul ... my spirit — “all that is within me” (^{<19A3B>}Psalm 103:1).

47. my Savior — Mary, poor heart, never dreamt, we see, of her own “immaculate conception” — in the offensive language of the Romanists — any more than of her own immaculate life.

54. holpen — Compare ^{<1999F>}Psalm 89:19, “I have laid *help* on One that is mighty.”

55. As he spake to our fathers — *The sense requires this clause to be read as a parenthesis.* (Compare ^{<3102I>}Micah 7:20 ^{<998B>}Psalm 98:3).

for ever — the perpetuity of Messiah’s kingdom, as expressly promised by the angel (^{<01E3>}Luke 1:33).

56. abode with her about three months — What an honored roof was that which, for such a period, overarched these cousins! and yet not a trace of it is now to be seen, while the progeny of those two women — the one but the honored pioneer of the other — have made the world new.

returned to her own house — at Nazareth, *after which took place what is recorded in* ^{<0118>}Matthew 1:18-25.

^{<0157>}LUKE 1:57-80.

BIRTH AND CIRCUMCISION OF JOHN — SONG OF ZACHARIAS AND PROGRESS OF THE CHILD.

59. eighth day — The law (^{<0172>}Genesis 17:12) was observed, even though the eighth day after birth should be a sabbath (^{<0123>}John 7:23; and see ^{<018F>}Philippians 3:5).

called him — literally, “were calling” — that is, (as we should say) “were for calling.” The *naming* of children at baptism has its origin in the Jewish custom at circumcision (^{<012B>}Genesis 21:3,4); and the names of Abram and Sarai were changed at its first performance (^{<017E>}Genesis 17:5,15).

62. made signs — showing he was deaf, as well as dumb.

63. marvelled all — at his giving the same name, not knowing of any communication between them on the subject.

64. mouth opened immediately — on thus palpably showing his full faith in the vision, for disbelieving which he had been struck dumb (^{<0113>}Luke 1:13,20).

65. fear — religious awe; under the impression that God’s hand was specially in these events (compare ^{<186>}Luke 5:26 7:16 8:37).

66. hand of the Lord was with him — by special tokens marking him out as one destined to some great work (^{<186>}1 Kings 18:46 ^{<186>}2 Kings 3:15 ^{<186>}Acts 11:21).

68-79. There is not a word in this noble burst of divine song about his own child; like Elisabeth losing sight entirely of self, in the glory of a Greater than both.

Lord God of Israel — the ancient covenant God of the peculiar people.

visited and redeemed — that is, in order to redeem: returned after long absence, and broken His long silence (see ^{<186>}Matthew 15:31). In the Old Testament, God is said to “visit” chiefly for *judgment*, in the New Testament for *mercy*. Zacharias would, as yet, have but imperfect views of such “visiting and redeeming,” “saving from and delivering out of the hand of enemies” (^{<186>}Luke 1:71,74). But this Old Testament phraseology, used at first with a *lower* reference, is, when viewed in the light of a loftier and more comprehensive kingdom of God, equally adapted to express the most spiritual conceptions of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

69. horn of salvation — that is “strength of salvation,” or “mighty Salvation,” meaning the Savior Himself, whom Simeon calls “Thy Salvation” (^{<186>}Luke 2:30). The metaphor is taken from those animals whose *strength* is in their horns (^{<186>}Psalms 18:2 75:10 132:17).

house of ... David — *This shows that Mary must have been known to be of the royal line, independent of Joseph; of whom Zacharias, if he knew anything, could not know that after this he would recognize Mary.*

70. since the world began — or, “from the earliest period.”

72. the mercy promised ... his holy covenant ...

73. the oath ... to ... Abraham — The whole work and kingdom of Messiah is represented as a mercy pledged on oath to Abraham and his seed, to be realized at an appointed period; and at length, in “the fullness of the time,” gloriously made good. Hence, not only “*grace*,” or the *thing* promised; but “*truth*,” or *fidelity* to the promise, are said to “come by Jesus Christ” (^{<186>}John 1:17).

74, 75. That he would grant us, etc. — How comprehensive is the view here given!

(1) The *purpose* of all redemption — “that we should *serve* Him” — that is, “the Lord God of Israel” (^{<4168>}Luke 1:68). The word signifies *religious* service distinctively — “the *priesthood* of the New Testament” [BENGE].

(2) The *nature* of this service — “in holiness and righteousness before Him” (^{<4175>}Luke 1:75) — or, as in His presence (compare ^{<4163>}Psalms 56:13).

(3) Its *freedom* — “being delivered out of the hand of our enemies.”

(4) Its *fearlessness* — “might serve Him without fear.”

(5) Its *duration* — “all the days of our life.”

76-79. Here are the dying echoes of this song; and very beautiful are these closing notes — like the setting sun, shorn indeed of its noontide radiance, but skirting the horizon with a wavy and quivering light — as of molten gold — on which the eye delights to gaze, till it disappears from the view. The song passes not here from Christ to John, but only from Christ direct to Christ as heralded by His forerunner.

thou child — not “my son” — this child’s relation to himself being lost in his relation to a Greater than either.

prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before him — that is, “the Highest.” As “the Most High” is an epithet in Scripture only. of *the supreme God*, it is inconceivable that inspiration should apply this term, as here undeniably, to Christ, unless He were “God over all blessed for ever” (^{<4161>}Romans 9:5).

77. to give knowledge of salvation — To sound the note of a *needed* and *provided* “salvation” was the noble office of John, above all that preceded him; as it is that of all subsequent ministers of Christ; but infinitely loftier was it to be the “Salvation” itself (^{<4169>}Luke 1:69 and ^{<4170>}Luke 2:30).

by the remission of ... sins — This stamps at once the *spiritual* nature of the salvation here intended, and explains ^{<4171>}Luke 1:71,74.

78. Through the tender mercy of our God — the sole spring, necessarily, of all salvation *for sinners*.

dayspring from on high — either *Christ Himself*, as the “Sun of righteousness” (^{<4102>}Malachi 4:2), arising on a dark world [BEZA, GROTIUS, CALVIN, DE WETTE, OLSHAUSEN, etc.], or the light which He sheds. The sense, of course, is one.

79. (Compare ^{<2000>}Isaiah 9:2 ^{<4003>}Matthew 4:13-17). “That St. Luke, of all the Evangelists, should have obtained and recorded these inspired utterances of Zacharias and Mary — is in accordance with his character and habits, as indicated in ^{<4001>}Luke 1:1-4” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

80. And the child, etc. — “a concluding paragraph, indicating, in strokes full of grandeur, the bodily and mental development of the Baptist; and bringing his life up to the period of his public appearance” [OLSHAUSEN].

in the deserts — probably “the wilderness of Judea” (^{<4001>}Matthew 3:1), whither he had retired early in life, in the *Nazarite* spirit, and where, free from rabbinical influences and alone with God, his spirit would be educated, like Moses in the desert, for his future high vocation.

his showing unto Israel — the presentation of himself before his nation, as Messiah’s forerunner.

CHAPTER 2

LUKE 2:1-7.

BIRTH OF CHRIST.

1. Caesar Augustus — the first of the Roman emperors.

all the world — so the vast Roman Empire was termed.

taxed — enrolled, or register themselves.

2. first ... when Cyrenius, etc. — a very perplexing verse, inasmuch as Cyrenius, or Quirinus, appears not to have been governor of Syria for about ten years after the birth of Christ, and the “taxing” under his administration was what led to the insurrection mentioned in ^{<415>}Acts 5:37. That there was a taxing, however, of the whole Roman Empire under Augustus, is now admitted by all; and candid critics, even of skeptical tendency, are ready to allow that there is not likely to be any real inaccuracy in the statement of our Evangelist. Many superior scholars would render the words thus, “This registration was *previous* to Cyrenius being governor of Syria” — as the word “first” is rendered in ^{<415>}John 1:15 15:18. In this case, of course, the difficulty vanishes. But it is perhaps better to suppose, with others, that the registration may have been ordered with a view to the taxation, about the time of our Lord’s birth, though the taxing itself — an obnoxious measure in Palestine — was not carried out till the time of Quirinus.

3. went ... to his own city — the city of his *extraction*, according to the Jewish custom, not of his *abode*, which was the usual Roman method.

4, 5. Not only does Joseph, who was of the royal line, go to Bethlehem (^{<415>}1 Samuel 16:1), but Mary too — not from choice surely in her condition, but, probably, for personal enrollment, as herself an heiress.

5. espoused wife — now, without doubt, taken home to him, as related in ^{<415>}Matthew 1:18 25:6.

6. while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered — Mary had up to this time been living at the wrong place for Messiah’s birth. A little longer stay at Nazareth, and the prophecy would have failed. But lo! with no intention certainly on her part, much less of Caesar Augustus, to fulfill the prophecy, she is brought from Nazareth to

Bethlehem, and at that nick of time her period arrives, and her Babe is born (^{<B23>}Psalm 118:23). “Every creature walks blindfold; only He that dwells in light knows whether they go” [BISHOP HALL].

7. first-born — So ^{<A25>}Matthew 1:25,26; yet the law, in speaking of the first-born, regardeth not whether any were born *after* or no, but only that none were born *before* [LIGHTFOOT].

wrapt him ... laid him — The mother herself did so. Had she then none to help her? It would seem so (^{<A22>}2 Corinthians 8:9).

a manger — the manger, the bench to which the horses’ heads were tied, on which their food could rest [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

no room in the inn — a square erection, open inside, where travelers put up, and whose rear parts were used as stables. The ancient tradition, that our Lord was born in a grotto or cave, is quite consistent with this, the country being rocky. In Mary’s condition the journey would be a slow one, and ere they arrived, the inn would be fully occupied — affecting anticipation of the reception He was throughout to meet with (^{<A11>}John 1:11).

Wrapt in His swaddling — bands, And in His manger laid, The hope and glory of all lands Is come to the world’s aid. No peaceful home upon His cradle smiled, Guests rudely went and came where slept the royal Child.

KEBLE

But some “guests went and came” *not* “rudely,” but reverently. God sent visitors of His own to pay court to the new-born King.

^{<A28>}LUKE 2:8-20.

ANGELIC ANNUNCIATION TO THE SHEPHERDS — THEIR VISIT TO THE NEWBORN BABE.

8. abiding in the fields — staying there, probably in huts or tents.

watch ... by night — or, night watches, taking their turn of watching. From about passover time in April until autumn, the flocks pastured constantly in the open fields, the shepherds lodging there all that time. (From this it seems plain that the period of the year usually assigned to our Lord’s birth is too late). Were these shepherds chosen to have the first sight of the blessed Babe without any respect of their own state of mind? That, at least, is not God’s way. “No doubt, like Simeon (^{<A25>}Luke 2:25), they were among the waiters for the Consolation of Israel” [OLSHAUSEN]; and, if the

simplicity of their rustic minds, their quiet occupation, the stillness of the midnight hours, and the amplitude of the deep blue vault above them for the heavenly music which was to fill their ear, pointed them out as fit recipients for the first tidings of an Infant Savior, the congenial meditations and conversations by which, we may suppose, they would beguile the tedious hours would perfect their preparation for the unexpected visit. Thus was Nathanael engaged, all alone but not unseen, under the fig tree, in unconscious preparation for his first interview with Jesus. (See on ^{<1148>}John 1:48). So was the rapt seer on his lonely rock “in the spirit on the Lord’s Day,” little thinking that this was his preparation for hearing behind him the trumpet voice of the Son of man (^{<1111>}Revelation 1:10, etc.). But if the shepherds in His immediate neighborhood had the *first*, the sages from afar had the *next* sight of the new-born King. Even so still, simplicity first, science next, finds its way to Christ, whom

In quiet ever and in shade Shepherds and Sage may find — They, who have bowed untaught to Nature’s sway, And they, who follow Truth along her star-pav’d way. KEBLE

9. glory of the Lord — “the brightness or glory which is represented as encompassing all heavenly visions” [OLSHAUSEN].

sore afraid — So it ever was (^{<2107>}Daniel 10:7,8 ^{<1112>}Luke 1:12 ^{<1117>}Revelation 1:17). Men have never felt easy with the invisible world laid suddenly open to their gaze. It was never meant to be permanent; a momentary purpose was all it was intended to serve.

10. to all people — “to the whole people,” that is, of Israel; to be by them afterwards opened up to the whole world. (See on ^{<1114>}Luke 2:14).

11. unto you is born — you shepherds, Israel, mankind [BENGEL]. Compare ^{<2106>}Isaiah 9:6, “Unto us a Child is born.” It is a *birth* — “The Word is *made flesh*” (^{<1114>}John 1:14). When? “*This day*.” Where? “*In the city of David*” — in the right *line* and at the right “spot”; where prophecy bade us look for Him, and faith accordingly expected Him. How dear to us should be these *historic moorings* of our faith! With the loss of them, all substantial Christianity is lost. By means of them how many have been kept from making shipwreck, and attained to a certain external admiration of Him, ere yet they have fully “beheld His glory.”

a Savior — not One who *shall* be a Savior, but “*born a Savior*.”

Christ the Lord — “magnificent appellation!” [BENGEL]. “This is the only place where these words come together; and I see no way of understanding this “Lord” but as corresponding to the *Hebrew* JEHOVAH” [ALFORD].

12. a sign — “the sign.”

the babe — “a Babe.”

a manger — “the manger.” The sign was to consist, it seems, solely in the overpowering *contrast* between the things just said of Him and the lowly condition in which they would find Him — Him whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, “ye shall find a Babe”; whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, “wrapt in swaddling bands”; the “Savior, Christ the Lord,” lying in a manger! Thus early were these amazing contrasts, which are His chosen style, held forth. (See ^{<4082>} Corinthians 8:9.)

13. suddenly — as if only waiting till their fellow had done.

with the angel — who retires not, but is joined by others, come to seal and to celebrate the tidings he has brought.

heavenly host — or “army,” an *army* celebrating *peace!* [BENGL] “transferring the occupation of their exalted station to this poor earth, which so seldom resounds with the pure praise of God” [OLSHAUSEN]; to let it be known how this event is regarded in *heaven* and should be regarded on *earth*.

14. Glory, etc. — brief but transporting hymn — not only in articulate human speech, for our benefit, but in tunable measure, in the form of a *Hebrew* parallelism of two complete clauses, and a third one only amplifying the second, and so without a connecting “and.” The “*glory to God*,” which the new-born “Savior” was to bring, is the first note of this sublime hymn: to this answers, in the second clause, the “*peace on earth*,” of which He was to be “the Prince” (^{<2396>} Isaiah 9:6) — probably sung responsively by the celestial choir; while quickly follows the glad echo of this note, probably by a third detachment of the angelic choristers — “*good will to men*.” “They say not, glory to God in *heaven*, where angels are, but, using a rare expression, “*in the highest* [heavens],” whither angels aspire not,” (^{<3005>} Hebrews 1:3,4) [BENGL]. “Peace” with God is the grand necessity of a fallen world. To bring in this, and all other peace in its train, was the prime errand of the Savior to this earth, and, along with it, Heaven’s whole “good will to men” — the divine complacency on a new footing — descends to rest upon men, as upon the Son Himself, in whom God is “well-pleased.” (^{<4087>} Matthew 3:17, the same word as here.)

15. Let us go, etc. — lovely simplicity of devoutness and faith this! They are not taken up with the angels, the glory that invested them, and the lofty strains with which they filled the air. Nor do they say, Let us go and see *if*

this be true — they have no misgivings. But “Let us go and see this thing *which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.*” Does not this confirm the view given on ^{<1018>}Luke 2:8 of the spirit of these humble men?

16. with haste — Compare ^{<1019>}Luke 1:39 ^{<1018>}Matthew 28:8 (“did run”); ^{<1018>}John 4:28 (“left her water-pot,” as they do their flocks, in a transport).

found Mary, etc. — “mysteriously guided by the Spirit to the right place through the obscurity of the night” [OLSHAUSEN].

a manger — “*the manger,*” as before.

17. made known abroad — before their return (^{<1020>}Luke 2:20), and thus were the first evangelists [BENGEL].

20. glorifying and praising God, etc. — The latter word, used of the song of the angels (^{<1023>}Luke 2:13), and in ^{<1037>}Luke 19:37, and ^{<1045>}Luke 24:53, leads us to suppose that theirs was a song too, probably some canticle from the Psalter — meet vehicle for the swelling emotions of their simple hearts at what “they had *heard and seen.*”

^{<1021>}LUKE 2:21.

CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

Here only recorded, and even here merely alluded to, for the sake of the name then given to the holy Babe, “JESUS,” or SAVIOR (^{<1021>}Matthew 1:21 ^{<1033>}Acts 13:23). Yet in this naming of Him “Savior,” in the act of circumcising Him, which was a symbolical and bloody removal of the body of sin, we have a tacit intimation that they “had need” — as John said of His Baptism — rather to be circumcised by Him “with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body [of the sins] of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (^{<1021>}Colossians 2:11), and that He only “suffered it to be so, because thus it became Him to fulfill all righteousness” (^{<1015>}Matthew 3:15). Still the circumcision of Christ had a profound bearing on His own work — by few rightly apprehended. For since “he that is circumcised is a *debtor to do the whole law*” (^{<1018>}Galatians 5:3), Jesus thus bore about with Him in His very flesh the seal of a voluntary obligation to do the whole law — by Him only possible in the flesh since the fall. And as He was “made under the law” for no ends of His own, but only “*to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*” (^{<1018>}Galatians 4:4,5), the obedience to which

His circumcision pledged Him was a *redeeming obedience* — that of a “Savior.” And, finally, as “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” by “being made *a curse for us*” (^{<B13>}Galatians 3:13), we must regard Him, in His circumcision, as brought under a palpable pledge to be “*obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (^{<B18>}Philippians 2:8).

^{<B22>}LUKE 2:22-40.

PURIFICATION OF THE VIRGIN — PRESENTATION OF THE BABE IN THE TEMPLE-SCENE THERE WITH SIMEON AND ANNA.

22, 24. her purification — Though the most and best copies read “their,” it was the mother only who needed purifying from the legal uncleanness of childbearing. “The days” of this purification for a male child were forty in all (^{<B12>}Leviticus 12:2,4), on the expiry of which the mother was required to offer a lamb for a burnt offering, and a turtle dove or a young pigeon for a sin offering. If she could not afford a lamb, the mother had to bring another turtle dove or young pigeon; and, if even this was beyond her means, then a portion of fine flour, but without the usual fragrant accompaniments of oil and frankincense, as it represented a sin offering (^{<B16>}Leviticus 12:6-8 5:7-11). From the intermediate offering of “a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons,” we gather that Joseph and the Virgin were in poor circumstances (^{<B20>}2 Corinthians 8:9), though not in abject poverty. Being a first-born male, they “bring him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.” All such had been claimed as “holy to the Lord,” or set apart to sacred uses, in memory of the deliverance of the first-born of Israel from destruction in Egypt, through the sprinkling of blood (^{<B23>}Exodus 13:2). In lieu of these, however, one whole tribe, that of Levi, was accepted, and set apart to occupations exclusively sacred (^{<B21>}Numbers 3:11-38); and whereas there were two hundred seventy-three fewer Levites than first-born of all Israel on the first reckoning, each of these first-born was to be redeemed by the payment of five shekels, yet not without being “*presented* (or brought) *unto the Lord*,” in token of His rightful claim to them and their service (^{<B24>}Numbers 3:44-47 18:15,16). It was in obedience to this “law of Moses,” that the Virgin presented her babe unto the Lord, “in the east gate of the court called Nicanor’s Gate, where she herself would be sprinkled by the priest with the blood of her sacrifice” [LIGHTFOOT]. By that Babe, in due time, we were to be redeemed, “not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (^{<B25>}1 Peter 1:18,19), and the consuming of the mother’s burnt offering, and the sprinkling of her with

the blood of her sin offering, were to find their abiding realization in the “living sacrifice” of the Christian mother herself, in the fullness of a “heart sprinkled from an evil conscience,” by “the blood which cleanseth from all sin.”

25. just — upright in his moral character.

devout — of a religious frame of spirit.

waiting for the consolation of Israel — a beautiful title of the coming Messiah, here intended.

the Holy Ghost was — supernaturally.

upon him — Thus was the Spirit, after a dreary absence of nearly four hundred years, returning to the Church, to quicken expectation, and prepare for coming events.

26. revealed by the Holy Ghost — implying, beyond all doubt, the personality of the Spirit.

should see not death till he had seen — “sweet antithesis!” [BENGEL]. How would the one sight gild the gloom of the other! He was, probably, by this time, advanced in years.

27, 28. The Spirit guided him to the temple at the very moment when the Virgin was about to present Him to the Lord.

28. took him up in his arms — immediately recognizing in the child, with unhesitating certainty, the promised Messiah, without needing Mary to inform him of what had happened to her. [OLSHAUSEN]. The remarkable act of taking the babe in his arms must not be overlooked. It was as if he said, “This is all my salvation and all my desire” (^{412B}2 Samuel 23:5).

29. Lord — “Master,” a word rarely used in the New Testament, and selected here with peculiar propriety, when the aged saint, feeling that his last object in wishing to live had now been attained, only awaited his Master’s word of command to “depart.”

now lettest, etc. — more clearly, “now Thou art releasing Thy servant”; a patient yet reverential mode of expressing a desire to depart.

30. seen thy salvation — Many saw this child, nay, the full-grown “man, Christ Jesus,” who never saw in Him “God’s Salvation.” This estimate of an object of sight, an unconscious, helpless babe, was pure faith. He “beheld His glory” (^{404B}John 1:14). In another view it was *prior faith* rewarded by *present sight*.

31, 32. all people — all the peoples, mankind at large.

a light to the Gentiles — then in thick darkness.

glory of thy people Israel — already Thine, and now, in the believing portion of it, to be so more gloriously than ever. It will be observed that this “swan-like song, bidding an eternal farewell to this terrestrial life” [OLSHAUSEN], takes a more comprehensive view of the kingdom of Christ than that of Zacharias, though the kingdom they sing of is one.

34, 35. set — appointed.

fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against — Perhaps the former of these phrases expresses the two stages of temporary “fall of many in Israel” through unbelief, during our Lord’s earthly career, and the subsequent “rising again” of *the same persons* after the effusion of the Spirit at pentecost threw a new light to them on the whole subject; while the latter clause describes the determined enemies of the Lord Jesus. Such opposite views of Christ are taken from age to age.

35. Yea, etc. — “Blessed as thou art among women, thou shalt have thine own deep share of the struggles and sufferings which this Babe is to occasion” — pointing not only to the continued obloquy and rejection of this Child of hers, those agonies of His which she was to witness at the cross, and her desolate condition thereafter, but to dreadful alternations of faith and unbelief, of hope and fear regarding Him, which she would have to pass through.

that the thoughts, etc. — Men’s views and decisions regarding Christ are a mirror in which the very “thoughts of their hearts” are seen.

36. Anna — or, Hannah.

a prophetess — another evidence that “the last times” in which God was to “pour out His Spirit upon all flesh” were at hand.

of the tribe of Aser — one of the ten tribes, of whom many were not carried captive, and not a few reunited themselves to Judah after the return from Babylon. The distinction of tribes, though practically destroyed by the captivity, was well enough known up to their final dispersion (^{<4026>}Romans 11:1 ^{<3074>}Hebrews 7:14); nor is it now entirely lost.

lived, etc. — she had lived seven years with her husband (^{<4026>}Luke 2:36), and been a widow eighty-four years; so that if she married at the earliest marriageable age, twelve years, she could not at this time be less than a hundred three years old.

37. departed not from the temple — was found there at all stated hours of the day, and even during the night services of the temple watchmen (^{<D01>}Psalm 134:1,2), “serving God with fastings and prayer.” (See ^{<S05>}1 Timothy 5:5, suggested by this.)

38. coming in — “presenting herself.” She had been there already but now is found “standing by,” as Simeon’s testimony to the blessed Babe died away, ready to take it up “in turn” (as the word rendered “likewise” here means).

to all them, etc. — the sense is, “to all them in Jerusalem that were looking for redemption” — saying in effect, In that Babe are wrapt up all your expectations. If this was at the hour of prayer, when numbers flocked to the temple, it would account for her having such an audience as the words imply [ALFORD].

39. Nothing is more difficult than to fix the precise order in which the visit of the Magi, with the flight into and return from Egypt (^{<M03>}Matthew 2:13-23), are to be taken, in relation to the circumcision and presentation of Christ in the temple, here recorded. It is perhaps best to leave this in the obscurity in which we find it, as the result of two independent, though if we knew all, easily reconcilable narratives.

40. His mental development kept pace with His bodily, and “the grace of God,” the divine favor, rested manifestly and increasingly upon Him. See ^{<L05>}Luke 2:52.

^{<L01>}LUKE 2:41-52.

FIRST CONSCIOUS VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

“Solitary flowered out of the wonderful enclosed garden of the thirty years, plucked precisely there where the swollen bud, at a *distinctive crisis* (at twelve years of age), bursts into flower. To mark that is assuredly the design and the meaning of this record” [STIER].

42. went up — “were wont to go.” Though males only were required to go up to Jerusalem at the three annual festivals (^{<E234>}Exodus 23:14-17), devout women, when family duties permitted, went also, as did Hannah (^{<H007>}1 Samuel 1:7), and, as we here see, the mother of Jesus.

when twelve years old — At this age every Jewish boy was styled “a son of the law,” being put under a course of instruction and trained to fasting and attendance on public worship, besides being set to learn a trade. At this

age accordingly our Lord is taken up for the first time to Jerusalem, at the passover season, the chief of the three annual festivals. But oh, with what thoughts and feelings must this Youth have gone up! Long ere He beheld it, He had doubtless “loved the habitation of God’s house and the place where His honor dwelt” (^{<BIB>}Psalm 26:8), a love nourished, we may be sure, by that “word hid in His heart,” with which in afterlife He showed so perfect a familiarity. As the time for His first visit approached, could one’s ear have caught the breathings of His young soul, he might have heard Him whispering, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!” (^{<BIB>}Psalm 42:1 87:2 122:1,2). On catching the first view of “the city of their solemnities,” and high above all in it, “the place of God’s rest,” we hear Him saying to Himself, “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King: Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God doth shine” (^{<BIB>}Psalm 48:2 50:2). Of His feelings or actions during all the eight days of the feast not a word is said. As a devout child, in company with its parents, He would go through the services, keeping His thoughts to Himself. But methinks I hear Him, after the sublime services of that feast, saying to Himself, “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste” (^{<BIB>}Song of Solomon 2:3,4).

43. as they returned — If the duties of life must give place to worship, worship, in its turn, must give place to them. *Jerusalem* is good, but *Nazareth* is good, too; let him who neglects the one, on pretext of attending to the other, ponder this scene.

tarried behind ... Joseph and his mother knew not — Accustomed to the discretion and obedience of the lad [OLSHAUSEN], they might be thrown off their guard.

44. sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances — On these sacred journeys, whole villages and districts traveled in groups together, partly for protection, partly for company; and as the well-disposed would beguile the tediousness of the way by good discourse, to which the child Jesus would be no silent listener, they expect to find Him in such a group.

45, 46. After three sorrowing days, they find Him still in Jerusalem, not gazing on its architecture, or surveying its forms of busy life, but in the temple — not the “sanctuary” (as in ^{<BIB>}Luke 1:9), to which only the priests

had access, but in some one of the enclosures around it, where the rabbins, or “doctors,” taught their scholars.

46. hearing ... asking — The method of question and answer was the customary form of rabbinical teaching; teacher and learner becoming by turns questioner and answerer, as may be seen from their extant works. This would give full scope for all that “astonished them in His understanding and answers.” Not that He assumed the office of *teaching* — “His hour” for that “was not yet come,” and His equipment for that was not complete; for He had yet to “increase in wisdom” as well as “stature” (⁴⁰¹³Luke 2:52). In fact, the beauty of Christ’s example lies very much in His never at one stage of His life anticipating the duties of another. All would be in the style and manner of a learner, “opening His mouth and panting.” “His soul breaking for the longing that it had unto God’s judgments at all times” (⁴⁰¹⁴Psalm 119:20), and now more than ever before, when finding Himself for the first time in His Father’s house. Still there would be in *His questions* far more than in *their answers*; and if we may take the frivolous interrogatories with which they afterwards plied Him, about the woman that had seven husbands and such like, as a specimen of their present drivelling questions, perhaps we shall not greatly err, if we suppose that “the questions” which He now “asked them” in return were just the germs of those pregnant questions with which He astonished and silenced them in after years:

“What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? If David call Him Lord, how is He then his Son?” “Which is the first and great commandment?” “Who is my neighbor?”

49. about my Father’s business — literally, “in” or “at My Fathers,” that is, either “about My Father’s *affairs*,” or “in My Father’s *courts*” — where He dwells and is to be found — *about His hand*, so to speak. This latter shade of meaning, which includes the former, is perhaps the true one, Here He felt Himself *at home*, breathing His own proper air. His words convey a gentle rebuke of their obtuseness in requiring Him to *explain this*. “Once here, thought ye I should so readily hasten away? Let ordinary worshippers be content to keep the feast and be gone; but is this all ye have learnt of Me?” Methinks we are here let into the holy privacies of Nazareth; for what He says they *should* have known, He must have given them *ground* to know. She tells Him of the sorrow with which *His father* and she had sought Him. He speaks of *no Father but one*, saying, in effect, My Father has *not* been seeking Me; I have been with Him all this time; “the King hath brought me into His chambers ... His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me” (⁴²⁰⁰Song of Solomon 1:4 2:6). How is it that ye do not understand? (⁴⁰²⁰Mark 8:21).

50, 51. understood not — probably He had never expressly *said* as much, and so confounded them, though it was but the true interpretation of many things which they had seen and heard from Him at home. (See on ^{<B40>}John 14:4.) But lest it should be thought that now He threw off the filial yoke, and became His own Master henceforth, and theirs too, it is purposely added, “And He went down *with them*, and was *subject unto them*.” The marvel of this condescension lies in its coming after such a scene, and such an assertion of His higher Sonship; and the words are evidently meant to convey this. “From this time we have *no more mention of Joseph*. The next we hear is of his “mother and brethren” (^{<B12>}John 2:12); whence it is inferred, that between this time and the commencement of our Lord’s public life, *Joseph died*’ [ALFORD], having now served the double end of being the protector of our Lord’s Virgin — mother, and affording Himself the opportunity of presenting a matchless pattern of subjection to both parents.

52. See on ^{<B41>}Luke 2:40.

stature — or better, perhaps, as in the *Margin*, “age,” which implies the other. This is all the record we have of the next eighteen years of that wondrous life. What seasons of tranquil meditation over the lively oracles, and holy fellowship with His Father; what inlettings, on the one hand, of light, and love, and power from on high, and outgoings of filial supplication, freedom, love, and joy on the other, would these eighteen years contain! And would they not seem “but a few days” if they were so passed, however ardently He might long to be more directly “about His Father’s business?”

CHAPTER 3

LUKE 3:1-20.

PREACHING, BAPTISM, AND IMPRISONMENT OF JOHN.

(See on ^{<A0RE>}Matthew 3:1-12; ^{<A0R7>}Mark 6:17, etc.).

1, 2. Here the curtain of the New Testament is, as it were, drawn up, and the greatest of all epochs of the Church commences. Even our Lord's own age (^{<A0R3>}Luke 3:23) is determined by it [BENGE]. No such elaborate chronological precision is to be found elsewhere in the New Testament, and it comes fitly from him who claims it as the peculiar recommendation of his Gospel, that he had "accurately traced down all things from the first" (^{<A0R1>}Luke 1:3). Here, evidently, commences his proper narrative. Also see on ^{<A0RE>}Matthew 3:1.

the fifteenth year of Tiberius — reckoning from the period when he was admitted, three years before Augustus' death, to a share of the empire [WEBSTER and WILKINSON], about the end of the year of Rome 779, or about four years before the usual reckoning.

Pilate ... governor of Judea — His proper title was *Procurator*, but with more than the usual powers of that office. After holding it about ten years he was ordered to Rome, to answer to charges brought against him, but ere he arrived Tiberius died (A.D. 35), and soon after Pilate committed suicide.

Herod — (See on ^{<A0R4>}Mark 6:14).

Philip — a different and very superior Philip to the one whose wife Herodias went to live with Herod Antipas. (See ^{<A0R7>}Mark 6:17).

Iturea — to the northeast of Palestine; so called from Ishmael's son *Itur* or *Jetur* (^{<A0R1>}1 Chronicles 1:31), and anciently belonging to the half tribe of Manasseh.

Trachonitis — farther to the northeast, between Iturea and Damascus; a rocky district, infested by robbers, and committed by Augustus to Herod the Great to keep in order.

Abilene — still more to the northeast, so called from *Abila*, eighteen miles from Damascus [ROBINSON].

2. Annas and Caiaphas ... high priests — the former, though deposed, retained much of his influence, and, probably, as *sagan* or deputy, exercised much of the power of the high priesthood along with Caiaphas (^{<383>}John 18:13 ^{<406>}Acts 4:6). Both Zadok and Abiathar acted as high priests in David's time (^{<1055>}2 Samuel 15:35), and it seems to have become the fixed practice to have two (^{<1258>}2 Kings 25:18). (Also see on ^{<401>}Matthew 3:1.)

word of God came unto John — *Such formulas, of course, are never used when speaking of Jesus, because the divine nature manifested itself in Him not at certain isolated moments of His life. He was the one everlasting manifestation of the Godhead* — THE WORD [OLSHAUSEN].

5. Every valley, etc. — *levelling and smoothing*, obvious figures, the sense of which is in the first words of the proclamation, “*Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*”

6. all flesh, etc. — (quoted literally from the *Septuagint* of ^{<340>}Isaiah 40:5). The idea is that every obstruction shall be so removed as to reveal to the whole world the Salvation of God in Him whose name is the “Savior” (compare ^{<198>}Psalms 98:3 ^{<3110>}Isaiah 11:10 ^{<49>}6 ^{<52>}10 ^{<4123>}Luke 2:31,32 ^{<4137>}Acts 13:47).

10-14. What shall we do then? — to show the sincerity of our repentance. (Also see on ^{<4160>}Matthew 3:10.)

11. two coats — directed against the reigning *avarice*. (Also see on ^{<4130>}Matthew 3:10.)

12. publicans, etc. (Also see on ^{<4130>}Matthew 3:10.)

13. Exact no more, etc. — directed against that *extortion* which made the publicans a byword. (See on ^{<2912>}Luke 19:2; ^{<2918>}Luke 19:8). (Also see on ^{<4130>}Matthew 3:10.)

14. soldiers ... Do violence to none — The word signifies to “shake thoroughly,” and so to “intimidate,” probably in order to extort money or other property. (Also see on ^{<4130>}Matthew 3:10.)

accuse ... falsely — acting as informers vexatiously, on frivolous or false grounds.

content with your wages — “rations.” We may take this as a warning against mutiny, which the officers attempted to suppress by largesses and donations [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. And thus the “fruits” which would evidence their repentance were just resistance to the reigning sins,

particularly of the *class* to which the penitent belonged, and the manifestation of an opposite spirit.

15-17. whether he were the Christ — showing both how successful he had been in awakening the expectation of Messiah's immediate appearing, and the high estimation, and even reverence, which his own character commanded. (Also see on ^{<4080>}Matthew 3:10.)

16. John answered — either to the deputation from Jerusalem (see ^{<4019>}John 1:19, etc.), or on some other occasion, simply to remove impressions derogatory to his blessed Master which he knew to be taking hold of the popular mind. (Also see on ^{<4080>}Matthew 3:10.)

saying unto *them* all — in solemn protestation. So far from entertaining such a thought as laying claim to the honors of Messiahship, the meanest services I can render to that "Mightier than I that is coming after me," are too high an honor for me. Beautiful spirit, distinguishing this servant of Christ throughout!

one mightier than I — "the Mightier than I."

18. many other things, etc. — such as we read in ^{<4019>}John 1:29,33,34 3:27-36. (Also see on ^{<4082>}Matthew 3:12.)

19, 20. But Herod, etc. — See on ^{<4064>}Mark 6:14, etc. (Also see on ^{<4082>}Matthew 3:12.)

and for all the evils which Herod had done — important fact here only mentioned, showing how *thoroughgoing* was the fidelity of the Baptist to his royal hearer, and how strong must have been the workings of conscience in that slave of passion when, notwithstanding such plainness, he "did many things and heard John gladly" (^{<4063>}Mark 6:20,26).

20. Added yet, etc. — (Also see on ^{<4082>}Matthew 3:12).

^{<4082>}LUKE 3:21, 22.

BAPTISM OF AND DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT UPON JESUS.

(See on ^{<4083>}Matthew 3:13-17.)

21. when all the people were baptized — that He might not seem to be merely one of the crowd. Thus, as He rode into Jerusalem upon an ass, "*whereon yet never man sat*" (^{<4083>}Luke 19:30), and lay in a sepulcher

“*wherein was never man yet laid*” (^{<394>}John 19:41), so in His baptism He would be “*separate from sinners.*”

^{<423>}LUKE 3:23-38.

GENEALOGY OF JESUS.

23. he began to be about thirty — that is, “was about entering on His thirtieth year.” So our translators have taken the word (and so CALVIN, BEZA, BLOOMFIELD, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, etc.): but “was about thirty years of age when He began [His ministry],” makes better *Greek*, and is probably the true sense [BENGE, OLSHAUSEN, DE WETTE, MEYER, ALFORD, etc.]. At this age the priests entered on their office (^{<404B>}Numbers 4:3).

being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, etc. — Have we in this genealogy, as well as in Matthew’s, the line of *Joseph*? or is this the line of *Mary*? — a point on which there has been great difference of opinion and much acute discussion. Those who take the *former* opinion contend that it is the natural sense of this verse, and that no other would have been thought of but for its supposed improbability and the uncertainty which it seems to throw over our Lord’s real descent. But it is liable to another difficulty; namely, that in this case Matthew makes *Jacob*, while Luke makes “*Heli*,” to be Joseph’s father; and though the same man had often more than one name, we ought not to resort to that supposition, in such a case as this, without necessity. And then, though the descent of Mary from David would be liable to no real doubt, even though we had no table of her line preserved to us (see, for example, ^{<406>}Luke 1:2-32, and see on ^{<405>}Luke 2:5), still it does seem unlikely — we say not incredible — that two genealogies of our Lord should be preserved to us, neither of which gives his *real* descent. Those who take the *latter* opinion, that we have here the line of *Mary*, as in Matthew that of *Joseph* — here His *real*, there His *reputed* line — explain the statement about Joseph, that he

was “*the son of Heli*,” to mean that he was his *son-in-law*, as the husband of his daughter Mary (as in ^{<411>}Ruth 1:11,12), and believe that Joseph’s name is only introduced instead of Mary’s, in conformity with the Jewish custom in such tables. Perhaps this view is attended with fewest difficulties, as it certainly is the best supported. However we decide, it is a satisfaction to know that not a doubt was thrown out by the bitterest of the early enemies of Christianity as to *our Lord’s real descent from David*. On comparing the two genealogies, it will be found that Matthew, writing more

immediately for *Jews*, deemed it enough to show that the Savior was sprung from Abraham and David; whereas Luke, writing more immediately for *Gentiles*, traces the descent back to Adam, the parent stock of the whole human family, thus showing Him to be the promised “Seed of the woman.” “The possibility of constructing such a table, comprising a period of thousands of years, in an uninterrupted line from father to son, of a family that dwelt for a long time in the utmost retirement, would be inexplicable, had not the members of this line been endowed with *a thread* by which they could extricate themselves from the many families into which every tribe and branch was again subdivided, and thus hold fast and know *the* member that was destined to continue the lineage. This thread was the hope that Messiah would be born of the race of Abraham and David. The ardent desire to behold Him and be partakers of His mercy and glory suffered not the attention to be exhausted through a period embracing thousands of years. Thus the member destined to continue the lineage, whenever doubtful, became easily distinguishable, awakening the hope of a final fulfillment, and keeping it alive until it was consummated” [OLSHAUSEN].

24-30. son of Matthat, etc. — (See on ^{<4013>}Matthew 1:13-15). In ^{<4127>}Luke 3:27, Salathiel is called the *son*, while in ^{<4012>}Matthew 1:12, he is called the *father* of Zerubbabel. But they are probably different persons.

38. son of God — Compare ^{<4172>}Acts 17:28.

CHAPTER 4

◀400▶ LUKE 4:1-13.

TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

(See on ▶401▶ Matthew 4:1-11.)

◀404▶ LUKE 4:14-32.

JESUS ENTERING ON HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY, MAKES A CIRCUIT OF GALILEE — REJECTION AT NAZARETH.

Note. — A large gap here occurs, embracing the important transactions in Galilee and Jerusalem which are recorded in ▶402▶ John 1:29-4:54, and which occurred *before* John's imprisonment (▶403▶ John 3:24); whereas the transactions here recorded occurred (as appears from ▶402▶ Matthew 4:12,13) *after* that event. The visit to Nazareth recorded in ▶405▶ Matthew 13:54-58 (and ▶406▶ Mark 6:1-6) we take to be not a later visit, but the same with this first one; because we cannot think that the Nazarenes, after being so enraged at His *first* display of wisdom as to attempt His destruction, should, on a *second* display of the same, wonder at it and ask how He came by it, as if they had never witnessed it before.

16. as his custom was — Compare ▶417▶ Acts 17:2.

stood up for to read — Others besides rabbins were allowed to address the congregation. (See ▶418▶ Acts 13:15.)

18, 19. To have fixed on any passage announcing His *sufferings* (as ▶258▶ Isaiah 53:1-12), would have been unsuitable at that early stage of His ministry. But He selects a passage announcing the sublime object of His whole mission, its divine character, and His special endowments for it; expressed in the first person, and so singularly adapted to *the first opening of the mouth* in His prophetic capacity, that it seems as if made expressly for this occasion. It is from the well-known section of Isaiah's prophecies whose burden is that mysterious "SERVANT OF THE LORD," despised of man, abhorred of the nation, but before whom kings on seeing Him are to arise, and princes to worship; in visage more marred than any man and His

form than the sons of men, yet sprinkling many nations; laboring seemingly in vain, and spending His strength for naught and in vain, yet Jehovah's Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and be His Salvation to the ends of the earth (^{<2301>}Isaiah 49:1-26, etc.). The quotation is chiefly from the *Septuagint* version, used in the synagogues.

19. acceptable year — an allusion to the jubilee year (^{<0251>}Leviticus 25:10), a year of universal *release* for person and property. (See also ^{<2308>}Isaiah 49:8 ^{<0002>}2 Corinthians 6:2.) As the maladies under which humanity groans are here set forth under the names of *poverty, broken-heartedness, bondage, blindness, bruisedness* (or *crushedness*), so, as the glorious HEALER of all these maladies, Christ announces Himself in the act of reading it, stopping the quotation just before it comes to “the day of vengeance,” which was only to come on the rejecters of His message (^{<0007>}John 3:17). The first words, “THE SPIRIT of the LORD is upon ME,” have been noted since the days of the Church Fathers, as an illustrious example of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* being exhibited as in distinct yet harmonious action in the scheme of salvation.

20. the minister — the *chazan*, or synagogue-officer.

all eyes ... fastened on Him — astounded at His putting in such claims.

21. began to say, etc. — His whole address was just a detailed application to Himself of this and perhaps other like prophecies.

22. gracious words — “the words of grace,” referring both to the richness of His matter and the sweetness of His manner (^{<0002>}Psalms 45:2).

Is not this, etc. — (See on ^{<0154>}Matthew 13:54-56). They knew He had received no rabbinical education, and anything *supernatural* they seemed incapable of conceiving.

23. this proverb — like our “Charity begins at home.”

whatsoever, etc. — “Strange rumors have reached our ears of Thy doings at Capernaum; but if such power resides in Thee to cure the ills of humanity, why has none of it yet come nearer home, and why is all this alleged power reserved for strangers?” His choice of Capernaum as a place of residence since entering on public life was, it seems, already well known at Nazareth; and when He did come thither, to give no displays of His power when distant places were ringing with His fame, wounded their pride. He had indeed “laid his hands on a few sick folk and healed them” (^{<0005>}Mark 6:5); but this seems to have been done quite privately the general unbelief precluding anything more open.

24. And he said, etc. — He replies to the one proverb by another, equally familiar, which we express in a rougher form — “Too much familiarity breeds contempt.” Our Lord’s long residence in Nazareth merely as a townsman had made Him *too common*, incapacitating them for appreciating Him as others did who were *less familiar with His everyday demeanor in private life*. A most important principle, to which the wise will pay due regard. (See also ^{<4106>}Matthew 7:6, on which our Lord Himself ever acted.)

25-27. But I tell you, etc. — falling back for support on the well-known examples of Elijah and Elisha (Eliseus), whose miraculous power, passing by those who were *near*, expended itself on those *at a distance*, yea on *heathens*, “the two great prophets who stand at the commencement of prophetic antiquity, and whose miracles strikingly prefigured those of our Lord. As He intended like them to feed the poor and cleanse the lepers, He *points to these miracles of mercy*, and not to the *fire* from heaven and the *bears* that tore the mockers” [STIER].

three years and six months — So ^{<5157>}James 5:17, including perhaps the six months *after the last fall of rain*, when there would be little or none at any rate; whereas in ^{<1181>}1 Kings 18:1, which says the rain returned “in the third year,” that period is probably not reckoned.

26, 27. save ... saving — “but only.” (Compare ^{<4133>}Mark 13:32, *Greek*.)

Sarepta — “Zarephath” (^{<1179>}1 Kings 17:9), a heathen village between Tyre and Sidon. (See ^{<4174>}Mark 7:24.)

28, 29. when they heard these things — these allusions to the *heathen*, just as afterwards with Paul (^{<4221>}Acts 22:21,22).

29. rose up — broke up the service irreverently and rushed forth.

thrust him — with violence, as a prisoner in their hands.

brow, etc. — Nazareth, though not built on the ridge of a hill, is in part surrounded by one to the west, having several such precipices. (See ^{<1452>}2 Chronicles 25:12 ^{<1183>}2 Kings 9:33.) It was a mode of capital punishment not unusual among the Romans and others. This was the first insult which the Son of God received, and it came from “them of His own household!” (^{<4106>}Matthew 10:36).

30. passing through the midst, etc. — evidently in a miraculous way, though perhaps quite noiselessly, leading them to wonder afterwards what spell could have come over them, that they allowed Him to escape. (Similar escapes, however, in times of persecution, are not unexampled.)

31. down to Capernaum — It lay on the Sea of Galilee (^{<4013>}Matthew 4:13), whereas Nazareth lay high.

^{<4033>}LUKE 4:33-37.

DEMONIAC HEALED.

33. unclean — The frequency with which this character of *impurity* is applied to evil spirits is worthy of notice.

cried out, etc. — (See ^{<4029>}Matthew 8:29 ^{<4031>}Mark 3:11).

35. rebuked them, etc. — (See on ^{<4041>}Luke 4:41).

thrown him, etc. — See on ^{<4021>}Mark 9:20.

36. What a word — a word from the *Lord of spirits*.

^{<4033>}LUKE 4:38-41.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW AND MANY OTHERS, HEALED.

(See on ^{<4034>}Matthew 8:14-17.)

41. suffered them not to speak — The marginal reading (“to say that they knew him to be Christ”) here is wrong. Our Lord ever refused testimony from devils, *for the very reason why they were eager to give it*, because He and they would thus seem to be one interest, as His enemies actually alleged. (See on ^{<4029>}Matthew 12:24, etc.; see also ^{<4036>}Acts 16:16-18.)

^{<4042>}LUKE 4:42-44.

**JESUS SOUGHT OUT AT MORNING PRAYER, AND
ENTREATED TO STAY, DECLINES FROM THE
URGENCY OF HIS WORK.**

See on ^{<4035>}Mark 1:35-39, where we learn how early He retired, and how He was engaged in solitude when they came seeking Him.

42. stayed him — “were staying Him,” or sought to do it. What a contrast to the Gadarenes! The nature of His mission required Him to keep moving, that all might hear the glad tidings (~~4089~~ Matthew 8:34).

43. I must, etc. — but duty only could move Him to deny entreaties so grateful to His spirit.

CHAPTER 5

LUKE 5:1-11.

MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES — CALL OF PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN.

Not their *first* call, however, recorded in ^{<40ES>}John 1:35-42; nor their *second*, recorded in ^{<40MS>}Matthew 4:18-22; but their *third* and last before their appointment to the apostleship. That these calls were all distinct and *progressive*, seems quite plain. (Similar stages are observable in other eminent servants of Christ.)

3. taught ... out of the ship — (See on ^{<40EP>}Matthew 13:2).

4. for a draught — munificent recompense for the use of his boat.

5. Master — betokening not surely a first acquaintance, but a relationship already formed.

all night — the usual time of fishing then (^{<40EB>}John 21:3), and even now Peter, as a fisherman, knew how hopeless it was to “let down his net” again, save as a mere act of faith, “at His word” of command, which carried in it, as it ever does, assurance of success. (This shows he must have been already and for some time a follower of Christ.)

6. net brake — rather “was breaking,” or “beginning to break,” as in ^{<40RP>}Luke 5:7, “beginning to sink.”

8. Depart, etc. — Did Peter then wish Christ to leave him? Verily no. His all was wrapt up in Him (^{<40MS>}John 6:68). “It was rather, Woe is me, Lord! How shall I abide this blaze of glory? A sinner such as I am is not fit company for Thee.” (Compare ^{<20MS>}Isaiah 6:5.)

10. Simon, fear not — This shows how the Lord read Peter’s speech. *The more highly they deemed Him, ever the more grateful it was to the Redeemer’s spirit. Never did they pain Him by manifesting too lofty conceptions of Him.*

from henceforth — marking a new stage of their connection with Christ. The last was simply, “I will make you fishers.”

fishers of men — “What wilt thou think, Simon, overwhelmed by this draught of fishes, when I shall bring to thy net what will beggar all this glory?” (See on ^{<4018>}Matthew 4:18.)

11. forsook all — They did this before (^{<4020>}Matthew 4:20); now they do it again; and yet after the Crucifixion they are at their boats once more (^{<4213>}John 21:3). In such a business this is easily conceivable. After pentecost, however, they appear to have finally abandoned their secular calling.

^{<4112>}LUKE 5:12-16.

LEPER HEALED.

(See on ^{<4102>}Matthew 8:2-4.)

15. But so, etc. — (See ^{<4045>}Mark 1:45).

^{<4117>}LUKE 5:17-26.

PARALYTIC HEALED.

(See on ^{<4101>}Matthew 9:1-8).

17. Pharisees and doctors ... sitting by — the highest testimony yet borne to our Lord’s growing influence, and the necessity increasingly felt by the ecclesiastics throughout the country of coming to some definite judgment regarding Him.

power of the Lord ... present — with Jesus.

to heal them — the sick people.

19. housetop — the flat roof.

through the tiling ... before Jesus — (See on ^{<4102>}Mark 2:2).

24. take up thy couch — “sweet saying! The bed had borne the man; now the man shall bear the bed!” [BENGE].

LUKE 5:27-32.

LEVI'S CALL AND FEAST.

(See on ⁴¹⁹⁹Matthew 9:9-13; and ⁴¹²⁴Mark 2:14.)

30. their scribes — a mode of expression showing that Luke was writing for *Gentiles*.

LUKE 5:33-39.

FASTING.

(See on ⁴¹⁹⁴Matthew 9:14-17.)

The *incongruities* mentioned in ⁴¹⁵⁶Luke 5:36-38 were intended to illustrate the difference between the *genius* of the old and new economies, and the danger of *mixing up* the one with the other. As in the one case supposed, “the rent is made worse,” and in the other, “the new wine is spilled,” *so by a mongrel mixture of the ascetic ritualism of the old with the spiritual freedom of the new economy, both are disfigured and destroyed.* The additional parable in ⁴¹⁵⁹Luke 5:39, which is peculiar to Luke, has been variously interpreted. But the “new wine” seems plainly to be the evangelical freedom which Christ was introducing; and the old, the opposite spirit of Judaism: men long accustomed to the latter could not be expected “straightway” — all at once — to take a liking for the former; that is, “These inquiries about the difference between My disciples and the Pharisees,” and even John’s, are not surprising; they are the effect of *a natural revulsion against sudden change, which time will cure; the new wine will itself in time become old, and so acquire all the added charms of antiquity.* What lessons does this teach, on the one hand, to those who unreasonably cling to what is getting antiquated; and, on the other, to hasty reformers who have no patience with the timidity of their weaker brethren!

CHAPTER 6

LUKE 6:1-5.

PLUCKING CORN-EARS ON THE SABBATH.

(See on ^{<4011>}Matthew 12:1-8 and ^{<4023>}Mark 2:23-28.)

1. second sabbath after the first — an obscure expression, occurring here only, generally understood to mean, the first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread. The reasons cannot be stated here, nor is the opinion itself quite free from difficulty.

5. Lord also — rather “even” (as in ^{<4028>}Matthew 12:8).

of the sabbath — as naked a claim to

all the authority of Him who gave the law at Mount Sinai as could possibly be made; that is, “I have said enough to vindicate the men ye carp at on My account: *but in this place is the Lord of the law, and they have His sanction.*” (See ^{<4028>}Mark 2:28.)

LUKE 6:6-11.

WITHERED HAND HEALED.

(See on ^{<4019>}Matthew 12:9-15 and ^{<4001>}Mark 3:1-7.)

7. watched whether, etc. — In Matthew (^{<4019>}Matthew 12:9) this is put as an ensnaring question of theirs to our Lord, who accordingly speaks to *the state of their hearts* (^{<4019>}Luke 6:9), just as if they had spoken it out.

9. good, or ... evil, save ... or destroy — By this novel way of putting His case, our Lord teaches the great ethical principle, that *to neglect any opportunity of doing good is to incur the guilt of doing evil*; and by this law He bound His own spirit. (See ^{<4034>}Mark 3:4.)

11. filled with madness — The word denotes senseless rage at the confusion to which our Lord had put them, both by word and deed.

what ... do to Jesus — not so much *whether* to get rid of Him, but *how* to compass it. (See on ^{<085>}Matthew 3:6.)

^{<082>}LUKE 6:12-49.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHOSEN — GATHERING MULTITUDES — GLORIOUS HEALING.

12, 13. went out — probably from Capernaum.

all night in prayer ... and when ... day, he called, etc. — The work with which the next *day* began shows what had been the burden of this *night's* devotions. As He directed His disciples to pray for “laborers” just before sending themselves forth (see on ^{<087>}Matthew 9:37; ^{<088>}Matthew 10:1), so here we find the Lord Himself in prolonged communion with His Father in preparation for the solemn appointment of those men who were to give birth to His Church, and from whom the world in all time was to take a new mould. How instructive is this!

13-16. (See on ^{<089>}Matthew 10:2-4.)

17. in the plain — by some rendered “on a level place,” that is, a piece of high tableland, by which they understand the same thing, as “on the mountain,” where our Lord delivered the sermon recorded by Matthew (^{<090>}Matthew 5:1), of which they take this following discourse of Luke to be but an abridged form. But as the sense given in our version is the more accurate, so there are weighty reasons for considering the discourses different. This one contains little more than a fourth of the other; it has woes of its own, as well as the beatitudes common to both; but above all, that of Matthew was plainly delivered a good while *before*, while this was spoken *after* the choice of the twelve; and as we know that our Lord delivered some of His weightiest sayings more than once, there is no difficulty in supposing this to be one of His more extended repetitions; nor could anything be more worthy of it.

19. healed — kept healing, denoting successive acts of mercy till it went over “*all*” that needed. There is something unusually grand and pictorial in this touch of description.

20, 21. In the Sermon on the Mount the benediction is pronounced upon the “poor *in spirit*” and those who “hunger and thirst *after righteousness*” (^{<091>}Matthew 5:3,6). Here it is simply on the “poor” and the “hungry now.” In this form of the discourse, then, our Lord seems to have had in view

“*the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him,*” as these very beatitudes are paraphrased by James (^{<3105>}James 2:5).

21. laugh — How charming is the liveliness of this word, to express what in Matthew is called being “comforted!”

22. separate you — whether from their *Church*, by excommunication, or from their society; both hard to flesh and blood.

for the Son of man’s sake — Compare ^{<4161>}Matthew 5:11, “for MY SAKE”; and immediately before, “for *righteousness*’ sake” (^{<4160>}Luke 6:10). Christ thus *binds up the cause of righteousness in the world with the reception of Himself*.

23. leap for joy — a livelier word than “be exceeding glad” of “exult” (^{<4162>}Matthew 5:12).

24, 25. rich ... full ... laugh — who have all their good things and joyous feelings *here and now*, in perishable objects.

received your consolation — (see on ^{<4165>}Luke 16:25).

shall hunger — their inward craving strong as ever, but the materials of satisfaction forever gone.

26. all ... speak well of you — alluding to the court paid to the false prophets of old (^{<3121>}Micah 2:11). For the principle of this woe, and its proper limits, see ^{<4159>}John 15:19.

27-36. (See on ^{<4154>}Matthew 5:44-48; ^{<4172>}Matthew 7:12; and ^{<4142>}Matthew 14:12-14.)

37, 38. See on ^{<4103>}Matthew 7:1,2; but this is much fuller and more graphic.

39. Can the blind, etc. — not in the Sermon on the Mount, but recorded by Matthew in another and very striking connection (^{<4154>}Matthew 15:14).

40. The disciple, etc. — that is, “The disciple aims to come up to his master, and he thinks himself complete when he does so: if you then be blind leaders of the blind, the perfection of one’s training under you will only land him the more certainly in one common ruin with yourselves.”

41-49. (See on ^{<4103>}Matthew 7:3-5, ^{<4176>}Matthew 7:16-27.)

CHAPTER 7

LUKE 7:1-10.

CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED.

(See on ⁴⁰⁸⁵Matthew 8:5-13.)

4. he was worthy — a testimony most precious, coming from those who probably were strangers to the principle from which he acted (²⁰⁰⁰Ecclesiastes 7:1).

5. loved our nation — Having found that “salvation was of the Jews,” he loved them for it.

built, etc. — His love took this practical and appropriate form.

LUKE 7:11-17.

WIDOW OF NAIN'S SON RAISED TO LIFE. (IN LUKE ONLY).

11. Nain — a small village not elsewhere mentioned in Scripture, and only this once probably visited by our Lord; it lay a little to the south of Mount Tabor, about twelve miles from Capernaum.

12. carried out — “was being carried out.” Dead bodies, being ceremonially unclean, were not allowed to be buried within the cities (though the kings of David's house were buried in the city of David), and the funeral was usually on the same day as the death.

only son, etc. — affecting particulars, told with delightful simplicity.

13. the Lord — “This sublime appellation is more usual with Luke and John than Matthew; Mark holds the mean” [BENGE].

saw her, he had compassion, etc. — What consolation to thousands of the bereaved has this single verse carried from age to age!

14, 15. What mingled majesty and grace shines in this scene! The Resurrection and the Life in human flesh, with a word of command,

bringing back life to the dead body; Incarnate Compassion summoning its absolute power to dry a widow's tears!

16. visited his people — more than bringing back the days of Elijah and Elisha (<1177>1 Kings 17:17-24 <1262>2 Kings 4:32-37; and see <1531>Matthew 15:31).

<1718>LUKE 7:18-35.

THE BAPTIST'S MESSAGE THE REPLY, AND CONSEQUENT DISCOURSE.

(See on <1112>Matthew 11:2-14.)

29, 30. And all the people that heard — “on hearing (this).” These are the observations of *the Evangelist*, not of our Lord.

and the publicans — a striking clause.

justified God, being baptized, etc. — rather, “having been baptized.” The meaning is, They acknowledged the divine wisdom of such a preparatory ministry as John's, in leading them to Him who now spake to them (see <1316>Luke 1:16,17); whereas the Pharisees and lawyers, true to themselves in refusing the baptism of John, set at naught also the merciful design of God in the Savior Himself, to their own destruction.

31-35. the Lord said, etc. — As cross, capricious children, invited by their playmates to join them in their amusements, will play with them neither at weddings nor funerals (juvenile imitations of the joyous and mournful scenes of life), so that generation rejected both John and his Master: the one because he was too unsocial — more like a demoniac than a rational man; the other, because He was too much the reverse, given to animal indulgences, and consorting with the lowest classes of society. But the children of Wisdom recognize and honor her, whether in the austere garb of the Baptist or in the more attractive style of his Master, whether in the Law or in the Gospel, whether in rags or in royalty, for “*the full soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet*” (<1271>Proverbs 27:7).

◀LUKE 7:36-50.

CHRIST'S FEET WASHED WITH TEARS.

37, 38. a sinner — one who had led a profligate life.

Note. — *There is no ground whatever for the popular notion that this woman was Mary Magdalene, nor do we know what her name was.* (See on ▶LUKE 8:2.)

an alabaster box of ointment — a perfume vessel, in some cases very costly (▶JOHN 12:5). “The ointment has here a peculiar interest, as the offering by a penitent of what had been an accessory in her unhallowed work of sin” [ALFORD].

38. at his feet behind him — the posture at meals being a reclining one, with the feet out behind.

began to wash, etc. — to “water with a shower.” The tears, which were quite *involuntary*, poured down in a flood upon His naked feet, as she bent down to kiss them; and deeming them rather fouled than washed by this, she hastened to wipe them off with the only towel she had, the long tresses of her own hair, “with which slaves were wont to wash their masters’ feet” [STIER].

kissed — The word signifies “to kiss fondly, to caress,” or to “kiss again and again,” which ▶LUKE 7:45 shows is meant here. What prompted this? *Much love, springing from a sense of much forgiveness.* So says He who knew her heart (▶LUKE 7:47). Where she had met with Christ before, or what words of His had brought life to her dead heart and a sense of divine pardon to her guilty soul, we know not. But probably she was of the crowd of “publicans and sinners” whom Incarnate Compassion drew so often around Him, and heard from His lips some of those words such as never man spake, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor,” etc. No personal interview had up to this time taken place between them; but she could keep her feelings no longer to herself, and having found her way to Him (and entered along with him, ▶LUKE 7:45), they burst forth in this surpassing yet most artless style, as if her whole soul would go out to Him.

39. the Pharisee — who had formed no definite opinion of our Lord, and invited Him apparently to obtain materials for a judgment.

spake within himself, etc. — “Ha! I have Him now; He plainly knows nothing of the person He allows to touch Him; and so, He can be no

prophet.” Not so fast, Simon; thou hast not seen through thy Guest yet, but He hath seen through thee.

40-43. Like Nathan with David, our Lord conceals His home thrust under the veil of a parable, and makes His host himself pronounce upon the case. The two debtors are the woman and Simon; the criminality of the one was *ten times* that of the other (in the proportion of “five hundred” to “fifty”); but both being equally insolvent, both are with equal frankness forgiven; and Simon is made to own that the greatest debtor to forgiving mercy will cling to her Divine Benefactor with the deepest gratitude. Does our Lord then admit that Simon was a forgiving man? Let us see.

44-47. I entered ... no water — a compliment to guests. Was this “much love?” Was it *any*?

45. no kiss — of salutation. How much love was here? *Any at all*?

46. with oil ... not anoint — even common *olive oil* in contrast with the woman’s “ointment” or *aromatic balsam*. What evidence was thus afforded of any feeling which forgiveness prompts? Our Lord speaks this with delicate politeness, as if *hurt* at these inattentions of His host, which though not *invariably* shown to guests, were the customary marks of studied respect and regard. The inference is plain — *only one of the debtors was really forgiven*, though in the first instance, to give room for the play of withheld feelings, the forgiveness of both is supposed in the parable.

47. Her sins which are many — “Those many sins of hers,” our Lord, who admitted how much more she owed than the Pharisee, now proclaims in naked terms the forgiveness of her guilt.

for — not *because*, as if love were the cause of forgiveness, but “inasmuch as,” or “in proof of which.” The latter clause of the verse, and the whole structure of the parable, plainly show this to be the meaning.

little forgiven ... loveth little — delicately ironical intimation of *no love* and *no forgiveness* in the present case.

48. said unto her, etc. — an unsought assurance, usually springing up unexpected in the midst of active duty and warm affections, while often it flies from those who mope and are paralyzed for want of it.

49, 50. they that sat ... Who is this, etc. — No wonder they were startled to hear One who was reclining at the same couch, and partaking of the same hospitalities with themselves, assume the awful prerogative of “even forgiving sins.” But so far from receding from this claim, or softening it down, our Lord only repeats it, with two precious additions: one,

announcing what was the one secret of the “forgiveness” she had experienced, and which carried “salvation” in its bosom; the other, a glorious dismissal of her in that “peace” which she had already felt, but is now assured she has His full warrant to enjoy! This wonderful scene teaches two very weighty truths:

(1) Though there be degrees of guilt, insolvency, or inability to wipe out the dishonor done to God, is common to all sinners.

(2) As Christ is the Great Creditor to whom all debt, whether great or small, contracted by sinners is owing, so to Him belongs the prerogative of forgiving it.

This latter truth is brought out in the structure and application of the present parable as it is nowhere else. Either then Jesus was a blaspheming deceiver, or He is God manifest in the flesh.

CHAPTER 8

LUKE 8:1-3.

A GALILEAN CIRCUIT, WITH THE TWELVE AND CERTAIN MINISTERING WOMEN. (IN LUKE ONLY).

1. **went** — traveled, made a progress.

throughout every city and village — through town and village.

preaching, etc. — the Prince of itinerant preachers scattering far and wide the seed of the Kingdom.

2. **certain women ... healed**, etc. — on whom He had the double claim of having brought healing to their bodies and new life to their souls. Drawn to Him by an attraction more than magnetic, they accompany Him on this tour as His *almoners* — ministering unto Him of their substance. Blessed Savior! It melts us to see Thee living upon the love of Thy ransomed people. That they bring Thee their poor offerings we wonder not. Thou hast sown unto them spiritual things, and they think it, as well they might, a small thing that Thou shouldst reap their material things (^{<4091>}1 Corinthians 9:11). But dost Thou take it at their hand, and subsist upon it? “Oh, the depth of the riches” (^{<6133>}Romans 11:33) — of this poverty of His!

Mary Magdalene — that is, probably, of *Magdala* (on which see ^{<4159>}Matthew 15:39; see on ^{<4080>}Mark 8:10).

went — rather, “had gone.”

seven devils — (^{<4109>}Mark 16:9). It is a great wrong to this honored woman to identify her with the once profligate woman of ^{<4079>}Luke 7:37, and to call all such penitents *Magdalenes*. The mistake has arisen from confounding unhappy demoniacal possession with the conscious entertainment of diabolic impurity, or supposing the one to have been afflicted as a punishment for the other — for which there is not the least scriptural ground.

3. **Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward** — If the steward of such a godless, cruel, and licentious wretch as Herod Antipas (see on ^{<4064>}Mark 6:14, etc.). differed greatly from himself, his post would be no easy or enviable one. That he was a disciple of Christ is very improbable, though he

might be favorably disposed towards Him. But what we know not of him, and may fear he lacked, we are sure his wife possessed. Healed either of “evil spirits” or of some one of the “infirmities” here referred to — the ordinary diseases of humanity — she joins in the Savior’s train of grateful, clinging followers. Of “Susanna,” next mentioned, we know nothing but the name, and that here only. But her services on this memorable occasion have immortalized her name. “Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done,” in ministering to the Lord of her substance on His Galilean tour, “shall be spoken of as a memorial of her” (<149>Mark 14:9).

many others — that is, many other *healed women*. What a train! and all ministering unto Him of their substance, and He allowing them to do it and subsisting upon it! “He who was the support of the spiritual life of His people disdained not to be supported by them in the body. He was not ashamed to penetrate so far into the depths of poverty as to live upon the alms of love. He only fed others miraculously; for Himself, He lived upon the love of His people. He gave all things to men, His brethren, and received all things from them, enjoying thereby the pure blessing of love: which is then only perfect when it is at the same time both giving and receiving. Who could invent such things as these? *It was necessary to live in this manner that it might be so recorded*” [OLSHAUSEN].

<188>LUKE 8:4-18.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

(See on <1018>Mark 4:3-9, <1014>Mark 4:14-20.)

16. No man, etc. — (see on <155>Matthew 5:15, of which this is nearly a repetition).

17. For nothing, etc. — (See on <110>Luke 12:2).

18. how ye — in <1024>Mark 4:24, “*what ye hear.*” The one implies the other. The precept is very weighty.

seemeth to have — or, “thinketh that he hath” (*Margin*). The “having” of <132>Matthew 13:12 (on which see), and this “thinking he hath,” are not different. Hanging loosely on him, and not appropriated, it *is* and *is not* his.

◀189 LUKE 8:19-21.

**HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN DESIRE
TO SPEAK WITH HIM.**

(See on ▶126 Matthew 12:46-50).

◀182 LUKE 8:22-25.

JESUS CROSSING THE LAKE, STILLS THE STORM.

(See on ▶183 Matthew 8:23-27, and ▶4065 Mark 4:35-41).

23. filled — literally, “were getting filled,” that is, those who sailed; meaning that their ship was so.

◀186 LUKE 8:26-39.

DEMONIAC OF GADARA HEALED.

(See on ▶188 Matthew 8:28-34; and ▶4061 Mark 5:1-20).

◀180 LUKE 8:40-56.

**JAIRUS’ DAUGHTER RAISED
AND ISSUE OF BLOOD HEALED.**

(See on ▶185 Matthew 9:18-26; and ▶4021 Mark 5:21-43).

40. gladly received him, for ... all waiting for him — The abundant teaching of that day (in ▶183 Matthew 13:1-58; and see ▶4065 Mark 4:36), had only whetted the people’s appetite; and disappointed, as would seem, that He had left them in the evening to cross the lake, they remain hanging about the beach, having got a hint, probably through some of His disciples, that He would be back the same evening. Perhaps they witnessed at a distance the sudden calming of the tempest. Here at least they are, watching for His return, and welcoming Him to the shore. The tide of His popularity was now fast rising.

45. Who touched me? — “Askest Thou, Lord, who touched Thee? Rather ask who touched Thee *not* in such a throng.”

46. Somebody hath touched — yes, the multitude “*thronged*” and *pressed* Him — “they *jostled against* Him,” but all *involuntarily*; they were merely *carried along*; *but one, one only* — “Somebody TOUCHED” HIM, with the conscious, voluntary, dependent touch of faith, reaching forth its hands expressly to have contact with Him. This and this only Jesus acknowledges and seeks out. Even so, as the Church Father AUGUSTINE long ago said, *multitudes still come similarly close to Christ in the means of grace, but all to no purpose, being only sucked into the crowd*. The voluntary, living contact of faith is that electric conductor which alone draws virtue out of Him.

47. declared ... before all — This, though a great trial to the shrinking modesty of the believing woman, was just what Christ wanted in dragging her forth, her public testimony to the facts of her case — both her disease, with her abortive efforts at a cure, and the instantaneous and perfect relief which her touch of the Great Healer had brought her.

55. give her meat — (See on ⁴¹⁵⁶Mark 5:43).

CHAPTER 9

LUKE 9:1-6.

MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

(See on ⁴⁰⁰¹Matthew 10:1-15).

1. power and authority — He both *qualified* and *authorized* them.

LUKE 9:7-9.

HEROD TROUBLED AT WHAT HE HEARS OF CHRIST DESIRES TO SEE HIM.

(See on ⁴⁰⁶⁴Mark 6:14-30).

7. perplexed — at a loss, embarrassed.

said of some, that John was risen — Among many opinions, this was the one which Herod himself adopted, for the reason, no doubt, mentioned on ⁴⁰³⁴Mark 6:14.

9. desired to see him — but did not, till as a prisoner He was sent to him by Pilate just before His death, as we learn from ⁴²³⁸Luke 23:8.

LUKE 9:10-17.

ON THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE JESUS RETIRES WITH THEM TO BETHSAIDA, AND THERE MIRACULOUSLY FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND.

(See on ⁴⁰⁶³Mark 6:31-44).

LUKE 9:18-27.

PETER'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST — OUR LORD'S FIRST EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH, AND WARNINGS ARISING OUT OF IT.

(See on ⁴⁰⁶³Matthew 16:13-28; and ⁴⁰⁸⁴Mark 8:34).

24. will save — “Is minded to save,” bent on saving. The pith of this maxim depends — as often in such weighty sayings (for example, “Let the *dead* bury the *dead*,” ⁴⁰⁸²Matthew 8:22) — on the double sense attached to the word “life,” a lower and a higher, the natural and the spiritual, temporal and eternal. An entire sacrifice of the lower, or a willingness to make it, is indispensable to the preservation of the higher life; and he who cannot bring himself to surrender the one for the sake of the other shall eventually lose both.

26. ashamed of me, and of my words — The sense of *shame* is one of the strongest in our nature, one of the social affections founded on our love of *reputation*, which causes instinctive aversion to what is fitted to lower it, and was given us as a preservative from all that is properly *shameful*. When one is, in this sense of it, *lost to shame*, he is nearly past hope (³⁰¹⁶Zechariah 3:5 ⁴⁰⁸⁵Jeremiah 6:15 3:3). But when Christ and “His words” — Christianity, especially in its more spiritual and uncompromising features — are unpopular, the same instinctive desire to *stand well with others* begets the temptation to be ashamed of Him, which only the ‘expulsive power’ of a higher affection can effectually counteract.

Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh, etc. — He will render to that man his own treatment; He will disown him before the most august of all assemblies, and put him to “*shame* and everlasting *contempt*” (³⁰¹⁶Daniel 12:2). “Oh shame, to be put to shame before God, Christ, and angels!” [BENGEL].

27. not taste of death fill they see the kingdom of God — “see it come with power” (⁴⁰⁰⁶Mark 9:1); or see “the Son of man coming in His kingdom” (⁴⁰⁶⁸Matthew 16:28). The reference, beyond doubt, is to the firm establishment and victorious progress, in the lifetime of some then present, of that new Kingdom of Christ, which was destined to work the greatest of all changes on this earth, and be the grand pledge of His final coming in glory.

LUKE 9:28-36.

JESUS TRANSFIGURED.

28. an eight days after these sayings — including the day on which this was spoken and that of the Transfiguration. Matthew and Mark say (^{<4170E>}Matthew 17:1 ^{<4190E>}Mark 9:2) “after six days,” *excluding* these two days. As the “sayings” so definitely connected with the transfiguration scene are those announcing His *death* — at which Peter and all the Twelve were so startled and scandalized — so this scene was designed to show to the eyes as well as the heart how *glorious* that death was in the view of Heaven.

Peter, James, and John — partners before in secular business; now sole witnesses of the resurrection of Jairus’ daughter (^{<4165E>}Mark 5:37), the transfiguration, and the agony in the garden (^{<4143E>}Mark 14:33).

a mountain — not *Tabor*, according to long tradition, with which the facts ill comport, but some one near the lake.

to pray — for the period He had now reached was a critical and anxious one. (See on ^{<4163E>}Matthew 16:13). But who can adequately translate those “strong cryings and tears?” Methinks, as I steal by His side, I hear from Him these plaintive sounds, “Lord, who hath believed Our report? I am come unto Mine own and Mine own receive Me not; I am become a stranger unto My brethren, an alien to My mother’s children: Consider Mine enemies, for they are many, and they hate Me with cruel hatred. Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail. Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth: Show Me a token for good: Father, glorify Thy name.”

29. as he prayed, the fashion, etc. — Before He cried He was answered, and while He was yet speaking He was heard. Blessed interruption to prayer this! Thanks to God, transfiguring manifestations are not quite strangers here. Ofttimes in the deepest depths, out of groanings which cannot be uttered, God’s dear children are suddenly transported to a kind of heaven upon earth, and their soul is made as the chariots of Amminadab. Their prayers fetch down such light, strength, holy gladness, as make their face to shine, putting a kind of celestial radiance upon it (^{<4178E>}2 Corinthians 3:18, with ^{<4169E>}Exodus 34:29-35).

raiment white, etc. — Matthew says, “His face did shine as the sun” (^{<4170E>}Matthew 17:2), and Mark says (^{<4190E>}Mark 9:3), “His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them” (^{<4190E>}Mark 9:3). The light, then, it would seem, shone not *upon* Him *from*

without, but *out of Him from within*; He was all irradiated, was in one blaze of celestial glory. What a contrast to that “visage more marred than men, and His form than the sons of men!” (²⁵²¹⁴Isaiah 52:14).

30, 31. there talked with him two men ... Moses and Elias ... appeared in glory — “Who would have believed these were not *angels* had not their *human* names been subjoined?” [BENDEL].

(Compare ⁴⁰¹¹Acts 1:10 ⁴¹¹⁶Mark 16:5). Moses represented “the law,” Elijah “the prophets,” and both together the whole testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the Old Testament saints, to Christ; now not borne in a *book*, but by *living men*, not to a *coming*, but a *come* Messiah, *visibly*, for they “appeared,” and *audibly*, for they “spake.”

31. spake — “were speaking.”

of his decease — “departure”; beautiful euphemism (softened term) for *death*, which Peter, who witnessed the scene, uses to express his own expected death, and the use of which single term seems to have recalled the whole by a sudden rush of recollection, and occasioned that delightful allusion to this scene which we find in ⁴⁰¹⁵2 Peter 1:15-18.

which he should accomplish — “was to fulfill.”

at Jerusalem — Mark the *historical character* and *local features* which Christ’s death assumed to these glorified men — as important as it is charming — and see on ⁴⁰¹¹Luke 2:11. What now may be gathered from this statement?

(1) *That a dying Messiah is the great article of the true Jewish theology.* For a long time the Church had fallen clean away from the faith of this article, and even from a preparedness to receive it. But here we have that jewel raked out of the dunghill of Jewish traditions, and by the true representatives of the Church of old made the one subject of talk with Christ Himself.

(2) *The adoring gratitude of glorified men for His undertaking to accomplish such a decease; their felt dependence upon it for the glory in which they appeared; their profound interest in the progress of it, their humble solaces and encouragements to go through with it; and their sense of its peerless and overwhelming glory.*

“Go, matchless, adored One, a Lamb to the slaughter! rejected of men, but chosen of God and precious; dishonored, abhorred, and soon to be slain by men, but worshipped by cherubim, ready to be greeted by all heaven. In virtue of that decease we are here; our all is suspended on it and wrapped up

in it. Thine every step is watched by us with ineffable interest; and though it were too high an honor to us to be permitted to drop a word of cheer into that precious but now clouded spirit, yet, as the first-fruits of harvest; the very joy set before Him, we cannot choose but tell Him that what is the depth of shame to Him is covered with glory in the eyes of Heaven, that the Cross to Him is the Crown to us, that that ‘decease’ is all our salvation and all our desire.” And who can doubt that such a scene *did* minister deep cheer to that spirit? It is said they “talked” not *to Him*, but “*with Him*”; and if they told *Him* how glorious His decease was, might He not fitly reply, “I know it, but your voice, as messengers from heaven come down to tell it Me, is music in Mine ears.”

32. and when they were awake — so, certainly, the most commentators: but if we translate literally, it should be “*but having kept awake*” [MEYER, ALFORD]. Perhaps “*having roused themselves up*” [OLSHAUSEN] may come near enough to the literal sense; but from the word used we can gather no more than that they *shook off their drowsiness*. It was night, and the Lord seems to have spent the whole night on the mountain (^{<6039>}Luke 9:37).

saw his glory, etc. — The emphasis lies on “*saw*,” qualifying them to become “*eye-witnesses of His majesty*” (^{<6016>}2 Peter 1:16).

33. they departed — Ah! bright manifestations in this vale of tears are always “departing” manifestations.

34, 35. a cloud — not one of our watery clouds, but the Shekinah-cloud (see on ^{<6039>}Matthew 23:39), the pavilion of the manifested presence of God with His people, what Peter calls “the excellent” of “magnificent glory” (^{<6017>}2 Peter 1:17).

a voice — “*such a voice*,” says Peter emphatically; “and this voice [he adds] we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount” (^{<6017>}2 Peter 1:17,18).

35. my beloved Son ... hear him — *reverentially, implicitly, alone*.

36. Jesus was found alone — Moses and Elias are gone. Their work is done, and they have disappeared from the scene, feeling no doubt with their fellow servant the Baptist, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” The cloud too is gone, and the naked majestic Christ, braced in spirit, and enshrined in the reverent affection of His disciples, is left — to suffer!

kept it close — feeling, for once at least, that such things were unmeet as yet for the general gaze.

◀LUKE 9:37-45.

DEMONIAC AND LUNATIC BOY HEALED — CHRIST'S SECOND EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

(See on ▶MARK 9:14-32.)

43-45. the mighty power of God — “the majesty” or “mightiness” of God in this last miracle, the transfiguration, etc.: the *divine grandeur* of Christ rising upon them daily. By comparing ▶MATTHEW 17:22, and ▶MARK 9:30, we gather that this had been the subject of conversation between the Twelve and their Master as they journeyed along.

44. these sayings — not what was passing between them about His grandeur [MEYER, etc.], but what He was now to repeat for the second time about His sufferings [DE WETTE, STIER, ALFORD, etc.]; that is, “Be not carried off your feet by all this grandeur of Mine, but bear in mind what I have already told you, and now distinctly repeat, that that Sun in whose beams ye now rejoice is soon to set in midnight gloom.” “The Son of *man*,” says Christ, “into the hands of *men*” — a remarkable antithesis (also in ▶MATTHEW 17:22, and ▶MARK 9:31).

45. and they feared — “insomuch that they feared.” Their most cherished ideas were so completely dashed by such announcements, that they were afraid of laying themselves open to rebuke by asking Him any questions.

◀LUKE 9:46-48.

STRIFE AMONG THE TWELVE WHO SHOULD BE GREATEST — JOHN REBUKED FOR EXCLUSIVENESS.

46-48. (See on ▶MATTHEW 18:1-5).

49, 50. John answered, etc. — The link of connection here with the foregoing context lies in the words “in My name” (▶LUKE 9:48). “Oh, as to that,” said John, young, warm, but not sufficiently apprehending Christ’s teaching in these things, “we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him: Were we wrong?” “Ye were wrong.” “But we did because he followeth not us,” “No matter. For

(1) There is no man which shall do a miracle in My name that can lightly [soon] speak evil of Me' [^{<4039>}Mark 9:39]. And

(2) If such a person cannot be supposed to be 'against us,' you are to consider him 'for us.'"

Two principles of immense importance. Christ does not say this man should *not* have followed "with them," but simply teaches how he was to be regarded *though he did not* — as a reverer of His name and a promoter of His cause. Surely this condemns not only those horrible attempts *by force* to shut up all within one visible pale of discipleship, which have deluged Christendom with blood in Christ's name, but the same spirit in its milder form of proud ecclesiastic scowl upon all who "after the form which they call *a sect* (as the word signifies, ^{<4214>}Acts 24:14), do so worship the God of their fathers." Visible unity in Christ's Church is devoutly to be sought, but this is not the way to it. *See the noble spirit of Moses* (^{<0124>}Numbers 11:24-29).

^{<4151>}LUKE 9:51-56.

THE PERIOD OF HIS ASSUMPTION APPROACHING CHRIST TAKES HIS LAST LEAVE OF GALILEE — THE SAMARITANS REFUSE TO RECEIVE HIM.

51. the time was come — rather, "the days were being fulfilled," or approaching their fulfillment.

that he should be received up — "of His assumption," meaning His exaltation to the Father; a sublime expression, taking the sweep of His whole career, as if at one bound He was about to vault into glory. The work of Christ in the flesh is here divided into *two great stages*; all that preceded this belonging to the one, and all that follows it to the other. During the one, He formally "*came to His own*," and "*would have gathered them*"; during the other, the awful consequences of "*His own receiving Him not*" rapidly revealed themselves.

he steadfastly set his face — the "He" here is emphatic — "He Himself then." See His own prophetic language, "I have set my face like a flint" (^{<2807>}Isaiah 50:7).

go to Jerusalem — as His *goal*, but including His preparatory visits to it at the feasts of tabernacles and of dedication (^{<4012>}John 7:2,10 10:22,23), and all the intermediate movements and events.

52. messengers before his face ... to make ready for him — He had not done this before; but now, instead of avoiding, He seems to court publicity — all now hastening to maturity.

53. did not receive him, because, etc. — The Galileans, in going to the festivals at Jerusalem, usually took the Samaritan route [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.6.1], and yet seem to have met with no such inhospitality. But if they were asked to prepare quarters *for the Messiah*, in the person of one whose “face was as though He would go to Jerusalem,” their national prejudices would be raised at so marked a slight upon their claims. (See on ^{<404>}John 4:20).

54. James and John — not *Peter*, as we should have expected, but those “*sons of thunder*” (^{<417>}Mark 3:17), who afterwards wanted to have all the highest honors of the Kingdom to themselves, and the younger of whom had been rebuked already for his exclusiveness (^{<439>}Luke 9:49,50). Yet this was “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” while the other willingly drank of His Lord’s bitter cup. (See on ^{<418>}Mark 10:38-40; and ^{<412>}Acts 12:2). That same fiery zeal, in a mellowed and hallowed form, in the beloved disciple, we find in ^{<415>}2 John 1:5:10 ^{<413>}3 John 1:10.

fire ... as Elias — a plausible case, occurring also in *Samaria* (^{<410>}2 Kings 1:10-12).

55, 56. know not what ... spirit — The thing ye demand, though in keeping with the *legal*, is unsuited to the genius of the *evangelical* dispensation. The sparks of *unholy* indignation would seize readily enough on this example of Elias, though our Lord’s rebuke (as is plain from ^{<416>}Luke 9:56) is directed to the *principle* involved rather than the animal heat which doubtless prompted the reference. “It is a golden sentence of Tillotson, Let us never do anything for religion which is contrary to religion” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

56. For the Son of man, etc. — a saying truly divine, of which all His miracles — for salvation, never destruction — were one continued illustration.

went to another — illustrating His own precept (^{<402>}Matthew 10:23).

^{<415>}LUKE 9:57-62.

INCIDENTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF DISCIPLESHIP.

The Precipitate Disciple (^{<415>}Luke 9:57,58).

(See on ^{<408F>}Matthew 8:19,20.)

The Procrastinating Disciple (^{<409B>}Luke 9:59,60).

(See on ^{<408F>}Matthew 8:21).

The Irresolute Disciple (^{<409B>}Luke 9:61,62).

61. I will follow ... but — The second disciple had a “but” too — a difficulty in the way just then. Yet the different *treatment* of the two cases shows how different was the *spirit* of the two, and to that our Lord addressed Himself. The case of Elisha (^{<4109>}1 Kings 19:19-21), though *apparently* similar to this, will be found quite different from the “looking back” of this case, the best illustration of which is that of *those Hindu converts of our day who, when once persuaded to leave their spiritual fathers in order to “bid them farewell which are at home at their house,” very rarely return to them.* (Also see on ^{<408F>}Matthew 8:21.)

62. No man, etc. — As ploughing requires an eye intent on the furrow to be made, and is marred the instant one turns about, so will they come short of salvation who prosecute the work of God with a distracted attention, a divided heart. Though the reference seems chiefly to ministers, the application is general. The expression “looking back” has a manifest reference to “Lot’s wife” (^{<4110B>}Genesis 19:26; and see on ^{<417B>}Luke 17:32). It is not *actual return* to the world, but a *reluctance to break with it.* (Also see on ^{<408F>}Matthew 8:21.)

CHAPTER 10

◀101 LUKE 10:1-24.

MISSION OF THE SEVENTY DISCIPLES, AND THEIR RETURN.

As our Lord's end approaches, the preparations for the establishment of the coming Kingdom are quickened and extended.

1. the Lord — a becoming title here, as this appointment was an act truly *lordly* [BENGEL].

other seventy also — rather, “others (also in number), seventy”; probably with allusion to the seventy elders of Israel on whom the Spirit descended in the wilderness (◀1012 Numbers 11:24,25). The mission, unlike that of the Twelve, was evidently quite *temporary*. All the instructions are in keeping with a brief and hasty *pioneering* mission, intended to supply what of general preparation for coming events the Lord's own visit afterwards to the same “cities and places” (◀1011 Luke 10:1) would not, from want of time, now suffice to accomplish; whereas the instructions to the Twelve, besides embracing all those to the Seventy, contemplate *world-wide* and *permanent* effects. Accordingly, after their return from this single missionary tour, we never again read of the Seventy.

2. The harvest, etc. — (See on ▶1057 Matthew 9:37).

pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest — (See on ▶1058 Matthew 9:38).

3-12. (See on ▶1007 Matthew 10:7-16).

10. son of peace — inwardly prepared to embrace your message of peace. See note on “worthy,” (see on ▶1003 Matthew 10:13).

12-15. (See on ▶1013 Matthew 11:20-24).

for Sodom — Tyre and Sidon were ruined by commercial prosperity; Sodom sank through its vile pollutions: but the doom of otherwise correct persons who, amidst a blaze of light, reject the Savior, shall be *less endurable* than that of any of these.

16. He that, etc. — (See on ▶1009 Matthew 10:40).

17. returned — evidently not long away.

Lord, etc. — “Thou hast exceeded Thy promise, for ‘*even the devils*,’” etc. The possession of such power, not being expressly in their commission, as in that to the Twelve (^{408F}Luke 9:1), filled them with more astonishment and joy than all else.

through thy name — taking no credit to themselves, but feeling lifted into a region of unimagined superiority to the powers of evil simply through their connection with Christ.

18. I beheld — As much of the force of this glorious statement depends on the nice shade of sense indicated by the *imperfect tense* in the original, it should be brought out in the translation: “I was beholding Satan as lightning falling from heaven”; that is, “I followed you on your mission, and watched its triumphs; while you were wondering at the subjection to you of devils in My name, a grander spectacle *was opening* to My view; sudden as the darting of lightning from heaven to earth, lo! Satan was beheld falling from heaven!” How remarkable is this, that by that law of association which connects a part with the whole, those feeble triumphs of the Seventy seem to have not only brought vividly before the Redeemer the whole ultimate result of His mission, but compressed it into a moment and quickened it into the rapidity of lightning! *Note.* — The word rendered “*devils*,” is always used for those spiritual agents employed in *demoniacal possessions* — never for the ordinary agency of Satan in rational men. When therefore the Seventy say, “the *devils* [demons] are subject to us,” and Jesus replies, “Mine eye was beholding *Satan falling*,” it is plain that He meant to raise their minds not only from the *particular* to the *general*, but from a very *temporary* form of satanic operation to the *entire kingdom of evil*. (See ⁴⁰²³John 12:31; and compare ²⁹⁴²Isaiah 14:12).

19. Behold, I give you, etc. — not for any renewal of their mission, though probably many of them afterwards became ministers of Christ; but simply as disciples.

serpents and scorpions — the latter more venomous than the former: literally, in the first instance (⁴¹⁶⁷Mark 16:17,18 ^{408F}Acts 28:5); but the next words, “*and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you*,” show that the glorious power of faith to “overcome the world” and “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one,” by the communication and maintenance of which to His people He makes them *innocuous*, is what is meant (^{408F}1 John 5:4 ⁴⁰⁸⁶Ephesians 6:16).

20. rejoice not, etc. — that is, not so much. So far from forbidding it, He takes occasion from it to tell them what had been passing in His own mind.

But as power over demons was after all intoxicating, He gives them a higher joy to *balance* it, the joy of having their names in Heaven's register (^{<3008>}Philippians 4:3).

21, 22. Jesus ... said, etc. — The very same sublime words were uttered by our Lord on a former similar occasion (see on ^{<4012>}Matthew 11:25-27); but

(1) There we are merely told that He “answered and said” thus; here, He “*rejoiced in spirit* and said,” etc.

(2) There it was merely “at that time” (or season) that He spoke thus, meaning with a general reference to the rejection of His gospel by the self-sufficient; here, “*In that hour* Jesus said,” with express reference probably to the humble class from which He had to draw the Seventy, and the similar class that had chiefly welcomed their message.

“Rejoice” is too weak a word. It is “exulted in spirit” — evidently giving visible expression to His unusual emotions; while, at the same time, the words “in spirit” are meant to convey to the reader the *depth* of them. This is one of those rare cases in which the veil is lifted from off the Redeemer's inner man, that, angel-like, we may “look into it” for a moment (^{<4012>}1 Peter 1:12). Let us gaze on it with reverential wonder, and as we perceive what it was that produced that mysterious ecstasy, we shall find rising in our hearts a still rapture — “Oh, the depths!”

23, 24. (See on ^{<4036>}Matthew 13:16,17).

^{<4025>}LUKE 10:25-37.

QUESTION OF A LAWYER AND PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

25. tempted him — “tested him”; in no hostile spirit, yet with no tender anxiety for light on that question of questions, but just to see what insight this great Galilean teacher had.

26. What is written in the law — apposite question to a doctor of the *law*, and putting him in turn to the test [BENGEL].

27. Thou shalt, etc. — the answer Christ Himself gave to another lawyer. (See on ^{<4122>}Mark 12:29-33).

28. he said, etc. — “Right; THIS do, and life is thine” — laying such emphasis on “this” as to indicate, without expressing it, *where the real difficulty to a sinner lay*, and thus nonplussing the questioner himself.

29. willing — “wishing,” to get himself out of the difficulty, by throwing on Jesus the definition of “neighbor,” which the Jews interpreted very narrowly and technically, as excluding Samaritans and Gentiles [ALFORD].

30. A certain man — a Jew.

from Jerusalem to Jericho — a distance of nineteen miles northeast, a deep and very fertile hollow — “the *Temple of Judea*” [TRENCH].

thieves — “robbers.” The road, being rocky and desolate, was a notorious haunt of robbers, then and for ages after, and even to this day.

31, 32. came down a ... priest ... and a Levite — Jericho, the second city of Judea, was a city of the priests and Levites, and thousands of them lived there. The two here mentioned are supposed, apparently, to be returning from *temple duties*, but they had not learnt what that meaneth, ‘I will have mercy and not sacrifice’ [TRENCH].

saw him — It was not *inadvertently* that he acted.

came and looked — a further aggravation.

passed by — although the law expressly required the opposite treatment even of the *beast* not only of their *brethren*, but of their *enemy* (^{<623>}Deuteronomy 22:4 ^{<623>}Exodus 23:4,5; compare ^{<2807>}Isaiah 58:7).

33. Samaritan — one excommunicated by the Jews, a byword among them, synonymous with heretic and devil (^{<6388>}John 8:48; see on ^{<2178>}Luke 17:18).

had compassion — His best is mentioned first; for “He who gives outward things gives something *external to himself*, but he who imparts compassion and tears gives him something *from his very self*” [GREGORY THE GREAT, IN TRENCH]. No doubt the priest and Levite had their excuses — It is not safe to be lingering here; besides, he’s past recovery; and then, may not suspicion rest upon ourselves? So might the Samaritan have reasoned, *but did not* [TRENCH]. Nor did he say, He’s a Jew, who would have had no dealings with me (^{<6109>}John 4:9), and why should I with him?

34. oil and wine — the remedies used in such cases all over the East (^{<2100>}Isaiah 1:6), and elsewhere; the *wine* to cleanse the wounds, the *oil* to assuage their smartings.

on his own beast — himself going on foot.

35. two pence — equal to two day's wages of a laborer, and enough for several days' support.

36. Which ... was neighbor? — a most dexterous way of putting the question:

(1) Turning the question from, "Whom am I to love as my neighbor?" to "Who is the man that shows that love?"

(2) Compelling the lawyer to give a reply very different from what he would like — not only condemning his own nation, but those of them who should be the most exemplary.

(3) Making him commend one of a deeply hated race. And he does it, but it is almost extorted. For he does not answer, "The Samaritan" — that would have sounded heterodox, heretical — but "He that showed mercy on him." It comes to the same thing, no doubt, but the circumlocution is significant.

37. Go, etc. — O exquisite, matchless teaching! What new fountains of charity has not this opened up in the human spirit — rivers in the wilderness, streams in the desert! What noble Christian institutions have not such words founded, all undreamed of till that wondrous One came to bless this heartless world of ours with His incomparable love — first in words, and then in deeds which have translated His words into flesh and blood, and poured the life of them through that humanity which He made His own! Was this parable, now, designed to magnify the law of love, and to show who fulfils it and who not? And who did this as never man did it, as our Brother Man, "our Neighbor?" The priests and Levites had not strengthened the diseased, nor bound up the broken (²⁵⁰⁸Ezekiel 34:4), while He bound up the brokenhearted (²⁵⁰⁹Isaiah 61:1), and poured into all wounded spirits the balm of sweetest consolation. All the Fathers saw through the thin veil of this noblest of stories, *the Story of love*, and never wearied of tracing the analogy (though sometimes fancifully enough) [TRENCH]. Exclaims GREGORY NAZIANZEN (in the fourth century), "He hungered, but He fed thousands; He was weary, but He is the Rest of the weary; He is saluted 'Samaritan' and 'Demoniac,' but He *saves him that went down from Jerusalem and fell among thieves*," etc.

LUKE 10:38-42.

MARTHA AND MARY.

38. certain village — Bethany (^{<B10>}John 11:1), which Luke so speaks of, having no farther occasion to notice it.

received him ... her house — The house belonged to her, and she appears throughout to be the older sister.

39. which also — “who for her part,” in contrast with Martha.

sat — “seated herself.” From the custom of sitting *beneath* an instructor, the phrase “sitting at one’s feet” came to mean being a disciple of any one (^{<A22>}Acts 22:3).

heard — rather, “kept listening” to His word.

40. cumbered — “distracted.”

came to him — “presented herself before Him,” as from another apartment, in which her sister had “*left* her to serve (or make preparation) *alone*.”

carest thou not ... my sister, etc. — “Lord, here am I with everything to do, and this sister of mine will not lay a hand to anything; thus I miss something from Thy lips, and Thou from our hands.”

bid her, etc. — She presumes not to stop Christ’s teaching by calling her sister away, and thus leaving Him without His one auditor, nor did she hope perhaps to succeed if she had tried.

41. Martha, Martha — emphatically redoubling upon the name.

careful and cumbered — the one word expressing the inward *worrying anxiety* that her preparations should be worthy of her Lord; the other, the outward *bustle* of those preparations.

many things — “much service” (^{<A10>}Luke 10:40); too elaborate preparation, which so engrossed her attention that she missed her Lord’s teaching.

42. one thing, etc. — The idea of “Short work and little of it suffices for Me” is not so much the *lower sense* of these weighty words, as *supposed* in them, as the basis of something far loftier than any precept on economy.

Underneath that idea is couched another, as to the littleness both of elaborate preparation for the present life and *of that life itself*, compared with another.

chosen the good part — not in the general sense of Moses' choice (³⁸¹²⁵Hebrews 11:25), and Joshua's (⁴⁶²⁴⁵Joshua 24:15), and David's (⁴³³⁸Psalms 119:30); that is, of good in opposition to *bad*; but, of two good ways of serving and pleasing the Lord, choosing *the better*. Wherein, then, was Mary's better than Martha's? Hear what follows.

not be taken away — Martha's choice would be taken from her, for *her services would die with her*; Mary's *never*, being spiritual and eternal. Both were true-hearted disciples, but the one was absorbed in the higher, the other in the lower of two ways of honoring their common Lord. Yet neither despised, or would willingly neglect, the other's occupation. The one represents the *contemplative*, the other the *active* style of the Christian character. A Church full of Marys would perhaps be as great an evil as a Church full of Marthas. Both are needed, each to be the complement of the other.

CHAPTER 11

LUKE 11:1-13.

THE DISCIPLES TAUGHT TO PRAY.

1. one, etc. — struck with either the matter or the manner of our Lord's prayers.

as John, etc. — From this reference to John, it is possible that disciple had not heard the Sermon on the Mount. Nothing of John's *inner* teaching (to his own disciples) has been preserved to us, but we may be sure he never taught his disciples to say, "Our Father."

2-4. (See on ~~109~~ Matthew 6:9-13).

3. day by day, etc. — an extension of the petition in Matthew for "*this day's*" supply, to every successive day's necessities. The closing doxology, wanting here, is wanting also in all the best and most ancient copies of Matthew's Gospel. Perhaps our Lord purposely left that part *open*: and as the grand Jewish doxologies were ever resounding, and passed immediately and naturally, in all their hallowed familiarity into the Christian Church, probably this prayer was never used in the Christian assemblies but in its present form, as we find it in Matthew, while in Luke it has been allowed to stand as originally uttered.

5-8. at midnight ... for a friend is come — The heat in warm countries makes evening preferable to-day for travelling; but "midnight" is everywhere a most *unseasonable* hour of call, and for that very reason it is here selected.

7. Trouble me not — the *trouble* making him insensible both to the urgency of the case and the claims of friendship.

I cannot — without exertion which he would not make.

8. importunity — The word is a strong one — "shamelessness"; persisting in the face of all that seemed reasonable, and refusing to take a denial.

as many, etc. — His reluctance once overcome, all the claims of friendship and necessity are felt to the full. The sense is obvious: If the churlish and

self-indulgent — deaf both to friendship and necessity — can after a positive refusal, be won over, by sheer persistency, to do all that is needed, *how much more* may the same determined perseverance in prayer be expected to prevail with Him whose very nature is “rich unto all that call upon Him” (◀6012 Romans 10:12).

9-13. (See on ▶4017 Matthew 7:7-11.)

13. the Holy Spirit — in Matthew (▶4071 Matthew 7:11), “good gifts”; the former, the Gift of gifts descending on the Church through Christ, and comprehending the latter.

◀2114 LUKE 11:14-36.

BLIND AND DUMB DEMONIAK HEALED — CHARGE OF BEING IN LEAGUE WITH HELL, AND REPLY — DEMAND OF A SIGN, AND REPLY.

(See on ▶4022 Matthew 12:22-45.)

14. dumb — blind also (▶4022 Matthew 12:22).

20. the finger of God — “the Spirit of God” (▶4028 Matthew 12:28); the former figuratively denoting the *power* of God, the latter the *living Personal Agent* in every exercise of it.

21, 22. strong man — meaning *Satan*.

armed — pointing to all the subtle and varied methods by which he wields his dark power over men.

keepeth — “guardeth.”

his palace — *man* whether viewed more largely or in individual souls — how significant of what men are to Satan!

in peace — undisturbed, secure in his possession.

22. a stronger than he — *Christ*: Glorious title, in relation to Satan!

come upon him and overcome him — sublimely expressing the Redeemer’s approach, as the Seed of the woman, to bruise the Serpent’s head.

taketh from him all his armor — “his panoply,” “his complete armor.” Vain would be the victory, were not the *means of gaining* his lost power

wrested from him. It is this that completes the triumph and ensures the final overthrow of his kingdom. The parable that immediately follows (^{<0124>}Luke 11:24-26) is just the *reverse of this*. (See on ^{<0123>}Matthew 12:43-45.) In the one case, Satan is *dislodged by Christ*, and so finds, in all future assaults, the house *preoccupied*; in the other, he merely goes out and comes in again, finding the house “EMPTY” (^{<0124>}Matthew 12:44) of any rival, and all ready to welcome him back. This explains the important saying that comes in *between the two parables* (^{<0123>}Luke 11:23). *Neutrality in religion there is none*. The absence of positive attachment to Christ involves hostility to Him.

23. gathereth ... scattereth — referring probably to gleaners. The meaning seems to be, Whatever in religion is disconnected from Christ comes to nothing.

27, 28. as he spake these things, a ... woman of the company — of the multitude, the crowd. A charming little incident and profoundly instructive. With true womanly feeling, she envies the mother of such a wonderful Teacher. Well, and higher and better than she had said as much before her (^{<0125>}Luke 1:28,42); and our Lord is far from condemning it. He only holds up — as “*blessed rather*” — the hearers and keepers of God’s word; in other words, *the humblest real saint of God*. (See on ^{<0124>}Matthew 12:49,50.) How utterly alien is this sentiment from the teaching of the Church of Rome, which would excommunicate any one of its members who dared to talk in the spirit of this glorious saying! (Also see on ^{<0123>}Matthew 12:43.)

29-32. (See on ^{<0123>}Matthew 12:39-42.)

33-36. (See on ^{<0124>}Matthew 5:14-16; ^{<0122>}Matthew 6:22,23.) But ^{<0125>}Luke 11:36 here is peculiarly vivid, expressing what pure, beautiful, broad perceptions *the clarity of the inward eye* imparts.

^{<0127>}LUKE 11:37-54.

DENUNCIATION OF THE PHARISEES.

38. marvelled, etc. — (See ^{<0102>}Mark 7:2-4).

39-41. cup and platter — remarkable example of our Lord’s way of drawing the most striking illustrations of great truths from the most familiar objects and incidents of life.

ravening — rapacity.

40. that which is without, etc. — that is, He to whom belongs the outer life, and right to demand its subjection to Himself — is the inner man less His?

41. give alms ... and ... all ... clean — a principle of immense value. As the greed of these hypocrites was one of the most prominent features of their character (^{<2164>}Luke 16:14 ^{<1234>}Matthew 23:14), our Lord bids them exemplify the opposite character, and then their *outside*, ruled by this, would be beautiful in the eye of God, and their meals would be eaten with clean hands, though never so fouled with the business of this worky world. (See ^{<2007>}Ecclesiastes 9:7).

42. mint ... rue, etc. — rounding on ^{<8770>}Leviticus 27:30, which they interpreted rigidly. Our Lord purposely names the most trifling products of the earth, as examples of what they punctiliously exacted the tenth of.

judgment and the love of God — in ^{<1235>}Matthew 23:25, “judgment, mercy, and *faith*.” The reference is to ^{<3167>}Micah 6:6-8, whose third element of all acceptable religion, “walking humbly with God,” comprehends both “love” and “faith.” (See on ^{<1129>}Mark 12:29; ^{<1123>}Mark 12:32,33). The same tendency to merge greater duties in less besets us still, *but it is the characteristic of hypocrites*.

these ought ye, etc. — There is no need for one set of duties to jostle out another; but of the *greater*, our Lord says, “Ye *ought to have done*” them; of the *lesser*, only “ye ought *not to leave them undone*.”

43. uppermost seats — (See on ^{<2407>}Luke 14:7-11).

greetings — (See on ^{<1217>}Matthew 23:7-10).

44. appear not, etc. — As one might unconsciously walk over a grave concealed from view, and thus contract ceremonial defilement, so the plausible exterior of the Pharisees kept people from perceiving the pollution they contracted from coming in contact with such corrupt characters. (See ^{<4189>}Psalms 5:9 ^{<6183>}Romans 3:13; a different illustration from ^{<1237>}Matthew 23:27).

46. burdens grievous, etc. — referring not so much to the irksomeness of the legal rites (though they were irksome, ^{<4150>}Acts 15:10), as to the heartless rigor with which they were enforced, and by men of shameless inconsistency.

47, 48. ye build, etc. — Out of pretended respect and honor, they repaired and beautified the sepulchres of the prophets, and with whining hypocrisy said, “If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been

partakers with them in the blood of the prophets,” while all the time they “were witnesses to themselves that they were the children of them that killed the prophets” (⁴¹²³Matthew 23:29,30); convicting themselves daily of as exact a resemblance in spirit and character to the very classes over whose deeds they pretended to mourn, as child to parent.

49-51. said the wisdom, etc. — a remarkable variation of the words in ⁴¹²³Matthew 23:34, “Behold *I SEND*.” As there seems plainly an allusion to ancient warnings of what God would do with so incorrigible a people, so here Christ, stepping majestically into the place of God, so to speak, says, “Now I am going to carry all that out.” *Could this be other than the Lord of Israel in the flesh?*

50. all ... required of this generation — As it was only in the last generation of them that “the iniquity of the Amorites was full” (⁴¹⁵¹⁶Genesis 15:16), and then the abominations of ages were at once completely and awfully avenged, so the iniquity of Israel was allowed to accumulate from age to age till in that generation it came to the full, and the whole collected vengeance of Heaven broke at once over its devoted head. In the first French Revolution the same awful principle was exemplified, and *Christendom has not done with it yet*.

prophets — in the New Testament sense (⁴¹²³Matthew 23:34; see ⁴¹²⁸1 Corinthians 12:28).

51. blood of Zacharias — Probably the allusion is not to any recent murder, but to ⁴²⁰²2 Chronicles 24:20-22, as the *last recorded* and most suitable case for illustration. And as Zacharias’ last words were, “The Lord *require it*,” so they are warned that “of that generation it should be *required*.”

52. key of knowledge — not the key to open knowledge, but knowledge, the only key to open heaven. In ⁴¹²³Matthew 23:13, they are accused of *shutting heaven*; here of *taking away the key*, which was worse. A right knowledge of God’s Word is eternal life (⁴³⁷³John 17:3); but this they took away from the people, substituting for it their wretched traditions.

53, 54. Exceedingly vivid and affecting. They were stung to the quick — and can we wonder? — yet had not materials for the charge they were preparing against Him.

provoke him, etc. — “to harass Him with questions.”

CHAPTER 12

LUKE 12:1-12.

WARNING AGAINST HYPOCRISY.

1-3. meantime — in close connection, probably, with the foregoing scene. Our Lord had been *speaking out* more plainly than ever before, as matters were coming to a head between Him and His enemies, and this seems to have suggested to His own mind the warning here. He had just Himself illustriously exemplified His own precepts.

his disciples first of all — afterwards to “the multitudes” (Luke 12:54).
covered — from the view.

2. hid — from knowledge. “Tis no use concealing anything, for all will one day come out. Give free and fearless utterance then to all the truth.”
 (Compare 1 Corinthians 4:3,5).

4, 5. I say, etc. — You will say, That may cost us our life. Be it so; but, “My friends, there their power ends.” He calls them “my friends” here, not in any loose sense, but, as we think, from the feeling He then had that in this “killing of the body” *He and they* were going to be affectingly one with each other.

5. Fear Him ... Fear Him — how striking the repetition here! *Only the one fear would effectually expel the other.*

after he hath killed, etc. — Learn here —

(1) To play false with one’s convictions to save one’s life, may fail of its end after all, for God can inflict a violent death in some other and equally formidable way.

(2) There is a *hell*, it seems, for the body as well as the soul; consequently, sufferings adapted to the one as well as the other.

(3) *Fear of hell* is a divinely authorized and needed motive of action even to Christ’s “friends.”

(4) As Christ’s meekness and gentleness were not compromised by such harsh notes as these, so those servants of Christ lack their

Master's spirit who soften down all such language to please ears "polite." (See on ^{<19>}Mark 9:43-48).

6, 7. five ... for two farthings — In ^{<10>}Matthew 10:29 it is "two for one farthing"; so if one took two farthings' worth, he got one in addition — of such small value were they.

than many sparrows — not "than millions of sparrows"; the charm and power of our Lord's teaching is very much in this simplicity.

8, 9. confess ... deny — The point lies in doing it "before men," because one has to do it "despising the *shame*." But when done, the Lord holds Himself bound to repay it *in kind* by confessing such "before the angels of God." For the rest, see on ^{<19>}Luke 9:26.

10. Son of man ... Holy Ghost — (See on ^{<21>}Matthew 12:31,32).

^{<21>}LUKE 12:13-53.

COVETOUSNESS — WATCHFULNESS — SUPERIORITY TO EARTHLY TIES.

13. Master, etc. — that is, "Great Preacher of righteousness, help; there is need of Thee in this rapacious world; here am I the victim of injustice, and that from my own brother, who withholds from me my rightful share of the inheritance that has fallen to us." In this most inopportune intrusion upon the solemnities of our Lord's teaching, there is a mixture of the absurd and the irreverent, the one, however, occasioning the other. The man had not the least idea that his case was not of as urgent a nature, and as worthy the attention of our Lord, as anything else He could deal with.

14. Man, etc. — *Contrast this style of address with "my friends,"* (^{<21>}Luke 12:4).

who, etc. — a question literally repudiating the office which Moses assumed (^{<19>}Exodus 2:14). *The influence of religious teachers in the external relations of life has ever been immense, when only the INDIRECT effect of their teaching; but whenever they intermeddle DIRECTLY with secular and political matters, the spell of that influence is broken.*

15. unto them — the multitude around Him (^{<21>}Luke 12:1).

of covetousness — The best copies have “all,” that is, “every kind of covetousness”; because as this was one of the more plausible forms of it, so He would strike at once at the *root* of the evil.

a man’s life, etc. — a singularly weighty maxim, and not less so because its meaning and its truth are equally evident.

16-19. a certain rich man, etc. — Why is this man called a “fool?”
(^{<424>}Luke 12:20)

(1) Because he deemed a life of secure and abundant earthly enjoyment the summit of human felicity.

(2) Because, possessing the means of this, through prosperity in his calling, he flattered himself that he had a long lease of such enjoyment, and nothing to do but give himself up to it. Nothing else is laid to his charge.

20, 21. this night, etc. — This sudden cutting short of his career is designed to express not only the folly of building securely upon the future, but of throwing one’s whole soul into what may at any moment be gone. “Thy *soul* shall be required of thee” is put in opposition to his own treatment of it, “I will say to my *soul*, *Soul*,” etc.

whose shall those things be, etc. — Compare ^{<396>}Psalm 39:6, “He heapeth up riches and *knoweth not who shall gather them.*”

21. So is he, etc. — Such is a picture of his folly here, and of its awful issue. and is not rich toward God — lives to amass and enjoy riches which terminate on *self*, but as to the riches of God’s favor, which is life (^{<310>}Psalm 30:5), of “precious” faith (^{<600>}2 Peter 1:1 ^{<316>}James 2:5), of good works (^{<508>}1 Timothy 6:18), of wisdom which is better than rubies (^{<2081>}Proverbs 8:11) — lives and dies *a beggar!*

22-31. (See on ^{<4025>}Matthew 6:25-33).

25, 26. which of you, etc. — Corroding solicitude will not bring you the least of the things ye fret about, though it may double the evil of wanting them. And if not the least, why vex yourselves about things of more consequence?

29. of doubtful, etc. — unsettled mind; put off your balance.

32. little flock, etc. — How sublime and touching a contrast between this tender and pitying appellation, “Little flock” (in the original a double diminutive, which in German can be expressed, but not in English) — and the “good pleasure” of the Father to give them the Kingdom; the one

recalling the insignificance and helplessness of that then literal handful of disciples, the other holding up to their view the eternal love that encircled them, the everlasting arms that were underneath them, and the high inheritance awaiting them! — “the kingdom”; grand word; then why not “bread” (^{<4023>}Luke 12:31 [BENGL]). Well might He say, “Fear not!”

33, 34. Sell, etc. — This is but a more vivid expression of ^{<4069>}Matthew 6:19-21 (see on ^{<4069>}Matthew 6:19-21).

35-40. loins ... girded — to fasten up the long outer garment, always done before travel and work (^{<1202>}2 Kings 4:29 ^{<4028>}Acts 12:8). The meaning is, Be in readiness.

lights, etc. — (See on ^{<4258>}Matthew 25:1).

36. return from the wedding — not come to it, as in the parable of the virgins. Both have their spiritual significance; but *preparedness for Christ's coming* is the prominent idea.

37. gird himself, etc. — “a promise the most august of all: Thus will the Bridegroom entertain his friends (nay, servants) on the solemn Nuptial Day” [BENGL].

38. second ... third watch — To find them ready to receive Him at any hour of day or night, when one might least of all expect Him, is peculiarly blessed. A servant may be truly faithful, even though taken so far unawares that he has not everything in *such* order and readiness for his master's return as he thinks is due to him, and both could and would have had if he had had notice of the time of his coming, and so may not be willing to open to him “*immediately,*” but fly to preparation, and let his master knock again ere he admit him, and even then *not with full joy*. A too common case this with Christians. But if the servant have himself and all under his charge in such a state that at any hour when his master knocks, he can open to him “*immediately,*” and hail his “return” — that is the most enviable, “blessed” servant of all.

41-48. unto us or even to all? — us the Twelve, or all this vast audience?

42. Who then, etc. — answering the question indirectly by another question, from which they were left to gather what it would be: — To you certainly in the first instance, representing the “stewards” of the “household” I am about to collect, but generally to all “servants” in My house.

faithful and wise — *Fidelity* is the first requisite in a servant, *wisdom* (discretion and judgment in the exercise of his functions), the next.

steward — house steward, whose it was to distribute to the servants their allotted portion of food.

shall make — will deem fit to be made.

44. make him ruler over all he hath — will advance him to the highest post, referring to the world to come. (See ^{<4157>}Matthew 25:21,23).

45. begin to beat, etc. — In the confidence that his Lord's return will not be speedy, he throws off the role of servant and plays the master, maltreating those faithful servants who refuse to join him, seizing on and revelling in the fullness of his master's board; intending, when he has got his fill, to resume the mask of fidelity ere his master appear.

46. cut him in sunder — a punishment not unknown in the East; compare ^{<8157>}Hebrews 11:37, "sawn asunder" (^{<9153>}1 Samuel 15:33 ^{<2115>}Daniel 2:5).

the unbelievers — the unfaithful, those unworthy of trust (^{<4155>}Matthew 24:51), "the hypocrites," falsely calling themselves "servants."

48. knew not — that is knew but *partially*; for *some* knowledge is presupposed both in the name "servant" of Christ, and his being liable to punishment at all.

many ... few stripes — degrees of future punishment proportioned to the knowledge sinned against. Even heathens are not without knowledge enough for future judgment; but the reference here is not to such. It is a solemn truth, and though *general*, like all other revelations of the future world, discloses a tangible and momentous principle in its awards.

49-53. to send — cast.

fire — "the higher spiritual element of life which Jesus came to introduce into this earth (compare ^{<4115>}Matthew 3:11), with reference to its mighty effects in quickening all that is akin to it and *destroying all that is opposed*. To cause this element of life to take up its abode on earth, and wholly to pervade human hearts with its warmth, was the lofty destiny of the Redeemer" [OLSHAUSEN: so CALVIN, STIER, ALFORD, etc.].

what will I, etc. — an obscure expression, uttered under deep and half-smothered emotion. In its general import all are agreed; but the nearest to the precise meaning seems to be, "And what should I have to desire if it were once already kindled?" [BENGEL and BLOOMFIELD].

50. But ... a baptism, etc. — clearly, His own bloody baptism, first to take place.

how ... straitened — not, “how do I long for its accomplishment,” as many understand it, thus making it but a repetition of ^{<0124>} Luke 12:49; but “what a pressure of spirit is upon Me.”

till it be accomplished — till it be over. Before a promiscuous audience, such obscure language was fit on a theme like this; but oh, what surges of mysterious emotion in the view of what was now so near at hand does it reveal!

51. peace ... ? Nay, etc. — the reverse of peace, *in the first instance*. (See on ^{<0084>} Matthew 10:34-36.) The connection of all this with the foregoing warnings about hypocrisy, covetousness, and watchfulness, is deeply solemn: “My conflict hasten apace; Mine over, yours begins; and then, let the servants tread in their Master’s steps, uttering their testimony entire and fearless, neither loving nor dreading the world, anticipating awful wrenches of the dearest ties in life, but looking forward, as I do, to the completion of their testimony, when, reaching the haven after the tempest, they shall enter into the joy of their Lord.”

^{<0125>} LUKE 12:54-59.

NOT DISCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE TIME.

54. to the people — “the multitude,” a word of special warning to the thoughtless crowd, before dismissing them. (See on ^{<0012>} Matthew 16:2,3).

56. how ... not discern, etc. — unable to perceive what a critical period that was for the Jewish Church.

57. why even of yourselves, etc. — They might say, To do this requires more knowledge of Scripture and providence than we possess; but He sends them to their own conscience, as enough to show them who He was, and win them to immediate discipleship.

58. When thou goest, etc. — (See on ^{<0125>} Matthew 5:25,26). The *urgency of the case with them, and the necessity, for their own safety, of immediate decision*, was the object of these striking words.

CHAPTER 13

LUKE 13:1-9.

THE LESSON, “REPENT OR PERISH,” SUGGESTED BY TWO RECENT INCIDENTS, AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE.

1-3. Galileans — possibly the followers of Judas of Galilee, who, some twenty years before this, taught that Jews should not pay tribute to the Romans, and of whom we learn, from ⁴¹⁵⁷Acts 5:37, that he drew after him a multitude of followers, who on his being slain were all dispersed. About this time that party would be at its height, and if Pilate caused this detachment of them to be waylaid and put to death as they were offering their sacrifices at one of the festivals, that would be “mingling their blood with their sacrifices” [GROTIUS, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, but doubted by DE WETTE, MEYER, ALFORD, etc.]. News of this being brought to our Lord, to draw out His views of such, and whether it was not a judgment of Heaven, He simply points them to the practical view of the matter: “These men are not signal examples of divine vengeance, as ye suppose; but every impenitent sinner — *ye yourselves*, except ye repent — shall be like monuments of the judgment of Heaven, and in a more awful sense.” The reference here to the impending destruction of Jerusalem is far from exhausting our Lord’s weighty words; they manifestly point to a “perdition” of a more awful kind — *future, personal, remediless*.

4, 5. tower in Siloam — probably one of the towers of the city wall, near the pool of Siloam. Of its fall nothing is known.

6-9. fig tree — Israel, as the visible witness of God in the world, but generally all within the pale of the visible Church of God; a familiar figure (compare ²³⁸¹Isaiah 5:1-7 ⁴⁵¹⁶John 15:1-8, etc.).

vineyard — a spot selected for its fertility, separated from the surrounding fields, and cultivated with special care, with a view solely to *fruit*.

came and sought fruit — a heart turned to God; the fruits of righteousness; compare ⁴¹²³Matthew 21:33,34, and ²³⁸¹Isaiah 5:2, “He *looked* that it should bring forth fruit”; He has a *right* to it, and will *require* it.

7. three years — a long enough trial for a fig tree, and so denoting probably just a *sufficient* period of culture for spiritual fruit. The supposed allusion to the duration of our Lord's ministry is precarious.

cut it down — indignant language.

cumbereth — not only doing no good, but wasting ground.

8. he answering, etc. — Christ, as Intercessor, loath to see it cut down so long as there was any hope (see ^{<0234>}Luke 13:34).

dig, etc. — loosen the earth about it and enrich it with manure; pointing to changes of method in the divine treatment of the impenitent, in order to freshen spiritual culture.

9. if ... fruit, well — Genuine repentance, however late, avails to save (^{<0234>}Luke 23:42,43).

after that, etc. — The final perdition of such as, after the utmost limits of reasonable forbearance, are found fruitless, will be pre-eminently and confessedly just (^{<0102>}Proverbs 1:24-31 ^{<0343>}Ezekiel 24:13).

^{<0310>}LUKE 13:10-17.

WOMAN OF EIGHTEEN YEAR'S INFIRMITY HEALED ON THE SABBATH.

11. spirit of infirmity — Compare ^{<0317>}Luke 13:17, "whom *Satan* hath bound." From this it is probable, though not certain, that her protracted infirmity was the effect of some milder form of *possession*; yet she was "a daughter of Abraham," in the same gracious sense, no doubt, as Zaccheus, after his conversion, was "a son of Abraham" (^{<0349>}Luke 19:9).

12, 13. said ... Woman ... and laid — both at once.

14. with indignation — not so much at the sabbath violation as at the glorification of Christ. (Compare ^{<0115>}Matthew 21:15) [TRENCH].

said to the people — "Not daring directly to find fault with the Lord, he seeks circuitously to reach Him through the people, who were more under his influence, and whom he feared less" [TRENCH].

15. the Lord — (See on ^{<0118>}Luke 10:1).

hypocrite! — How "the faithful and true Witness" tears off the masks which men wear!

his ox, etc. — (See on ^{<4009>}Matthew 12:9-13; and ^{<4009>}Luke 6:9).

16. ought not, etc. — How gloriously the Lord vindicates the superior claims of this woman, in consideration of the sadness and long duration of her suffering, and of her dignity notwithstanding, as an heir of the promise!

^{<4008>}LUKE 13:18-30.

MISCELLANEOUS TEACHINGS.

18-21. mustard seed ... leaven — (See on ^{<4008>}Mark 4:30-32). The parable of “the Leaven” sets forth, perhaps, rather the *inward* growth of the kingdom, while “the Mustard Seed” seems to point chiefly to the *outward*. It being a woman’s work to knead, it seems a refinement to say that “the woman” here represents *the Church*, as the instrument of depositing the leaven. Nor does it yield much satisfaction to understand the “three measures of meal” of that threefold division of our nature into “spirit, soul, and body,” (alluded to in ^{<4008>}1 Thessalonians 5:23) or of the threefold partition of the world among the three sons of Noah (^{<4008>}Genesis 10:32), as some do. It yields more real satisfaction to see in this brief parable just the *all-penetrating* and *assimilating* quality of the Gospel, by virtue of which it will yet mould all institutions and tribes of men, and exhibit over the whole earth one “Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” (See on ^{<4015>}Revelation 11:15).

23. Lord, etc. — one of those curious questions by talking of which some flatter themselves they are *religious*.

said unto them — the multitude; taking no notice of the man or his question, save as furnishing the occasion of a solemn warning not to trifle with so momentous a matter as “salvation.”

24. Strive — The word signifies to “contend” as for the mastery, to “struggle,” expressive of the *difficulty* of being saved, as if one would have to *force his way in*.

strait gate — another figure of the same. (See on ^{<4007>}Matthew 7:13,14).

for many ... will seek — “desire,” that is, with a mere wish or slothful endeavor.

and shall not be able — because it must be made a *life-and-death struggle*.

25. master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door — awfully sublime and vivid picture! At present he is represented as in a *sitting* posture, as if calmly looking on to see who will “strive,” while entrance is practicable, and who will merely “seek” to enter in. But this is to have an end, by the great Master of the house Himself rising and shutting the door, after which there will be *no admittance*.

Lord, Lord — emphatic reduplication, expressive of the earnestness *now* felt, but too late. (See on ^{<4102>}Matthew 7:21,22).

26, 27. See on the similar passage (^{<4102>}Matthew 7:22,23).

eaten and drunk, etc. — We have sat with Thee at the same table. (See on ^{<4102>}Matthew 7:22).

taught in our streets — Do we not remember listening in our own streets to Thy teaching? Surely *we* are not to be denied admittance?

27. But he shall say, etc. — (See on ^{<4102>}Matthew 7:23). *No nearness of external communion with Christ will avail at the great day, in place of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.* Observe the *style* which Christ intimates that He will then assume, that of absolute Disposer of men’s eternal destinies, and contrast it with His “despised and rejected” condition at that time.

28, 29. (See ^{<4101>}Matthew 8:11,12). Also see on ^{<4103>}Matthew 13:42.

^{<4103>}LUKE 13:31-35.

MESSAGE TO HEROD.

31. and depart hence — and “go forward,” *push on*. He was on His way out of Perea, east of Jordan, and in Herod’s dominions, “journeying towards Jerusalem” (^{<4103>}Luke 13:22). Haunted by guilty fears, probably, Herod wanted to get rid of Him (see on ^{<4104>}Mark 6:14), and seems, from our Lord’s answer, to have sent these Pharisees, under pretense of a friendly hint, to persuade Him that the sooner He got beyond Herod’s jurisdiction the better it would be for His own safety. Our Lord saw through both of them, and sends the cunning ruler a message couched in dignified and befitting irony.

32. that fox — that crafty, cruel enemy of God’s innocent servants.

Behold, I cast out devils and I do cures — that is, “Plot on and ply thy wiles; I also have My plans; My works of mercy are nearing completion, but some yet remain; I have work for to-day and to-morrow too, and the third day; by that time I shall be where his jurisdiction reaches not; the guilt of My blood shall not lie at his door; that dark deed is reserved for others.” He does not say, I preach the Gospel — that would have made little impression upon Herod — in the light of the *merciful* character of Christ’s *actions* the *malice* of Herod’s snares is laid bare [BENGEL].

to-day, to-morrow, the third day — remarkable language expressive of *successive steps* of His work yet remaining, the calm *deliberateness* with which He meant to go through with them, one after another, to the last, unmoved by Herod’s threat, yet the *rapid march* with which they were now hastening to completion. (Compare ^{12:37}Luke 22:37).

I shall be perfected — I finish my course, I attain completion.

33. it cannot be that a prophet, etc. — “*It would never do that,*” etc. — awful severity of satire this upon “the bloody city!” “He seeks to kill me, does he? Ah! I must be out of Herod’s jurisdiction for that. Go tell him I neither fly from him nor fear him, but Jerusalem is the prophets’ slaughter-house.”

34, 35. O Jerusalem, etc. — (See on ^{12:37}Matthew 23:37; ^{12:39}Matthew 23:39).

CHAPTER 14

LUKE 14:1-24.

HEALING OF A DROPSICAL MAN, AND MANIFOLD TEACHINGS AT A SABBATH FEAST.

2. man before him — not one of the company, since this was apparently *before* the guests sat down, and probably the man came in hope of a cure, though not expressly soliciting it [DE WETTE].

3-6. (See on ^{<14:1>}Matthew 12:11,12).

7-11. a parable — showing that His design was not so much to inculcate mere politeness or good manners, as *underneath* this to teach something *deeper* (^{<14:11>}Luke 14:11).

chief rooms — principal seats, in the middle part of the couch on which they reclined at meals, esteemed the most honorable.

8. wedding — and seating thyself at the wedding *feast*. Our Lord avoids the appearance of personality by this delicate allusion to a different kind of entertainment than this of his host [BENGEL].

9. the lowest — not a *lower* merely [BENGEL].

with shame — “To be lowest is only ignominious to him who affects the highest” [BENGEL].

10. Friend — said to the *modest* guest only, not the proud one (^{<14:9>}Luke 14:9) [BENGEL].

worship — honor. The whole of this is but a reproduction of ^{<15:6>}Proverbs 25:6,7. But it was reserved for the matchless Teacher to *utter articulately*, and *apply to the regulation of the minutest features of social life*, such *great laws of the Kingdom of God*, as that of ^{<14:11>}Luke 14:11.

11. whosoever, etc. — couching them in a chaste simplicity and proverbial terseness of style which makes them “apples of gold in a setting of silver.” (See on ^{<18:14>}Luke 18:14).

12-14. call not thy friends — Jesus certainly did not mean us to dispense with the duties of ordinary fellowship, but, remitting these to their proper place, inculcates what is better [BENGEL].

lest ... a recompense be given thee — a fear the world is not afflicted with [BENGEL]. The meaning, however, is that no *exercise of principle* is involved in it, as selfishness itself will suffice to prompt to it (^{<4154>}Matthew 5:46,47).

13. call the poor — “Such God Himself calls” (^{<4121>}Luke 14:21) [BENGEL].

14. blessed — acting from disinterested, god-like compassion for the wretched.

15-24. when one ... heard ... he said, Blessed, etc. — As our Lord’s words seemed to hold forth the future “recompense” under the idea of a great Feast, the thought passes through this man’s mind, how blessed they would be who should be honored to sit down to it. Our Lord’s reply is in substance this: “The great Feast is prepared already; the invitations are issued, *but declined*; the feast, notwithstanding, shall not want abundance of guests; but not one of its present contemners — who shall yet come to sue for admission — shall be allowed to taste of it.” This shows what was lacking in the seemingly pious exclamation of this man. It was Balaam’s, “Let me *die the death* of the righteous, and let my last end be like his”

(^{<4230>}Numbers 23:10), without any anxiety about *living his life*; fondly wishing that all were right with him *at last*, while all heedless of the precious *present*.

16. a great supper — (Compare ^{<2217>}Isaiah 25:6).

bade many — *historically*, the Jews (see on ^{<4123>}Matthew 22:3); generally, those within the pale of professed discipleship.

17. supper-time ... all now ready — pointing undoubtedly to the now ripening preparations for the great Gospel call. (See on ^{<4123>}Matthew 22:4.)

18. all began to make excuse — (Compare ^{<4125>}Matthew 22:5). Three excuses, given as specimens of the rest, answer to “the *care of this world*” (^{<4148>}Luke 14:18), “the *deceitfulness of riches*” (^{<4149>}Luke 14:19), and “the *pleasures of this life*” (^{<4141>}Luke 14:20), which “choke the word” (^{<4132>}Matthew 13:22 and ^{<4184>}Luke 8:14). Each differs from the other, and each has its own plausibility, but *all come to the same result*: “We have other things to attend to, more pressing just now.” Nobody is represented as saying, *I will not come*; nay, all the answers imply that *but for* certain things they *would* come, and when these are out of the way they *will* come. So it

certainly is in the case intended, for the last words clearly imply that the *refusers* will one day become *petitioners*.

21. came, and showed, etc. — saying as in ^{<2511>}Isaiah 53:1. “It is the part of ministers to report to the Lord in their prayers the compliance or refusal of their hearers” [BENGEL].

angry — in one sense a *gracious* word, showing how sincere he was in issuing his invitations (^{<2511>}Ezekiel 33:11). But it is the *slight* put upon him, the sense of which is intended to be marked by this word.

streets and lanes — *historically*, those within the same pale of “the city” of God as the former class, but the despised and outcasts of the nation, the “publicans and sinners” [TRENCH]; generally, all similar classes, usually overlooked in the first provision for supplying the means of grace to a community, half heathen in the midst of revealed light, and in every sense miserable.

22. yet there is room — implying that these classes *had* embraced the invitation (^{<4123>}Matthew 21:32 ^{<4123>}Mark 12:37, last clause; ^{<4074>}John 7:48,49); and beautifully expressing the longing that should fill the hearts of ministers to see their Master’s table filled.

23. highways and hedges — outside the city altogether; *historically*, the heathen, sunk in the lowest depths of spiritual wretchedness, as being beyond the pale of all that is revealed and saving, “without Christ, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (^{<4122>}Ephesians 2:12); generally, all such still. Thus, this parable *prophetically* contemplates the extension of the kingdom of God to the whole world; and *spiritually*, directs the Gospel invitations to be carried to the lowest strata, and be brought in contact with the outermost circles, of human society.

compel them to come in — not as if they would make the “excuses” of the first class, but because it would be hard to get them over two difficulties:

(1) “We are not fit company for such a feast.”

(2) “We have no proper dress, and are ill in order for such a presence.”

How fitly does this represent the difficulties and fears of the *sincere*! How is this met? “Take no excuse — make them come as

they are — bring them along with you.” What a directory for ministers of Christ!

that my house may be filled — “Grace no more than nature will endure a vacuum” [BENGEL].

24. I say unto you, That none — Our Lord here appears to throw off the veil of the parable, and proclaim the Supper *His own*, intimating that when transferred and transformed into its final glorious form, and the refusers themselves would give all for another opportunity, He will not allow one of them to taste it. (*Note.* This parable must not be confounded with that of ^{<02B>}Proverbs 1:24-33; *The Marriage Supper*, ^{<02D>}Matthew 22:2-14).

^{<04C>}LUKE 14:25-35.

ADDRESS TO GREAT MULTITUDES TRAVELLING WITH HIM.

25. great multitudes with him — on His final journey to Jerusalem. The “great multitudes” were doubtless people going to the passover, who moved along in clusters (^{<02B4>}Luke 2:44), and who on this occasion falling in with our Lord had formed themselves into one mass about Him.

26, 27. If any man, etc. — (See on ^{<01C8>}Matthew 10:34-36, and ^{<01B8>}Mark 8:34,35).

28-33. which of you, etc. — Common sense teaches men not to *begin* any costly work without first seeing that they have wherewithal to *finish*. And he who does otherwise exposes himself to general ridicule. Nor will any wise potentate enter on a war with any hostile power without first seeing to it that, despite formidable odds (two to one), he be able to stand his ground; and if he has no hope of this, he will feel that nothing remains for him but to make the best terms he can. *Even so*, says our Lord, “in the warfare you will each have to wage as My disciples, despise not your enemy’s strength, for the odds are all against you; and you had better see to it that, despite every disadvantage, you still have wherewithal to hold out and win the day, or else not begin at all, and make the best you can in such awful circumstances.” In this simple sense of the parable (STIER, ALFORD, etc., go wide of the mark here in making the enemy to be *God*, because of the “conditions of peace,” ^{<04E3>}Luke 14:32), two things are taught:

(1) Better not begin (^{<01B5>}Revelation 3:15), than begin and not finish.

(2) Though the contest for salvation be on our part an awfully unequal one, *the human will*, in the exercise of that “faith which overcometh the world” (^{<01B6>}1 John 5:4), and nerved by power from above, which “out

of *weakness* makes it *strong*” (^{<58134>}Hebrews 11:34 ^{<60065>}1 Peter 1:5), becomes heroic and will come off “more than conqueror.” But without *absolute surrender of self* the contest is hopeless (^{<21437>}Luke 14:33).

34, 35. Salt, etc. — (See on ^{<41513>}Matthew 5:13-16; and ^{<40287>}Mark 9:50).

CHAPTER 15

◀LUKE 15:1-32.

PUBLICANS AND SINNERS WELCOMED BY CHRIST — THREE PARABLES TO EXPLAIN THIS.

1. drew near ... all the publicans and sinners, etc. — drawn around Him by the extraordinary adaptation of His teaching to their case, who, till He appeared — at least His forerunner — might well say, “No man careth for my soul.”

2. murmured, saying, etc. — took it ill, were scandalized at Him, and insinuated (on the principle that a man is known by the company he keeps) that He must have some secret sympathy with their *character*. But oh, what a truth of unspeakable preciousness do their lips, as on other occasions, unconsciously utter., Now follow three parables representing the sinner:

(1) *in his stupidity;*

(2) *as all-unconscious of his lost condition;*

(3) *knowingly and willingly estranged from God* [BENGEL]. The first two set forth the *seeking* love of God; the last, His *receiving* love [TRENCH].

◀LUKE 15:3-7.

I. THE LOST SHEEP.

3-7. Occurring again (◀MATTHEW 18:12-14); but there to show how precious one of His sheep is to the Good Shepherd; here, to show that the shepherd, though the sheep stray never so widely, will seek it out, and when he hath found, will rejoice over it.

4. leave the ninety and nine — bend all His attention and care, as it were, to the one object of recovering the lost sheep; not saying. “It is but one; let it go; enough remain.”

go after ... until, etc. — pointing to all the diversified means which God sets in operation for recovering sinners.

6. Rejoice with me, etc. — The principle here is, that one feels *exuberant joy* to be almost too much for himself to bear alone, and is positively relieved by having others to *share it with him*. (See on ^{<D150>}Luke 15:10).

7. ninety-nine just ... needing no repentance — not *angels*, whose place in these parables is very different from this; but those represented by the *prodigal's well-behaved brother*, who have “served their Father” many years and not at any time transgressed His commandment (in the outrageous sense of the prodigal). (See on ^{<D159>}Luke 15:29; ^{<D151>}Luke 15:31). In other words, *such as have grown up from childhood* in the fear of God and as the sheep of His pasture. Our Lord does not *say* “the Pharisees and scribes” were such; but as there was undoubtedly such a class, while “the publicans and sinners” were confessedly the strayed sheep and the prodigal children, He leaves them to fill up the place of the other class, *if they could*.

^{<D158>}LUKE 15:8-10.

II. THE LOST COIN.

8. sweep the house — “not done without *dust* on man’s part” [BENGEL].

10. Likewise — on the same principle.

joy, etc. — Note carefully the language here — not “joy *on the part*,” but “joy *in the presence* of the angels of God.” True to the idea of the parables. The Great Shepherd. The Great Owner Himself, is He *whose the joy properly is over His own recovered property*; but so vast and exuberant is it (^{<3817>}Zechariah 8:17), that as if He could not keep it to Himself, He “calleth His friends and neighbors together” — His whole celestial family — saying, “Rejoice WITH ME, for I have found *My* sheep-My-piece,” etc. In this sublime sense it is “joy,” *before* “or in the presence of the angels”; they

only “catch the flying joy,” sharing it *with Him!* The application of this to the reception of those publicans and sinners that stood around our Lord is grand in the extreme: “Ye turn from these lost ones with disdain, and because I do not the same, ye murmur at it: but a very different feeling is cherished in heaven. There, the recovery of even one such outcast is watched with interest and hailed with joy; nor are they left to come home of themselves or perish; for lo! even now the great Shepherd is going after His

lost sheep, and the Owner is making diligent search for the lost property; and He is finding it, too, and bringing it back with joy, and all heaven is full of it.” (Let the reader mark what sublime claims Himself our Lord covertly puts in here — as if in Him they beheld, all unknown to themselves, nothing less than heaven in the habiliments of earth, the Great Shepherd above, clothed in a garment of flesh, come “to seek and to save that which was lost”)!

LUKE 15:11-32.

III. THE PRODIGAL SON.

12. the younger — as the more thoughtless.

said, etc. — weary of restraint, panting for independence, unable longer to abide the check of a father’s eye. *This is man* impatient of divine control, desiring to be independent of God, seeking to be his own master; that “sin of sins, in which all subsequent sins are included as in their germ, for they are but the unfolding of this one” [TRENCH].

he divided, etc. — Thus “God, when His service no longer appears a perfect freedom, and man promises himself something far better elsewhere, allows him to make the trial; and he shall discover, if need be by saddest proof, that to depart from Him is not to throw off the yoke, but to exchange a light yoke for a heavy one, and one gracious Master for a thousand imperious tyrants and lords” [TRENCH].

13. not many days — intoxicated with his new — found resources, and eager for the luxury of using them at Will.

a far country — beyond all danger of interference from home.

wasted, etc. — So long as it lasted, the inward monitor (^{2880B}Isaiah 55:2) would be silenced (^{2390B}Isaiah 9:10 57:10 ^{3100B}Amos 4:6-10).

riotous living — (^{4150B}Luke 15:30), “with harlots.” Ah! but this reaches farther than the sensualist; for “in the deep symbolical language of Scripture fornication is the standing image of idolatry; they are in fact ever spoken of as one and the same sin, considered now in its fleshly, now in its spiritual aspect” (^{2480B}Jeremiah 3:1-15 ^{2360B}Ezekiel 16:1-17:24) [TRENCH].

14. when he had spent all ... a mighty famine — a mysterious providence holding back the famine till he was in circumstances to feel it in all its rigor. Thus, like Jonah, whom the storm did not overtake till on the

mighty deep at the mercy of the waves, does the sinner feel as if “the stars in their courses were fighting against” him (⁻⁴⁰⁸¹⁹Judges 5:20).

in want — the first stage of his bitter experience, and preparation for a change.

15. joined himself, etc. — his pride not yet humbled, unable to brook the shame of a return.

to feed swine — glad to keep life anyhow, behold the son sank into a swineherd — among the Jews, on account of the prohibition of swine’s flesh, emphatically vile! “He who begins by using the world as a servant, to minister to his pleasure, ends by reversing the relationship” [TRENCH].

16. would fain have filled — rather, “was fain to fill,” ate greedily of the only food he could get.

the husks — “the hulls of a leguminous plant which in the East is the food of cattle and swine, and often the nourishment of the poorest in times of distress” [STIER].

no man gave ... him — not this food, for that he had, but *anything better* (⁻²⁸¹¹⁴Jeremiah 30:14). This was his lowest depth — *perishing unpitied, alone in the world, and ready to disappear from it unmissed!* But this is just the blessed turning-point; midnight before dawn of day (⁻³⁴¹²⁸2 Chronicles 12:8 33:11-13 ⁻³⁴²¹⁹Jeremiah 2:19).

17. came to himself — Before, he had been “beside himself” (⁻²⁰¹⁸Ecclesiastes 9:3), in what sense will presently appear.

How many hired, etc. — What a testimony to the *nature* of the home he had left! But did he not know all this ere he departed and every day of his voluntary exile? He did, and he did not. His heart being wholly estranged from home and steeped in selfish gratification, his father’s house never came within the range of his vision, or but as another name for bondage and gloom. Now empty, desolate, withered, perishing, *home*, with all its peace, plenty, freedom, dignity, starts into view, fills all his visions as a warm and living reality, and breaks his heart.

18. I will arise and go to my FATHER — The change has come at last, and what a change! — couched in terms of such exquisite simplicity and power as if expressly framed for all heart-broken penitents.

Father, etc. — Mark the term. Though “no more *worthy* to be called his son,” the prodigal sinner is taught to claim the *defiled*, but *still existing* relationship, asking not to be made a servant, but *remaining a son* to be

made “*as a servant*,” willing to take the lowest place and do the meanest work. Ah! and is it come to this? Once it was, “Any place rather than home.” Now, “Oh, that home! Could I but dare to hope that the door of it would not be closed against me, how gladly would I take any place and do any work, happy only to be there at all.” Well, *that is conversion* — nothing absolutely new, yet all new; old familiar things seen in a new light and for the first time as realities of overwhelming magnitude and power. *How this is brought about the parable says not.* (We have that abundantly elsewhere, ^{<3083>}Philippians 2:13, etc.). Its one object is to paint the *welcome home* of the greatest sinners, when (no matter for the present *how*) they “arise and go to their Father.”

20. a great way off — Oh yes, when but the face is turned *homeward*, though as yet far, far away, our Father recognizes His own child in us, and bounds to meet us — not saying, Let him come to Me and sue for pardon first, but Himself taking the first step.

fell on his neck and kissed him — What! In all his filth? Yes. In all his rags? Yes. In all his haggard, shattered wretchedness? Yes. “Our Father who art in heaven,” is this Thy portraiture? It is even so (^{<3612>}Jeremiah 31:20). And because it is so, I wonder not that such incomparable teaching hath made the world new.

21. Father, I have sinned, etc. — “This confession is uttered *after the kiss of reconciliation*” (^{<3163>}Ezekiel 16:63) [TRENCH].

22. But the Father said, etc. — The son has not said all he purposed, not so much, because the father’s demonstrations had rekindled the filial, and swallowed up all servile feeling [TRENCH] (on the word “Father,” see on ^{<2158>}Luke 15:18), but because the father’s heart is made to appear too full to listen, at that moment, to more in this strain.

the best robe — Compare ^{<3017>}Zechariah 3:4,5, “Take away the filthy garments from him; behold I have clothed thee with change of raiment; and they clothed him with garments” (^{<2910>}Isaiah 61:10 ^{<6183>}Revelation 3:18).

a ring — (Compare ^{<0440>}Genesis 41:42 ^{<5052>}James 2:2).

shoes — Slaves went barefoot. Thus, we have here a threefold symbol of *freedom* and *honor*, restored, as the fruit of *perfect reconciliation*.

23. the fatted calf — kept for festive occasions.

24. my son — now *twice* his son.

dead ... lost — to *me*; to *himself* — to my service, my satisfaction; to his own dignity, peace, profit.

alive again ... found — to all these.

merry — (See on ^{<D150>}Luke 15:10).

25. in the field — engaged in his father's business: compare ^{<D159>}Luke 15:29, "These many years do I *serve* thee."

28. came his father out, and entreated him — "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (^{<D4313>}Psalms 103:13). As it is the elder brother who now errs, so it is *the same paternal compassion* which had fallen on the neck of the younger that comes forth and pleads with the elder.

29. these many years ... neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment — The words are not to be pressed too far. He is merely contrasting *his constancy of love and service* with the conduct of his brother; just as Job, resenting the charge of *hypocrisy* by his friends, speaks as if nothing could be laid to his charge (^{<D230>}Job 23:10-12), and David too (^{<D1810>}Psalms 18:20-24). *The father attests the truth of all he says.*

never ... a kid — I say not a *calves*, but not even a kid.

that I might make merry with my friends — Here lay his misapprehension. It was no entertainment for the gratification of the prodigal: it was a *father's* expression of the joy *he* felt at his recovery.

thy son ... thy living — How unworthy a reflection on the common father of both, for the one not only to disown the other, but fling him over upon his father, as if he should say, Take him, and have joy of him!

31. Son, etc. — The father resents not the insult — how could he, after the largeness of heart which had kissed the returning prodigal? He calmly expostulates with him, "Son, listen to reason. What need for special, exuberant joy over thee? Didst thou say, 'Lo, these many years do I serve thee?' In that saidst thou truly; but *just for that reason* do I not set the whole household a-rejoicing over thee. For thee is reserved *what is higher still* — a tranquil lifelong satisfaction in thee, as a true-hearted faithful son in thy father's house, nor of the inheritance reserved for thee is aught alienated by this festive and fitting joy over the once foolish but now wise and newly recovered one."

32. It was meet — Was it possible he should simply take his long vacant place in the family without one special sign of wonder and delight at the

change? Would that have been *nature*? But *this* being the meaning of the festivity, it would for that very reason be *temporary*. In time, the dutifulness of even the younger son would become the *law* and not the *exception*; he too at length might venture to say, “Lo, these many years do I serve thee”; and of him the father would say, “Son, thou art ever with me.” In that case, therefore, it would *not* be “meet that they should make merry and be glad.” The lessons are obvious, but how beautiful!

- (1) The deeper sunk and the longer estranged any sinner is, the more exuberant is the joy which his recovery occasions.
- (2) Such joy is *not* the portion of those whose whole lives have been spent in the service of their Father in heaven.
- (3) Instead of grudging the want of this, they should deem it the highest testimony to their lifelong fidelity, that something better is reserved for them — the deep, abiding complacency of their Father in heaven.

CHAPTER 16

LUKE 16:1-31.

PARABLES OF THE UNJUST STEWARD AND OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS, OR, THE RIGHT USE OF MONEY.

1. **steward** — manager of his estate.

accused — informed upon.

had wasted — rather, “was wasting.”

3. **cannot dig ... to beg, ashamed** — therefore, when dismissed, shall be in utter want.

4. **may receive me**, etc. — Observe his one object — *when cast out of one home to secure another*. This is the key to the parable, on which there have been many differing views.

5-7. **fifty ... fourscore** — deducting a half from the debt of the one, and a fifth from that of the other.

8. **the lord** — evidently the steward’s lord, so called in Luke 16:3,5.

commended, etc. — not for his “injustice,” but “because he had done wisely,” or prudently; with commendable *foresight* and *skillful adaptation of means to end*.

children of this world — so Luke 20:34; compare Psalm 17:14 (“their portion in this life”); Philippians 3:19 (“mind earthly things”); Psalm 4:6,7.

their generation — or “for their generation” — that is, for the purposes of the “world” they are “of.” The greater wisdom (or shrewdness) of the one, in *adaptation of means to ends*, and in energetic, determined prosecution of them, is none of it for *God* and *eternity* — a region they were never in, an atmosphere they never breathed, an undiscovered world, an unborn existence to them — but all for the purposes of their own grovelling and fleeting generation.

children of light — (so John 12:36 Ephesians 5:8 1 Thessalonians 5:5). Yet this is only “as night-birds see better in the dark than those of the

day owls than eagles” [CAJETAN and TRENCH]. But we may learn lessons from them, as our Lord now shows, and “be wise as *serpents*.”

9. Make ... friends of — Turn to your advantage; that is, as the steward did, “by showing mercy to the poor” (²⁰²⁷Daniel 4:27; compare ⁰²³³Luke 12:33 14:13,14).

mammon of unrighteousness — treacherous, precarious. (See on ⁰¹⁶³Matthew 6:24).

ye fail — in respect of life.

they may receive you — not generally, “ye may be received” (as ⁰¹⁶³Luke 6:38, “shall *men* give”), but “those ye have relieved may rise up as witnesses for you” at the great day. Then, like the steward, when turned out of one home shall ye secure another; but better than he, a heavenly for an earthly, an everlasting for a temporary habitation. Money is not here made the key to heaven, more than “the deeds done in the body” in general, according to which, as a test of character — but not by the merit of which — men are to be judged (⁰¹⁵⁰2 Corinthians 5:10, and see ⁰²³⁴Matthew 25:34-40).

10. He, etc. — a maxim of great pregnancy and value; rising from the *prudence* which the steward had to the *fidelity* which he had not, the “*harmlessness* of the dove, to which the serpent” with all his “*wisdom*” is a total stranger. Fidelity depends not on the *amount entrusted*, but on the *sense of responsibility*. He that feels this in little will feel it in much, and conversely.

11, 12. unrighteous mammon — To the whole of this He applies the disparaging term “what is least,” in contrast with “the true riches.”

12. another man’s ... your own — an important turn to the subject. Here all we have is *on trust* as stewards, who have an account to render. Hereafter, what the faithful have will be *their own property*, being no longer on probation, but in secure, undisturbed, rightful, everlasting possession and enjoyment of all that is graciously bestowed on us. Thus money is neither to be *idolized* nor *despised*: we must sit loose to it and use it for God’s glory.

13. can serve — be *entirely at the command of*; and this is true even where the services are not opposed.

hate ... love — showing that the two *here intended* are in uncompromising hostility to each other: an awfully searching principle!

14-18. covetous ... derided him — sneered at Him; their master sin being too plainly struck at for them to relish. But it was easier to *run down* than to *refute* such teaching.

15. justify yourselves — make a show of righteousness.

highly esteemed among men — generally carried away by plausible appearances. (See ^{<0947>}1 Samuel 16:7; and ^{<0241>}Luke 14:11).

16. The law, etc. — (See ^{<0113>}Matthew 11:13).

and every man presseth, etc. — Publicans and sinners, all indiscriminately, are eagerly pressing into it; and ye, interested adherents of the mere forms of an economy which is passing away, “discerning not the signs of this time,” will allow the tide to go past you and be found a stranded monument of blindness and obstinacy.

17. it is easier, etc. — (See on ^{<0157>}Matthew 5:17,18)

18. putteth away his wife, etc. — (See on ^{<0038>}Matthew 19:3-9). Far from intending to weaken the force of the law, in these allusions to a new economy, our Lord, in this unexpected way, sends home its high requirements with a pungency which the Pharisees would not fail to feel.

19. purple and fine linen, etc. — (Compare ^{<0705>}Esther 8:15 ^{<0682>}Revelation 18:12); wanting nothing which taste and appetite craved and money could procure.

20, 21. laid — having to be carried and put down.

full of sores — open, running, “not closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment” (^{<0306>}Isaiah 1:6).

21. desiring to be fed with — but was not [GROTIUS, BENDEL, MEYER, TRENCH, etc.]. The words may mean indeed “was fain to feed on,” or “gladly fed on,” as in ^{<0256>}Luke 15:16 [ALFORD, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, etc.]. But the context rather favors the former.

licked, etc. — a touching act of brute pity, in the absence of human relief. It is a case of heartless indifference, amidst luxuries of every kind, to one of God’s poorest and most afflicted ones, presented daily before the eye.

22. died — His burial was too unimportant to mention; while “the rich man died and *was buried*” — his carcass carried in pomp to its earthly resting-place.

in to Abraham’s bosom — as if seen reclining next to Him at the heavenly feast (^{<0111>}Matthew 8:11).

23. in hell — not the final place of the lost (for which another word is used), but as we say “the unseen world.” But as the object here is certainly to depict the *whole torment* of the one and the *perfect bliss* of the other, it comes in this case to much the same.

seeth Abraham — not God, to whom therefore he cannot cry [BENGEL].

24. Father Abraham — a well-founded, but unavailing, claim of natural descent (^{<QRB>}Luke 3:8 ^{<RSE>}John 8:37).

mercy on me — who never showed any (^{<SIB>}James 2:3).

send Lazarus — the pining victim of his merciless neglect.

that he may — take me hence? No; that he dares not to ask.

dip ... tongue — that is the *least* conceivable and the *most momentary* abatement of his torment; that is all. But even this he is told is

(1) *unreasonable*.

25, 26. Son — stinging acknowledgment of the claimed relationship.

thou ... Lazarus, etc. — As it is a great law of God’s kingdom, that *the nature of our present desires shall rule that of our future bliss*, so by that law, he whose “good things,” craved and enjoyed, were all bounded by time, could look for none after his connection with time had come to an end (^{<QRB>}Luke 6:24). But by this law, he whose “evil things,” all crowded into the present life, drove him to seek, and find, consolation in a life beyond the grave, is by death released from all evil and ushered into unmixed and uninterrupted good (^{<QRB>}Luke 6:21).

(2) It is *impossible*.

26. besides all this — independently of this consideration.

a great gulf fixed — *By an irrevocable decree* there has been placed a vast impassable abyss between the two states, and the occupants of each.

27-31. Then he said — now abandoning all hope for himself.

send him to my father’s house, etc. — no waking up of good in the heart of the lost, but bitter reproach against God and the old economy, as not warning him sufficiently [TRENCH]. The answer of Abraham is, They *are* sufficiently warned.

30. Nay — giving the lie to Abraham.

but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent — a principle of awful magnitude and importance. The greatest miracle will have no effect on those who are determined not to believe. A *real* Lazarus soon “rose from the dead,” but the sight of him by crowds of people, inclined thereby to Christ, only crowned the unbelief and hastened the murderous plots of the Pharisees against the Lord of glory; nor has His own resurrection, far more overpowering, yet won over that “crooked and perverse nation.”

CHAPTER 17

LUKE 17:1-10.

OFFENSES — FAITH — HUMILITY.

1, 2. (See ^{<1806>}Matthew 18:6,7).

3, 4. (See on ^{<1815>}Matthew 18:15-17; ^{<1821>}Matthew 18:21,22).

4. **seven times** — not a *lower* measure of the forgiving spirit than the “seventy times seven” enjoined on Peter, which was occasioned by his asking if he was to *stop* at seven times. “No,” is the virtual answer, “though it come to seventy times that number, if only he ask forgiveness in sincerity.”

5. **Lord** — (See on ^{<2101>}Luke 10:1).

increase our faith — moved by the difficulty of avoiding and forgiving “offenses.” This is the only instance in which *a spiritual operation upon their souls* was solicited of Christ by the Twelve; but a kindred and higher prayer had been offered before, by one with far fewer opportunities. (See on ^{<4024>}Mark 9:24.)

6. **sycamine** — mulberry. (See on ^{<4112>}Mark 11:22-24.)

7-10. **say unto him by and by** — The “by and by” (or rather “directly”) should be joined not to the *saying* but the *going*: “Go directly.” The connection here is: “But when your faith *has* been so increased as both to avoid and forgive offenses, and do things impossible to all but faith, be not puffed up as though you had laid the Lord under any obligations to you.”

9. **I trow not** — or, as we say, when much more is meant, “I should think not.”

10. **unprofitable** — a word which, though usually denoting the *opposite* of profit, is here used simply in its *negative* sense. “We have not, as his servants, profited or benefited God at all.” (Compare ^{<3219>}Job 22:2,3 ^{<5135>}Romans 11:35.)

LUKE 17:11-19.

TEN LEPERS CLEANSED.

11-13. through the midst of Samaria and Galilee — probably on the *confines* of both.

12. stood afar off — (Compare ^{<4834>}Leviticus 13:45,46).

13. they lifted up — their common misery drawing these poor outcasts together (^{<4882>}2 Kings 7:3), nay, making them forget the fierce national antipathy of Jew and Samaritan [TRENCH].

Jesus, etc. — (Compare ^{<4880>}Matthew 20:30-33). How quick a teacher is felt misery, even though as here the teaching may be soon forgotten!

14. show yourselves — as cleansed persons. (See on ^{<4880>}Matthew 8:4.) Thus too would the Samaritan be taught that “salvation is of the Jews” (^{<4902>}John 4:22).

as they went, were cleansed — In how many different ways were our Lord’s cures wrought, and this different from all the rest.

17, 18. Were there not ten cleansed — rather, were not *the ten* cleansed? that is, the whole of them — an example (by the way) of Christ’s omniscience [BENGEL].

18. this stranger — “this alien” (literally, “of another race”). The language is that of wonder and admiration, as is expressly said of another exhibition of Gentile faith (^{<4880>}Matthew 8:10).

19. Arise — for he had “fallen down on his face at His feet” (^{<4776>}Luke 17:16) and there lain prostrate.

faith made thee whole — not as the others, merely in body, but in that higher spiritual sense with which His constant language has so familiarized us.

LUKE 17:20-37.

COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND OF THE SON OF MAN.

20-25. when, etc. — To meet the erroneous views not only of the Pharisees, but of the disciples themselves, our Lord addresses both, announcing the coming of the kingdom under different aspects.

It cometh not with observation — with watching or lying in wait, as for something outwardly imposing and at once revealing itself.

21. Lo here! ... lo there! — shut up within *this* or *that* sharply defined and visible geographical or ecclesiastical limit.

within you — is of an internal and *spiritual* character (as contrasted with their *outside* views of it). But it has its *external* side too.

22. The days — rather “Days.”

will come — as in ^{<D948} Luke 19:43, when, amidst calamities, etc., you will anxiously look for a deliverer, and deceivers will put themselves forward in this character.

one of the days of the Son of man — Himself again among them but for one day; as we say when all seems to be going wrong and the one person who could keep them right is removed [NEANDER in STIER, etc.]. “This is said to guard against the mistake of supposing that His visible presence would accompany the manifestation and establishment of His kingdom” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

23. they shall say, See here ... go not, etc. — a warning to all so-called expositors of prophecy and their followers, who cry, Lo there and see here, every time that war breaks out or revolutions occur.

24. as lightning ... so ... the Son of man — that is it will be as manifest. The Lord speaks here of His coming and manifestation in a prophetically indefinite manner, and in these preparatory words *blends into one the distinctive epochs* [STIER]. When the whole polity of the Jews, civil and ecclesiastical alike, was broken up at once, and its continuance rendered impossible by the destruction of Jerusalem, it became as manifest to all as the lightning of heaven that the kingdom of God had ceased to exist in its old, and had entered on a new and perfectly different form. So it may be again, ere its final and greatest change at the personal coming of Christ, and of which the words in their highest sense are alone true.

25. But first ... suffer, etc. — This shows that the more immediate reference of ^{<41723>}Luke 17:23 is to an event *soon* to follow the death of Christ. It was designed to withdraw the attention of “His disciples” from the *glare* in which His foregoing words had invested the approaching establishment of His kingdom.

26-30. eat ... married ... planted — all the ordinary occupations and enjoyments of life. Though the antediluvian world and the cities of the plain were awfully wicked, it is not their *wickedness*, but their *worldliness*, their unbelief and indifference to the future, their *unpreparedness*, that is here held up as a warning. *Note.* — These recorded events of Old Testament history — denied or explained away nowadays by not a few — are referred to here as *facts*.

31-33. to take it away ... Remember, etc. — a warning against that *lingering reluctance to part with present treasures* which induces some to remain in a burning house, in hopes of saving this and that precious article till consumed and buried in its ruins. The cases here supposed, though different, are similar.

32. Lot's wife — her “*look back*,” for that is all that is said of her, and her recorded *doom*. Her heart was in Sodom still, and the “look” just said, “And must I bid it adieu?”

33. Whosoever, etc. — (See on ^{<41923>}Luke 9:23-27).

34. two in one bed — the prepared and unprepared mingled in closest intercourse together in the ordinary walks and fellowships of life, when the moment of severance arrives. Awful truth! realized before the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Christians found themselves forced by their Lord's directions (^{<42123>}Luke 21:21) at once and for ever away from their old associates; but most of all when the second coming of Christ shall burst upon a heedless world.

37. Where — shall this occur?

Wheresoever, etc. — “As birds of prey scent out the carrion, so wherever is found a mass of incurable moral and spiritual corruption, there will be seen alighting the ministers of divine judgment,” a proverbial saying terrifically verified at the destruction of Jerusalem, and many times since, though its most tremendous illustration will be at the world's final day.

CHAPTER 18

LUKE 18:1-8.

PARABLE OF THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.

1-5. always — Compare ^{<QRT>}Luke 18:7, “night and day.”

faint — lose heart, or slacken.

2. feared not ... neither regarded — defying the vengeance of God and despising the opinion of men.

widow — weak, desolate, defenseless (^{<SRF>}1 Timothy 5:5, which is taken from this).

3. came — kept coming. See ^{<QRT>}Luke 18:5, “her continual coming.”

Avenge me — that is, rid me of the oppression of.

5. continual coming — coming for ever.

6-8. the Lord — a name expressive of the *authoritative* style in which He interprets His own parable.

7. shall not God — not unjust, but the infinitely righteous Judge.

avenge — redeem from oppression.

his own elect — not like this widow, the object of indifference and contempt, but dear to Him as the apple of the eye (^{<SRF>}Zechariah 2:8).

cry day and night — whose every cry enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth (^{<SRF>}James 5:4), and how much more their incessant and persevering cries!

bear long with them — rather, “in their case,” or “on their account” (as ^{<SRF>}James 5:7, “for it”), [GROTIUS, DE WETTE, etc.].

8. speedily — as if pained at the long delay, impatient for the destined moment to interpose. (Compare ^{<QRT>}Proverbs 29:1.)

Nevertheless, etc. — that is, Yet ere the Son of man comes to redress the wrongs of His Church, so low will the hope of relief sink, through the

length of the delay, that one will be fain to ask, Will He find any faith of a coming avenger left on the earth? From this we learn:

- (1) That the *primary* and *historical* reference of this parable is to the Church in its *widowed*, desolate, oppressed, defenseless condition during the present absence of her Lord in the heavens;
- (2) That in these circumstances importunate, persevering prayer for deliverance is the Church's fitting exercise;
- (3) That notwithstanding every encouragement to this, so long will the answer be delayed, while the need of relief continues the same, and all hope of deliverance will have nearly died out, and "faith" of Christ's coming scarcely to be found. But the application of the parable to *prayer in general* is so obvious as to have nearly hidden its more direct reference, and so precious that one cannot allow it to disappear in any public and historical interpretation.

<P>LUKE 18:9-14.

PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

11, 12. stood — as the Jews in prayer (<41125>Mark 11:25).

God, etc. — To have been kept from gross iniquities was undoubtedly a just cause of thankfulness to God; but instead of the devoutly humble, admiring frame which this should inspire, the Pharisee arrogantly severs himself from the rest of mankind, as quite above them, and, with a contemptuous look at the poor publican, thanks God that he has not to stand afar off like him, to hang down his head like a bulrush and beat his breast like him. But these are only his *moral* excellencies. His *religious* merits complete his grounds for congratulation. Not confining himself to the one divinely prescribed annual fast (<41629>Leviticus 16:29), he was not behind the most rigid, who fasted on the second and fifth days of every week [LIGHTFOOT], and gave the tenth not only of what the law laid under tithing, but of "all his gains." Thus, besides doing *all his duty*, he did *works of supererogation*; while sins to confess and spiritual wants to be supplied he seems to have felt none. What a picture of the Pharisaic character and religion!

13. standing afar off — as unworthy to draw near; but that was the way to get near (<43418>Psalm 34:18 <42515>Isaiah 57:15).

would not lift up — blushing and ashamed to do so (<43906>Ezra 9:6).

smote, etc. — kept smiting; for anguish (^{<2348>}Luke 23:48), and self-reproach (^{<2619>}Jeremiah 31:19).

be merciful — “be propitiated,” a very unusual word in such a sense, only once else used in the New Testament, in the sense of “making reconciliation” by sacrifice (^{<8127>}Hebrews 2:17). There *may* therefore, be some allusion to this here, though not likely.

a sinner — literally, “*the sinner*”; that is, “If ever there was one, I am he.”

14. rather than the other — The meaning is, “and not the other”; for the Pharisee was not seeking justification, and felt no need of it. This great law of the Kingdom of God is, in the teaching of Christ, inscribed, as in letters of gold, over its entrance gate. And in how many different forms is it repeated (^{<4806>}Psalm 138:6 147:6 ^{<4163>}Luke 1:53). To be *self-emptyed*, or, “poor in spirit,” is the fundamental and indispensable preparation for the reception of the “grace which bringeth salvation”: wherever this exists, the “mourning” for it which precedes “comfort” and the earnest “hungerings and thirstings after righteousness” which are rewarded by the “fullness” of it, will, as we see here, be surely found. Such, therefore, and such only, are the justified ones (^{<8327>}Job 33:27,28 ^{<4948>}Psalm 34:18 ^{<2575>}Isaiah 57:15).

^{<2815>}LUKE 18:15-17.

LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

15. infants — showing that some, at least, of those called in Matthew (^{<4913>}Matthew 19:13) and Mark (^{<4103>}Mark 10:13) simply “little” or “young children,” were literally “*babes*.”

touch them — or, as more fully in Matthew (^{<4093>}Matthew 19:13), “put His hands on them and *pray*,” or invoke a “blessing” on them (^{<4106>}Mark 10:16), according to venerable custom (^{<4484>}Genesis 48:14,15).

rebuked them — Repeatedly the disciples thus interposed to save annoyance and interruption to their Master; but, as the result showed, *always against the mind of Christ* (^{<4153>}Matthew 15:23 ^{<2839>}Luke 18:39,40). Here, it is plain from our Lord’s reply, that they thought the intrusion a useless one, as *infants* were not capable of receiving anything from Him. His ministrations were for *grown people*.

16. But Jesus — “*much displeased*,” says Mark (^{<4104>}Mark 10:14); and invaluable addition.

said — “SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME” — “AND FORBID THEM NOT,” is the important addition of Matthew (^{<4094>}Matthew 19:14) and Mark (^{<4104>}Mark 10:14). What words are these from the lips of Christ! The price of them is above rubies. But the *reason* assigned, “FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD,” or “of heaven,” as in ^{<4094>}Matthew 19:14, completes the previous information here conveyed; especially as interpreted by what immediately follows: “AND HE TOOK THEM UP IN HIS ARMS, PUT HIS HANDS UPON THEM, AND BLESSED THEM” (^{<4106>}Mark 10:16). It is surely not to be conceived that all our Lord meant was to inform us, that seeing *grown people* must become childlike in order to be capable of the Kingdom of God, therefore they should not hinder *infants* from coming to Him, and therefore He took up and blessed *the infants themselves*. Was it not just the grave mistake of the disciples that infants should not be brought to Christ, because only grown people could profit by Him, which “much displeased” our Lord? And though He took the irresistible opportunity of lowering their pride of reason, by informing them that, in order to enter the Kingdom, “*instead of the children first becoming like them, they must themselves become like the children*” [RICHTER in STIER], this was but by the way; and, returning to the *children themselves*, He took them up in His gracious arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them, for no conceivable reason but to show that *they were thereby made capable, AS INFANTS, of the Kingdom of God*. And if so, then “*Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*” (^{<4107>}Acts 10:47). But such application of the baptismal water can have no warrant here, save where the infants have been *previously brought to Christ Himself* for His benediction, and only as the *sign and seal* of that benediction.

^{<4088>}LUKE 18:18-30.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER AND DISCOURSE THEREON.

This case presents some remarkable points.

- (1) The man was of irreproachable moral character; and this amidst all the temptations of *youth*, for he was a “young man” (^{<4092>}Matthew 19:22), and *wealth*, for “he was very rich” (^{<4083>}Luke 18:23 ^{<4102>}Mark 10:22).
- (2) But restless notwithstanding, his heart craves eternal life.

(3) Unlike the “rulers,” to whose class he belonged (^{<4088>}Luke 18:18), he so far believed in Jesus as to be persuaded He could authoritatively direct him on this vital point.

(4) So earnest is he that he comes “running” and even “kneeling before Him,” and that when He was gone forth *into the war* (^{<4107>}Mark 10:17) — the high-road, by this time crowded with travelers to the passover; undeterred by the virulent opposition of the class he belonged to as a “ruler” and by the shame he might be expected to feel at broaching such a question in the hearing of a crowd and on the open road.

19. Why, etc. — Did our Lord mean then to teach that God only ought to be called “good?” Impossible, for that had been to contradict all Scripture teaching, and His own, too (^{<4016>}Psalms 112:5 ^{<4121>}Matthew 25:21 ^{<5008>}Titus 1:8). Unless therefore we are to ascribe captiousness to our Lord, He could have had but one object — *to raise the youth’s ideas of Himself*, as not to be classed merely with other “good masters,” and declining to receive this title *apart from* the “One” who is essentially and only “good.” This indeed is but distantly hinted; but unless this is seen in *the background* of our Lord’s words, nothing worthy of Him can be made out of them. (Hence, *Socinianism*, instead of having any support here, is only baffled by it).

20. Thou knowest, etc. — Matthew (^{<4097>}Matthew 19:17) is more complete here: “but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which — as if he had said, Point me out one of them which I have not kept? — “Jesus said, Thou shalt,” etc. (^{<4097>}Matthew 19:17,18). Our Lord purposely confines Himself to the *second* table, which He would consider easy to keep, enumerating them all — for in Mark (^{<4109>}Mark 10:19), “Defraud not” stands for the *tenth* (else the eighth is twice repeated). In Matthew (^{<4099>}Matthew 19:19) the *sum* of this second table of the law is added, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” as if to see if he would venture to say he had kept *that*.

21. All these, etc. — “what lack I yet?” adds Matthew (^{<4090>}Matthew 19:20). Ah! this gives us a glimpse of his heart. Doubtless he was perfectly sincere; but something within whispered to him that *his* keeping of the commandments was *too easy* a way of getting to heaven. He felt something beyond this to be necessary; after keeping all the commandments he was at a loss to know what that could be; and he came to Jesus just upon that point. “Then,” says Mark (^{<4121>}Mark 10:21), “Jesus beholding him loved him,” or “looked lovingly upon him.” His sincerity, frankness, and nearness to the kingdom of God, in themselves most winning qualities, won our Lord’s regard even though he turned his back upon Him — a lesson to those who can see nothing lovable save in the regenerate.

22. lackest ... one thing — Ah! but that a fundamental, fatal lack.

sell, etc. — As riches were his idol, our Lord, who knew if from the first, lays His great authoritative grasp at once upon it, saying, “Now give Me up that, and all is right.” No general direction about the disposal of riches, then, is here given, save that we are to sit loose to them and lay them at the feet of Him who gave them. He who does this with all he has, whether rich or poor, is a true heir of the kingdom of heaven.

23-25. was very sorrowful — Matthew (^{<41922>}Matthew 19:22) more fully, “*went away sorrowful*”; Mark still more, “was sad” or “sullen” at that saying, and “went away grieved.” Sorry he was, very sorry, to part with Christ; but to part with his riches would have cost him a pang more. When Riches or Heaven, on Christ’s terms, were the alternative, the result showed to which side the balance inclined. Thus was he shown to lack the one all-comprehensive requirement of the law — the *absolute subjection of the heart to God*, and this want vitiated all his other obediences.

24. when Jesus saw — Mark says (^{<41036>}Mark 3:34), He “looked round about” — as if first following the departing youth with His eye — “and saith unto His disciples.”

How hardly, etc. — with what difficulty. In Mark (^{<41024>}Mark 10:24) an explanation is added, “How hard is it for them that *trust* in riches,” etc. — that is, with what difficulty is this idolatrous trust conquered, without which they cannot enter; and this is introduced by the word “children” — sweet diminutive of affection and pity (^{<42105>}John 21:5).

25. easier for a camel, etc. — a proverbial expression denoting literally a thing impossible, but figuratively, very difficult.

26, 27. For, etc. — “At that rate none can be saved”: “Well, it does pass *human* power, but not *divine*.”

28-30. Lo, etc. — in the simplicity of his heart (as is evident from the reply), conscious that the required surrender had been made, and generously taking in his brethren with him — “*we*”; not in the spirit of the young ruler. “All these have I kept,”

left all — “The workmen’s little is as much his “all” as the prince’s much” [BENGEL]. In Matthew (^{<41927>}Matthew 19:27) he adds, “What shall we have therefore?” How shall it fare with us?

29. There is no man, etc. — graciously acknowledging at once the completeness and the acceptableness of the surrender as a thing already made.

house, etc. — The specification is still more minute in Matthew and Mark, (^{<4197>}Matthew 19:27 ^{<4109>}Mark 10:29) to take in *every* form of self-sacrifice.

for the kingdom of God's sake — in Mark (^{<4109>}Mark 10:29), “for MY sake and the Gospel's.” See on ^{<4162>}Luke 6:22.

30. manifold more in this present time — in Matthew (^{<4199>}Matthew 19:29) “an hundredfold,” to which Mark (^{<4103>}Mark 10:30) gives this most interesting addition, “Now in this present time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions.” We have here the blessed promise of a *reconstruction of all human relationships and affections on a Christian basis and in a Christian state, after being sacrificed, in their natural form, on the altar of love to Christ*. This He calls “manifold more” — “an hundredfold more” — than what they sacrificed. Our Lord was Himself the first to exemplify this *new adjustment of His own relationships*. (See on ^{<4124>}Matthew 12:49,50; and ^{<4164>}2 Corinthians 6:14-18.) But this “with persecutions”; for how could such a transfer take place without the most cruel wrenches to flesh and blood? but the persecution would haply follow them into their new and higher circle, breaking that up too! But best of all, “in the world to come life everlasting.” And

When the shore is won at last Who will count the billows past? KEBLE

These promises are for *every one* who forsakes his all for Christ. But in Matthew (^{<4128>}Matthew 19:28) this is prefaced by a special promise to *the Twelve*: “Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me in the Regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Ye who have now adhered to Me shall, in the new kingdom, rule, or give law to, the great Christian world, here set forth in Jewish dress as the twelve tribes, presided over by the twelve apostles on so many judicial thrones. In this sense certainly the promise has been illustriously fulfilled [CALVIN, GROTIUS, LIGHTFOOT, etc.]. But if the promise refers to the yet future glory (as may be thought from ^{<4228>}Luke 22:28-30, and as most take it), it points to the highest personal distinction of the first founders of the Christian Church.

LUKE 18:31-34.

FULLER ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

(See on ^{<4117E>}Mark 10:32-34.)

31. all written by the prophets concerning the Son of man ... be accomplished — showing how Christ Himself read, and would have us to read, the Old Testament, in which some otherwise evangelical interpreters find no prophecies, or *virtually* none, of the sufferings of the Son of man.

34. understood none, etc. — The Evangelist seems unable to say strongly enough how entirely hidden from them at that time was the *sense* of these exceeding plain statements: no doubt to add weight to their subsequent testimony, which from this very circumstance was prodigious, and with all the simple-hearted irresistible.

LUKE 18:35-43.

BLIND MAN HEALED.

In ^{<4119>}Matthew 20:29-34, they are *two*, as in the case of the Demoniac of Gadara. In Matthew and Mark (^{<4116>}Mark 10:46-52) the occurrence is connected with Christ's *departure from* Jericho; in Luke with His *approach* to it. Many ways of accounting for these slight divergences of detail have been proposed. Perhaps, *if we knew all the facts*, we should see no difficulty; but that we have been left so far in the dark shows that the thing is of no moment any way. One thing is plain, there could have been no collusion among the authors of these Gospels, else they would have taken care to remove these "spots on the sun."

38. son of David, etc. — (See on ^{<4123>}Matthew 12:23).

39. rebuked, etc. — (See on ^{<4185>}Luke 18:15).

so much the more — that *importunity* so commended in the Syrophenician woman, and so often enjoined (^{<4115>}Luke 11:5-13 18:1-8).

40. commanded, etc. — Mark (^{<4104>}Mark 10:49) has this interesting addition: "And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, He calleth thee" — just as one earnestly desiring an interview with some exalted person, but told by one official after another that it is vain

to wait, as he will not succeed (they know it), yet persists in waiting for some answer to his suit, and at length the door opens, and a servant appears, saying, "You will be admitted — he has called you." *And are there no other suitors to Jesus who sometimes fare thus?* "And he, casting away his garment" — how lively is this touch, evidently of an eye-witness, expressive of his earnestness and joy — "came to Jesus" (~~4109~~ Mark 10:49,50).

41-43. What wilt thou, etc. — to try them; to deepen their present consciousness of need; and to draw out their faith in Him. Lord "*Rabboni*" (~~4116~~ Mark 10:51); an emphatic and confiding exclamation. (See on ~~4316~~ John 20:16.)

CHAPTER 19

◀D91 LUKE 19:1-10.

ZACCHEUS THE PUBLICAN.

The name is Jewish.

2-4. chief among the publicans — farming a considerable district, with others under him.

rich — Ill-gotten riches some of it certainly was. (See on ▶D98 Luke 19:8.)

3. who he was — what sort of person. *Curiosity* then was his only motive, though his determination not to be baulked was overruled for more than he sought.

4. sycamore — the Egyptian fig, with leaves like the mulberry.

5, 6. looked up, — in the full knowledge of who was in the tree, and preparatory to addressing him.

Zaccheus — whom he had never seen in the flesh, nor probably heard of. “He calleth His own sheep *by name* and leadeth them out” (▶G08 John 10:3).

make haste, and come down — to which he literally responded — “he made haste and came down.”

for to-day, etc. — Our Lord *invites Himself*, and in “royal” style, which waits not for invitations, but as the honor is done to the subject, not the sovereign, announces the purpose of royalty to partake of the subject’s hospitalities. Manifestly our Lord speaks as knowing how the privilege would be appreciated.

to-day ... abide — (Compare ▶R13 John 1:39), probably over night.

6. joyfully — Whence this so sudden “joy” in the cold bosom of an avaricious publican? The internal revolution was as perfect as instantaneous. “He spake and it was done.” “Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing” (▶Z30 Isaiah 35:6).

7. to be guest — or *lodge*: something more than “eating with” such (▶D51 Luke 15:2).

a sinner — that was one but a minute ago, but now is not. This mighty change, however, was all unknown to them. But they shall know it presently. “Sinner” would refer both to his office, vile in the eyes of a Jew, and to his character, which it is evident was not good.

8-10. stood — before all.

said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord — Mark how frequently Luke uses this title, and always where lordly *authority, dignity, or power* is intended.

if I have — that is, “so far as I have,” for evidently the “if” is so used (as in ^{<008>}Philippians 4:8).

taken by false accusation — defrauded, overcharged (^{<00P>}Luke 3:12,13).

fourfold — The Roman law required this; the Jewish law, but the principal and a fifth more (^{<007P>}Numbers 5:7). There was no *demand* made for either; but, as if to revenge himself on his hitherto reigning sin (see on ^{<007P>}John 20:28), and to testify the change he had experienced, besides surrendering the half of his *fair* gains to the poor, he voluntarily determines to give up all that was ill-gotten, quadrupled. He gratefully addressed this to the “Lord,” to whom he owed the wonderful change.

9. Jesus said unto him — but also before all.

This day, etc. — memorable saying! Salvation already come, but not a day old.

to this house — so expressed probably to meet the taunt, “He is gone to be guest,” etc. The house is no longer polluted; it is now fit to receive Me. But *salvation to a house* is an exceedingly precious idea, expressing the new air that would henceforth breathe in it, and the new impulses from its head which would reach its members (^{<00815>}Psalm 118:15 ^{<00165>}Acts 16:15,16,31).

son of Abraham — He was that by birth, but here it means a partaker of his *faith*, being mentioned as the sufficient explanation of *salvation* having come to him.

10. lost — and such “lost” ones as this Zaccheus. (See on ^{<005P>}Luke 15:32.) What encouragement is there in this narrative to hope for unexpected conversions?

LUKE 19:11-27.

PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.

A different parable from that of the Talents (ⲙⲁⲩⲏⲙ Matthew 25:14-30). For,

(1) This parable was spoken “when He was *nigh* to Jerusalem” (ⲙⲁⲩⲏⲙ Luke 19:11); that one, some days after entering it, and from the Mount of Olives.

(2) This parable was spoken to the promiscuous crowd; that, to the Twelve alone. Accordingly,

(3) Besides the “servants” in this parable, who profess subjection to Him, there is a class of “citizens” who refuse to own Him, and who are treated differently, whereas in the parable of the talents, spoken to the *former* class alone, this latter class is omitted.

(4) In the Talents, each servant receives a different number of them (five, two, one); in the Pounds all receive the same one pound, which is but about the sixtieth part of a talent; also, in the talents, each shows the same fidelity by doubling what he received (the five are made ten; the two, four); in the Pounds, each receiving the same, render a *different* return (one making his pound ten, another five). Plainly, therefore, the intended lesson is different; the one illustrating *equal fidelity with different degrees of advantage*; the other, *different degrees of improvement of the same opportunities*; yet with all this difference, the parables are remarkably similar.

12. a far country — said to put down the notion that He was just on His way to set up His kingdom, and to inaugurate it by His personal presence.

to receive ... a kingdom — be invested with royalty; as when Herod went to Rome and was there made king; a striking expression of what our Lord went away for and received, “sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

to return — at His second coming.

13. Occupy — “negotiate,” “do business,” with the resources entrusted.

14. his citizens — His proper subjects; meaning the Jews, who expressly repudiating our Lord’s claims said, “We have no king but Caesar” (ⲙⲁⲩⲏⲙ John 19:15). In Christendom, these correspond to infidel rejecters of Christianity, as distinguished from professed Christians.

15-26. (See on ^{<0259>}Matthew 25:19-29.)

ten ... five cities — different degrees of future gracious reward, proportioned to the measure of present fidelity.

27. bring hither, etc. — (Compare ^{<0152>}1 Samuel 15:32,33). Referring to the awful destruction of Jerusalem, but pointing to the final destruction of all that are found in open rebellion against Christ.

^{<0208>}LUKE 19:28-44.

CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM AND TEARS OVER IT.

(See on ^{<0201>}Matthew 21:1-11.)

29-38. Bethphage — “house of figs,” a village which with Bethany lay along the further side of Mount Olivet, east of Jerusalem.

30. whereon, etc. — (See on ^{<4304>}John 19:41).

31. the Lord hath need, etc. — He both knew all and had the key of the human heart. (See on ^{<0215>}Luke 19:5.) Perhaps the owner was a disciple.

35. set Jesus on — He allowing this, as befitting the *state* He was for the first and only time assuming.

37. whole multitude, etc. — The language here is very grand, intended to express a burst of admiration far wider and deeper than ever had been witnessed before.

38. Blessed be the King, etc. — Mark (^{<4119>}Mark 11:9,10) more fully, “Hosanna,” that is, “*Save now*,” the words of ^{<4825>}Psalms 118:25, which were understood to refer to Messiah; and so they add, “to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord (^{<4833>}Psalms 118:26), Hosanna in the highest.” This was the very loftiest style in which He could be saluted as the promised Deliverer.

peace, etc. — (See on ^{<4013>}Luke 2:13,14).

40. the stones, etc. — Hitherto the Lord had discouraged all demonstrations in His favor; latterly He had *begun* an opposite course; on this one occasion He seems to yield His whole soul to the wide and deep acclaim with a mysterious satisfaction, regarding it as *so necessary* a part of the regal dignity in which as Messiah He for this last time entered the city,

that if not offered by the vast multitude, it would have been *wrung out of the stones* rather than be withheld (^{<3211>}Habakkuk 2:11).

41-44. when beheld ... wept — Compare ^{<2151>}Lamentations 3:51, “Mine eye affecteth mine heart”; the heart again affecting the eye. Under this sympathetic law of the relation of mind and body, Jesus, in His beautiful, tender humanity, was constituted even as we. What a contrast to the immediately preceding profound joy! He yielded Himself alike freely to both. (See on ^{<1237>}Matthew 23:37.)

42. at least in this, etc. — even at this moving moment. (See on ^{<1239>}Luke 13:9.)

thy peace — thinking perhaps of the name of the city. (^{<3072>}Hebrews 7:2) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. How much is included in this word!

now ... hid — It was His among His *last* open efforts to “gather them,” but their eyes were judicially closed.

43. a trench — a rampart; first of wood, and when this was burnt, a built wall, four miles in circuit, built in three days — so determined were they. This “cut off all hope of escape,” and consigned the city to unparalleled horrors. (See JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 6.2; 12.3,4.) All here predicted was with dreadful literally fulfilled.

^{<1245>}LUKE 19:45-48.

SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE AND SUBSEQUENT TEACHING.

45, 46. As the *first* cleansing was on His first visit to Jerusalem (^{<4123>}John 2:13-22), so this second cleansing was on His last.

den of thieves — banded together for plunder, reckless of principle. The mild term “house of merchandise,” used on the former occasion, was now unsuitable.

47. sought — continued seeking, that is, daily, as He taught.

48. were very attentive to hear him — hung upon His words.

CHAPTER 20

LUKE 20:1-19.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS QUESTIONED, AND HIS REPLY — PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

(See on ^{<4213>}Matthew 21:23.)

2. **these things** — particularly the clearing of the temple.

4. **baptism of John** — his whole ministry and mission, of which baptism was the seal.

5. **Why then believed ye him not?** — that is, in his testimony to Jesus, the sum of his whole witness.

7. **could not tell** — crooked, cringing hypocrites! No wonder Jesus gave you no answer (^{<4006>}Matthew 7:6). But what dignity and composure does our Lord display as He turns their question upon themselves!

9-13. **vineyard** — (See on ^{<2316>}Luke 13:6). In ^{<4213>}Matthew 21:33 additional points are given, taken literally from ^{<2162>}Isaiah 5:2, to fix down the application and sustain it by Old Testament authority.

husbandmen — the ordinary spiritual guides of the people, under whose care and culture the fruits of righteousness might be yielded.

went, etc. — leaving it to the laws of the spiritual husbandry during the whole length of the Jewish economy. (See on ^{<4006>}Mark 4:26.)

10. **beat**, etc. — (^{<4213>}Matthew 21:35); that is, the prophets, extraordinary messengers raised up from time to time. (See on ^{<4237>}Matthew 23:37.)

13. **my beloved son** — Mark (^{<4116>}Mark 12:6) still more affectingly, “Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved”; our Lord thus severing Himself from all merely *human* messengers, and claiming *Sonship* in its loftiest sense. (Compare ^{<3088>}Hebrews 3:3-6.)

it may be — “surely”; implying the almost unimaginable guilt of *not* doing so.

14. reasoned among themselves — (Compare ^{<4378>}Genesis 37:18-20 ^{<8147>}John 11:47-53).

the heir — sublime expression of the great truth, that God's inheritance was destined for, and in due time to come into the possession of, His Son *in our nature* (^{<3002>}Hebrews 1:2).

inheritance ... ours — and so from mere *servants* we may become *lords*; the deep aim of the depraved heart, and literally “*the root of all evil.*”

15. cast him out of the vineyard — (Compare ^{<8311>}Hebrews 13:11-13 ^{<12131>}1 Kings 21:13 ^{<4897>}John 19:17).

16. He shall come, etc. — This answer was given by the Pharisees themselves (^{<4248>}Matthew 21:41), thus pronouncing their own righteous doom. Matthew alone (^{<4243>}Matthew 21:43) gives the naked application, that “the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” — the great evangelical community of the faithful, chiefly Gentiles.

God forbid — His whole meaning now bursting upon them.

17-19. written — (in ^{<4822>}Psalm 118:22,23. See on ^{<2138>}Luke 19:38). The Kingdom of God is here a Temple, in the erection of which *a certain stone*, rejected as unsuitable by the spiritual builders, is, by the great Lord of the House, made the keystone of the whole. On that Stone the builders were now “falling” and being “broken” (^{<2385>}Isaiah 8:15), “sustaining great spiritual hurt; but soon that Stone should fall upon *them* and grind them to powder” (^{<2038>}Daniel 2:34,35 ^{<3018>}Zechariah 12:3) — in their *corporate* capacity in the tremendous destruction of Jerusalem, but *personally*, as unbelievers, in a more awful sense still.

19. the same hour — hardly able to restrain their rage.

^{<211>}LUKE 20:20-40.

ENTANGLING QUESTIONS ABOUT TRIBUTE AND THE RESURRECTION — THE REPLIES.

20-26. sent forth — after consulting (^{<4125>}Matthew 22:15) on the best plan.

spies — “of the Pharisees and Herodians” (^{<4123>}Mark 12:13). See ^{<4186>}Mark 3:6.

21. we know, etc. — hoping by flattery to throw Him off His guard.

22. tribute — (See on ^{<41724}Matthew 17:24).

25. things which be Caesar's — Putting it in this general form, it was impossible for sedition itself to dispute it, and yet it dissolved the snare.

and unto God — How much there is in this profound but to them startling addition to the maxim, and how incomparable is the whole for fullness, brevity, clearness, weight!

27-34. no resurrection — “nor angel nor spirit” (^{<4238}Acts 23:8); the *materialists* of the day.

34. said unto them — In ^{<4229}Matthew 22:29, the reply begins with this important statement: — “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures,” regarding the future state, “nor the power of God,” before which a thousand such difficulties vanish (also ^{<4124}Mark 12:24).

36. neither ... die any more — Marriage is ordained to perpetuate the human family; but as there will be no breaches by death in the future state, this ordinance will cease.

equal — or “like.”

unto the angels — that is, in the *immortality* of their nature.

children of God — not in respect of *character* but *nature*; “being the children of the resurrection” to an undecaying existence (^{<5121}Romans 8:21,23). And thus the children of their Father's immortality (^{<5061}1 Timothy 6:16).

37, 38. even Moses — whom they had just quoted to entangle Him.

38. not ... of the dead, ... for all, etc. — To God, no human being is dead, or ever will be; but all sustain an abiding conscious relation to Him. But the “all” here meant “those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world.” These *sustain a gracious covenant relation to God, which cannot be dissolved*. In this sense our Lord affirms that for Moses to

call the Lord the “God” of His patriarchal servants if at that moment they had no existence, would be unworthy of Him. He “would be *ashamed* to be called their God, if He had not prepared for them a city” (^{<5116}Hebrews 11:16). How precious are these glimpses of the *resurrection state*!

39. scribes ... well said — enjoying His victory over the Sadducees.

they durst not — neither party, both for the time utterly foiled.

LUKE 20:41-47.

CHRIST BAFFLES THE PHARISEES BY A QUESTION ABOUT DAVID AND MESSIAH, AND DENOUNCES THE SCRIBES.

41. said, etc. — “What think ye of Christ [the promised and expected Messiah]? Whose son is He [to be]? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit [by the Holy Ghost, ^{<126>}Mark 12:36] call Him Lord?” (^{<122>}Matthew 22:42,43). The difficulty can only be solved by the *higher* and *lower* — the *divine* and *human* natures of our Lord (^{<123>}Matthew 1:23). Mark the testimony here given to the *inspiration* of the Old Testament (compare ^{<144>}Luke 24:44).

46, 47. Beware, etc. — (See on ^{<135>}Matthew 23:5; and ^{<147>}Luke 14:7).

47. devour, etc. — taking advantage of their helpless condition and confiding character, to obtain possession of their property, while by their “long prayers” they made them believe they were raised far above “filthy lucre.” So much “the greater damnation” awaits them. What a lifelike description of the Romish clergy, the true successors of “the scribes!”

CHAPTER 21

LUKE 21:1-4.

THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES.

1. looked up — He had “sat down over against the treasury” (⁴¹²⁴Mark 12:41), probably to rest, for He had continued long standing as he taught in the temple court (⁴¹²⁷Mark 11:27), and “looking up He saw” — as in Zaccheus’ case, not quite casually.

the rich, etc. — “the people,” says ⁴¹²⁴Mark 12:41 “cast money into the treasury, and many rich east in much”; that is, into chests deposited in one of the courts of the temple to receive the offerings of the people towards its maintenance (²¹⁹2 Kings 12:9 ⁴⁸³John 8:20).

2. two mites — “which make a farthing” (⁴¹²²Mark 12:42), the smallest Jewish coin. “She might have kept one” [BENGEL].

3. And he said — “to His disciples,” whom He “called to Him” (⁴¹²³Mark 12:43), to teach from it a great future lesson.

more than ... all — in proportion to her means, which is God’s standard (⁴¹⁸²2 Corinthians 8:12).

4. of their abundance — their *superfluity*; what they had to spare,” or beyond what they needed.

of her penury — or “want” (⁴¹²⁴Mark 12:44) — her *deficiency*, of what was *less* than her own wants required, “all the living she had.” Mark (⁴¹²⁴Mark 12:44) still more emphatically, “all that she had — her whole subsistence.” *Note*:

(1) *As temple offerings are needed still for the service of Christ at home and abroad, so “looking down” now, as then “up,” Me “sees” who “cast in,” and how much.*

(2) *Christ’s standard of commendable offering is not our superfluity, but our deficiency — not what will never be missed, but what costs us some real sacrifice, and just in proportion to the relative amount of that sacrifice. (See ⁴¹⁸²2 Corinthians 8:1-3.)*

◀215 LUCHE 21:5-38.

CHRIST'S PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND WARNINGS TO PREPARE FOR HIS SECOND COMING, SUGGESTED BY IT — HIS DAYS AND NIGHTS DURING HIS LAST WEEK.

5-7. (See on ▶111 Matthew 24:1-3.)

8. **the time** — of the Kingdom, in its full glory.

go ... not ... after them — “I come not so very soon” (▶512 2 Thessalonians 2:1,2) [STIER].

9-11. **not terrified** — (See ▶215 Luke 21:19 ▶311 Isaiah 8:11-14).

end not by and by — or immediately, not yet (▶116 Matthew 24:6 ▶1137 Mark 13:7): that is, “Worse must come before all is over.”

10. **Nation**, etc. — Matthew and Mark (▶116 Matthew 24:8 ▶1138 Mark 13:8) add, “All these are the beginning of sorrows,” or travail pangs, to which heavy calamities are compared (▶203 Jeremiah 4:31, etc.).

12. **brought before**, etc. — The book of Acts verifies all this.

13. **for a testimony** — an opportunity of bearing testimony.

18. **not a hair ... perish** — He had just said (▶215 Luke 21:16) they should be *put to death*; showing that this precious promise is far above immunity from mere bodily harm, and furnishing a key to the right interpretation of the ninety-first Psalm, and such like. Matthew adds the following (▶112 Matthew 24:12): “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many,” the many or, the most — the generality of professed disciples — “shall wax cold.” But he that endureth to the end shall be saved. Sad illustrations of the effect of abounding iniquity in cooling the love of faithful disciples we have in the *Epistle of James*, written about this period referred to, and too frequently ever since (▶313 Hebrews 10:38,39 ▶617 Revelation 2:10). “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness, and then shall the end come” (▶114 Matthew 24:14). God never sends judgment without previous warning; and there can be no doubt that the Jews, already dispersed over most known countries, had nearly all heard the Gospel “as a witness,” before the end of the Jewish state. The same principle was repeated and will repeat itself to *the end*.

20, 21. by armies — encamped armies, that is, besieged: “the abomination of desolation” (meaning the Roman ensigns, as the symbols of an idolatrous, pagan, unclean power) “spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (^{<2107>}Daniel 9:27) “standing where it ought not” (^{<4134>}Mark 13:14). “Whoso readeth [that prophecy] let him understand” (^{<4145>}Matthew 24:15).

Then ... flee, etc. — EUSEBIUS says the Christians fled to *Pella*, at the north extremity of Perea, being “prophetically directed”; perhaps by some prophetic intimation still more explicit than this, which still would be their *chart*.

23. woe unto — “alas for.”

with child, etc. — from the greater suffering it would involve; as also “flight in winter, and on the sabbath,” which they were to “pray” against (^{<4120>}Matthew 24:20), the one as more trying to the body, the other to the soul. “For then shall be tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be” — language not unusual in the Old Testament for tremendous calamities, though of this it may perhaps be literally said, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (^{<4121>}Matthew 24:21,22). But for this merciful “shortening,” brought about by a remarkable concurrence of causes, the whole nation would have perished, in which there yet remained a remnant to be afterwards gathered out. Here in Matthew and Mark (^{<4124>}Matthew 24:24 ^{<4132>}Mark 13:22) are some particulars about “false Christs,” who should, “*if possible*” — a precious clause — “deceive the very elect.” (Compare ^{<5109>}2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 ^{<6133>}Revelation 13:13.)

24. Jerusalem ... trodden down ... until, etc. — Implying

(1) that one day Jerusalem shall cease to be “trodden down by the *Gentiles*” (^{<6102>}Revelation 11:2), as then by pagan so now by Mohammedan unbelievers;

(2) that this shall be at the “completion” of “the times of the Gentiles,” which from ^{<6125>}Romans 11:25 (taken from this) we conclude to mean till the Gentiles have had their *full time* of that place in the Church which the Jews in *their time* had before them — after which, the Jews being again “grafted into their own olive tree,” one Church of Jew and Gentile together shall fill the earth (^{<6101>}Romans 11:1-36). What a vista this opens up!

25-28. signs, etc. — Though the grandeur of this language carries the mind over the head of all periods but that of Christ’s second coming, nearly every

expression will be found used of the Lord's coming in terrible national judgments, as of Babylon, etc.; and from ^{<4218>}Luke 21:28,32, it seems undeniable that its *immediate* reference was to the destruction of Jerusalem, though its *ultimate* reference beyond doubt is to Christ's final coming.

28. redemption — from the oppression of ecclesiastical despotism and legal bondage by the total subversion of the Jewish state and the firm establishment of the evangelical kingdom (^{<4219>}Luke 21:31). But the words are of far wider and more precious import. Matthew (^{<4220>}Matthew 24:30) says, "And then shall appear *the sign* of the Son of man in heaven," evidently something distinct from Himself, mentioned immediately after. What this was intended to mean, interpreters are not agreed. But as before Christ came to destroy Jerusalem, some appalling portents were seen in the air, so before His personal appearing it is likely that something *analogous* will be witnessed, though of what nature it is vain to conjecture.

32. This generation — not "this nation," as some interpret it, which, though admissible in itself, seems very unnatural here. It is rather as in ^{<4221>}Luke 9:27.

34-37. surfeiting, and drunkenness — All animal excesses, quenching spirituality.

cares of this life — (See on ^{<4007>}Mark 4:7; ^{<4049>}Mark 4:19).

36. Watch ... pray, etc. — the two great duties which in prospect of trial are constantly enjoined. These warnings, suggested by the need of preparedness for the tremendous calamities approaching, and the total wreck of the existing state of things, are the *general improvement* of the whole discourse, carrying the mind forward to Judgment and Vengeance of another kind and on a grander and more awful scale — not ecclesiastical or political but personal, not temporal but eternal — when all safety and blessedness will be found to lie in being able to "STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN" in the glory of His personal appearing.

37, 38. in the daytime — of this His last week.

abode in the mount — that is, at Bethany (^{<4217>}Matthew 21:17).

CHAPTER 22

LUKE 22:1-6.

CONSPIRACY OF THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES TO PUT JESUS TO DEATH — COMPACT WITH JUDAS.

1, 2. (See on ^{<4181>}Matthew 26:1-5.)

3. **Then entered Satan**, etc. — but not yet in the full sense. The awful stages of it were these:

(1) *Covetousness* being his master — passion, the Lord let it reveal itself and gather strength by entrusting him with “the bag” (^{<6116>}John 12:6), as treasurer to Himself and the Twelve.

(2) In the discharge of that most sacred trust he became “a thief,” appropriating its contents from time to time to his own use. Satan, seeing this door into his heart standing wide open, determines to enter by it, but cautiously (^{<4212>}2 Corinthians 2:11); first merely “*putting it into his heart to betray Him*” (^{<6112>}John 13:2), suggesting the thought to him that by this means he might enrich himself.

(3) This thought was probably converted into a settled purpose by what took place in Simon’s house at Bethany. (See ^{<4116>}Matthew 26:6, and see on ^{<6114>}John 12:4-8.)

(4) Starting back, perhaps, or mercifully held back, for some time, the determination to carry it into immediate effect was not consummated till, sitting at the paschal supper, “*Satan entered into him*” (see on ^{<6127>}John 13:27), and conscience, effectually stifled, only rose again to be his tormentor. What lessons in all this for every one (^{<4027>}Ephesians 4:27 ^{<5047>}James 4:7 ^{<4188>}1 Peter 5:8,9)!

5. **money** — “thirty pieces of silver” (^{<4115>}Matthew 26:15); thirty shekels, the fine payable for man- or maid-servant accidentally killed (^{<0232>}Exodus 21:32), and equal to \$25 in our money — “a *goodly price* that I was priced at of them” (^{<3113>}Zechariah 11:13). (See on ^{<6116>}John 19:16.)

6. **in the absence**, etc. — (See ^{<4115>}Matthew 26:5).

◀217 LUKE 22:7-38.

**LAST PASSOVER — INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER —
DISCOURSE AT THE TABLE.**

7. the day of unleavened bread — strictly the fifteenth Nisan (part of our March and April) *after* the paschal lamb was killed; but here, the fourteenth (Thursday). Into the difficult questions raised on this we cannot here enter.

10-13. when ye are entered the city — He Himself probably stayed at Bethany during the day.

there shall a man, etc. — (See on ▶193 Luke 19:29-32).

14-18. the hour — about six P.M. Between three and this hour the lamb was killed (▶126 Exodus 12:6, *Margin*)

15. With desire ... desired — “earnestly have I longed” (as ▶133 Genesis 31:30, “sore longedst”). Why? It was to be His last “before He suffered” — and so became “*Christ our Passover sacrificed for us*” (▶167 1 Corinthians 5:7), when it was “fulfilled in the Kingdom of God,” the typical ordinance thenceforth disappearing.

17. took the cup — the first of several partaken of in this service.

divide *it* among, etc. — that is, It is to be *your* last as well as Mine, “until the Kingdom of God come,” or as it is beautifully given in ▶139 Matthew 26:29, “until that day when I shall drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” It was *the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals*, the one about to close for ever, the other immediately to open and run its majestic career until from earth it be transferred to heaven.

21, 22. (See on ▶132 John 13:21, etc.).

24-30. there was — or “had been,” referring probably to some symptoms of the former strife which had reappeared, perhaps on seeing the whole paschal arrangements committed to two of the Twelve. (See on ▶100 Mark 10:42-45.)

25. benefactors — a title which the vanity of princes eagerly coveted.

26. But ye ... not — Of how little avail has this condemnation of “lordship” and vain titles been against the vanity of Christian ecclesiastics?

28. continued, etc. — affecting evidence of Christ’s tender susceptibility to human sympathy and support! (See on ^{<316>}John 6:66,67; see ^{<316>}John 16:32.)

29. I appoint, etc. — Who is this that dispenses kingdoms, nay, the Kingdom of kingdoms, within an hour or two of His apprehension, and less than a day of His shameful death? These sublime contrasts, however, perpetually meet and entrance us in this matchless history.

30. eat and drink, etc. — (See ^{<226>}Luke 22:16 and see on ^{<333>}Luke 18:28, etc.).

31-34. Simon, Simon — (See on ^{<201>}Luke 10:41).

desired *to have* — rather, “hath obtained you,” properly “asked and obtained”; alluding to Job (^{<306>}Job 1:6-12 2:1-6), whom he solicited and obtained that he might sift him as wheat, insinuating as “the accuser of the brethren” (^{<620>}Revelation 12:10), that he would find chaff enough in his religion, if indeed there was any wheat at all.

you — not Peter only, but them *all*.

32. But I have prayed — have been doing it already.

for thee — as most in danger. (See on ^{<223>}Luke 22:61,62.)

fail not — that is, entirely; for partially it did fail.

converted — brought back afresh as a penitent disciple.

strengthen, etc. — that is, make use of thy bitter experience for the fortifying of thy tempted brethren.

33. I am ready, etc. — honest-hearted, warmly-attached disciple, thinking thy present feelings immovable as a rock, thou shalt find them in the hour of temptation unstable as water: “I have been praying for thee,” therefore thy faith shall not perish; but thinking this superfluous, thou shalt find that “he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (^{<133>}Proverbs 28:26).

34. cock ... crow — “twice” (^{<140>}Mark 14:30).

35-38. But now — that you are going forth not as before on a temporary mission, provided for without purse or scrip, but into scenes of continued and severe trial, your *methods* must be different; for purse and scrip will now be needed for support, and the usual means of defense.

37. the things concerning me — decreed and written.

have an end — are rapidly drawing to a close.

38. two swords ... enough — they thinking He referred to present defense, while His answer showed He meant something else.

LUKE 22:39-46.

AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

39. as ... wont — (See ⁴²²³John 18:2).

40. the place — the Garden of Gethsemane, on the west or city side of the mount. Comparing all the accounts of this mysterious scene, the facts appear to be these:

(1) He bade nine of the Twelve remain “here” while He went and prayed “yonder.”

(2) He “took the other three, Peter, James, and John, and began to be sore amazed [appalled], sorrowful, and very heavy [oppressed], and said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death” — “I feel as if nature would sink under this load, as if life were ebbing out, and death coming before its time” — “tarry ye here, and watch with Me”; not, “Witness for Me,” but, “Bear Me company.” It did Him good, it seems, to have them beside Him.

(3) But soon even they were too much for Him: He must be alone. “He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s-*cast*” — though near enough for them to be competent witnesses and kneeled down, uttering that most affecting prayer (⁴¹⁴⁶Mark 14:36), that if possible “the cup,” of His approaching *death*, “might pass from Him, but if not, His Father’s will be done”: implying that *in itself* it was so purely revolting that only its being the Father’s will would induce Him to taste it, but that *in that view* of it He was perfectly prepared to drink it. It is no struggle between a reluctant and a compliant will, but between two views of one event — an *abstract* and a *relative* view of it, in the one of which it was *revolting*, in the other *welcome*. By signifying how it felt in the *one* view, He shows His beautiful oneness with ourselves in nature and feeling; by expressing how He regarded it in the other light, He reveals His absolute obediential subjection to His Father.

(4) On this, having a momentary relief, for it came upon Him, we imagine, by surges, He returns to the three, and finding them sleeping,

He addresses them affectingly, particularly *Peter*, as in ^{<41437>}Mark 14:37,38. He then

(5) goes back, not now to kneel, but fell on His face on the ground, saying the same words, but with this turn, “If this cup *may not pass*,” etc. (^{<41652>}Matthew 26:42) — that is, ‘Yes, I understand this mysterious silence (^{<49211>}Psalm 22:1-6); it may not pass; I am to drink it, and I will’ — “Thy will be done!”

(6) Again, for a moment relieved, He returns and finds them “sleeping for sorrow,” warns them as before, but puts a loving construction upon it, separating between the “willing spirit” and the “weak flesh.”

(7) Once more, returning to His solitary spot, the surges rise higher, beat more tempestuously, and seem ready to overwhelm Him. To fortify Him for this, “there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him” — not to minister light or comfort (He was to have none of that, and they were not needed nor fitted to convey it), but purely to sustain and brace up sinking nature for a yet hotter and fiercer struggle. And now, He is “in an agony, and prays more earnestly” — even Christ’s prayer, it seems, admitted of and now demanded such increase — “and His sweat was as it were great drops [literally, ‘clots’] of blood falling down to the ground.” What was this? *Not His proper sacrificial offering*, though essential to it. It was just the internal struggle, apparently hushing itself before, but now swelling up again, convulsing His whole inner man, and this so affecting His animal nature that the sweat oozed out from every pore in thick drops of blood, falling to the ground. It was just *shuddering nature* and *indomitable will* struggling together. But again the cry, If it must be, *Thy will be done*, issues from His lips, and all is over. “The bitterness of death is past.” He has anticipated and rehearsed His final conflict, and won the victory — now on the theater of an *invincible will*, as then on the arena of the Cross. “I *will* suffer,” is the grand result of Gethsemane: “It is finished” is the shout that bursts from the Cross. The Will without the Deed had been all in vain; but His work was consummated when He carried the now manifested Will into the palpable Deed, “*by the which WILL we are sanctified THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL*” (^{<38100>}Hebrews 10:10).

(8) At the close of the whole scene, finding them still sleeping (worn out with continued sorrow and racking anxiety), He bids them, with an irony of deep emotion, “sleep on now and take their rest, the hour is come, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners, rise, let us be going, the traitor is at hand.” And while He spoke, Judas approached

with his armed band. Thus they proved “miserable comforters,” broken reeds; and thus in His whole work He was *alone*, and “of the people there was none with Him.”

LUKE 22:47-54.

BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS — FLIGHT OF HIS DISCIPLES.

LUKE 22:55-62.

JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS — FALL OF PETER.

The particulars of these two sections require a combination of all the narratives, for which see on ^{<4147>}John 18:1-27.

61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter — (Also see on ^{<4147>}Mark 14:72.)

62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly — (Also see on ^{<4147>}Mark 14:72.)

LUKE 22:63-71.

JESUS CONDEMNED TO DIE AND SHAMEFULLY ENTREATED.

(See on ^{<4145>}Mark 14:53-63; ^{<4149>}John 18:19, etc.; and ^{<4225>}Luke 22:55-62.)

CHAPTER 23

LUKE 23:1-5.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

(See on ^{<4151>}Mark 15:1-5; and ^{<6828>}John 18:28-19:22.)

LUKE 23:6-12.

JESUS BEFORE HEROD.

(See ^{<4156>}Mark 15:6.)

7. sent him to Herod — hoping thus to escape the dilemma of an unjust condemnation or an unpopular release.

at Jerusalem ... at that time — to keep the passover.

8. some miracle — Fine sport thou expectedst, as the Philistines with Samson (^{<1765>}Judges 16:25), O coarse, crafty, cruel tyrant! But thou hast been baulked before (see on ^{<2331>}Luke 13:31-33), and shalt be again.

9. answered ... nothing — (See ^{<4076>}Matthew 7:6).

10. stood and vehemently accused him — no doubt both of *treason* before the *king*, and of *blasphemy*, for the king was a *Jew*.

11. his men of war — his bodyguard.

set him at naught, etc. — stung with disappointment at His refusal to amuse him with miracles or answer any of his questions.

gorgeous robe — bright robe. If this mean (as sometimes) of shining white, this being the royal color among the Jews, it may have been in derision of His claim to be “King of the Jews.” But if so, “He in reality honored Him, as did Pilate with His true title blazoned on the cross” [BENGE].

sent him again to Pilate — instead of releasing him as he ought, having established nothing against Him (^{<2314>}Luke 23:14,15). “Thus he implicated

himself with Pilate in all the guilt of His condemnation, and with him accordingly he is classed” (^{<4027>}Acts 4:27) [BENJEL].

at enmity — perhaps about some point of disputed jurisdiction, which this exchange of the Prisoner might tend to heal.

^{<0293>}LUKE 23:13-38.

JESUS AGAIN BEFORE PILATE — DELIVERED UP — LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED.

(See on ^{<4156>}Mark 15:6-15; and ^{<6902>}John 19:2-17).

26. Cyrenian — of Cyrene, in Libya, on the north coast of Africa, where were many Jews who had a synagogue at Jerusalem (^{<4069>}Acts 6:9, and see ^{<4120>}Acts 2:10). He was “the father of ALEXANDER and Rufus” (^{<4152>}Mark 15:21), probably better known afterwards than himself, as disciples. (See ^{<6163>}Romans 16:13).

out of the country — and casually drawn into that part of the crowd.

laid the cross — “Him they compel to bear His cross,” (^{<4732>}Matthew 27:32) — sweet compulsion, if it issued in him or his sons *voluntarily* “taking up *their* cross!” It would appear that our Lord had first to bear His own cross (^{<6897>}John 19:17), but being from exhaustion unable to proceed, it was laid on another to bear it “after Him.”

27-31. women — not the precious Galilean women (^{<02349>}Luke 23:49), but part of the crowd.

28. not for me, etc. — noble spirit of compassion, rising above His own dread endurance, in tender commiseration of sufferings yet in the distance and far lighter, but *without His supports and consolations!*

30. mountains ... hills, etc. — (^{<2308>}Hosea 10:8), flying hither and thither as they did in despair for shelter, during the siege; a very slight premonition of cries of another and more awful kind (^{<23209>}Isaiah 2:10,19,21 ^{<66667>}Revelation 6:16,17).

31. green tree — that naturally resists the fire.

the dry — that attracts the fire, being its proper fuel. The proverb here plainly means: “If such sufferings alight upon the innocent One, the very Lamb of God, what must be in store for those who are provoking the flames?”

LUKE 23:32-38, 44-46.

CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS.

(See on ⁴⁸⁹⁷John 19:17-30).

LUKE 23:39-43.

THE TWO THIEVES.

39. railed on him — catching up the universal derision, but with a turn of his own. Jesus, “reviled, reviles not again”; but another voice from the cross shall nobly wipe out this dishonor and turn it to the unspeakable glory of the dying Redeemer.

40. Dost not thou — “thou” is emphatic: “Let others jeer, but dost *thou*?”

fear God — Hast thou no fear of meeting Him so soon as thy righteous Judge? Thou art within an hour or two of eternity, and dost thou spend it in reckless disregard of coming judgment?

in the same condemnation — He has been condemned to die, but is it better with thee? Doth even a common lot kindle no sympathy in thy breast?

41. we ... justly, etc. — He owns the worst of his crimes and deserts, and would fain shame his fellow into the same.

nothing amiss — literally, “out of place”; hence “unnatural”; a striking term here. Our Lord was not charged with *ordinary crime*, but only with laying claim to office and honors which amounted to blasphemy. The charge of treason had not even a show of truth, as Pilate told His enemies. In this defense then there seems more than meets the eye. “He made Himself the promised Messiah, the Son of God; but in this He ‘did nothing amiss’; He ate with publicans and sinners, and bade all the weary and heavy laden come and rest under His wing; but in this He ‘did nothing amiss’: He claimed to be Lord of the Kingdom of God, to shut it at will, but also to open it at pleasure even to such as we are; but in this He ‘did nothing amiss!’” Does His next speech imply *less* than this? Observe:

(1) His frank confession and genuine self-condemnation.

(2) His astonishment and horror at the very different state of his fellow's mind.

(3) His anxiety to bring him to a better mind while yet there was hope.

(4) His noble testimony, not only to the innocence of Jesus, but to all that this implied of the rightfulness of His claims.

42. said unto Jesus, etc. — Observe here

(1) The “kingdom” referred to was one *beyond the grave*; for it is inconceivable that he should have expected Him to come down from the cross to erect any *temporal* kingdom.

(2) This he calls Christ's own (Thy) kingdom.

(3) As such, he sees in Christ the absolute right to dispose of that kingdom to whom He pleased.

(4) He does not presume to *ask* a place in that kingdom, though that is what he means, but with a humility quite affecting, just says, “Lord, *remember me* when,” etc. Yet was there mighty faith in that word. If Christ will but “think upon him” (~~KEB~~ Nehemiah 5:19), at that august moment when He “cometh into His kingdom,” it will do. “Only assure me that then Thou wilt not forget such a wretch as I, that once hung by Thy side, and I am content.” Now contrast with this bright act of faith the darkness even of the apostles' minds, who could hardly be got to believe that their Master would die at all, who now were almost despairing of Him, and who when dead had almost buried their hopes in His grave. Consider, too, the man's previous *disadvantages* and *bad life*. And then mark how his faith comes out — not in protestations, “Lord, I cannot doubt, I am firmly persuaded that Thou art Lord of a kingdom, that death cannot disannul Thy title nor impede the assumption of it in due time,” etc. — but as having no shadow of doubt, and rising above it as a question altogether, he just says, “Lord, remember me *when* Thou comest,” etc. Was ever faith like this exhibited upon earth? It looks as if the brightest crown had been reserved for the Savior's head at His darkest moment!

43. Jesus said, etc. — The dying Redeemer speaks as if He Himself viewed it in this light. It was a “song in the night.” It ministered cheer to His spirit in the midnight gloom that now enwrapt it.

Verily I say unto thee — “Since thou speakest as to the king, with kingly authority speak I to thee.”

To-day — “Thou art prepared for a long delay before I come into My kingdom, but not a day’s delay shall there be for thee; thou shalt not be parted from Me even for a moment, but together we shall go, and with Me, ere this day expire, shalt thou be in Paradise” (future bliss, <47214>2 Corinthians 12:4 <61811>Revelation 2:7). Learn

- (1) How “One is taken and another left”;
- (2) How easily divine teaching can raise the rudest and worst above the best instructed and most devoted servants of Christ;
- (3) How *presumption* and *despair* on a death hour are equally discountenanced here, the one in the impenitent thief, the other in his penitent fellow.

<42342>LUKE 23:47-56.

SIGNS AND CIRCUMSTANCES FOLLOWING HIS DEATH — HIS BURIAL.

(See on <41751>Matthew 27:51-56; <41713>Matthew 27:62-66; and <61811>John 19:31-42).

CHAPTER 24

LUKE 24:1-12.

ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE WOMEN THAT CHRIST IS RISEN — PETER'S VISIT TO THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE.

(See on ⁴¹⁶⁰Mark 16:1-8; and ⁴¹⁸⁰Matthew 28:1-5).

5. Why, etc. — Astonishing question! not “the *risen*,” but “*the Living One*” (compare ⁶⁰¹⁸Revelation 1:18); and the surprise expressed in it implies an *incongruity* in His being there at all, as if, though He might *submit* to it, “it was impossible He should be *holden* of it” (⁴¹²⁴Acts 2:24).

6. in Galilee — to which these women themselves belonged (⁴²⁵⁶Luke 23:55).

7. Saying, etc. — How remarkable it is to hear angels quoting a whole sentence of Christ's to the disciples, mentioning where it was uttered, and wondering it was not fresh in their memory, as doubtless it was in theirs! (⁵¹⁸⁶1 Timothy 3:16, “seen of angels,” and ⁴⁰¹²1 Peter 1:12).

10. Joanna — (See on ⁴⁰⁰⁸Luke 8:1-3).

12. Peter, etc. — (See on ⁴³⁰⁰John 20:1-10).

LUKE 24:13-35.

CHRIST APPEARS TO THE TWO GOING TO EMMAUS.

13. two of them — One was *Cleopas* (⁴²⁴⁸Luke 24:18); who the other was is mere conjecture.

Emmaus — about seven and a half miles from Jerusalem. They probably lived there and were going home after the Passover.

14-16. communed and reasoned — exchanged views and feelings, weighing afresh all the facts, as detailed in ⁴²⁴⁸Luke 24:18-24.

drew near — coming up behind them as from Jerusalem.

eyes holden — Partly He was “in another form” (^{<162>}Mark 16:12), and partly there seems to have been an operation on their own vision; though certainly, as they did not believe that He was alive, His company as a fellow traveler was the last thing they would expect,

17-24. communications, etc. — The words imply the earnest discussion that had appeared in their manner.

18. knowest not, etc. — If he knew not the events of the last few days in Jerusalem, he must be a mere sojourner; if he did, how could he suppose they would be talking of anything else? How artless all this!

19. Concerning Jesus, etc. — As if feeling it a relief to have someone to unburden his thoughts and feelings to, this disciple goes over the main facts in his own desponding style, and this was just what our Lord wished.

21. we trusted, etc. — They expected the promised Deliverance at His hand, but in the current sense of it, not by His death.

besides all this — not only did His death seem to give the fatal blow to their hopes, but He had been two days dead already, and this was the third. It is true, they add, some of our women gave us a surprise, telling us of a vision of angels they had at the empty grave this morning that said He was alive, and some of ourselves who went thither confirmed their statement; but then Himself they saw not. A doleful tale truly, told out of the deepest despondency.

25-27. fools — senseless, without understanding.

26. Ought not Christ — “the Christ,” “the Messiah.”

to suffer ... and enter — that is, through the gate of suffering (and suffering “*these things*,” or *such a death*) to enter into His glory. “Ye believe in the glory; but these very sufferings are the predicted gate of entrance into it.”

27. Moses and all the prophets, etc. — Here our Lord both teaches us the reverence due to Old Testament Scripture, and the great burden of it — “Himself.”

28-31. made as though, etc. — (Compare ^{<168>}Mark 6:48 ^{<188>}Genesis 18:3,5 32:24-26).

29. constrained, etc. — But for this, the whole design of the interview had been lost; but *it was not to be lost*, for He who only wished to be constrained had kindled a longing in the hearts of His travelling companions which was not to be so easily put off. And does not this still

repeat itself in the interviews of the Savior with His loving, longing disciples? Else why do they say,

Abide with me from morn to eve, For without Thee I cannot live; Abide with me when night is nigh, For without Thee I cannot die. KEBLE

30, 31. he took ... and blessed ... and their eyes were opened — The stranger first startles them by taking the place of master at their own table, but on proceeding to that act which reproduced the whole scene of the last Supper, a rush of associations and recollections disclosed their guest, and He stood confessed before their astonished gaze — THEIR RISEN LORD! They were going to gaze on Him, perhaps embrace Him, but that moment He is gone! It was enough.

32-34. They now tell each to the other how their hearts burned — were fired — within them at His talk and His expositions of Scripture. “Ah! this accounts for it: We could not understand the glow of self-evidencing light, love, glory that ravished our hearts; but now we do.” They cannot rest — how could they? — they must go straight back and tell the news. They find the eleven, but ere they have time to tell their tale, their ears are saluted with the thrilling news, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to *Simon*.” Most touching and precious intelligence this. The only one of the Eleven to whom He appeared *alone* was he, it seems, who had so shamefully denied Him. What passed at that interview we shall never know here. Probably it was too sacred for disclosure. (See on <41437>Mark 16:7). The two from Emmaus now relate what had happened to them, and while thus comparing notes of their Lord’s appearances, lo! Christ Himself stands in the midst of them. What encouragement to doubting, dark, true-hearted disciples!

<4285>LUKE 24:36-53.

JESUS APPEARS TO THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES — HIS ASCENSION.

36. Jesus ... stood — (See on <4309>John 20:19).

37, 38. a spirit — the ghost of their dead Lord, but not Himself in the body (<4125>Acts 12:15 <41437>Matthew 14:26).

thoughts — rather, “reasonings”; that is, whether He were risen or no, and whether this was His very self.

39-43. Behold, etc. — lovingly offering them both *ocular* and *tangible* demonstration of the reality of His resurrection.

a spirit hath not — an important statement regarding “spirits.”

flesh and bones — He says not “flesh and *blood*”; for the blood is the life of the animal and corruptible body (^{<0004}Genesis 9:4), which “cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (^{<4501}1 Corinthians 15:50); but “flesh and bones,” implying the *identity*, but *with diversity of laws*, of the resurrection body. (See on ^{<4024}John 20:24-28).

41. believed not for joy, etc. — They did believe, else they had not rejoiced [BENGEL]. But it seemed *too good* to be true (^{<4300}Psalm 126:1,2).

42. honeycomb — common frugal fare, anciently.

43. eat before them — that is, let them see Him doing it: not for His own necessity, but their conviction.

44-49. These are the words, etc. — that is, “Now you will understand what seemed so dark to you when I told you about the Son of man being put to death and rising again” (^{<2031}Luke 18:31-34).

while ... yet with you — a striking expression, implying that He was now, as the dead and risen Savior, virtually dissevered from this scene of mortality, and from all ordinary intercourse with His mortal disciples.

law ... prophets ... psalms — the three Jewish divisions of the Old Testament Scriptures.

45. Then opened he, etc. — a statement of unspeakable value; expressing, on the one hand, Christ’s *immediate access to the human spirit* and *absolute power over it*, to the adjustment of its vision, and permanent rectification for spiritual discernment (than which it is impossible to conceive a stronger evidence of His proper divinity); and, on the other hand, making it certain that the *manner of interpreting the \ Old Testament which the apostles afterwards employed* (see the Acts and Epistles), *has the direct sanction of Christ Himself*.

46. behoved Christ — (See on ^{<2026}Luke 24:26).

47. beginning at Jerusalem —

(1) As the metropolis and heart of the then existing kingdom of God: — “to the Jew first” (^{<4016}Romans 1:16 ^{<4436}Acts 13:46 ^{<2103}Isaiah 2:3, see on ^{<4006}Matthew 10:6).

(2) As the great reservoir and laboratory of all the sin and crime of the nation, thus proclaiming for all time that there is mercy in Christ for the chief of sinners. (See on ^{<4237}Matthew 23:37).

48. witnesses — (Compare ^{<400>}Acts 1:8,22).

49. I send — the present tense, to intimate its nearness.

promise of my Father — that is, what My Father hath promised; the Holy Ghost, of which Christ is the authoritative Dispenser (^{<640>}John 14:7 ^{<610>}Revelation 3:1,5;6).

endued — invested, or clothed with; implying, as the parallels show (^{<6134>}Romans 13:14 ^{<653>}1 Corinthians 15:53 ^{<807>}Galatians 3:27 ^{<509>}Colossians 3:9,10), their being *so penetrated and acted upon by conscious supernatural power* (in the full sense of that word) *as to stamp with divine authority the whole exercise of their apostolic office*, including, of course, their *pen* as well as their *mouth*.

50-53. to Bethany — not to the village itself, but on the “descent” to it from Mount Olivet.

51. while he blessed ... parted, etc. — Sweet intimation! Incarnate Love, Crucified Love, Risen Love, now on the wing for heaven, waiting only those odorous gales which were to waft Him to the skies, goes away in benedictions, that in the character of Glorified, Enthroned Love, He might continue His benedictions, but in yet higher form, until He come again! And oh, if angels were so transported at His birth into this scene of tears and death, what must have been their ecstasy as they welcomed and attended Him “far above all heavens” into the presence-chamber, and conducted Him to the right hand of the Majesty on High! Thou hast an everlasting right, O my Savior, to that august place. The brightness of the Father’s glory, enshrined in our nature, hath won it well; for He poured out His soul unto death, and led captivity captive, receiving gifts for men, yea for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Thou art the King of glory, O Christ. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in! Even so wilt Thou change these vile bodies of ours, that they may be like unto Thine own glorious body; and then with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, they shall enter into the King’s palace!

52. worshipped him — certainly in the strictest sense of adoration.

returned to Jerusalem — as instructed to do: but not till after gazing, as if entranced, up into the blue vault in which He had disappeared, they were gently checked by two shining ones, who assured them He would come again to them in the like manner as He had gone into heaven. (See on ^{<400>}Acts 1:10,11). This made them return, not with disappointment at His removal, but “with great joy.”

53. were continually in the temple — that is, every day at the regular hours of prayer till the day of Pentecost.